WORK SESSION AGENDA

Monday, June 23, 2025 at 1:00 PM

Council Chambers

Mayor
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Mayor Pro Tem
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Councilors
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Page

1. JOBS OF THE WEEK

2. PETS OF THE WEEK

3. AGENDA ITEM

3.1. A REVIEW OF THE STRATEGIES, GOALS, SETTINGS, AND POPULATIONS RECOMMENDED BY THE OPIOID SETTLEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL IN ORDER TO DEVELOP ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS. — 2 - 4

WS #25-033 - Pdf

3.2. PUBLIC INPUT NEEDED: METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN OVERVIEW FOR EL PASEO AND S. SOLANO. — 5 - 175

WS #25-018 - Pdf

Council Work Session Summary

Meeting: Work Session - Jun 23 2025

TITLE: A REVIEW OF THE STRATEGIES, GOALS, SETTINGS, AND POPULATIONS RECOMMENDED BY THE OPIOID SETTLEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL IN ORDER TO DEVELOP ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS.

PURPOSE(S) OF DISCUSSION: ☒ **Inform/Update** ☒ **Direction/Guidance** ☐ **Legislative Development/Policy**

BACKGROUND / KEY ISSUES / CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:

Over a 17-year period, the City of Las Cruces is slated to receive almost $10 million in settlement funds related to nationwide opioid litigation. The use of the funds is governed by the settlement agreement which outlines allowable uses to address the harms of the opioid crisis. In order to make recommendations for expenditures based on local expertise, the City of Las Cruces, together with Doña Ana County, established an Opioid Settlement Advisory Council in the fall of 2023.

In collaboration with Vital Strategies, a global health organization and lead partner in the Bloomberg Overdose Prevention Initiative, and New Mexico State University Crimson Research, a community needs assessment was conducted. Preliminary results were shared with City Council and County Commission in a joint work session May 13, 2024, and the report was finalized in August 2024. The Advisory Council then convened a workshop with first responders and key stakeholders to review the report and to recommend strategies which would best address the needs of the community.

On March 10, 2025, four strategies were presented to a joint work session including the City Council and County Commission. At that meeting, both governing bodies indicated support for: medication assisted treatment, warm handoff programs/recovery services, prevention programs, and data collection/research in order to address the harms of the opioid crisis. The governing bodies also expressed an interest in exploring options for establishing a trust with a portion of the settlement funds.

After the joint work session, the Advisory Council utilized the Opioid Settlement Principles Resource and Indicators (OSPRI) interactive online tool to determine the recommended settings, populations, goals and activities associated with the supported strategies. The purpose of this work session is to review and get guidance on the recommended goals, settings, and populations which best meet the needs of the community. The next step will be to bring forward recommended actions and funding amounts which will be developed in collaboration with Doña Ana County staff, as well as proposals for establishing a trust with a portion of the funds.

SUPPORT INFORMATION:

Attachment Work Session 062325- CLC

COMMITTEE/BOARD REVIEW:

None

Strategies, Goals, Settings, and Populations for the Use of the Opioid Settlement Funds as Recommended by the Opioid Settlement Advisory Council

Selected Allowable Strategies (From 3/10/25 Work Session)

1. Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)
2. Expansion of Warm Hand Off Programs and Recovery Services
3. Enrich prevention strategies
4. Evidence-based data collection, research, and reporting (Internal data collection, evaluation, and reporting to inform response strategy)

Associated Goals

1. Improve access and utilization of Medication for Opioid Use Disorders (MOUD) by engaging people seeking medical/emergency care.
2. Increase access to MOUD in rural communities and Spanish-speaking constituents.
3. Improve early identification of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) by implementing universal screening.
4. Improve access to naloxone for people most vulnerable to overdose.
5. Incorporate harm reduction services into medical/emergency care to people at risk of overdose from OUD or developing OUD.
6. Improve capacity within healthcare systems to identify and treat OUD.
7. Prevent the development of OUD, primarily in youth, by addressing risk factors such as trauma.

Settings and Populations

Below are the recommended **settings** in which programs will be implemented, and the target ***populations*** to receive the services.

- Emergency Departments
  - People who overdose or are experiencing withdrawal symptoms.
- Community

    - People who are justice-involved or likely to be and have OUD and/or substance use disorder (SUD).
    - Older adults at risk of overdose.
    - People at risk of developing OUD or overdosing from OUD, especially youth.
- Residential Treatment Facilities & Primary Care Clinics, as well as Intensive Outpatient and Partial Hospitalization Programs
    - People with current SUD and/or Serious Mental Illness (SMI).
    - All new patients.
- First Responder (EMS/Fire/Police)
    - People who overdose or near overdose but may not go to emergency departments.
    - People in rural communities and/or who are Spanish speaking.
- Obstetrics, Pediatric Clinics, & Labor and Delivery Departments
    - Pregnant/post-partum women, infants and their families.
    - Children at risk for developing OUD.
- Child Welfare
    - Children and Youth involved with delinquency or dependency systems.
    - Children and Youth at risk of developing OUD.
- Schools*
    - Children and Youth

*Recommended by LCPD and LCFD Chiefs

Council Work Session Summary

Meeting: Work Session - Jun 23 2025

TITLE: PUBLIC INPUT NEEDED: METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN OVERVIEW FOR EL PASEO AND S. SOLANO.

PURPOSE(S) OF DISCUSSION: ☒ **Inform/Update** ☐ **Direction/Guidance** ☐ **Legislative Development/Policy**

BACKGROUND / KEY ISSUES / CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:

A Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) is a designated district within a city identified as physically or economically blighted and in need of revitalization. Established under the New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code, MRAs allow municipalities to focus planning efforts and resources to stimulate economic growth, attract private investment, improve infrastructure, and enhance quality of life for residents. Once an area is officially designated as an MRA by the City Council, a redevelopment plan is created to guide improvements and outline key catalytic projects. These plans are developed with community input and often aim to support small businesses, encourage mixed-use development, and promote equitable, long-term growth.

The El Paseo and S. Solano area was identified as a potential MRA in the Metropolitan Redevelopment Designation Report completed by Groundwork Studio in March 2023. Sites Southwest was selected as the planning consultant for the project in February 2024.

Throughout the planning process, there has been a strong emphasis on public engagement to reflect the community's vision—especially from those who live, work, and visit the area regularly. Sites Southwest and the City began meeting with public focus groups in April 2024, followed by a three-day workshop in September 2024, which also included hands-on planning activities with students from Las Montañas High School. Additionally, City departments and staff from across the organization have contributed their time and expertise to help shape this plan.

SUPPORT INFORMATION:

CLC-MRA-Report_6-11-25_sm

PLAN(S):

Elevate Las Cruces

COMMITTEE/BOARD REVIEW:

None

El Paseo and South Solano

MRA PLAN

2025



Prepared for:

CITY OF LAS CRUCES

June 12, 2025

Table of CONTENTS

01 INTRODUCTION.....001

02 COMMUNITY PROFILE.....016

03 MARKET ANALYSIS.....066

04 ILLUSTRATIVE VISION.....086

05 STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS.....094

06 FINANCING AND IMPLEMENTATION.....132

INTRODUCTION



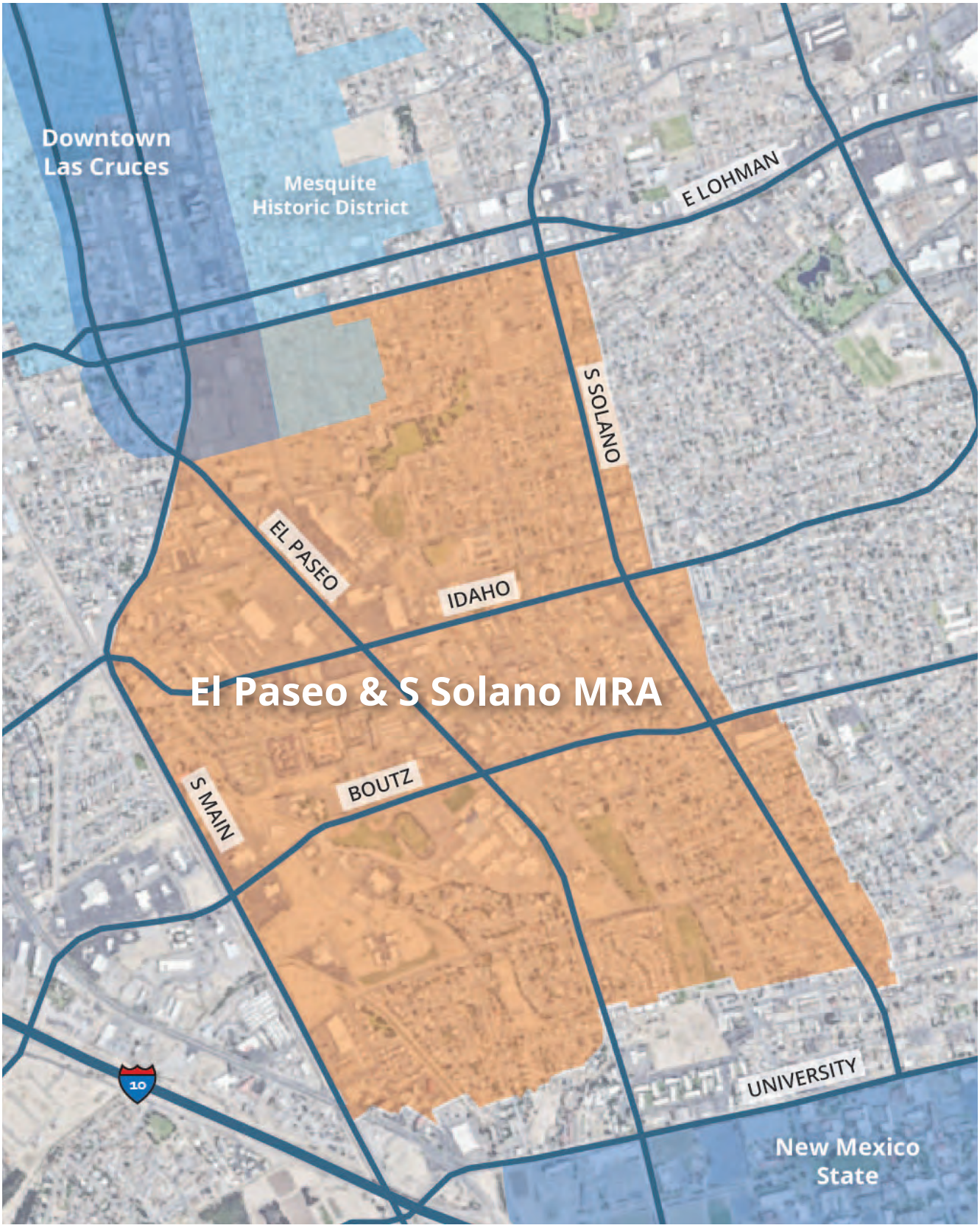
The El Paseo and S Solano Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) Plan represents a pivotal opportunity to transform this section of Las Cruces into a thriving, pedestrian-friendly community with a renewed focus on sustainable development and equitable growth. Our goals extend beyond revitalizing commercial and retail areas; they encompass a holistic approach to urban renewal that prioritizes infrastructure improvement, environmental sustainability, social equity, historic preservation, and public safety and health.

By reimagining both areas as vibrant hubs of economic and community activity, with expanded commercial and retail spaces, enhanced recreational amenities for families, and housing options that address the city's pressing need for additional affordable and workforce housing, we aim to create a model of revitalization that fosters inclusivity, preserves our cultural heritage, and ensures the well-being of all residents.

Through collaborative efforts and innovative strategies with the community, organizational partners, and city staff, we aspire to build not just a neighborhood but return the infill area into a resilient and thriving community that serves as a beacon of progress and opportunity for generations to come.



Boundary of the Study Area



By focusing on these key goals, the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan aims to create a comprehensive plan that addresses the diverse needs of the community while fostering sustainable growth and development.

Plan Goals

Economic Revitalization and Housing

- Transform areas into a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly community.
- Revitalize commercial and retail areas to attract businesses and visitors.
- Introduce new recreational opportunities for families to enhance community engagement.
- Work with City, State, Federal and private partners to develop affordable and workforce housing options, including new projects, revitalization, and hotel conversions.

Infrastructure Improvement

- Enhance infrastructure to support sustainable development and facilitate connectivity and walkability.
- Improve transportation networks to promote accessibility and mobility within the area.

Public Safety and Health

- Implement measures to enhance public safety and create a secure environment.
- Improve access to healthcare services and amenities to support residents' well-being.
- Improve access and options for childcare providers.

Social Equity

- Ensure inclusivity in redevelopment efforts to address social disparities.
- Promote affordable housing options to accommodate diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

Environmental Sustainability

- Prioritize sustainable development practices to minimize environmental impact.
- Implement green initiatives to enhance the area's resilience and reduce carbon footprint.

Historic Preservation

- Preserve cultural heritage and historical landmarks in both MRA areas.
- Integrate historical elements into redevelopment plans to honor the area's heritage.

Planning Framework

The El Paseo and S Solano MRA Plan is not the first planning effort in this part of the city. There are several planning efforts that the City and community have undertaken in recent years that provide critical guidance and recommendations for the plan. These are summarized in the following pages.

