

Downtown Fallon Commercial Corridor Architectural Survey Report



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Executive Summary

In October 2015, employees of the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office surveyed 65 buildings in downtown Fallon's commercial district to determine whether the district retained sufficient integrity to support a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The survey concluded that 39 of the buildings contribute to a potential historic district and that 13 of the resources are individually eligible for listing in the NRHP. It is recommended that a district nomination be pursued.

Objectives

The Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (NVSHPO) conducted an intensive survey of Fallon's downtown commercial corridor with the goal of evaluating the surveyed resources for their eligibility in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). This project built upon previous surveys, updating, and in some cases revising, determinations made in previous projects. The survey's primary focus was to consider the mid-twentieth century development of downtown Fallon, specifically buildings that were either constructed or significantly altered between 1951 and 1965. Survey objectives included the following:

- Determine whether each resource within the survey area is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and/or the Nevada State Register.
- Determine whether Fallon's downtown commercial corridor retains sufficient integrity to support a national historic district.
- Provide a complete, up-to-date record of downtown Fallon's historic resources.

Methodology

Kautz Environmental Consultants, Inc. has previously conducted three intensive-level surveys of the downtown Fallon area for the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) in accordance with Section 106 consultation requirements for a multi-phase transportation and streetscape enhancement project. In 2001, James Hutchins, Ph.D. and Monique Kimball, M.A. undertook the first of these surveys, which covered the first phase of the project that sought to revitalize U.S. 95/Maine Street. The report, titled *An Architectural Survey of the Fallon Commercial District*, states that the project area encompassed Maine Street between Williams Avenue and Stillwater Avenue. The inventory documented 41 architectural resources, 35 of which were re-surveyed by NVSHPO during the current survey. In 2001, eligibility for these resources was determined as such:

SHPO Number	Address	APN	Year Built	Alteration Date	NRHP Eligibility
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SHPO Number	Address	APN	Year Built	Alteration Date	NRHP Eligibility
B4792	1 S. Maine Street	001-541-25	1957	n/a	Not Eligible
B4793	35, 37, 39 S. Maine Street	001-541-23	1926	Unknown	Not Eligible
B4794	45 S. Maine Street	001-541-31	1926	1970s	Not Eligible
B4795	55 & 65 S. Maine Street	001-541-34	1926	Unknown	Not Eligible
B4816 B4817 B4818	70 S. Maine Street	001-534-01 001-534-05 001-534-08	1912	c. 1950s, c.1973	Not Eligible
B4796	71 S. Maine Street	001-541-19	1920	1930s, c.1950s	Not Eligible
B4797 B4798 B4799 B4800 B4801	81-95 S. Maine Street	001-541-18 001-541-17 001-541-30 001-541-15 001-541-14	1920	c.1958-1975	Not Eligible
B4819	98 S. Maine Street	001-534-06	1910	1950s, 1960s	Not Eligible
B4802	105 S. Maine Street	001-541-13	1920	c.1960s- 1970s	Not Eligible
B4820	116 & 120 S. Maine Street	001-538-01	1911	c.1954, post-1975	Not Eligible
B4803	125 S. Maine Street	001-541-12	c.1907	1920s, 1960s-1970s	Not Eligible
B4821	130 S. Maine Street	001-538-02	1906	1954, 1975	Not Eligible
B4804	131 & 143 S. Maine Street	001-541-11	c.1904- 1905	c.1906, 1920s, 1950	Eligible (Criterion A)
B4822	134 S. Maine Street	001-538-03	c.1923	Post-1950s	Not Eligible
B4823	136 & 138 S. Maine Street	001-538-04	c.1923	c.1975	Not Eligible
B4807	145 S. Maine Street	001-541-28	c.1907	c.1960s-	Not Eligible

SHPO Number	Address	APN	Year Built	Alteration Date	NRHP Eligibility
				1970s	
B4824	148 & 156 S. Maine Street	001-538-05	c.1944	n/a	Not Eligible
B4805	149 & 153 S. Maine Street	001-541-28	c.1904/ c.1945	c.1960s- 1970s	Not Eligible
B4825	158 S. Maine Street	001-538-06	1904	Unknown	Not Eligible
B822	165 S. Maine Street	001-541-28	c.1904	1906-1908, 1910s, 1950s, 1970s	Not Eligible
B4826	178 S. Maine Street	001-538-07	1907	Unknown	Not Eligible
B821 B4827	198 S. Maine Street	001-538-13	1986	n/a	Not Eligible
B837 B4828	200 S. Maine Street	001-524-04	1982	n/a	Not Eligible
B838 B4808	201-257 S. Maine Street	001-551-03	1915	Unknown	Eligible (Criterion C)
B4829	250 S. Maine Street	001-524-06	c.1909	Unknown	Not Eligible
B4830	260 S. Maine Street	001-524-07	c.1940	Post-1950	Not Eligible
B4809	263 S. Maine Street	001-551-02	1920	Unknown	Eligible (Criterion C)
B4831	270 S. Maine Street	001-524-08	1921	Unknown	Not Eligible
B4832	290 S. Maine Street	001-524-09	1948	n/a	Eligible (Criterion C)
B4810	295 S. Maine Street	001-551-01	1950	n/a	Not Eligible
B4811	301 S. Maine Street	001-554-02	1948	Unknown	Not Eligible
B4833	310 S. Maine Street	001-528-02	1958	1981	Not Eligible
B4834	360 S. Maine Street	001-528-04	1941	Unknown	Eligible

SHPO Number	Address	APN	Year Built	Alteration Date	NRHP Eligibility
					(Criterion C)
B4812	365 & 395 S. Maine Street	001-554-01	1961	1971	Not Eligible
B4835	380 S. Maine Street	001-528-07	1942	n/a	Eligible (Criterion C)

In 2002, Monique Kimball, M.A. and Teri H. Morley, B.A. conducted the second survey of downtown Fallon, which included a five-block segment of Center Street (between Carson Street and W. Park Street) and a one-block segment of S. East Street (between Center Street and Court Street). The survey report, titled *Architectural Survey for the City of Fallon, Center Street Project, Phase 2A*, describes the proposed project as the second phase of NDOT's Transportation Enhancement Project, which included street improvements and enhancements to sidewalks, curb and gutters, sidewalk benches, light fixtures, and trash receptacles. The inventory documented 39 architectural resources, of which 28 were historic (built prior to 1952). The following resources were re-surveyed by NVSHPO during the current survey, and the table below lists their determinations of eligibility according to the 2002 inventory:

SHPO Number	Address	APN	Year Built	NRHP Eligibility
B817	102 W. Center Street	001-537-03	1912	Not Eligible
B819	70, 80, and 90 W. Center Street	001-538-11	1925	Eligible (Criterion C)
B818	66 W. Center Street	001-538-11	1925	Not Eligible
B820	60 W. Center Street	001-538-10	c.1915	Eligible (Criterion C)
B821 B4827	198 S. Maine Street	001-538-13	1986	Not Eligible
B822	165 S. Maine Street	001-541-28	1904	Not Eligible
B823 9901106	105 & 125 E. Center Street	001-544-06	1907	Not Eligible; Listed in State Register
B824	135, 137, & 139 E. Center Street	001-544-05	1935	Not Eligible
B825	159 E. Center Street	001-544-04	c.1925	Not Eligible

