

I. INTRODUCTION

On February 9, 1880, the first train pulled into the Santa Fe, New Mexico depot—its arrival celebrated by colorful speeches and a grand parade. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company had finally made it to Santa Fe - the final destination. With that train began an era of economic and social change that is still evident in the life of Santa Fe today.

The railroad brought in its sleeping and dining cars, tourists, new residents, and the “Harvey Girls” on their way to the Harvey House - La Fonda Hotel on the Plaza. Artists hired by the rail line came to draw and photograph images of Santa Fe to entice faraway Easterners to come see “the West.” Local Native American

and Hispanic arts and crafts were created to market to rail travelers. Building materials brought in on the rail, such as galvanized tin and bricks, added metal roofs and Victorian brick buildings to the architectural fabric of Santa Fe. Increased economic activity fostered new ways of trading and exchange. Lands were sold and bought and businesses sprang up around the rail head. New neighborhoods were created around the railyard to house the workers and their families involved in the new rail economy.

By the 1940s the Railyard was an activity center for Santa Fe locals. Older neighbors, still living next to the Railyard today, remember afternoons picking wild

lettuce and swimming along the acequia that flows through the site. There was ice skating in the winter and elephants when the circus was in town. During the Depression, locals came to the Railyard to be given free meat from the warehouses. The Railyard was Santa Fe’s family room to the downtown plaza’s living room.

Today, more than one hundred years later, the City of Santa Fe is the owner of the Railyard. The glory days of the railroad may have faded, but the train still pulls into the historic depot every day and Santa Feans are still engaged and concerned with the Railyard. The echoes of its vibrant past and potential future still excite the imagination of the community.

The City of Santa Fe has commissioned this Master Plan and Design Guidelines to guide the redevelopment of the Railyard site as a unique district within the City of Santa Fe. The Master Plan and Design Guidelines intend to honor the historic context and to build upon the rich history of the Railyard—to bring back for the future--the Railyard’s importance as a transportation center, an economic development area, and as a nexus for generating art and culture in Santa Fe.

Figure I-1: Historic Santa Fe Depot, ca. 1912.



Figure I-2: Nuckolls Packing Company Building, date unknown.



Figure I-3: Gross Kelly & Co. Warehouse, ca. 1920.



Figure I-4: Railyard Water Tanks, ca. 1928.