Citywide Policy

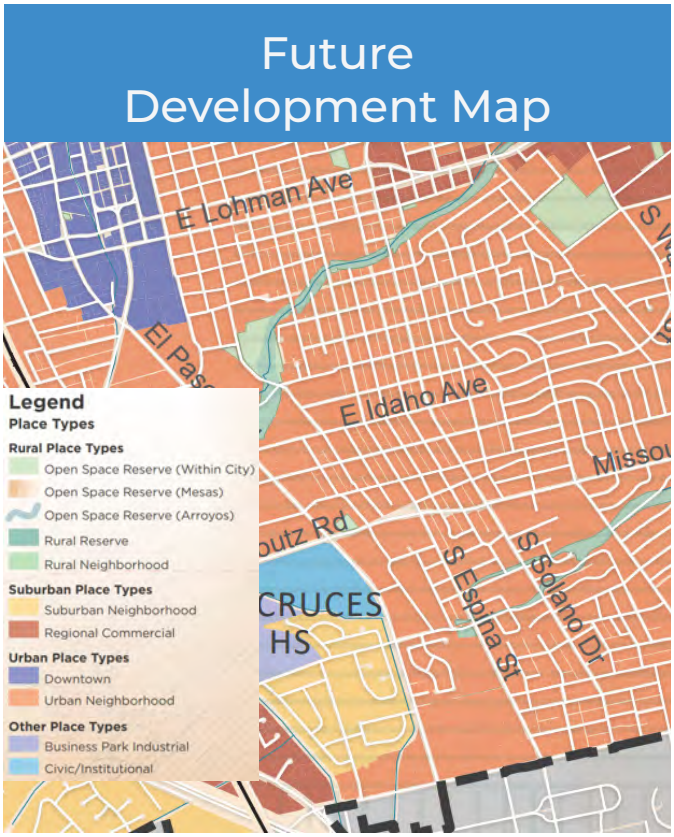
Elevate Las Cruces, 2020

Purpose

This comprehensive plan is Las Cruces's unified policy guide and action plan for enhancing the community's long-term prosperity and happiness by building a city that is environmentally, fiscally, and socially sustainable. It provides a framework for policy and action for the next 25 years. It includes a vision framework, a physical framework, and a policy framework.

Recommendations

- Future Development Program – Elevate Las Cruces recommends a place-based approach to future development. This framework includes Place Classifications, Place Types, and Areas of Special Consideration.
- Future Development Map – The MRA area is primarily identified as Urban Neighborhood, with a small area identified as Suburban Neighborhood south of Las Cruces High School. There is also a segment of Regional Commercial along south Main Street, and the southernmost section of Downtown on the north side of the MRA. Lastly, there are small Open Space Reserve areas designated around drainage pathways and parks.



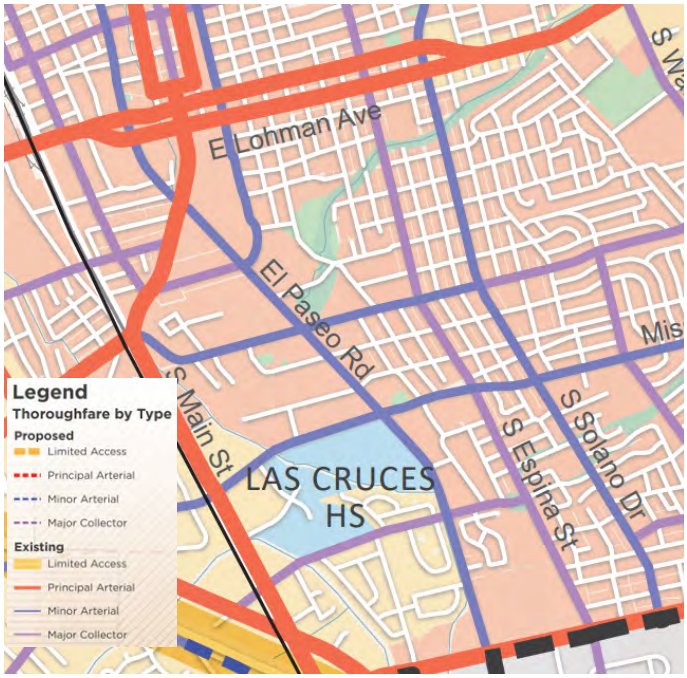
- **Future Place Type Overlays** – Within the Place Type Overlays map, there are several key roads classified as Mixed-Use Corridors, including El Paseo Rd. and S Solano Dr. Additionally, major roads that border the MRA area are also identified as Mixed-Use Corridors: University Avenue, E Lohman Avenue, and S Main Street. Finally, this plan identifies three Neighborhood Centers within the MRA Area: at the intersection of S Solano and E. Lohman Ave., the intersection of S Solano Drive and Missouri Avenue, and the intersection of S Main Street and E Idaho Avenue.

- **Future Thoroughfare Program** – The goal of the Future Thoroughfare Program is to provide recommendations for a network of streets that effectively balance mobility and accessibility with variable design features to complement a wide range of development types. It determines the location and character of future thoroughfares and considers improvements or expansions to existing streets and the location of future roadways based on projected growth patterns.
  - Multi-Modal Street Systems that consider motor vehicles, public transit, cyclists, and pedestrians as a key aspect of this Program.

Future Place Type Overlays Map



Future Thoroughfare Program Map



- Policy Framework – The Policy Framework includes goals, policies, and actions that will leverage the City's intended physical transformation into a program that seeks to enhance the daily lives and long-term prospects for community members. It is organized around the following themes:
  - Environmental Sustainability
  - Fiscal Sustainability
  - Social Equity

Relevance to MRA

Elevate Las Cruces cites redevelopment as a strategy to advance several plan goals. The MRA Plan will align with the principles determined in Elevate Las Cruces to do this. The projects in the MRA Plan will address the site conditions while contributing to larger city benefits.

Solano Drive: Enhanced Mixed-Use Corridor Example

ENHANCED MIXED-USE CORRIDORS: SOLANO DRIVE

Solano Drive is a commercial corridor east of Downtown Las Cruces. The corridor supports a wide variety of uses including retail, services and office buildings. The form of development along Solano Drive is suburban, with buildings set back from the street, expansive surface parking areas, and wide travel lanes for motor vehicles. During a multi-day design workshop Solano Drive was re-envisioned as a Mixed-use Corridor - transforming the four-lane road into a two-lane road, with a turning lane at intersections and bicycle lanes.

According to the NMDOT traffic count data, Solano Drive at the Idaho Avenue intersection has decreased from 16,899 in 2012 to 14,517 in 2017. The long-term transportation plan of Las Cruces shows buffered bike lanes on both sides of Solano Drive and separated bike lanes on Idaho Avenue. This can significantly improve the safety of this corridor for cyclists and at the same time creates a more pedestrian friendly environment.



S. Solano Drive at Idaho Avenue (above).



Design concept (above).

Solano Drive Example taken from *Elevate Las Cruces.*

Realize Las Cruces, 2025

Purpose

Realize Las Cruces is the City's Development Code update project. It includes amendments to existing zoning regulations, zoning map, subdivision regulations, sign regulations, and design standards. A goal for this update is to streamline and simplify development procedures. The code was adopted in February 2025.

Recommendations

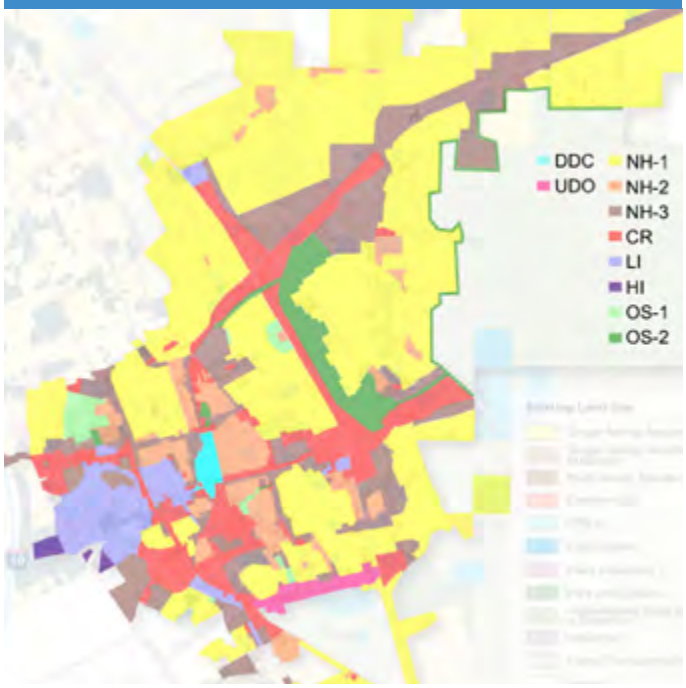
Notable changes were made throughout the document to update and streamline the Code:

- Reorganize and consolidate several chapters (Design Standards, Drainage and Flood Control, Signs, Subdivisions, Zoning, Outdoor Lighting, Historic Preservation) into a unified Development Code
- Create a separate Technical Manual for design criteria and technical details
- Add cross-reference functionality
- Add illustrations, tables and flow charts
- All electronic submittals of all applications except Final Plats

There are notable recommended changes to zoning regulations, including the introduction of Character-Based Districts and Character Areas. The purpose of this approach is to implement the Elevate Las Cruces Future Development Map's Place Types, and to allow regulatory tools that allows flexibility and promote context-sensitive development.

The new zoning map includes two place type overlays – Town Center Overlays and Mixed-Use Corridor Overlays – whose purpose is to allow a broader range of development options, with an emphasis on walkable, coordinated mixed-use development. This is explored further in the Existing Conditions chapter.

Zoning Map



Active Transportation Plan, 2018

Purpose

This plan provides a vision and framework to make Las Cruces more livable for all residents and visitors, by providing recommended programs, policies, and infrastructure that support active transportation throughout the city.

Recommendations

This plan outlines a future active transportation plan that includes additions to bicycle facilities, pedestrian focus areas and specific approaches for pedestrian safety around school zones and transit corridors, naming El Paseo as an example here.

- Key Considerations for Transit Corridors:
  - Large, expansive parking lots and frequent driveway access points reduce comfort and introduce excessive conflict points for pedestrians traveling to the

front doors of businesses. The City of Las Cruces should consider reducing or eliminating parking minimums to avoid the construction of large and under-utilized surface parking lots.

- RoadRUNNER Transit and South Central Regional Transit District operate some out-and-back routes that serve bus stops on both sides of the street. Transit riders often board the bus at a stop on one side of the street and alight at the stop on the opposite side of the street, resulting in frequent crossings at bus stops which can be unsafe without adequate crosswalk infrastructure. Las Cruces should prioritize connecting sidewalks to bus stops and providing mid-block crossings where needed at transit stops. In situations where mid-block crosswalks aren't warranted, nearby intersections should be upgraded to include high-visibility crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and median refuge islands.
- Pedestrian walk phases that coincide with motor vehicle turns create conflicts at intersections. While pedestrians in a crosswalk legally have the right of way, motorists often aren't looking for pedestrians and sometimes complete turns at high speeds to avoid collisions with other motorists. Higher numbers of motorists and pedestrians can be expected along transit corridors, which can increase the number of potential conflicts at intersections. Where appropriate, reducing curb radii to manage turning speeds, installing signage to restrict right turns on red or require yielding to pedestrians, and adjusting traffic signal timings can improve safety for motorists, transit users, and pedestrians at intersections.

> Recommendations for the El Paseo/Idaho Avenue Intersection:
  - Potential changes could include median refuge islands, access management including curb-cut consolidation, the reduction of curb radii and/or removal of the existing slip lanes, sidewalk widening, high-visibility crosswalks, and transit shelter upgrades (such as cover). Any changes should be considered in detail by the Public Works Department, in concert with the community and surrounding businesses.

Infill Policy Plan (Infill Development Overlay District), 1998

Purpose

The Infill Policy Plan is intended to provide guidelines and incentives for the development of vacant and possibly underutilized parcels or those parcels that are ready for redevelopment within Las Cruces urban core area, regardless of the property's zoning. The plan was prepared by first conducting a windshield survey of all parcels within the study area by the City Planning Department in 1996. The infill study area was defined by using major highways and roads in the area. The previous land use inventory for the area was used as a basis to determine development activities. The Plan defined the infill study area to be bounded by Interstate 25 (I-25) on the east, University Avenue (NM 101) on the south, Valley Drive (NM 185/188) on the west, and Hoaglan Road, North Alameda Boulevard, Three Crosses Avenue, and North Main Street (U. S. Highway 70) on the north. Its main purpose is therefore to analyze vacant or underdeveloped parcels within the Infill Study Area and specifically address issues of providing incentives and guidelines for those parcels' development.

Encourage infill development on vacant parcels in the central part of Las Cruces by streamlining the review process for development or redevelopment. Possible benefits of development within the IDO include:

- Expedited permit review
- Flexibility in design
- Flexibility in use
- No building permit fees (does not include impact fees)
- No submittal fees

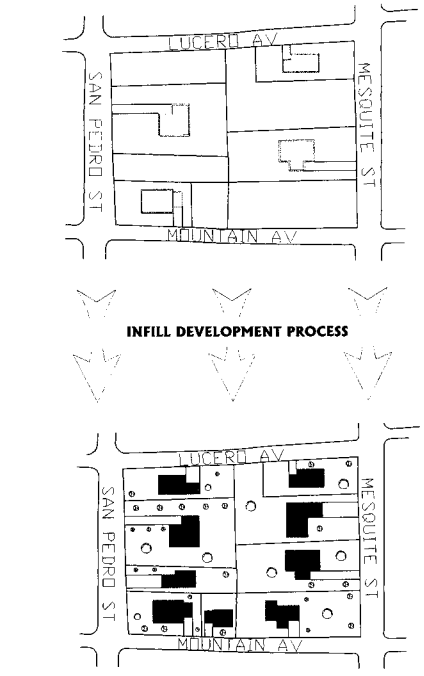
Recommendations

- Encouraging infill development to possibly increase property taxes and new utility usage which may provide long term benefit to the city.
- The plan recommends focus should be placed on addressing nonconforming and smaller lots and those older neighborhoods which have a higher frequency of smaller, individual vacant lots.
- Planning process should look into larger lots in the infill study area and the possible future expansion
- Possible expansion of infill study area's boundaries to add up the number of vacant lots when those identified decreases to prevent allowing them to remain vacant land as growth occurs outside the infill study area
- A balance between any incentives provided and the compatibility of any infill development to the existing uses and neighborhoods.