SHPO Number	Address	APN	Year Built	NRHP Eligibility
B826	169 E. Center Street	001-544-04	c.1940	Not Eligible
B827	195 E. Center Street	001-544-03	1912	Not Eligible
B833	125 W. Center Street	001-523-03	1957	Not Eligible
B834	95 W. Center Street	001-524-16	c.1923	Not Eligible
B835	93 W. Center Street	001-524-02	1957	Not Eligible
B836	55 & 75 W. Center Street	001-524-14	c.1930	Not Eligible
B837 B4828	200 S. Maine Street	001-524-04	1982	Not Eligible
B838 B4808	201-257 S. Maine Street	001-551-03	1915	Eligible (Criteria A, C)
B839	24 E. Center Street	001-551-08	c.1920	Not Eligible
B841	100 E. Center Street	001-552-01	1923	Not Eligible
B842	190 E. Center Street	001-552-02	1925	Not Eligible

In 2006 Monique Kimball, M.A. and Teri H. Morley, B.A. conducted a third survey of downtown Fallon for Phase IV of NDOT's Transportation Enhancement Project, which proposed improvements to a 15-block corridor of South Maine Street just north of the intersection with Stillwater Street to just south of the intersection with Tolas Place. The report, titled *Architectural Survey for the City of Fallon, South Maine Street Project, Phase IV*, identified 71 architectural resources. Only one of these resources was also recorded for the current project, and the table below lists its determination of eligibility according to the 2006 inventory:

SHPO Number	Address	APN	Year Built	NRHP Eligibility
B4835	380 Maine Street	001-528-07	1942	Not Eligible

These prior surveys did not take into account Fallon's mid-century commercial development and only minimally addressed alterations to resources as a result of the 1954 earthquake, as these were not of sufficient age to be considered historic at the time. Moreover, with the exception of the 2001 survey which determined that downtown Fallon's commercial district did not retain sufficient integrity for

NRHP-listing, previous researchers did not consider a potential historic district in their respective project areas, as their primary objective was to determine whether proposed streetscape improvements would result in an adverse effect to properties deemed individually eligible for listing in the NRHP.

In addition to previous surveys and secondary-source material, the following resources were consulted in researching Fallon's commercial development and evaluating individual resources:

- Churchill County Museum & Archives
- Nevada Historical Society
- University of Nevada, Reno Special Collections
- Churchill County Assessor's Office
- Churchill County Recorder (Building Permits)

Before commencing fieldwork, NVSHPO determined survey boundaries for the project, which include the following corridors:

- Maine Street, from U.S. 50/Williams Avenue south to Stillwater Avenue (36 properties)
- Center Street, from S. Carson Street east to Broadway (17 properties)
- Carson Street, from 1st Street south to Richards Street (3 properties)
- Nevada Street, from U.S. 50/Williams Avenue south to Richards Street (6 properties)
- U.S. 50/Williams Avenue, from Carson Street east to Nevada Street (3 properties).

A total of 65 buildings and two accessory structures were surveyed on October 7, 2015 by NVSHPO employees ZoAnn Campana, Jim Bertolini, and Elyse Jolly. Photographs and GIS data were captured in the field. In the previous surveys, some individual buildings were grouped together and considered a single resource, particularly commercial blocks with party walls. However, the multiple storefronts contained within these grouped resources often evolved independently of one another, and therefore display varying degrees of integrity. For this reason, our team separated a number of these previously grouped storefronts into individual resources and re-evaluated the buildings with an eye for mid-century modifications within the updated period of significance. ZoAnn Campana completed Architectural Resource Assessment (ARA) forms for all of the surveyed properties, entered GIS data for each resource into the Nevada Cultural Resource Information System (NVCRIS), and completed an evaluation of the survey area as a potential national historic district.



Figure 1: Partial View of Maine Street, October 2015

Historic Context: Twentieth Century Commercial Development in Downtown Fallon, Nevada

"Jimtown" (1894-1900)

In 1894, James W. Richards opened a store at a crossroads in the Lahontan Valley with the intent of supplying local ranchers and Native Americans with general merchandise. The general store offered a convenient, well-located alternative to previously established stores located in the adjacent communities of Stillwater, St. Clair, Wadsworth, and Dayton. In fact, Jimtown was located at the present-day intersection of Maine Street and Williams Avenue-U.S. 50 in downtown Fallon. As Jimtown's success grew, the first United States Post Office in the Lahontan Valley was founded in an outbuilding on Michael Fallon's ranch, which comprised much of the land surrounding Jimtown, on July 24, 1896. The post office was located near the present-day intersection of Ada Street and Williams Avenue-U.S. 50 in Fallon, three blocks west of Jimtown. Predicting that additional merchants would be attracted to the fledgling commercial area, Michael Fallon subdivided his land surrounding the post office, and the new townsite was named "Fallon."¹

Early Downtown Fallon (1900-1941)

In 1901, Nevada State Senator Warren W. Williams purchased Michael Fallon's ranch, as well as the subdivided town lots surrounding the post office. Using paced distances and compass bearings, Senator

¹ Hutchins, J. and M.E. Kimball. *An Architectural Survey of the Fallon Commercial District* (2001), 6.

Williams platted the earliest area of Fallon (approximately corresponding to the Williams Tract) in an orthogonal plan and named the north-south main street after his home state of Maine.²

On June 17, 1902, the Newlands Reclamation Act passed, leading the way for the construction of the Derby Dam, which was chosen as the first reclamation project in the United States. The Newlands Project, as it was known, entailed the erection of a diversion dam on the Truckee River, which would provide water to irrigate the Lahontan Valley and "reclaim" the desert. This undertaking was instrumental in the commercial and agricultural development of Fallon.³

While the Truckee-Carson irrigation project was underway, the Churchill County seat was moved from Stillwater to Fallon on March 5, 1903, thanks to legislation sponsored by Senator Williams. Williams donated land just north of Fallon's coalescing business district for the new county courthouse, which was constructed in the Neo-Classical style in 1903. Upon its completion, Fallon's population had healthily increased to around 200 residents.⁴

Engineers and surveyors of the U.S. Reclamation Service involved with the Newlands Project formally platted the town site of Fallon in 1904, and the number of businesses in Fallon rapidly grew the same year. At the beginning of 1904, the town featured six establishments: Richards' general merchandise store, the Hotel Fallon, a restaurant, two saloons, and the newly-constructed courthouse. By the end of the year, the number of businesses more than quadrupled with the addition of six restaurants, five saloons, two hotels, four boarding houses, and a bevy of other commercial establishments. Fallon's draw as a burgeoning commercial center in 1904 is further demonstrated by the relocation of I.H. Kent's office building from Stillwater to Fallon. The building, formerly housing Kent's lumber company, was moved using skids and mules, and it was reborn as a general merchandise store with a newly constructed façade of locally quarried stone.⁵ I.H. Kent continued to be a cornerstone of downtown Fallon throughout the twentieth century.