Relevance to MRA

- The Infill Policy Plan defines the infill study area in the city and recommends what infilling and redevelopment in the city should consider.
- The methodology adopted in preparing the plan analyzed the then existing land use inventory to better inform its recommendations in the infill policy plan.
- The plan's goals, objectives and the recommended actions/strategies are aligned to those of the Comprehensive Plan for the city to avoid issues of non-conforming and conflicting development/land uses.
- The plan's infill study area captures both the city's recognized State and National Historic Districts which would be relevant for any development or redevelopment considerations.
- The plan also identifies other issues that need to be considered in infilling or redevelopment in the city.
- Assessment of property taxes collected and how the value of properties are likely to be increased after infilling or redevelopment especially in the defined Infill Study Area.
- The plan outlines required efforts and implementation strategies
- It contains infill development processes

Infill Policy Plan



Complete Streets Ordinance, 2022

Purpose

The Ordinance (Ordinance 2993; Council Bill 22-015) sought to add sections 32-41 through 32-47, Complete Streets to the Las Cruces Municipal Code (LCMC). The complete streets ordinance is applied to all roadways and or segments on City right-of-way which meets one or more of those that are;

- Located within Las Cruces and are listed on the elevate Las Cruces Map1.4, Future Thoroughfare Map, and owned and maintained by the City of Las Cruces,
- Designated collectors or above and are being designed and constructed by private developers as part of subdivision or site plan development and will become part of the City's owned and maintained street network.

The ordinance provides directions on and required standards for the design, construction and maintenance of transportation infrastructure such as streets, sidewalks, bike lanes etc.

Relevance to MRA

The ordinance provides crucial information on standards the design, construction, and maintenance of infrastructure should consider. It contains principles that apply to all projects that alter or otherwise affect streets that are in its jurisdiction (City of Las Cruces). The ordinance also provides compliance requirements for all departments that pursue projects that affect or alter streets in Las Cruces. It provides Capital Improvement Project criteria contained in Project Prioritization Matrix that all departments pursuing projects that affect or alter streets in Las Cruces should comply with.

Area Specific Plans

El Paseo Corridor Blueprint, 2012

Purpose

A Planning Blueprint is a policy guide for a defined area, documenting the needs and issues of an area and making recommendations to address them. This plan is used to inform Las Cruces' City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, and staff of development priorities and generate support for the implementation of projects. The blueprint is aligned with the city-wide goals laid out in Elevate Las Cruces, the city's comprehensive plan.

The El Paseo Corridor Blueprint specifically analyzed El Paseo Road from Main Street to University Avenue, a 1.7-mile corridor connecting Downtown Las Cruces to New Mexico State University. This plan highlights El Paseo as a vital connection across two major activity sites with the potential to be redeveloped into a site itself.

Recommendations

- Redevelop El Paseo Road as a safer and more user-friendly corridor; prioritize equitable design to ensure pedestrians, bicyclists, transit-users, automobile users and people with varying abilities have equal opportunity in accessing uses along the corridor.
- Allow diverse land uses and housing types to locate in proximity to each other in order to achieve a walkable, inclusive and economically viable area.
- Allow flexibility in land and building uses such that development can respond to economic and ownership changes.
- Improve the aesthetic appeal of the corridor; foster a "sense of place" or community identity along the corridor.
- Encourage climate-responsive and environmentally sustainable development practices, such as traditional building forms, green building techniques and the use of green infrastructure along the corridor.

- Support active living and healthy community design through appropriate guidelines and regulations for the planning area

Actions

- Develop and adopt a form-based code for the El Paseo planning area. (Goals 1- 6)
- Design El Paseo Road as a Complete Street. (Goals 1 & 6)
- Implement the Road Safety Assessment (RSA) recommendations for El Paseo Road as appropriate within the context of the Complete Street concept. (Goals 1 & 6)
- Incorporate the Institute of Transportation Engineers' recommended practices in Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach, as they pertain to the overarching vision for the plan area. (Goals 1, 2, 4 & 6)
- Advance the City's transit plan and affordable housing strategies by encouraging higher density housing along and around the corridor. (Goals 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6)
- Adopt policies that require, or at minimum encourage, affordable housing units to be integrated with other housing options within the same development. (Goal 2)
- Develop standards to guide the evolution of destination-oriented and/or transit-oriented developments with distinctive, human-scaled urban environments and civic spaces. (Goals 1-6)
- Adopt urban design and architectural standards that can improve the aesthetics and user-appeal of the streetscape. (Goals 4 & 6)
- Adopt standards to incorporate green development and building techniques. (Goals 4, 5 & 6)
- Investigate options to incentivize redevelopment such as investing in infrastructure improvements, pilot/catalyst projects, public-private partnerships; shared parking provisions, density bonus allowances; streamlining the application process, and organizing design competitions and charrettes. (Goals 1- 6)

Relevance to MRA

This blueprint plan is a concentrated study on one of the key north-south corridors in the MRA – El Paseo. The blueprint identifies the potential for El Paseo to become a multi-modal corridor that supports all walks of life through infrastructure and policy changes. The revitalized corridor is designed to be safe and accessible for pedestrians, cyclists, and people with varying mobility needs. The physical environment is improved to be climate responsive, environmentally sustainable, and promote active lifestyles. Flexible, multi-use zoning encourages affordable housing development and bolsters the local economy by attracting small businesses.

El Paseo-S Solano Corridors Committee, 2022

Purpose

An Ad Hoc Committee was organized in December 2021 to assess redevelopment strategies that could revitalize the El Paseo and S Solano corridors. For eight months, stakeholders and city staff convened to review city policy related to physical improvements along the El Paseo and S Solano Corridors. The stated purpose of this working group reads as follows:

- "The southern infill neighborhoods envision and strive to be a place of economic stability, wealth creation, and healthy living. They are attractive, peaceful places where people feel welcome, safe, and comfortable and are hot spots for dwelling choice, local shopping, eateries, entrepreneurship, and businesses… The southern infill corridors (El Paseo, South Solano) are seen as and continue to transform into thriving transit-oriented areas where businesses, residents, visitors and the City work together to create and maintain a place of sustainability, one that is pedestrian and bicycle friendly, and addresses the needs of all citizens."

Recommendations

- Community Development Department: responsible for overseeing and managing redevelopment processes
- City MRA Evaluation Program: formalizing and operationalizing the MRA process including designation, funding, and execution
- Fiscal Resources: city budget for redevelopment, support for LIHTC application, support for federal grant funding, capital improvement program money
- Virtual Technical Assistance and Resource Program: toolbox of MRA and redevelopment graphic information
- Building Technical Assistance Studio Team: technical assistance related to building, construction, and development
- Business Technical Assistance Team: technical assistance related to business relocation, growth, and success
- Neighborhood Technical Assistance Team: technical assistance related to marketing, project funding, and civic involvement
- Paseos Verdes Affordable Housing & Multi-Use Redevelopment
- Official Boundary Designation of El Paseo – S Solano Redevelopment Area

MRA Designation Report, 2023

Purpose

The purpose of the MRA Designation Report is to demonstrate the physical and socioeconomic conditions within the boundaries of the MRA inhibiting economic development, investment, and prosperity. This report precedes the MRA Plan as a prerequisite of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area process by proving the condition of this area to require public intervention to spur redevelopment.

The report identified several physical factors that inhibit investment including vacant and underutilized buildings, deteriorated commercial and residential buildings, deterioration of public infrastructure and streetscapes, missing sidewalks, and brownfield asbestos contamination. The report also notes crime as a deterrence for business owners interested in vacant commercial properties.

Recommendations

- "Realistic implementation strategies, considering the longstanding nature and complexity of the needs that have been demonstrated in this report"
- "With the powers made available to municipalities by the New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code, the City of Las Cruces will be working with the private and non-profit sectors to **create opportunities to preserve existing businesses in these areas, expand business and job opportunities, expand and revitalize the housing stock, as well as implement much needed improvements to the public realm.** Authentic and effective community processes will ensure that the revitalization strategies and catalytic projects that the City pursues are place-based and reflect the unique history, identity, culture, and vision of the community"

Relevance to MRA

- This document offers a thorough analysis of the physical and socioeconomic conditions that will influence the recommendations and projects laid out in the following MRA Plan.
- Notably, the auto-oriented design of the area is hostile to pedestrians and will need to be redesigned to promote safety and multi-modal access that is necessary here. The corridor connects two high-traffic areas, Downtown and NMSU, but experiences disproportionately higher commercial vacancies than throughout the rest of the city. There is an opportunity to provide more amenities that cater to the younger and working-age population that lives here. There are many households with specific needs relevant to the conditions present in the MRA, including people with disabilities, people without access to a car, and a significant bilingual population. Most of the

housing units are occupied by renters, 74 percent, and are cost-burdened by housing-related expenses. Despite educational attainment and high participation in the workforce, this area also has a lower average household income than the rest of the city.

Current Projects

Lift Up Las Cruces

Lift Up Las Cruces is a multi-department effort of the City of Las Cruces to improve neighborhoods one at a time. The annual program, which began in 2022, works with the residents to identify their needs and concerns within their neighborhood. The City then allocates our limited resources in this concentrated area to make a larger impact in that neighborhood through actionable projects. Some examples of these projects are road improvements, bus shelters, neighborhood clean-up initiatives, or City-sponsored events.

In 2024, the focus neighborhood encompassed the northern section of the MRA area, bound by E Amador Avenue to the North, Campo Street and El Paseo Road to the west, Idaho Avenue to the south, and S Solano Drive to the west.

A block party was held on May 18 at Valley View Park to celebrate the work that is beginning here. A survey was also conducted and solicited feedback from residents; 112 surveys were completed. Local investments and projects include:

- Neighborhood cleanup events
- Street light upgrades
- Repave Almendra and Alamo Streets
- Public Art at the Munson Center
- Multi-purpose room addition at the Munson Center
- Security Services
- Playground, shade structure and site furnishings at Valley View Park



Lift Up Las Cruces Event.



Valley View Park.

Planning Process

Project Timeline



Public Engagement Activities

Listening Sessions & Stakeholder Meetings

The team met with key stakeholders through individual phone/video calls, in-person and virtual meetings and focus groups during the planning process. We want to thank each and every person who gave their time to this planning process. These meetings included:

- Representatives from City of Las Cruces Departments (Planning, Parks & Recreation, Public Works, Utilities, Transit, Historic Preservation)
- Elected officials
- Local growers
- Administrators from Las Cruces Public School District
- Staff from Las Cruces Police Department
- Staff from the Elephant Butte Irrigation District
- Staff from New Mexico State University
- Staff from the local Economic Development District
- Las Cruces Homebuilders Association
- Historic Preservation advocates

During the first Site Visit the team met with key representatives from the following groups:

- Local Business Representatives
- Developers/Realtors
- Public Institutions/Nonprofits/Social Services
- Neighborhoods/Historic/Cultural Organizations

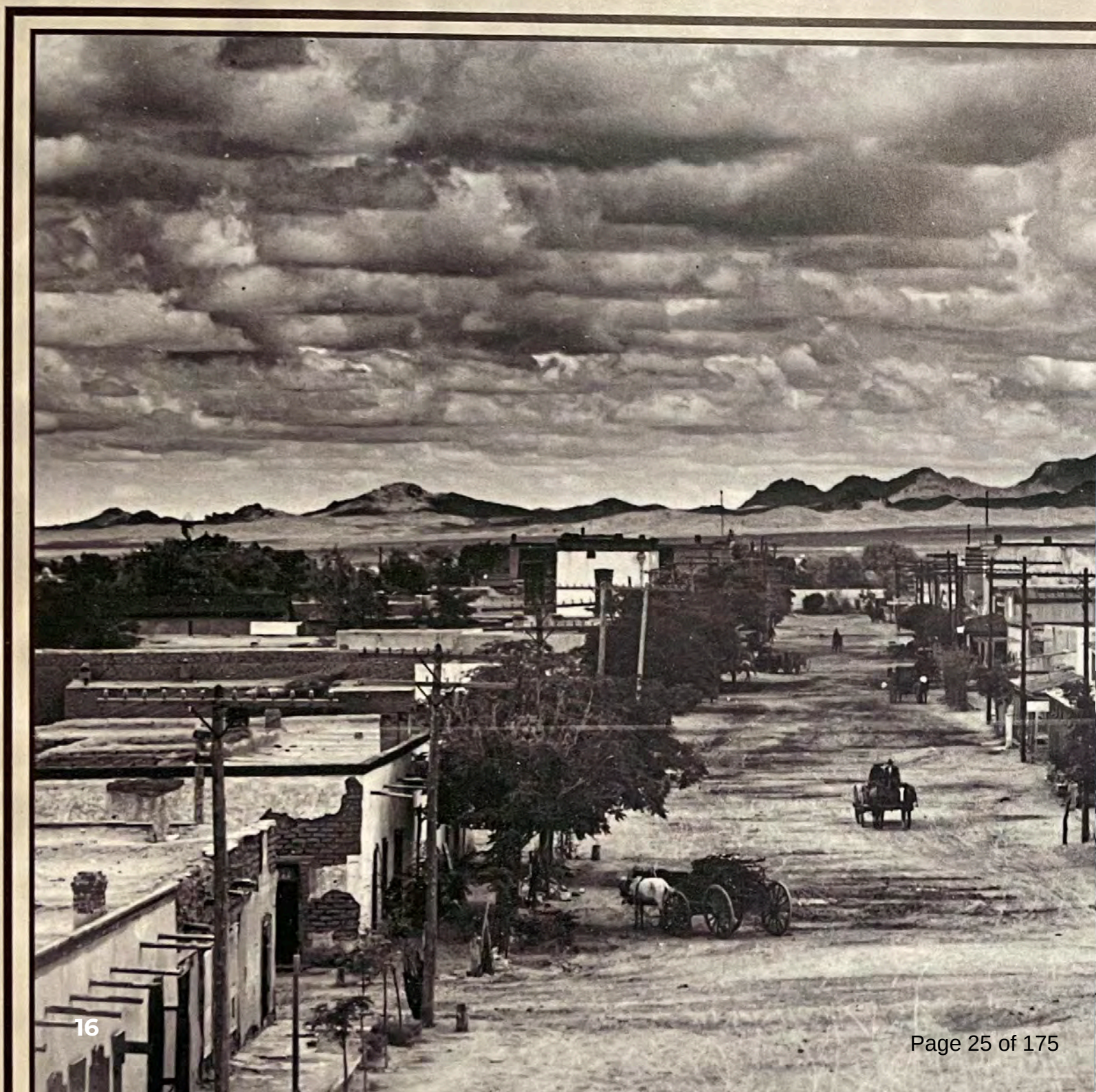
Community Design Workshop

The MRA Team hosted a 3-day community workshop at Real Life Church, located within the MRA. These meetings were open to the public and promoted across Las Cruces, and targeted towards MRA area residents, employees, and business owners. Details about this Workshop are provided in the Illustrative Vision chapter.