In early 1905, the second phase of the Newlands Project was completed, which linked together the Truckee River and Carson River by constructing the Truckee Canal. The canal enabled the Lahontan Valley to receive additional water from the Carson River, which maintained the area's agriculture boom. Homesteaders were drawn to the valley, and 108 new farms and ranches were established in 1906 alone. This boom additionally impacted the town of Fallon, whose population nearly doubled between 1903 and 1906 to 398.⁶

According to Mackendon, Fallon's commercial district in 1906 ran along Maine Street between Williams Avenue and Center Street and included a lively collection of general stores, saloons, hotels, restaurants, and drug stores, as well as a butcher, confectionary, bakery, bank, saddle shop, and furniture store. J.W.

² Hutchins and Kimball, 6.

³ Ibid, 8.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Hutchins and Kimball, 8-9.

Murdock established Fallon's first automobile dealership in 1906, and the same year, Fallon saw the founding of the Chamber of Commerce, as well as a multitude of civic organizations.⁷

Fallon's regional importance was cemented when, in 1907, the Central Pacific Railroad completed construction of a spur line from Hazen to Fallon, eliminating the need to transport freight from Hazen and Wadsworth by wagon. The spur line linked the community to a nationwide distribution network that allowed local farms to ship their products around the county. The same year, the number of area farms and ranches grew to 300.⁸

On December 18, 1908, citizens voted to incorporate the City of Fallon. Around the same time, the city experienced a wave of disasters. In 1907, a flood devastated the area's buildings, roads, and canals. In 1908, a fire in the commercial district razed buildings on the corner of Maine and Center Streets, inspiring the creation of the town's first fire brigade. The same year, a legal filing on behalf of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe challenged the diversion of Truckee River waters, sparking Reclamation-related controversy that has continued into the 21st century. In 1910, a second fire ravaged wooden buildings along the west side of Maine Street, which set off a growing trend in downtown masonry construction.⁹

In 1911, the latest phase of the Newlands Project, construction of the Lahontan Dam and an accompanying electric power plant on the Carson River, was underway. Completion of the power plant in 1912 resulted in the electrification of Fallon, which was shortly followed by the introduction of a sewage disposal system.¹⁰ Fallon was emerging as a modern town in the agricultural hub of Nevada. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation completed the Lahontan Dam in 1914, which signaled full implementation of the Newlands Project. Homesteading in the Lahontan Valley continued to grow, as additional tracts of land were made available to the public.¹¹

The United States government completed the Lincoln Highway in 1915, which ran from New York to San Francisco and traveled directly through Fallon's commercial district. Completion of the highway resulted in increased automobile traffic through Fallon and therefore a proliferation of automobile- and travel-related businesses, including hotels, repair garages, and service stations. Merchants and innkeepers experienced revenue growth as a direct result of the highway.¹²

World War I spurred a demand for agricultural products, metals, and oil, hastening Fallon's already-booming economy between 1916 and 1918. Mining resumed in the area, and the nearby mining towns of Fairview and Wonder demanded Fallon's agricultural products. Fallon annexed three new business blocks to its commercial district in 1916, further illustrating the economic boon of the war in Europe,

⁷ Mackendon, 22.

⁸ Hutchins and Kimball, 10.

⁹ Ibid, 10-11.

¹⁰ Ibid, 11.

¹¹ Ibid, 12.

¹² Hutchins and Kimball, 12-13.

which caused a wave of settlement in the Lahontan Valley in 1916 and 1917. In 1918, various elements of the oil exploration industry arrived in the area, prompting a short-lived boom.¹³ The largest wave of settlement in the Lahontan Valley occurred in 1919 and largely consisted of American WWI veterans, who had been encouraged to settle in the reclaimed desert upon their return from Europe.¹⁴ Fallon-area agriculture continued to grow into the 1920s, at which point production of alfalfa, cantaloupes, dairy products, and poultry reached its peak. Additionally, Fallon's opportune location along the Lincoln Highway prompted local construction companies to become key players in Central Nevada's numerous road building and maintenance projects.¹⁵

As with the rest of the nation, Fallon's economy slowed as a result of the Great Depression. Despite the economic slump, agriculture remained the area's major industry throughout the Depression, and downtown Fallon merchants continued to provide their goods and services to nearby farmers and ranchers.¹⁶

Fallon's early growth and development is largely owed to the Newlands Project, which influenced the economy from 1903, when construction commenced on the Truckee Canal, to the 1920s, which saw a sustained agricultural boom. The irrigation of arid lands sparked several waves of settlement to the Fallon area, which was sparsely populated prior to the project. Once established as the area's main industry, agriculture supported the growth and development of downtown Fallon as the Lahontan Valley's primary commercial center and transportation hub. Resources related to this theme include banks, mills, agricultural suppliers, and mercantiles.

Transportation is another major theme that influenced early Fallon's establishment, particularly between 1906 and the 1920s, which encompasses the 1906 establishment of Fallon as a distribution center for nearby boomtowns, the completion of the Lincoln Highway in 1915, and the 1920s-era nationwide enthusiasm for auto travel. The City of Fallon initially developed at a crossroads that continues to be significant today (US 95 and US 50), and this strategic location increased its accessibility within the region, state, and country, which directly contributed to its development as a distribution hub and commercial center. Resources related to this theme include repair garages, parking garages, hotels, service stations, and warehouses.

Mid-Century Downtown Development in Fallon (1942-1965)

The Great Depression affected American farming throughout the 1930s, and the Lahontan Valley, as Nevada's foremost producer of beef, turkeys, chickens, eggs, and melons, was not immune to the slump.¹⁷ Fallon's economic upswing out of the Depression came on the heels of World War II. In 1941, the United States entered the war, initiating the establishment of new military bases throughout the

¹³ Ibid, 13-15.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid, 15.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Hulse, James W. *The Silver State: Nevada's Heritage Reinterpreted* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2004), 321.

country. The Navy commissioned the Naval Auxiliary Air Station (NAAS), located southeast of Fallon, in 1944, which stimulated the local economy by hiring area residents and drawing servicemen into downtown to purchase goods and services. The Navy decommissioned the base in 1946 following the end of the Second World War.¹⁸ According to local historian Bunny Corkill, the decommissioning of the base did little to depress Fallon's economy, as downtown Fallon boomed in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Ms. Corkill recalls 1949 and 1950 as especially prosperous years for the town, as new businesses moved in and buildings were erected.¹⁹ This coincides with the flourishing state of small towns across America in the years after World War II, which had been starved of their young men during wartime and subsequently welcomed back the servicemen who were needed to replace aging tradesmen and merchants.²⁰ Moreover, the U.S. Government removed wartime economic controls from 1945 to 1946, and as a result, businessmen and investors were able to confidently re-enter and reignite the market.²¹ After several years of war-era frugality and the associated postponement of marriage and childbearing, Americans began to consume and reproduce, resulting in massive economic and population growth.²² Nearby Reno experienced sustained economic prosperity during the war years, and into the postwar era, as a result of the booming tourism industry borne of liberal divorce and gambling laws in Nevada.²³ The combination of the "Baby Boom" and Reno's growth as a market for consumer goods leveraged demand for the Lahontan Valley's agricultural products that directly benefitted Fallon. The postwar economy, having lifted the country out of the Great Depression, was in full swing, and downtown Fallon's heyday continued into the 1960s.²⁴

In 1953, the Navy recommissioned the Fallon NAAS as a result of the accelerating Korean conflict and the Cold War with the Soviet Union. Again, the base bolstered Fallon's economy by creating a demand for locally supplied goods and services by military personnel, as well as by employing area residents.²⁵ The Fallon Naval Air Station functioned as an important influence in Fallon's economic development from its establishment in 1942 to the present. The proximity of a military base stimulated Fallon's economy during WWII, as the related influx of personnel demanded local goods and services, and area residents were hired as civilian workers at the air station. In response to the influx of customers, existing

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Personal interview with Bunny Corkill, Churchill County Archives Research Curator, 11/20/2015.

²⁰ Orvell, Miles. *The Death and Life of Main Street: Small Towns in American Memory, Space, and Community* (University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 50.

²¹ Higgs, Robert. *Depression, War, and Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 117.

²² Beauregard, Robert A. *When America Became Suburban* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 33.

²³ Moehring, Eugene P. *Reno, Las Vegas, and the Strip: A Tale of Three Cities* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2014), 8.

²⁴ Editorial, *Lahontan Valley News*, 11/14/2010.

²⁵ Kimball, Monique and Terry Morley. *Architecture Survey for the City of Fallon, South Maine Street Project, Phase IV*. 2002, 23.

downtown businesses remodeled their spaces in an effort to appeal to a changing market of consumers.²⁶

On July 6, 1954, a major earthquake struck Fallon and its environs, ripping deep trenches into area roads and damaging homes and businesses. Aftershocks followed throughout summer and autumn, and unreinforced masonry construction, weakened by the initial quake, began to fail.²⁷ The tremors caused cornices, parapets, pilasters, and entire facades to fall off downtown buildings. According to the 2001 survey report, the following buildings were affected and subsequently altered via repair efforts:

- Woodliff Block (116-126 S. Maine), “shaped parapet replaced with concrete blocks.”
- Fallon Arcade/Churchill County Bank Building (131-143 S. Maine), “castellated parapet removed.”
- 158 S. Maine, “brick wall repaired.”
- I.H. Kent Co. (165 S. Maine), “brick wall repaired.”
- Palludan Block (201-257 S. Maine), “shaped parapet removed.”²⁸

The 1954 earthquake is a significant event when considering Fallon's commercial development between 1954 and 1958. The devastating string of tremors, which occurred during a period of economic prosperity (both nationwide and locally), damaged a number of downtown buildings at a time when business owners were in a position to repair their properties quickly. In some cases, business owners saw the damage as an opportunity to modernize a building's appearance. Typical modernization efforts included installing slipcovers over the existing façade, replacing existing wood windows, and adding awnings over entrances. These projects utilized contemporary materials, including aluminum siding, steel window frames, plate glass, asbestos tiles, and concrete brick. On the other hand, some property owners simply repaired the immediate damage wreaked by the tremor. Repair efforts generally consisted of masonry re-pointing, the replacement of upper-story brick with concrete block, the removal of damaged parapets and chimneys, and the replacement of wood windows with steel renditions. Fallon's combination of early- and mid-20th century architectural fabric, often found in the same building, is a character-defining feature of its streetscape.

According to historian Miles Orvell, the early 20th-century establishment of chain stores (e.g. J.C. Penney and Woolworth's) along American main streets sparked a nationwide appetite for affordable, mass-produced goods that eventually attracted residents to suburban malls and big-box stores.²⁹ Fallon hosted brand-name stores including J.C. Penney (established in Fallon in 1929), Safeway (1929), and

²⁶ Kimball and Morley, 23-24.

²⁷ "Safeguards, Not Quakes, Cause of Wrecked Walls," *Fallon Eagle* (Fallon, NV), Sep. 8, 1954.

²⁸ Hutchins and Kimball, 15-16.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 51.

Sprouse-Reitz (1949), all of which eventually relocated away from the downtown corridor.³⁰ The postwar economic boom, characterized by a renewed demand for consumer goods and growing families, directly contributed to the accelerated development of outlying, urban-adjacent areas and, conversely, to the decentralization of downtowns. Rising incomes and mass production methods made widespread automobile ownership possible, which helped to facilitate this new pattern of development, as a growing network of roads and highways provided accessibility to land beyond the reach of railroad and streetcar nodes. The housing market further contributed to urban decline, as low-cost mortgages and inexpensive, mass-produced homes stimulated the construction of suburban housing tracts.³¹ By 1960, more Americans resided in suburbs than in urban or rural areas.³² Low-density commercial development emerged alongside the residential sprawl, spurred by increased investment capital and the low-risk nature of developing open spaces.³³

By the 1960s, commerce began to transition from the Maine Street corridor to new strip malls and shopping centers that were emerging along Williams Avenue west of Maine Street. Shoppers were attracted to these developing hubs of commerce by their modern appearance and abundance of parking, as well as the draw of nationwide chain stores over locally owned businesses.³⁴ As with main streets across the United States, downtown Fallon began a slow decline as a result. Signaling the importance of the Maine Street corridor in the 1950s, the City of Fallon installed the first parking meters along the corridor in 1953. The meters remained until 1979, when the city removed them, likely due to diminished patronage of downtown businesses as a result of suburban commercial development.³⁵ Ms. Corkill remembers the Cherokee Drive-In and the Roadside Inn as two of suburban Fallon's earliest establishments, and newspaper advertisements and city directories confirm her recollection: the Cherokee appears in the Churchill County Telephone and Telegraph System's 1958 phone book, and the Roadside Inn is advertised in local newspapers as early as 1958. In fact, phone books best demonstrate the slow, sprawling nature of Fallon's businesses between 1950 and 1980. In 1955, there were seven restaurants located within the downtown Fallon survey area; by 1970, the number decreased to four. Concurrently, only four restaurants existed along the sprawling Williams Avenue/U.S. 50 corridor in 1955, and by 1970, there were 10.

Some downtown businesses refreshed their facades in an effort to attract consumers who were otherwise drawn to the new, sprawling shopping centers on the outskirts of town. From the 1930s to the 1970s, businesses throughout the nation updated their storefronts as a strategy to draw customers

³⁰ "East Side of Maine Street from Williams to Stillwater Avenue." *Maine Street Research Materials* file, Churchill County Museum and Archives.

³¹ Beauregard, 32-33.

³² Cohen, Lizabeth. *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 123.