Survey

Between October 2024 and January 2025, the El Paseo & S Solano MRA team conducted a public opinion survey to better understand the community preferences surrounding redevelopment in the El Paseo & S Solano MRA – 2,055 people responded. Key takeaways and priorities from the Survey are provided in the Illustrative Vision chapter.

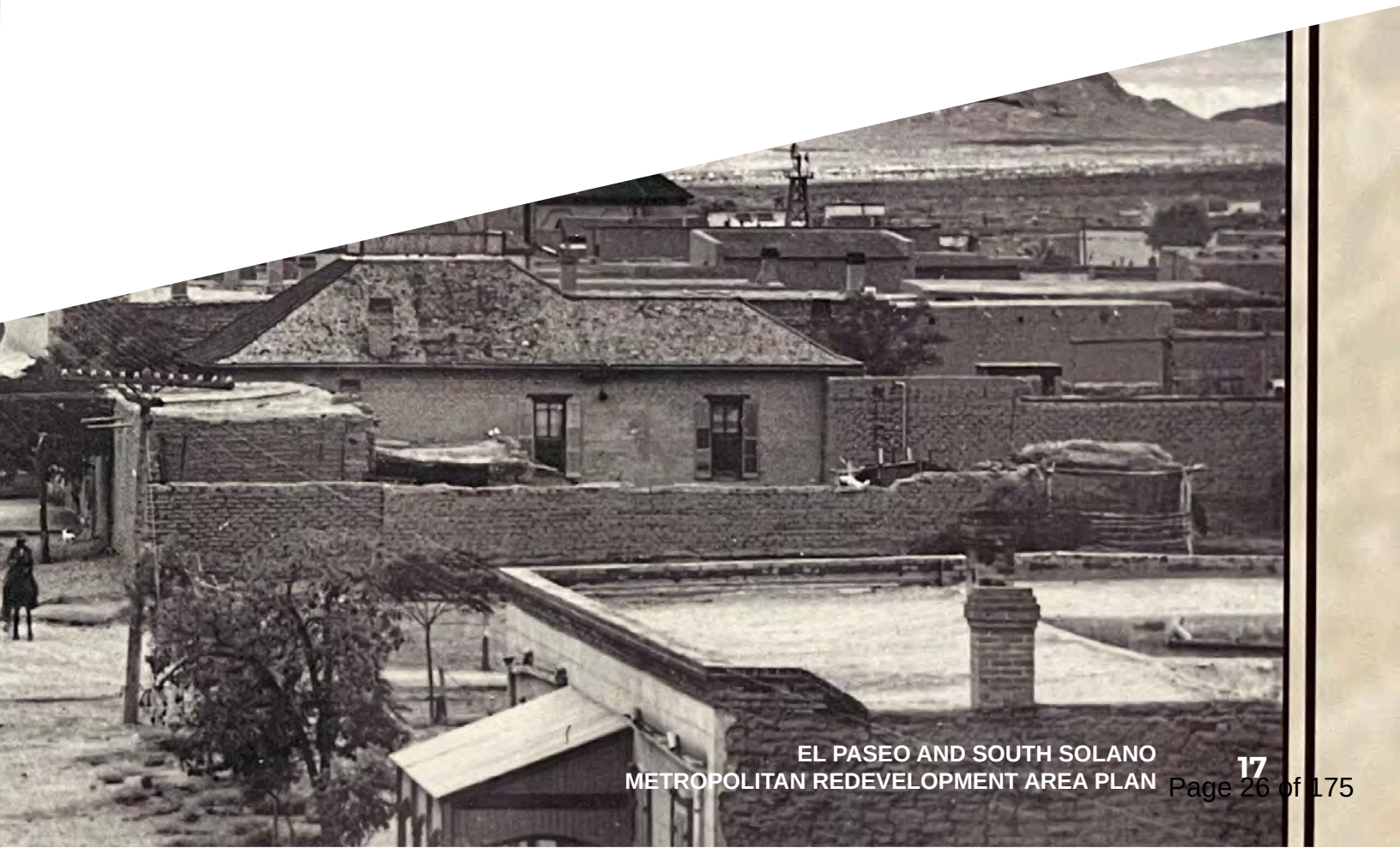
COMMUNITY **PROFILE**



Area History

The El Paseo and S Solano corridors and the neighborhoods they pass through comprise the southern part of the core of Las Cruces, connecting downtown to the University. Just south of the original townsite, neighborhoods and commercial grew along these streets through the mid-century. El Paseo, and Wyatt Drive, in particular, became the commercial heart of the city in the 1980s and 90s, with a movie theater, many stores, and restaurants attracting residents throughout the day and on weekends. “Cruising” El Paseo became a popular pastime for community members that many residents today remember fondly. S Solano held smaller, mostly local businesses between East Lohman and Missouri Avenue, serving the nearby neighborhoods.

Today, these corridors retain some of these commercial traits, but many entertainment options and large businesses have shifted to the periphery of the city, leaving several vacant storefronts in their wake. Many service-oriented offices and businesses remain, including healthcare, automotive supply and repair, and fitness centers. There are several fast food options that make it popular for high school and college students.



Community Assets

Las Cruces is located in southern New Mexico, roughly 200 miles south of Albuquerque. Close to the US-Mexico border, Las Cruces is less than 50 miles north of El Paso, TX, and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. The arid desert climate draws in visitors looking for southwestern desert heat and dry air and is favorable for retirees and seniors. Dramatic mountain views, especially from the Organ Mountain Range, line most of the horizon. The Rio Grande runs just west of the town and is easily accessed by numerous public parks along the riverbank. Large flat agricultural fields are met by gentle hills leading to the surrounding mountains.



The MRA is immediately north of New Mexico State University, the state's land-grant university, and benefits from the proximity to this institution. In 2023, 14,779 students were enrolled at the main Las Cruces campus. The same year, the university employed nearly 3,500 people, including 1,090 faculty and 2,394 staff. There is rental housing in the MRA that supports students and staff at the University.



Downtown Las Cruces lies immediately north of the MRA and provides a key connection to the historic heart of the community. The City has made investments in the downtown core to improve infrastructure and pedestrian facilities, as well as support local businesses and arts and cultural investments.

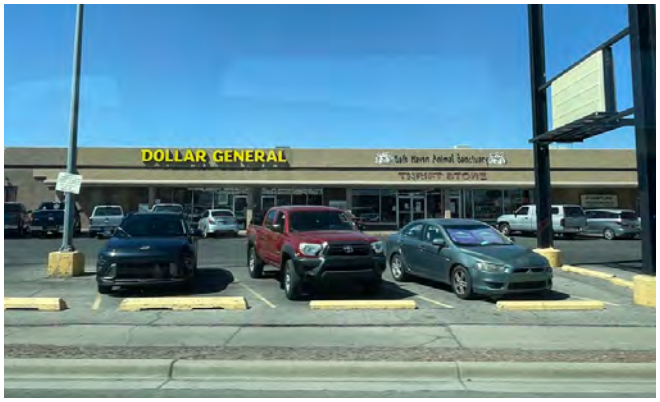


Physical Conditions

To better understand the issues and opportunities within the nearly 1,200 acres that comprise the MRA, the team has taken time to thoroughly review the physical conditions and future planning for this space, looking at:

- Current zoning
- Parks and open space
- Utilities
- Transportation and connectivity
- Land uses
- Public ownership
- Building and sidewalk conditions
- Area assets

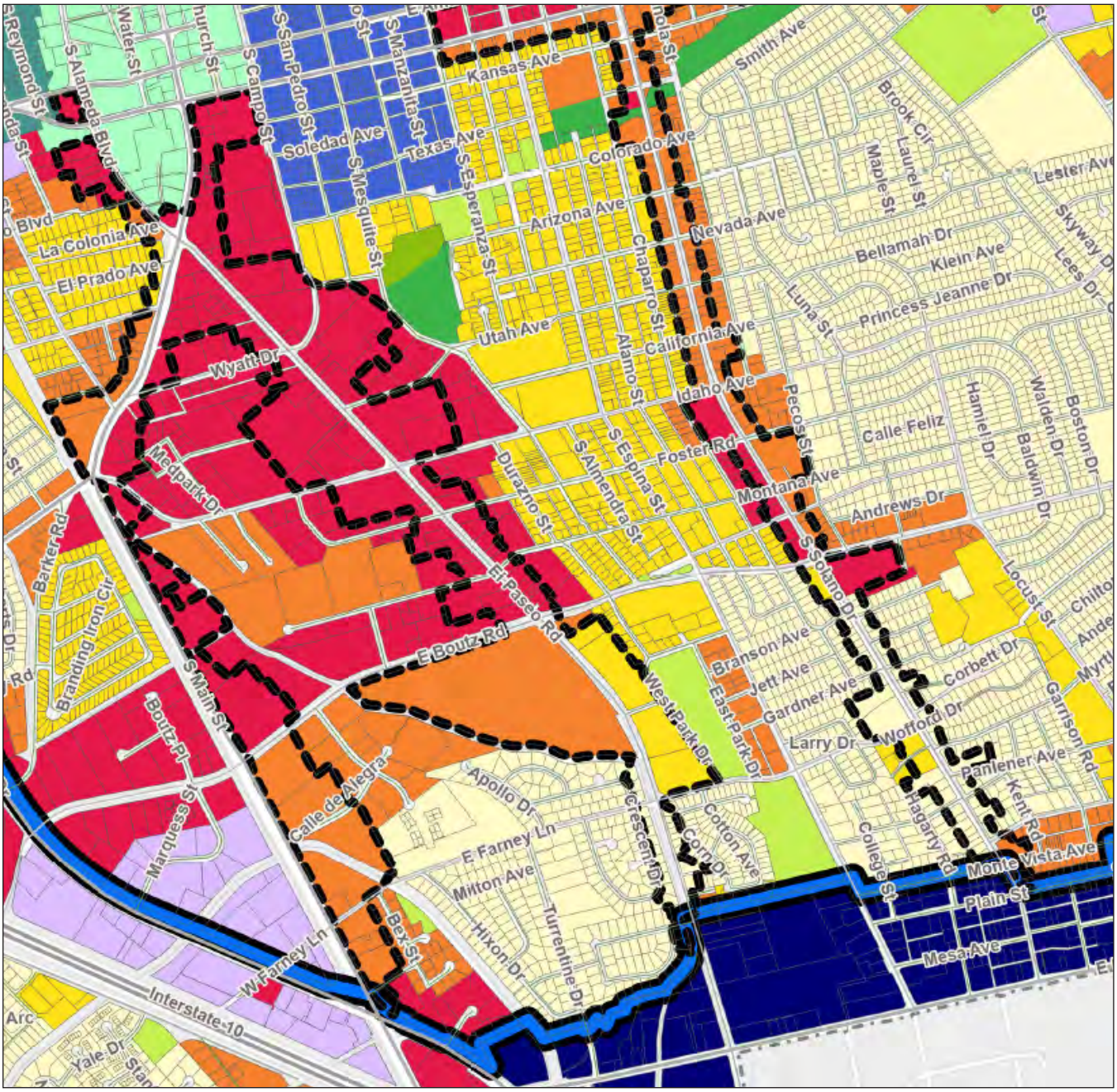
Ultimately, this information has provided guidance for what we are calling “Character Areas” which are smaller zones within the MRA that have common attributes and challenges.







Zoning Assessment



Zoning Districts

- Neighborhood 1 (NH-1)
- Neighborhood 2 (NH-2)
- Neighborhood 3 (NH-3)
- Commercial Retail (CR)
- Light Industrial (LI)
- Heavy Industrial (HI)
- Open Space 1 (OS-1)
- Open Space 2 (OS-2)
- Planned Unit Development (PUD)
- Holding (H)

Characters

- Urban Character (U)
- Rural Character (R)
- No Character Defined

* Everything else is Suburban Character (S)

Overlays

- Mixed-Use (MX)
- Town Center (TC)
- Neighborhood Center (NC) * None currently added *
- Airport Overlay District

The Las Cruces City Council recently adopted Realize Las Cruces, the new land development code for the city that implements its comprehensive plan – Elevate Las Cruces. Some of the salient elements of land development code and associated zoning are summarized in this section.

- The entire MRA is in the Urban Character designation.
- Most of the commercial corridors are zoned CR Commercial Retail with a few parcels between Idaho and Montana just east of the drainage channel are zoned Neighborhood 3
- The residential blocks between El Paseo and S Solano north of Boutz are generally zoned Neighborhood 2 and the newer neighborhoods of Boutz are zoned Neighborhood 1.
- The parcels fronting along Main Street, El Paseo and S Solano are also in the Mixed Use Corridor Overlay.

Zone	NH-1 Urban	NH-2 Urban	NH-3 Urban
Illustration			
Residential Density Max.	40 DUA	50 DUA	60 DUA
Lot width (min.)	20′	20′	20′
Front Setback	15′ (arterials and collectors) 12′ (local streets)	15′ (arterials and collectors) 12′ (local streets)	15′ (arterials and collectors) 12′ (local streets)
Building height	70′ max	70′	70′
Building Design	• Buildings 3+ stories shall be built with tri-partite architecture (base, middle, and top) • Glazing standards (min. 50% of front facade) for ground floor commercial and mixed use buildings		
Uses (highlights)	By right: Multi-family, townhouse, single family uses Accessory dwellings and structures Some public and civic uses	Uses allowed in NH-1 Plus: Art studio, banks Local grocery Personal Services Retail store (not regional) Shopping center Animal services (indoor) Plant nursery	Uses allowed in NH-1 and NH-2 plus: Offices Urgent care Hotels Indoor and outdoor entertainment Convenience stores, gas station Regional grocery, Retail store (all scales) Shopping Center Food truck park Bar, café, restaurant, etc. Auto sales and rental Auto repair (minor) Artisan manufacturing
Parking	Off-street parking is not required in the Urban Character Area		

Urban Character Area

The Urban Character Area is the area that is designated for the highest intensity with the goal of facilitating redevelopment within already developed areas of the city. The El Paseo and S Solano areas are entirely within the Urban Character area. The Neighborhood 1, 2, and 3 zones within the Urban Character area are all distinct from the same zones in the Suburban and Rural Character areas.

The Table on the previous page provides the development standards for the NH-1, 2, and 3 zones within the Urban Character areas.

Mixed Use Corridor Overlay (MXCO)

The El Paseo and S Solano corridors are also within the Mixed Use Corridor Overlay which allows multi-family uses by right up to a maximum of 60 DUA. Off-street parking requirements are not applicable in the MXCO.

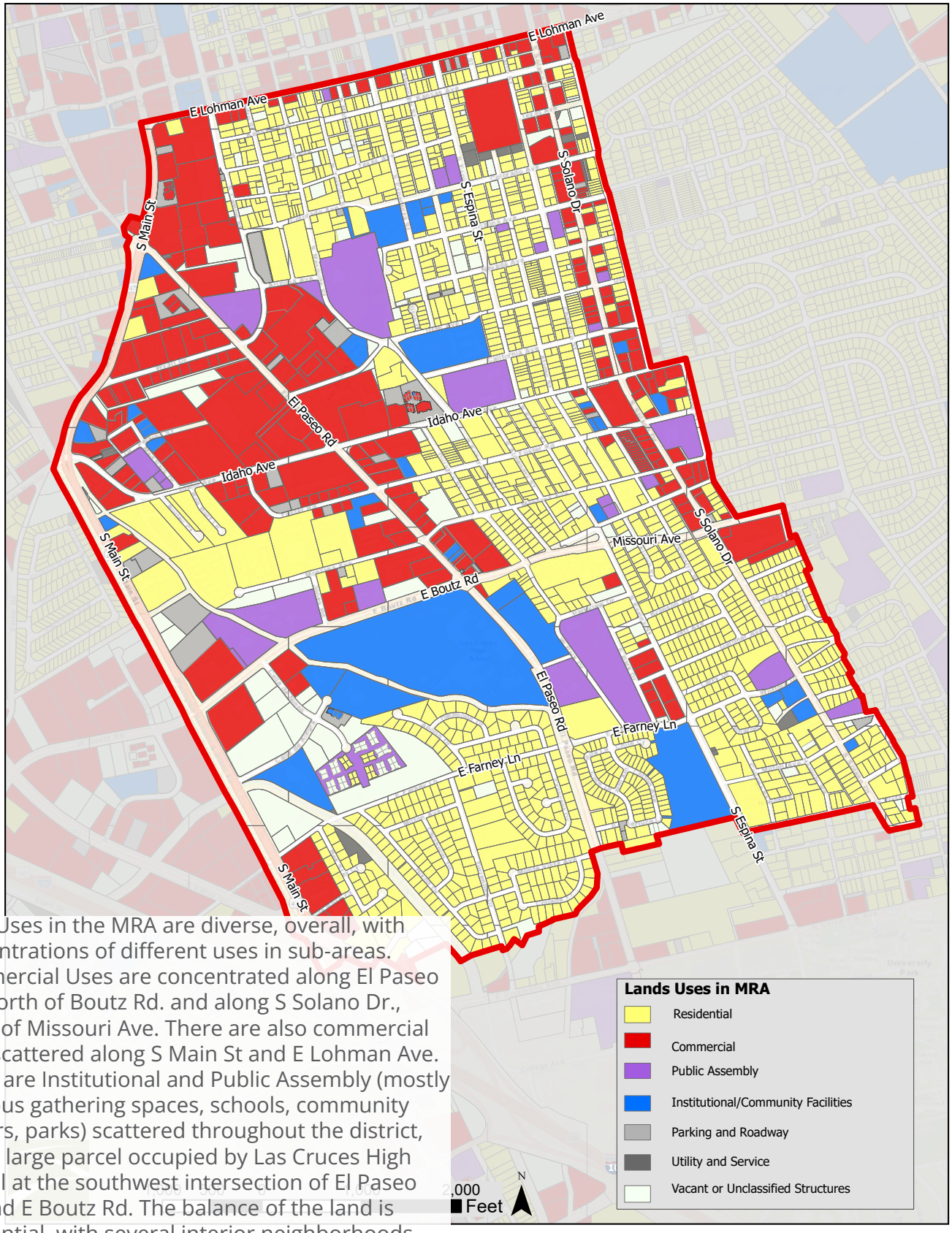
CR Commercial Retail District

The CR, Commercial/Retail District provides a wide range of commercial uses at various scales to serve residents and attract regional customers. This district specifically accommodates commercial, retail, office, and related nonresidential uses.

Other Requirements

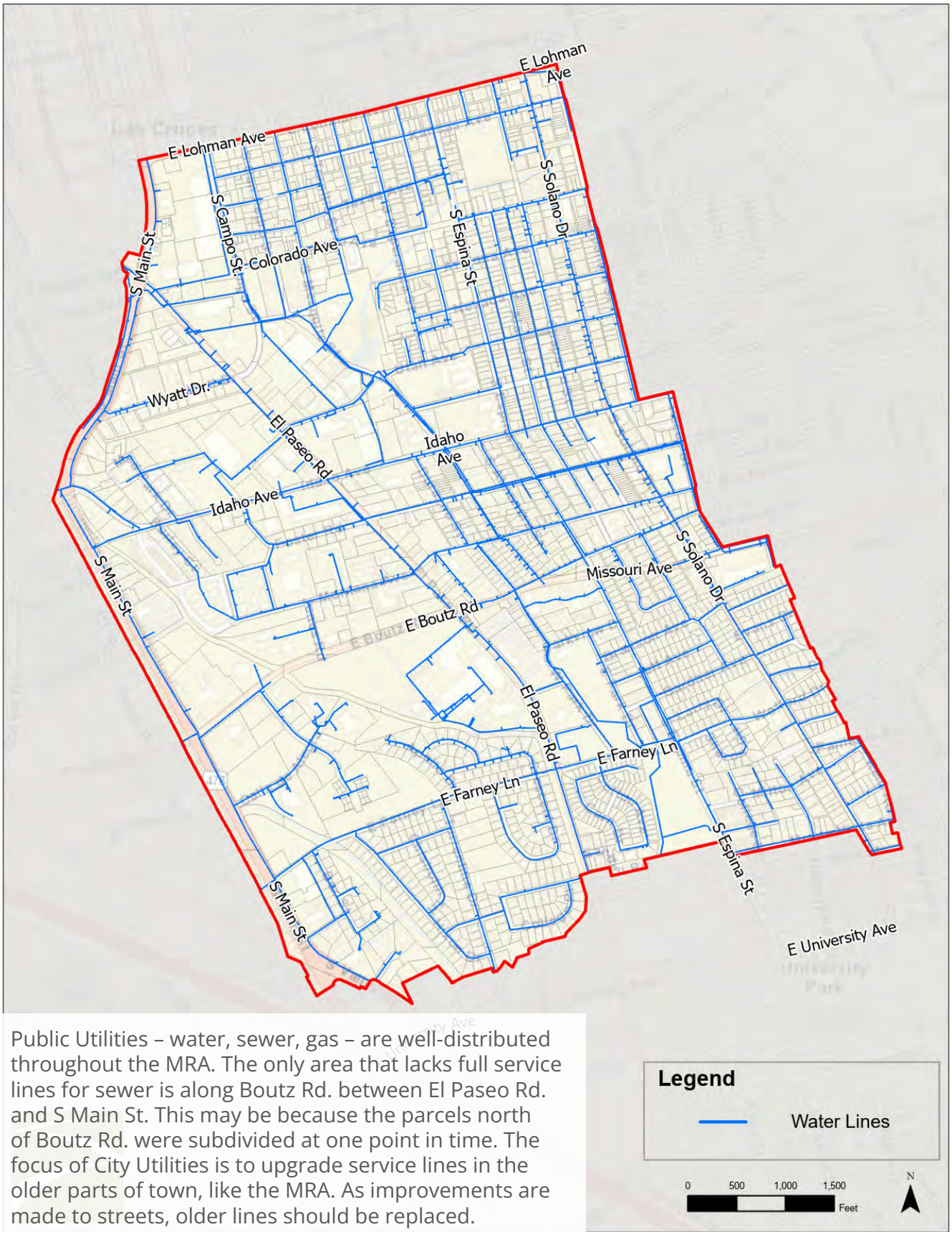
Standards for building materials, front facade entry requirements, building articulation, architectural features, and amenities for multi-family residential (over 12 unit developments) all apply to new nonresidential, mixed-use, and multi-family development, regardless of the Character area.

Land Use



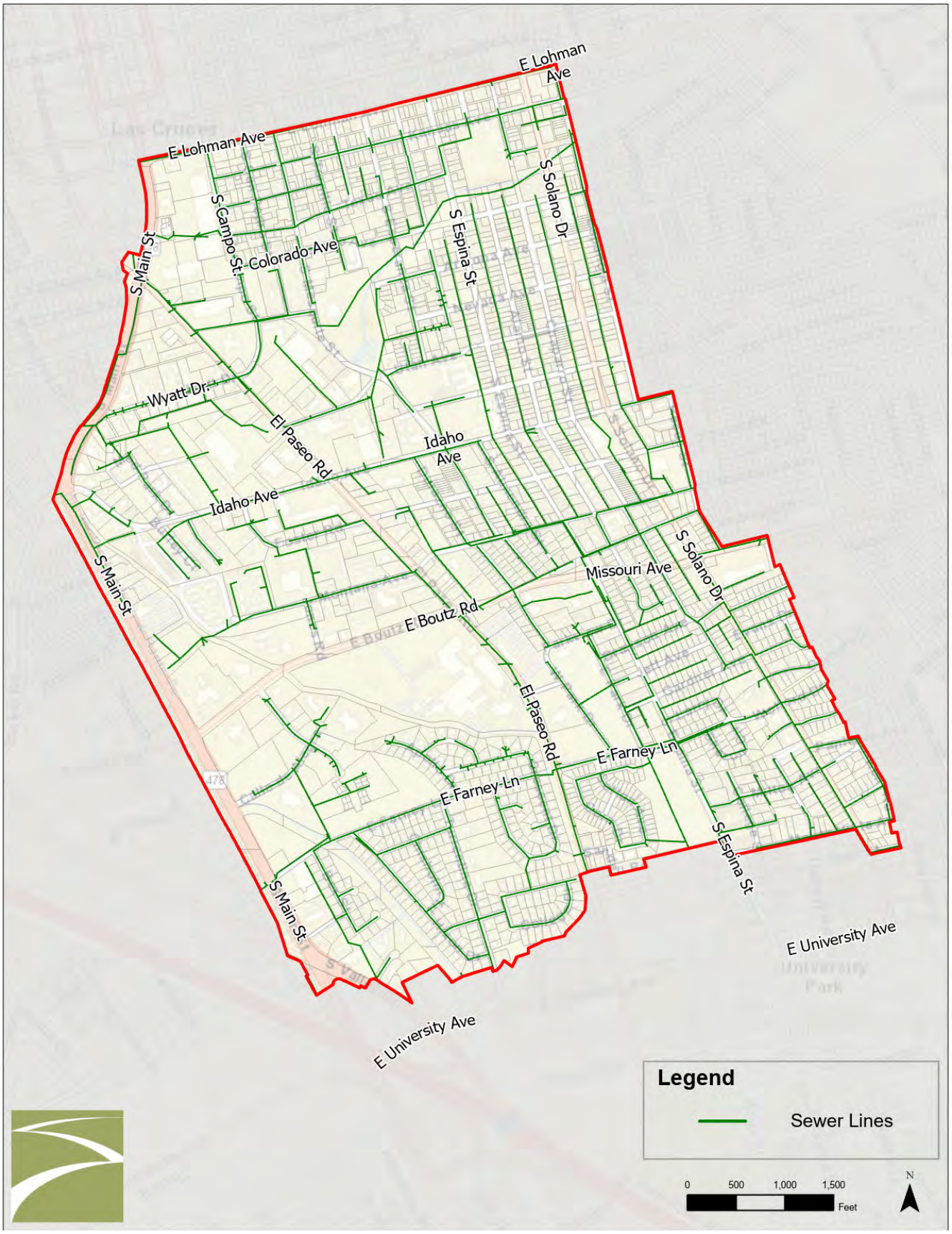
Land Uses in the MRA are diverse, overall, with concentrations of different uses in sub-areas. Commercial Uses are concentrated along El Paseo Rd., north of Boutz Rd. and along S Solano Dr., north of Missouri Ave. There are also commercial uses scattered along S Main St and E Lohman Ave. There are Institutional and Public Assembly (mostly religious gathering spaces, schools, community centers, parks) scattered throughout the district, with a large parcel occupied by Las Cruces High School at the southwest intersection of El Paseo Rd. and E Boutz Rd. The balance of the land is residential, with several interior neighborhoods and some multi-family complexes.