³³ Beauregard, 88-89.

³⁴ Kimball and Morley, 20.

³⁵ "Miscellaneous Facts about Maine Street." *Maine Street Research Materials* file, Churchill County Museum and Archives.

back to Main Street, often resulting in "a stylistic jumble of incompatible storefronts".³⁶ Modernization efforts during this time often utilized contemporary materials, including "plate glass, steel, aluminum, and glass blocks."³⁷ An unknown newspaper clipping from 1948, titled "Fallon Buildings Get 'Face-Lifting'", describes the Williams Estate Building's newly updated storefront.³⁸ The old bank building at 131-143 S. Maine experienced a 1950s redesign that included the replacement of original upper-story wood windows with multi-light metal windows and the installation of modern commercial display windows and recessed entries along the lower story.³⁹ Additionally, the I.H. Kent Company at 165 S. Maine Street covered its stone lower walls with decorative tiles in 1950, in addition to cladding the upper walls with metal panels and attaching a mid-century modern zig-zag awning.⁴⁰ These changes resulted in the appearance of a thoroughly modern supermarket by 1950s standards. The Kolhoss Building expanded in 1954, most likely an earthquake-related opportunity for revitalization.⁴¹ In 1957, Safeway constructed a new store on South Maine Street.⁴² Mid-century Fallon also sought to modernize its commercial district by razing existing buildings to make way for new development. In 1962, developers demolished the Tarzyn Building, located opposite the post office, to make way for the new Security National Bank,⁴³ and in 1964, the owners of the Union 76 razed the Federated Store so that the service station could expand.⁴⁴

The postwar-era phenomenon of suburbanization signaled the slow decline of Fallon's historic commercial corridor. The associated establishment of ultra-modern strip malls and shopping centers along Williams Avenue (U.S. 95) west of Maine Street drew customers away from the downtown corridor, contributing to economic disinvestment in the area. As a result, some local business owners refreshed their storefronts with mid-century design elements and materials.

Property Types and Historic Alterations

In terms of property types, one-part commercial blocks are the most prevalent in downtown Fallon, comprising 35 of the surveyed resources. Two-part commercial blocks are also common, encompassing 11 resources within the survey area. Four resources are Modern Movement expressions of the

³⁶ Orvell, 59.

³⁷ Ibid, 101.

³⁸ "Fallon Buildings Get 'Face-Lifting.'" Unknown publication, *Fallon Businesses Maine Street* file, Churchill County Museum and Archives.

³⁹ "Historic Walking Tour of Maine Street, Fallon, Nevada."

⁴⁰ Brochure, "Historic Walking Tour of Maine Street, Fallon, Nevada," *Miscellaneous Maine Street* file, Churchill County Museum and Archives.

⁴¹ "Kolhoss to Expand," *Fallon Eagle* (Fallon, NV), Nov. 27, 1954.

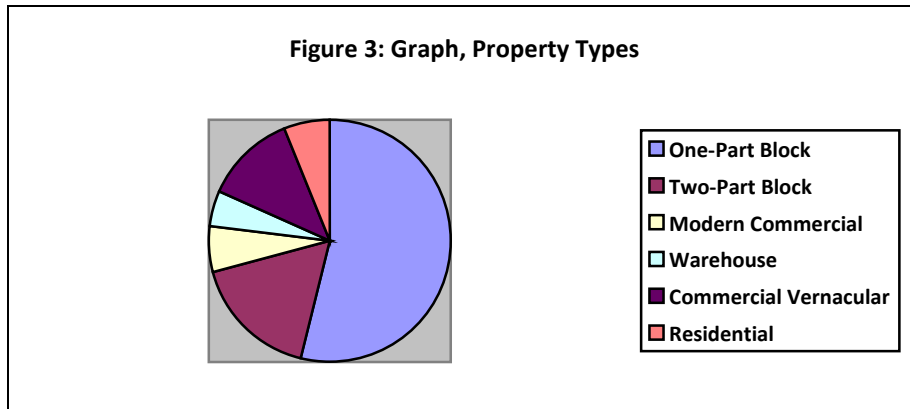
⁴² Advertisement, *Fallon Eagle-Standard* (Fallon, NV), Dec. 5, 1958.

⁴³ "12/7/1962", Notecard, *Fallon Businesses Maine Street* file, Churchill County Museum and Archives,.

⁴⁴ "Old Landmark to be Torn Down," *Fallon Eagle* (Fallon, NV), Jun. 26, 1964.

Commercial building type, including Art Deco, Mid-Century Modern, and Contemporary styles. There are three warehouses, eight vernacular commercial buildings, and four residences.

Property uses may be split into three categories: commercial (59 properties), residential (5 properties), and religious (1 property). Eighteen of the properties were unoccupied at the time of the survey, resulting in a 27.7% vacancy rate for the area. These vacancies, as well as occupancies, are evenly distributed throughout the commercial corridor and do not appear to correlate to a particular locale.



One-Part Commercial Block

The one-part commercial block property type emerged in the late 19th and early 20th century and is characterized by simple, street-level massing and prominent display windows. One-part blocks with false-fronts are common building types in towns throughout the American West.⁴⁵ This is the most common property type in downtown Fallon, comprising 54% of surveyed properties within the commercial corridor.

Two-Part Commercial Block

Another common building type in Fallon is the two-part commercial block. Also featuring simple rectangular massing, the two-part block is generally two-to-four stories in height and divided into two separate spaces: a street-level, commercial-use public zone, and an upper-story, residential or commercial-use private zone. Two-part blocks, like their single-part counterparts, are characterized by large display windows along the first story. 17% of surveyed properties are of this type.

Modern Commercial

Within the proposed district, there are four Modern Commercial buildings, exemplifying the Art Deco, Contemporary, and other Mid-Century Modern architectural typology. These four examples are of buildings constructed during the mid-twentieth century in downtown Fallon, and are distinguished from early-twentieth century buildings that received modifications in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

⁴⁵ "Commercial, Public, and Industrial Building Types," *Utah Division of State History*, Jul. 8, 2015, <https://heritage.utah.gov/history/commercial-public-industrial-building-types>.

Warehouse

Off the main corridor of Maine Street, there are three buildings that are examples of the warehouse property type, primarily used for large-scale storage, sometimes for stores and shops along Maine or Center Streets. These buildings are of either masonry or steel and frame construction. However, the two early-twentieth century examples have been recently altered and possess new corrugated steel exteriors. None of the three examples are eligible or contributing due to their age or loss of integrity.

Commercial Vernacular

Commercial Vernacular buildings display no apparent style or type. Many are of new construction, including corrugated steel buildings over steel frames, or include stucco finishes. This resource type comprises 12% of the surveyed resources, most of which are ineligible and non-contributing to the district due to age or loss of integrity.

Residential

The surveyed area did contain a small number of residential properties constructed adjacent to the downtown corridor, all along Nevada Street. This includes three Folk Victorian residences along Nevada Street and a masonry structure believed to be a garage in the 200-block of Nevada Street. These resources constitute what appears to be a rare example of working class housing from the earliest years of Fallon's development.