Utilities - Water

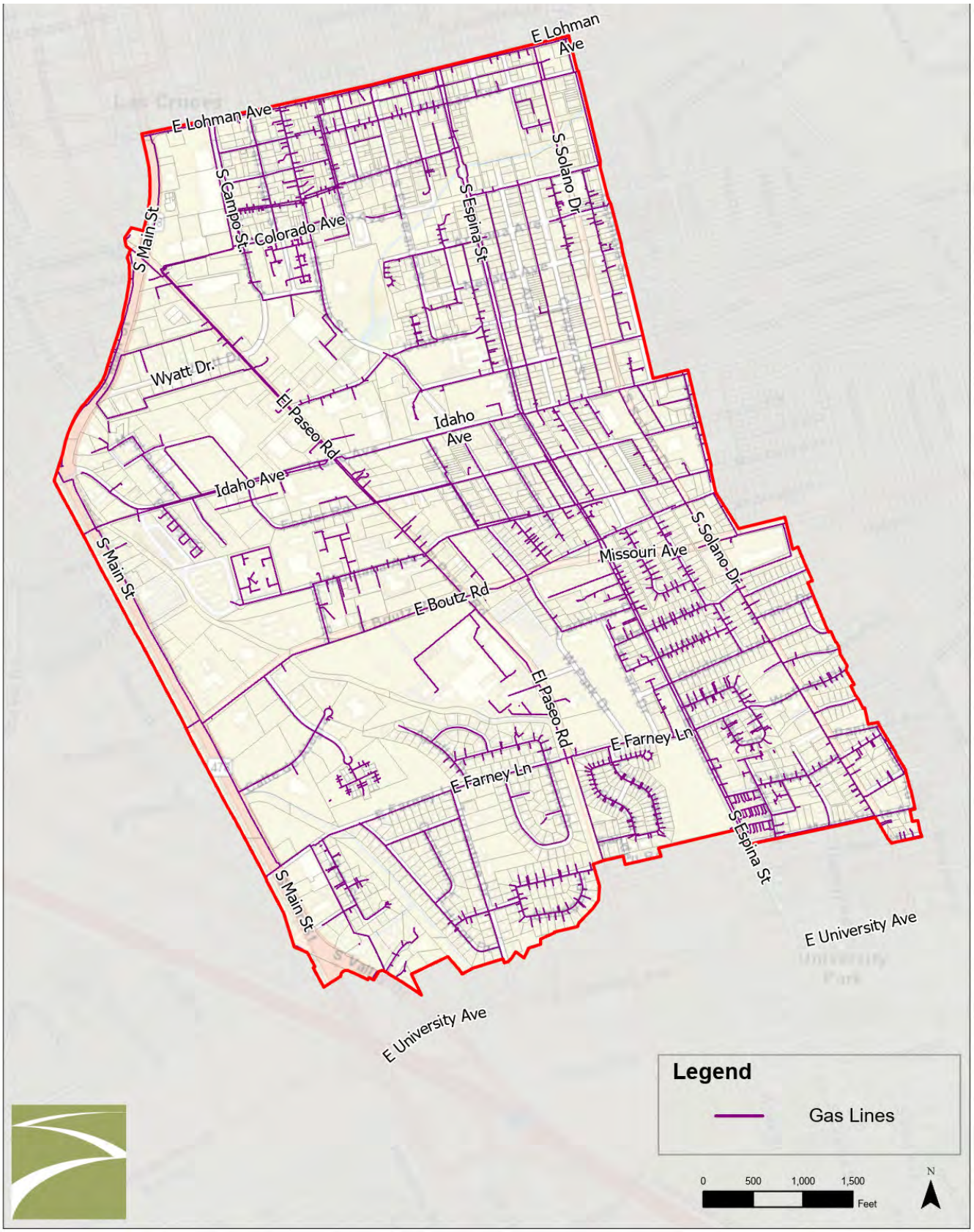


Public Utilities – water, sewer, gas – are well-distributed throughout the MRA. The only area that lacks full service lines for sewer is along Boutz Rd. between El Paseo Rd. and S Main St. This may be because the parcels north of Boutz Rd. were subdivided at one point in time. The focus of City Utilities is to upgrade service lines in the older parts of town, like the MRA. As improvements are made to streets, older lines should be replaced.