Mid-Century Modifications

A number of buildings in downtown Fallon experienced exterior alterations from the 1950s to the 1970s. In some cases, these renovations sought to update the building's appearance and attract customers back from emerging strip malls and shopping centers. This is illustrated in the widespread use of "slipcovers" in downtown Fallon, which obscure the original appearance of exterior walls by re-cladding them with modern materials such as aluminum or asbestos siding, as well as concrete block and cultured stone veneer. During this time, awnings were updated or added, and original wood windows were replaced with new, steel-framed plate glass. Resources that experienced such developments are related to the theme of suburbanization and the decentralization of downtown Fallon's commercial district.



Figure 2: The I.H. Kent Store is an example of multiple Mid-Century modifications related to modernization and earthquake damage repair, October 2015.

Other resources were altered in order to repair damage inflicted by the 1954 earthquake. Before the tremor, historic photographs illustrate a streetscape of decorative brick buildings with ornate, textured parapets and façades. The buildings are individually unique, yet they form a cohesive aesthetic that is characteristic of early 20th century downtowns. Because the majority of earthquake-related damage resulted in the structural failure of parapets and ornamental façades, buildings were repaired by using concrete block to rebuild parapets and patch walls, and slipcovers were used to mask exterior damage. Damaged wood windows were replaced with new, steel-framed plate glass. Earthquake repairs were largely undertaken as a utilitarian endeavor, and as a result, the storefronts of downtown Fallon now appear much more uniform than they did before 1954, displaying smooth, flat parapets and simple, unadorned façades.

Results

Of the 65 resources located within the survey area, 39 were determined to be contributing to a potential historic district, and 26 were determined to be non-contributing. Because 60 percent of surveyed properties were deemed to be contributing, the area retains sufficient integrity to support the nomination of downtown Fallon's commercial corridor as a historic district to the NRHP. Contributing and non-contributing resources are well distributed throughout the survey area, suggesting that potential historic district boundaries should mirror those of the 2015 survey area.

Of the contributing resources, 13 were found to be individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Eligible resources are also well distributed throughout the survey area, suggesting that no single portion of the commercial corridor is better preserved than another. The following table illustrates the 2015 survey's individual NRHP-eligibility recommendations and supplies previous survey recommendations for comparison:

SHPO Number	Address	APN	Year Built	NRHP Eligibility Previous Surveys	NRHP Eligibility 2015 Survey
B4793	35 S. Maine Street	001-541-23	1926	Not Eligible	Eligible (Criterion A)
B822	165 S. Maine Street	001-541-28	1904	Not Eligible	Eligible (Criteria A, C)
B4808	201-255 S. Maine Street	001-551-03	1920	Eligible (Criteria A, C)	Eligible (Criterion A)
B4809	263 S. Maine Street	001-551-02	1920	Eligible (Criterion C)	Eligible (Criterion A)
B4810	295 S. Maine Street	001-551-01	1950	Not Eligible	Eligible (Criteria A, C)
B4811	301 S. Maine Street	001-554-02	1948	Not Eligible	Eligible (Criterion C)
B841	100 E. Center Street	001-552-01	1923	Not Eligible	Eligible (Criteria A, C)
B823	105 E. Center Street	001-544-06	1907	Not Eligible	Eligible (Criteria A, C)
B834	95 W. Center Street	001-524-16	1930	Not Eligible	Eligible (Criterion A)
B833	125 W. Center Street	001-523-03	1963	Not Eligible	Eligible (Criterion A)
B14113	126-136 E. Center Street	001-552-01	1923	N/A (not surveyed)	Eligible (Criterion A)
B14115	115 S. Nevada Street	001-544-07	1930	N/A (not surveyed)	Eligible (Criterion C)
B14122	42 E. Williams Avenue	001-541-01	1928	N/A (not surveyed)	Eligible (Criterion A)

Recommendations

At this time, it is recommended that a nomination be pursued to list the proposed Downtown Fallon Commercial Corridor Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places under the historic themes of transportation, commerce, and agriculture, particularly in regard to Fallon's mid-century development. Fallon is significant locally, as well as statewide, as an urban center of commerce in the heart of Nevada's agricultural region.

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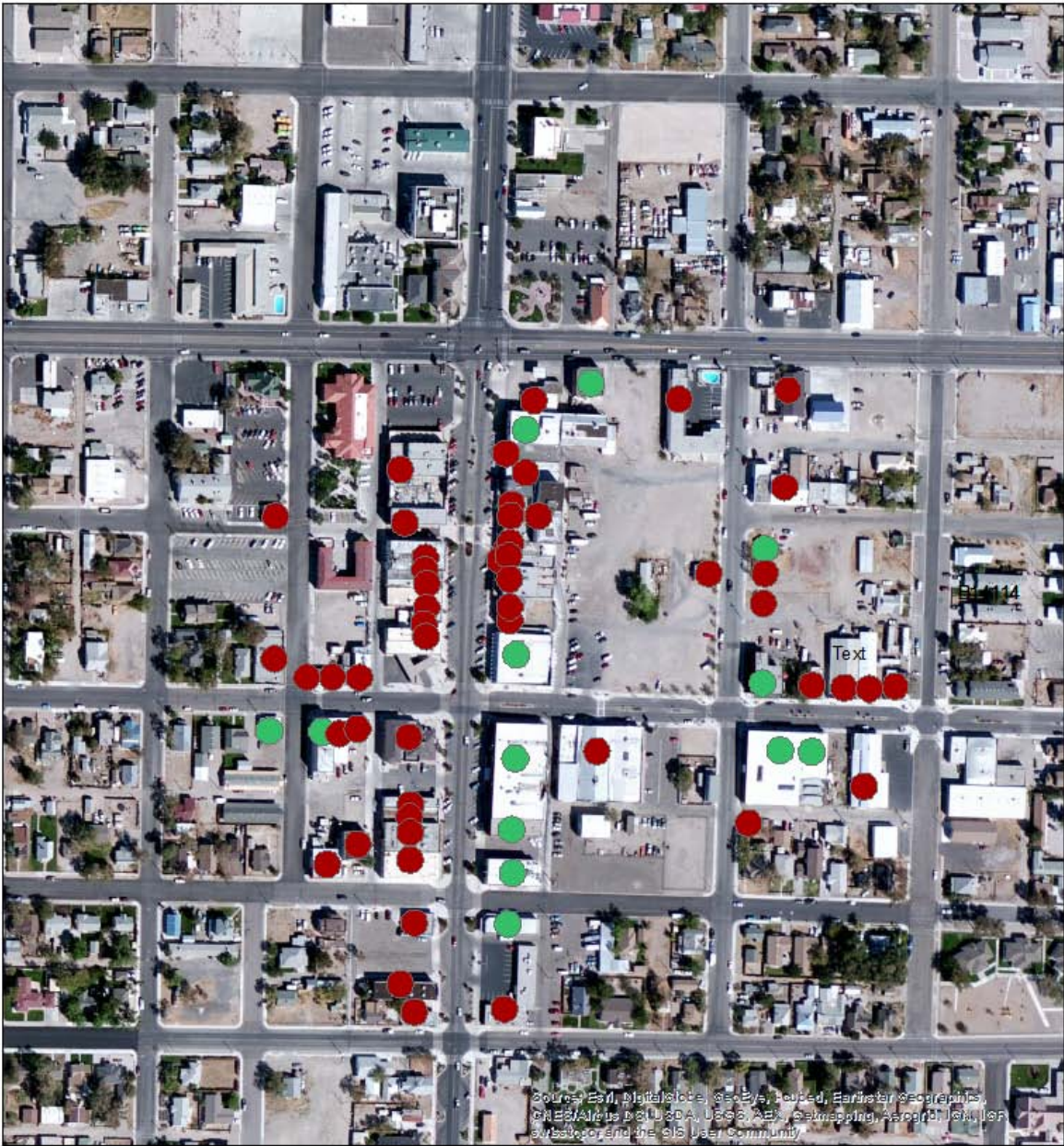
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Appendix A – Survey Results and Maps

Fallon Downtown Commercial District - NRHP Status				
Eligible - Eligible for individual listing in the National Register				
Contributing - Not individually eligible, but would contribute to a historic district				
Not eligible - Not individually eligible, does not contribute to a historic district				
Resource Number	Address #	Street	Date Built	NRHP Status
B839	24	East Center Street	1930	Ineligible
B841	100	East Center Street	1923	Eligible
B823	105	East Center Street	1907	Eligible
B825	159	East Center Street	1925	Ineligible
B826	169	East Center Street	2007	Ineligible
B842	190	East Center Street	1923	Ineligible
B827	195	East Center Street	1920	Ineligible
B14113	126-136	East Center Street	1923	Eligible
B824	135-147	East Center Street	1935	Ineligible
B14122	42	East Williams Avenue	1928	Eligible
B14123	70	East Williams Avenue	1960	Ineligible
B14124	128	East Williams Avenue	1973	Ineligible
B14112	98	South Carson Street	1974	Ineligible
B822	165	South Main Street	1904	Eligible
B4792	1	South Maine Street	1957	Contributing
B4793	35	South Maine Street	1926	Eligible
B4794	45	South Maine Street	1926	Contributing
B4795	55	South Maine Street	1907	Contributing
B4815	70	South Maine Street	1912;1925	Ineligible
B4796	71	South Maine Street	1920	Contributing
B4797	81	South Maine Street	1920	Contributing
B4800	93	South Maine Street	1920	Contributing
B4801	95	South Maine Street	1920	Contributing
B4819	98	South Maine Street	1910	Contributing
B4802	105	South Maine Street	1920	Contributing
B4803	125	South Maine Street	1920	Contributing
B4821	130	South Maine Street	1906	Contributing
B4822	134	South Maine Street	1923	Ineligible
B4823	136	South Maine Street	1926	Ineligible
B4807	145	South Maine Street	1904	Ineligible
B4824	148	South Maine Street	1944	Contributing
B4825	158	South Maine Street	1904	Ineligible

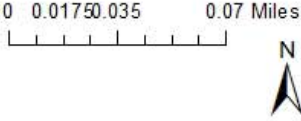
B4826	178	South Maine Street	1907	Ineligible
B837	200	South Maine Street	1982	Ineligible
B4829	250	South Maine Street	1912	Contributing
B4830	260	South Maine Street	1927	Ineligible
B4809	263	South Maine Street	1920	Eligible
B4831	270	South Maine Street	1921	Ineligible
B4832	290	South Maine Street	1948	Ineligible
B4810	295	South Maine Street	1950	Eligible
B4811	301	South Maine Street	1948	Eligible
B4833	310	South Maine Street	1958	Ineligible
B4834	360	South Maine Street	1941	Ineligible
B4835	380	South Maine Street	1942	Contributing
B4804	131-143	South Maine Street	1904	Contributing
B4805	149-153	South Maine Street	1945	Ineligible
B838	201-255	South Maine Street	1920	Eligible
B4812	365-395	South Maine Street	1961	Ineligible
B4798	83-85	South Maine Street	1920	Contributing
B14114	99	South Nevada Street	1975	Ineligible
B14115	115	South Nevada Street	1930	Eligible
B14116	125	South Nevada Street	1930	Contributing
B14117	135	South Nevada Street	1930	Contributing
B14118	140	South Nevada Street	1946	Contributing
B14119	255	South Nevada Street	1932	Ineligible
B820	60	West Center Street	c.1915	Ineligible
B818	66	West Center Street	1925	Contributing
B835	93	West Center Street	1957	Contributing
B834	95	West Center Street	1930 (c. 1923)	Eligible
B817	102	West Center Street	1912	Contributing
B833	125	West Center Street	1963	Eligible
B836	55-75	West Center Street	1935	Contributing
B819	70-90	West Center Street	1925	Contributing
B14120	60	West Richards Street	1941	Contributing
B14121	80	West Richards Street	1949	Contributing