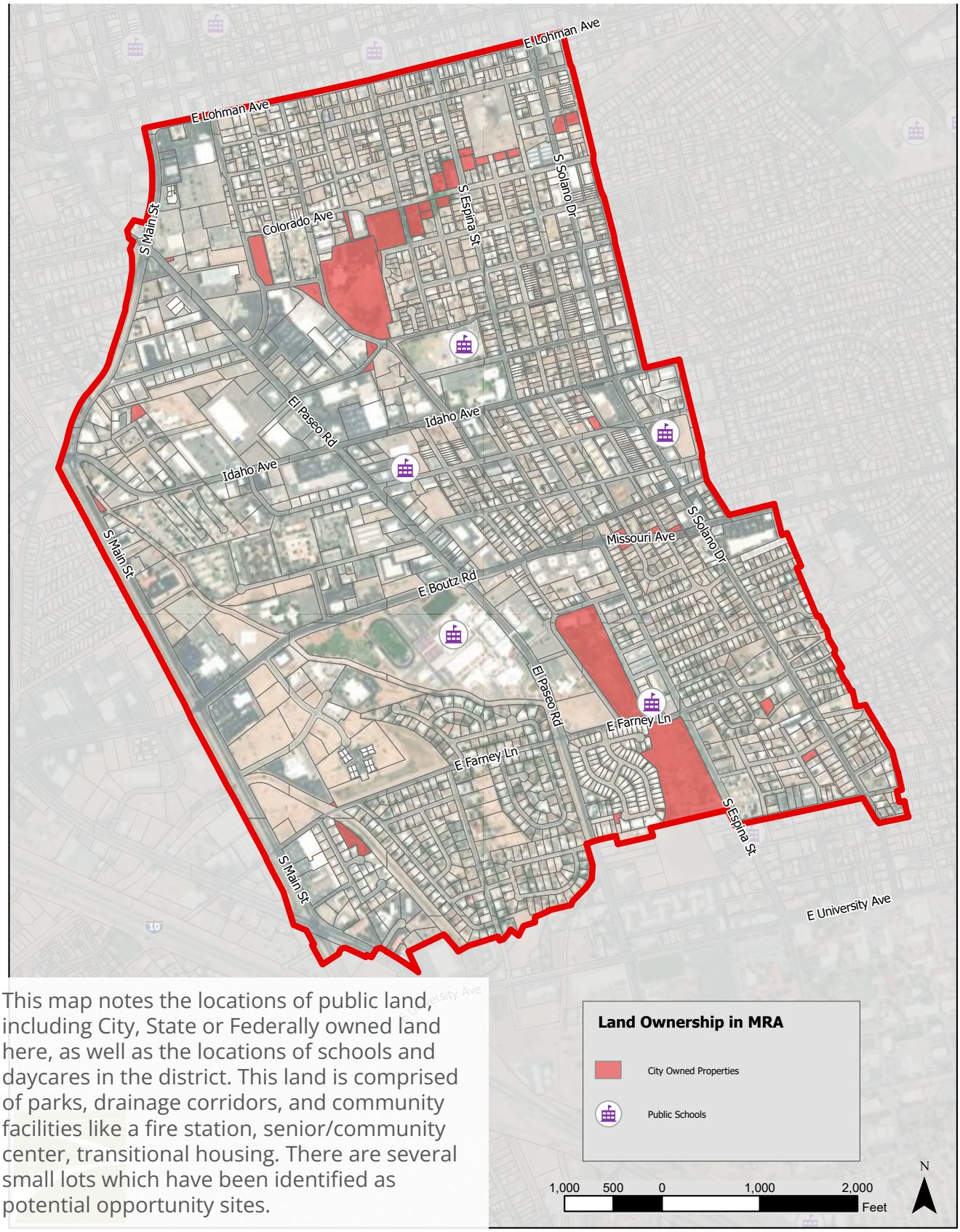
Utilities - Sewer



Utilities - Gas

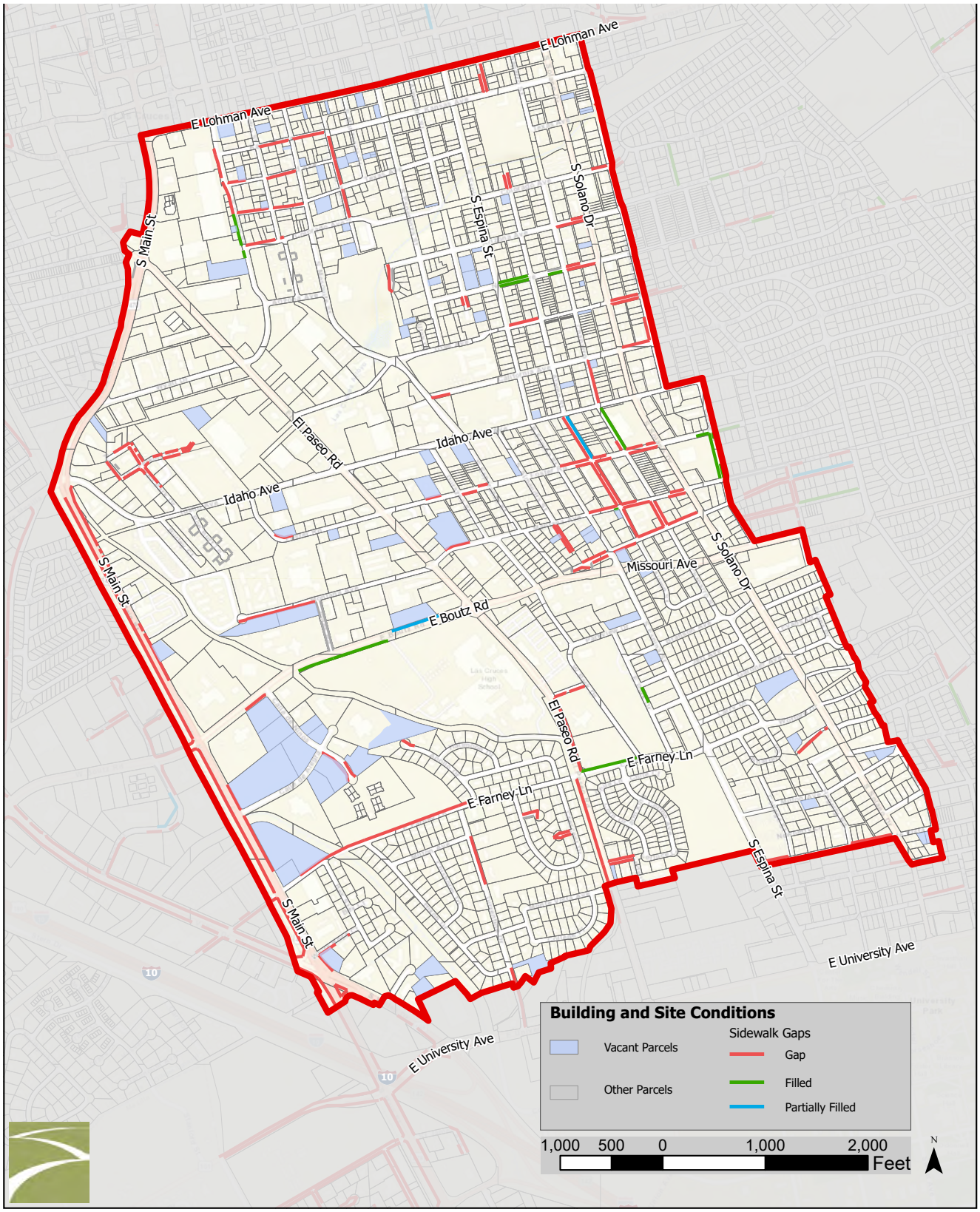


Land Ownership



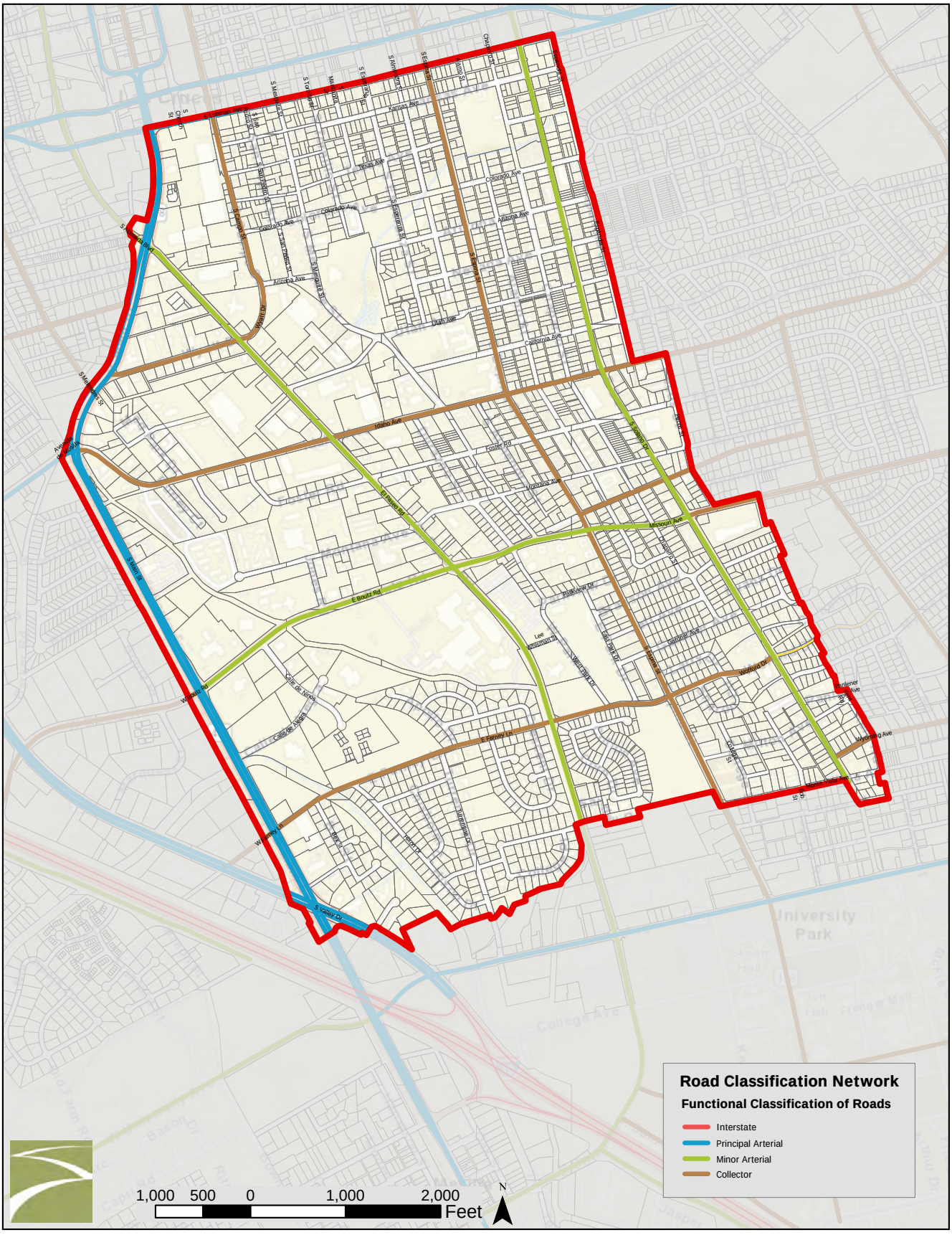
This map notes the locations of public land, including City, State or Federally owned land here, as well as the locations of schools and daycares in the district. This land is comprised of parks, drainage corridors, and community facilities like a fire station, senior/community center, transitional housing. There are several small lots which have been identified as potential opportunity sites.

Site Conditions



There are several vacant parcels throughout the MRA that offer opportunities for future development. Some of these are smaller, residential lots in the northern, more historic neighborhoods, but there are several larger vacant properties along S Main St. and in the commercial areas, just off El Paseo Rd. This map also highlights sidewalk conditions in the MRA, which gives key insight into the presence of pedestrian facilities. Overall, the area is mostly covered by sidewalks. However, there are notable gaps in 4 primary locations. The first is in the historic south Mesquite District along residential streets there. The second area is along residential streets between Idaho Ave. and Missouri Ave. just west of S Solano Dr. The third area is near the medical service facilities north of Idaho Ave. and east of S Main St. Finally, there is a notable lack of sidewalks on the southern portion of El Paseo Rd. and along Farney Ln.

Road Classifications



The MRA has several primary corridors in Las Cruces that are used for moving vehicular traffic. Main St. is the only principal arterial which serves a high degree of mobility and typically services the highest volumes of traffic. There are three roads classified as minor arterials: E Boutz Rd./ Missouri Ave., El Paseo Rd., and S Solano Dr. These roads provide connections to higher-class roads, but mobility is still a primary quality.

There are four collector roads: Farney Ln., Idaho Ave., S Espina St., and S Campo St./Wyatt Dr. The collectors focus more on accessibility than mobility and generally have more driveways and moderate speeds than the higher classification arterials. The rest of the roads in the MRA are local roads.



Principal Arterial: S Main St., Google Streetview.

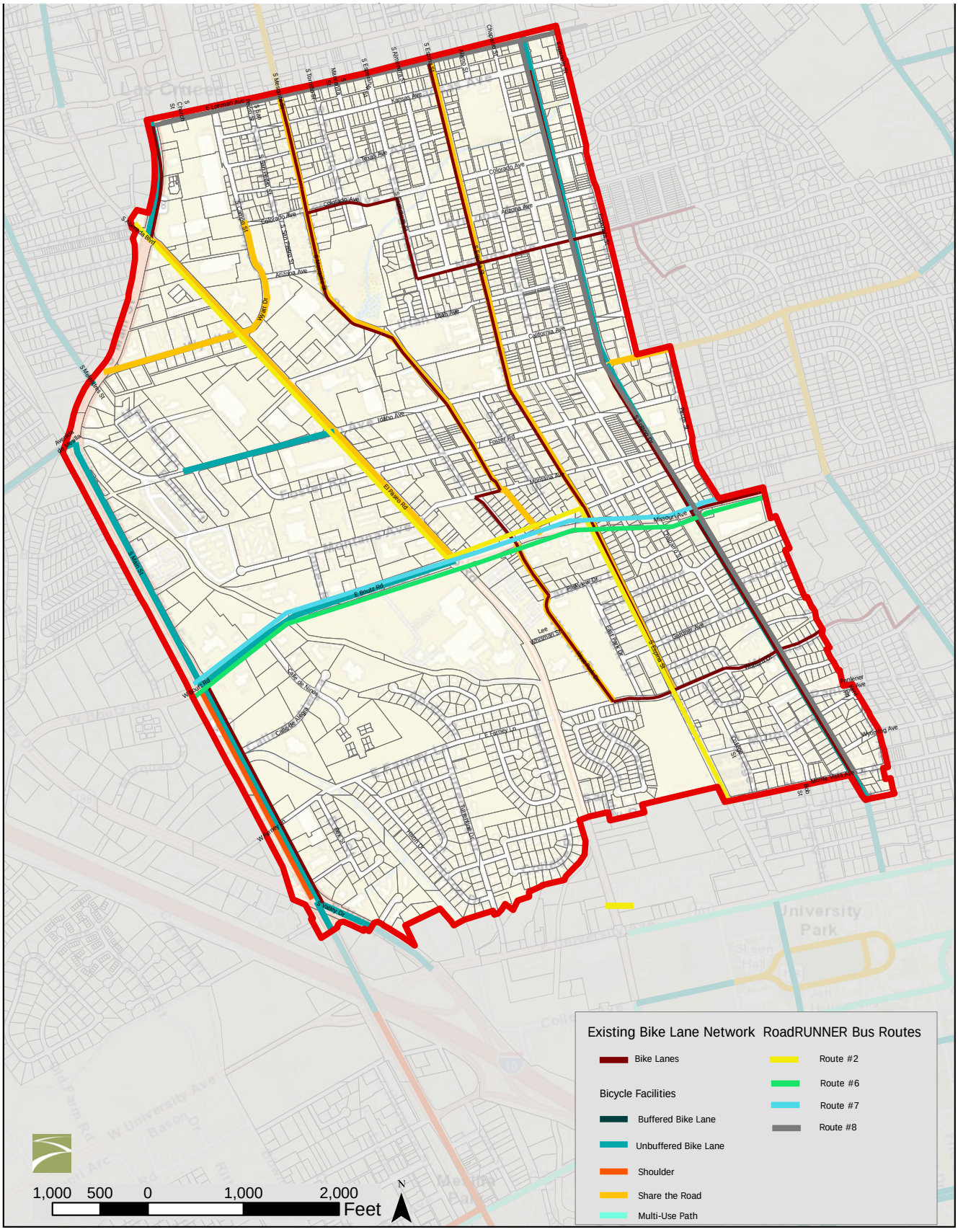


Minor Arterial: S Solano Dr., Google Streetview.



Collector: Farney Ln., Google Streetview.

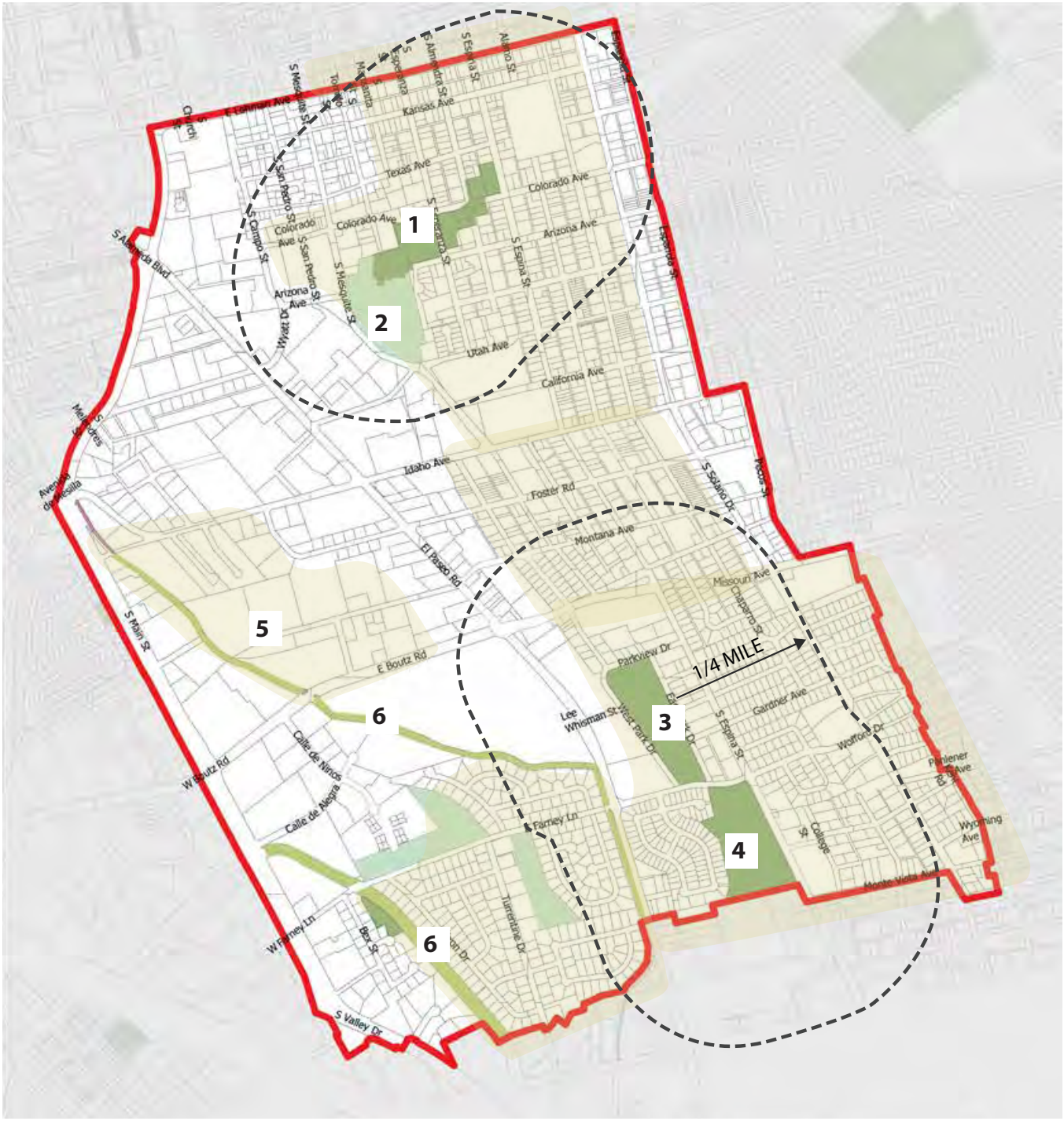
Bicycle Facilities & Public Transit



Asset Map


Assets in MRA
Parks
Community Centers & Organizations
Health & Quality of Life
Businesses
Public Institutions, Schools & Government Buildings
Bike Lanes
Hard Surface Trails
1,000 500 0 1,000 2,000
Feet
N

Parks and Open Space



1. Valley View Park
2. Stormwater retention area
3. Frenger Park
4. Gomez Park
5. Montana/Foster Neighborhood
6. Existing ditch

The MRA area includes three substantial parks, all of which are located east of El Paseo. The parks are well-situated to serve the nearby residential uses concentrated on the east side of the study area, with most residences within a quarter mile walk of a park.

Valley View Park (1) anchors the Chiva Town and Mesquite neighborhoods. There is a plan to rebuild the playground that recently burned. The park is in good condition but could benefit from improvements such as a bike/pedestrian path running along the length of the park. In addition, there is a vision to extend the greenway to the northeast to connect to the Las Cruces Arroyo.