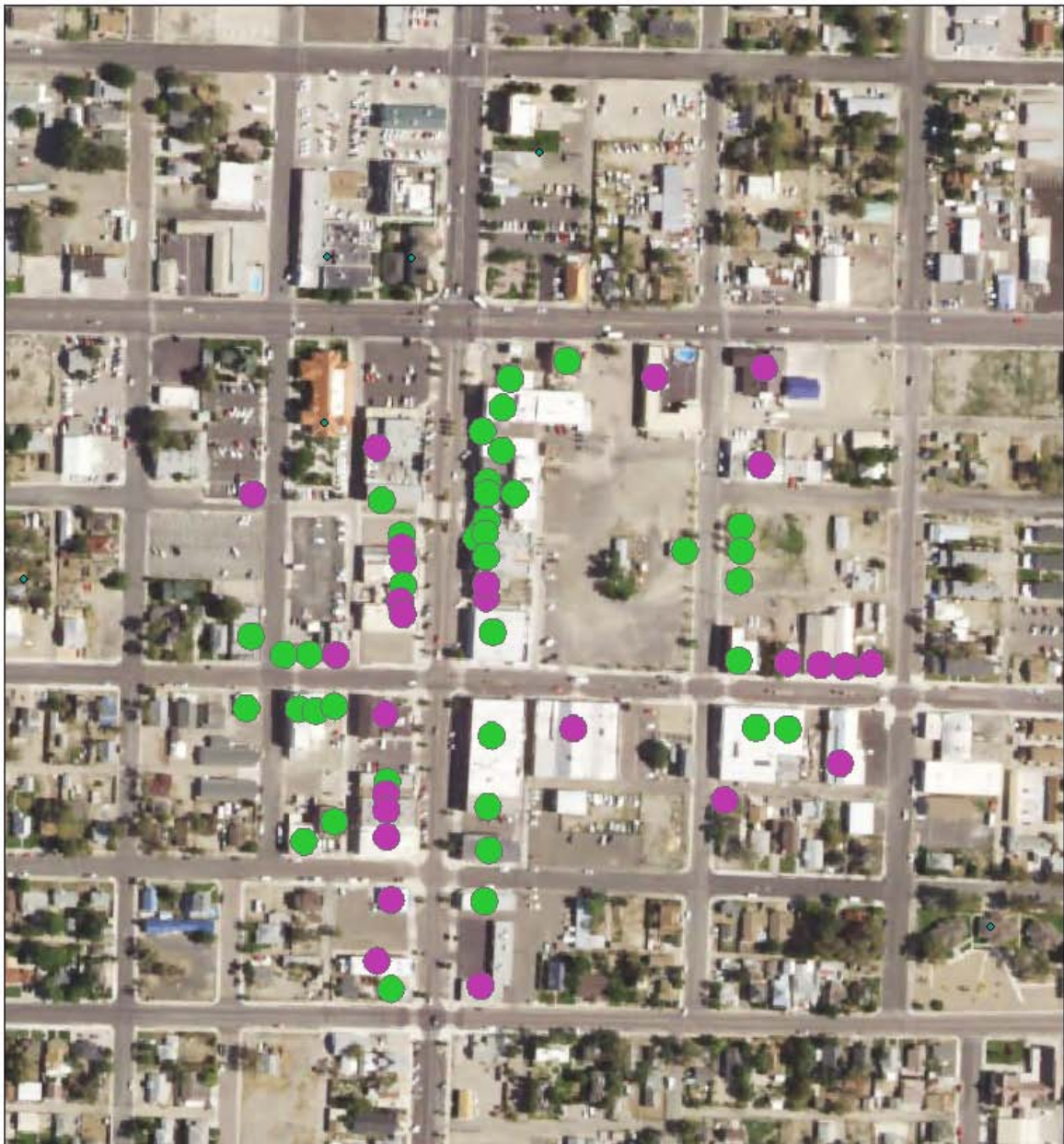
Downtown Fallon Commercial District Survey

Individual NRHP Eligibility for Surveyed Resources

- Eligible
- Ineligible



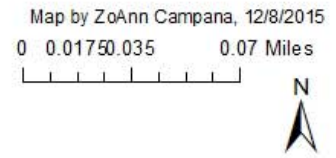
Map by ZoAnn Campana, 12/8/2015

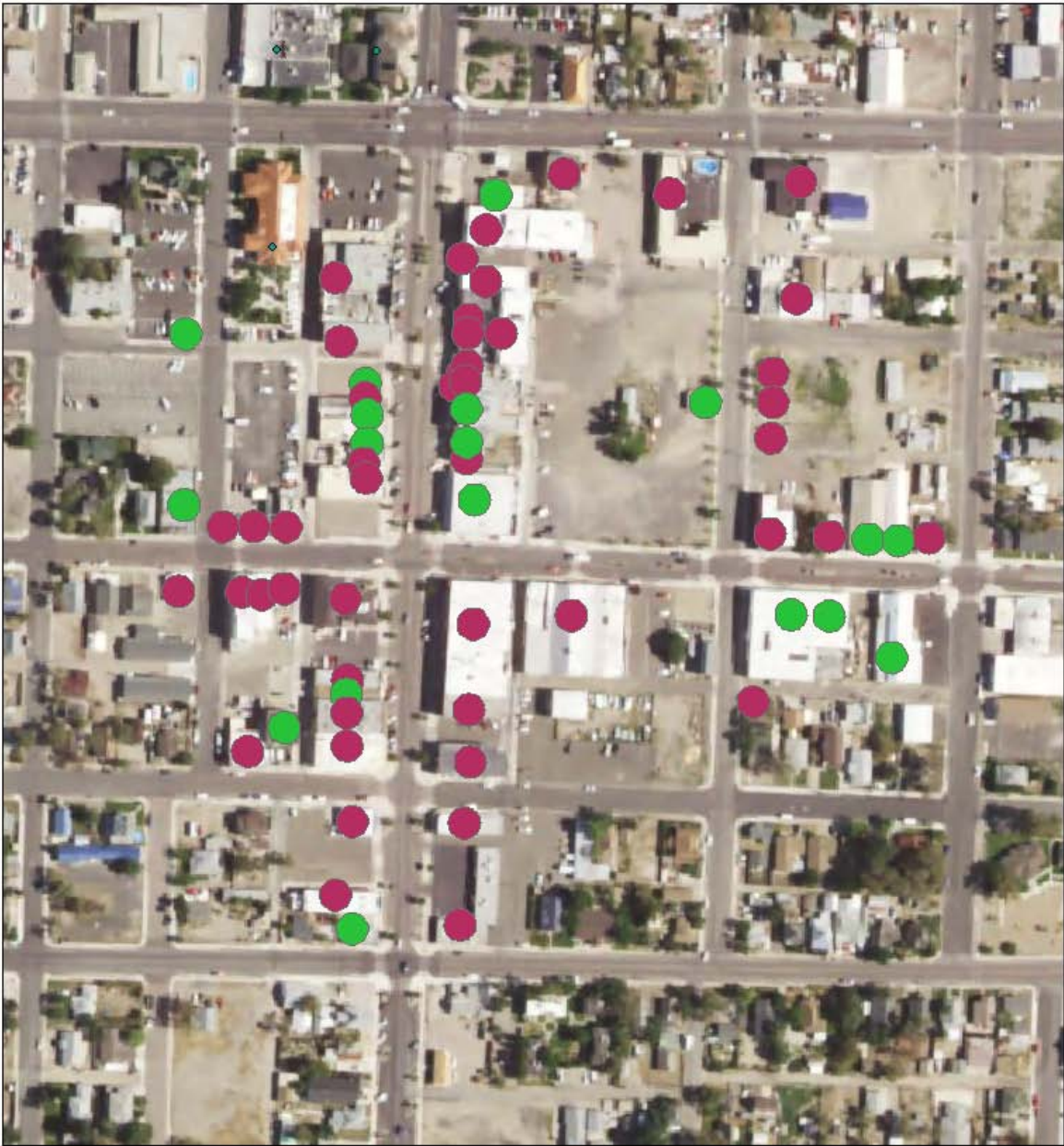


Downtown Fallon Commercial Corridor Survey

District Status for Surveyed Resources

- Contributing
- Not Contributing





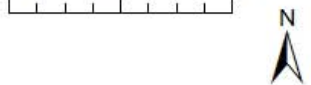
Downtown Fallon Commercial Corridor Survey

Occupancy Status for Surveyed Resources

- Occupied
- Vacant

Map by ZoAnn Campana, 12/8/2015

0 0.015 0.03 0.06 Miles





Downtown Fallon Commercial Corridor Survey

Property Use for Surveyed Resources

- Commercial
- Residential
- Religious

Map by ZoAnn Campana, 12/8/2015

0 0.015 0.03 0.06 Miles



Appendix:
Architectural Resource Assessment (ARA) Forms