There is a large storm water retention area (2) next to Valley View Park that is currently fenced off, creating a large void in the neighborhood. The City of Las Cruces is open to ideas on ways to improve the access and aesthetics of the area.

There are planned improvements to both Frenger and Gomez Parks (3 and 4, respectively), including new sports courts and walking trails. Improvements will also include an accessible ramp to provide better access for the new Padrena senior housing project.

The west side of El Paseo, especially the multi-family residential area identified as "Montana Foster Neighborhood" (5) lacks convenient access to a park. Some consideration should be given as to whether there is an opportunity to provide some shared greenspace for these residents.

The existing ditches, some of which have been put in pipes underground, provide an opportunity to enhance open space in the form of pedestrian and bike trails.



The Heske Garden located within Valley View Park.



Frenger Park's stormwater infrastructure.



Stormwater retention area next to Valley View Park.

Floodplain

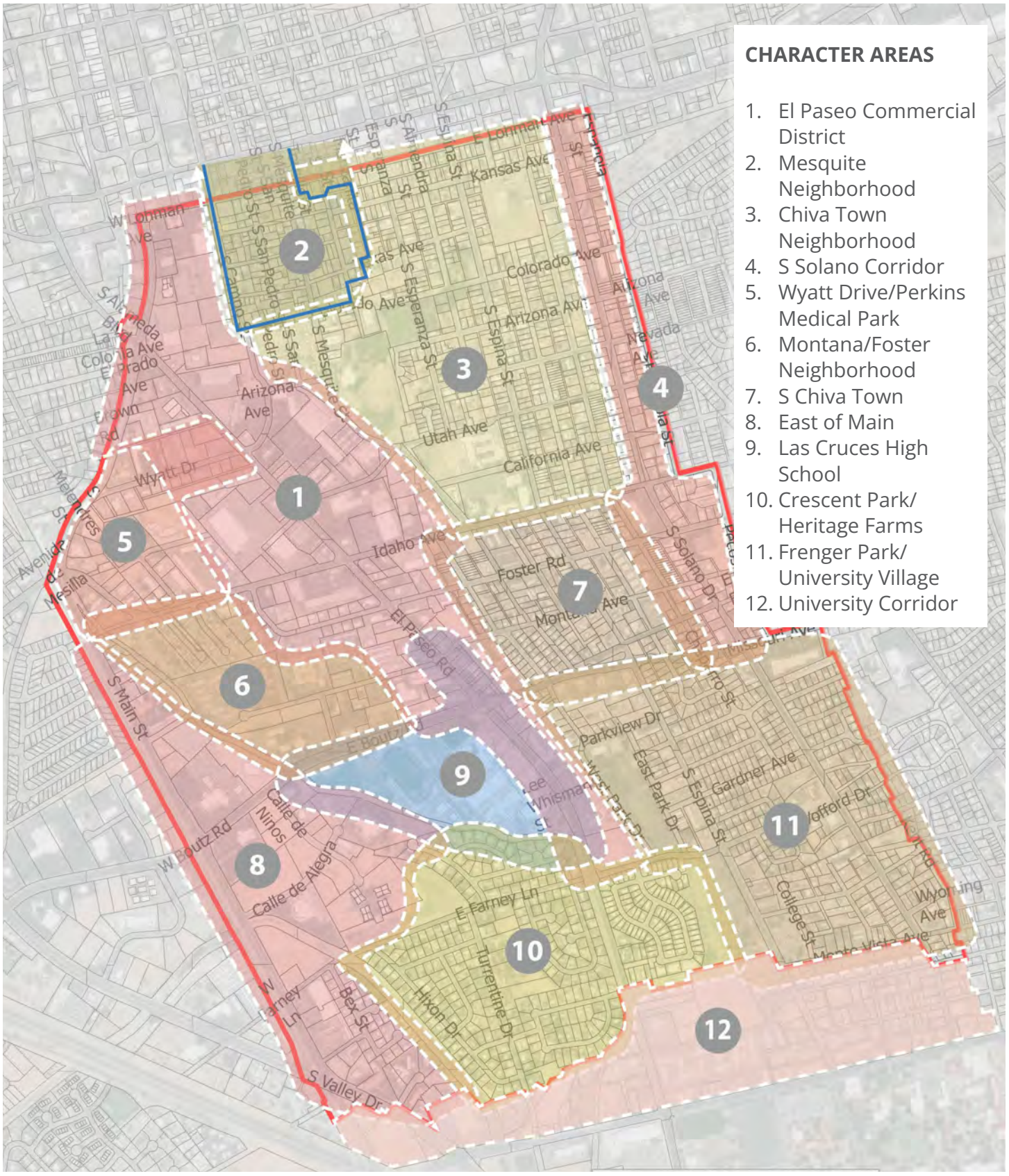

E Lohman Ave
E Lohman Ave
S Main St
S Campo St.
Colorado Ave
S Espina St
S Solano Dr
Wyatt Dr.
El Paseo Rd
Idaho Ave
Idaho Ave
S Main St
Missouri Ave
S Solano Dr
E Boutz Rd
El Paseo Rd
E Farney Ln
E Farney Ln
S Espina St
S Main St
E University Ave
E University Ave
Legend
FEMA Flood Zones
AE
AH
MRA Boundary
0 500 1,000 2,000
Feet

A significant portion of the MRA falls within the category of floodplain. This is an area that has been ideintified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on flood maps that indicate the probability of flooding. They help communities and individuals understand overall flood risk, which can impact insurance requirements and development/building costs.

Chapter 34 of Las Cruces's Land Development Code outlines the requirements for any new construction (or substantial rehabilitation - renovation costing more than 50% the market value of the structure) that falls within the floodplain. These include required building to be 1' above base flood elevation. If there are any structures that are below base flood elevation, they must include flood vents (at least 1 sq in per 1 sq ft of enclosed area) in order to allow floodwaters to naturally flow through the enclosure. Qualifying structures are parking, storage or access.

Structures that have national historic designation have slightly different requirements that need to be verified by the city prior to rehabilitation.

Character Areas



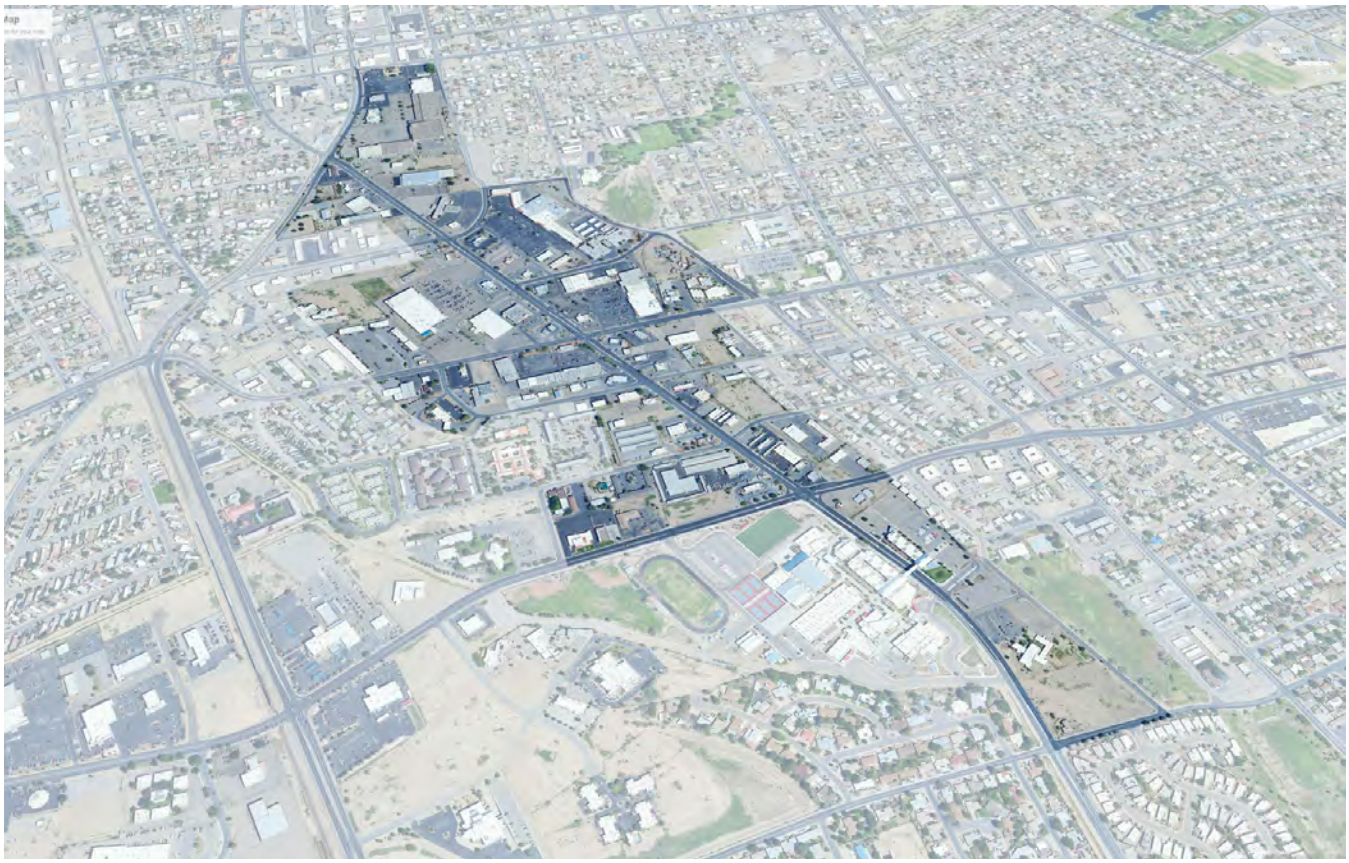
Approach

Comprising nearly 1,200 acres, the El Paseo & S Solano MRA study area is very large. To facilitate the planning and analysis of the area, it has been broken down into smaller areas which exhibit similar traits and attributes and have been identified as “Character Areas.” These smaller areas will help planners address specific issues related to the area as well as identifying opportunities to support the mission of the MRA district. The boundaries of these areas are “loose” and may be adjusted as more information and input is gathered.

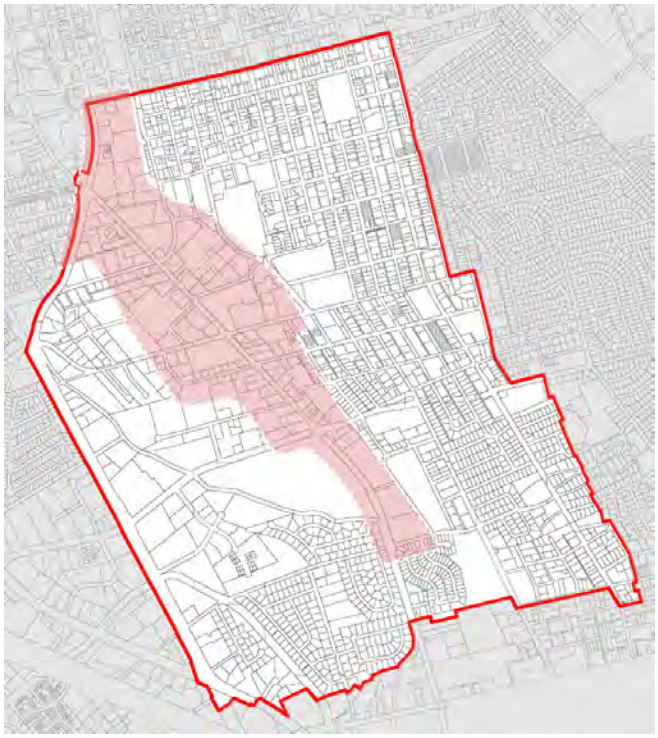
Another aim of the Character Area map is to begin to identify neighborhood units, both those that are currently recognized and well defined, and those that may need greater support and organization. Strong neighborhoods foster stewardship by residents, create better social cohesion and enhance quality of life. They are also the best opportunity to promote sustainable practices such as walking and biking.

On the following pages, each area is highlighted with a brief description, contextual images, and a preliminary list of issues and opportunities which may evolve as the planning process continues.

El Paseo Commercial District



Aerial view (Google Earth) showing large “super blocks” with little connectivity.



Residents recount that for several decades, El Paseo was the commercial and social center of the city. With the migration of commercial energy moving outward, the corridor is left with some underutilized large commercial buildings with expansive parking lots. Some of these buildings have been successfully adapted into churches and gyms, but there is more capacity than demand for both the structures and the associated large parking lots. El Paseo is the primary vehicular connection between downtown to the north, and NMSU to the south with Las Cruces High School located at about the midpoint.

Public Realm

El Paseo Road is a 5-lane arterial with a center turn lane and minimal sidewalks. Landscaping along the corridor is intermittent. There are no bike facilities. Both the lack of comfortable sidewalks and the large expanse of parking lots make walking difficult and the area may be more conducive to biking and transit.

Private Realm

The area is comprised primarily of one-story commercial buildings, some of which have cultural and historical significance. Buildings range from small commercial buildings housing local businesses, to large "big box" stores.

Previous Planning Efforts

- El Paseo Community Blueprint
- El Paseo - South Solano Corridor Recommendations

Issues and Opportunities

- Lots of space but decreasing demand for retail/commercial. Opportunities for new projects or uses here.
- Walkability is limited due to scale and traffic counts - focus on safety.
- Explore the potential for bike and transit improvements.
- The proximity to LCHS means that students often walk to lunch on the corridor. Safety improvements should be prioritized for common paths.
- There are existing plans for El Paseo which can guide the MRA projects here.



View of the corridor.

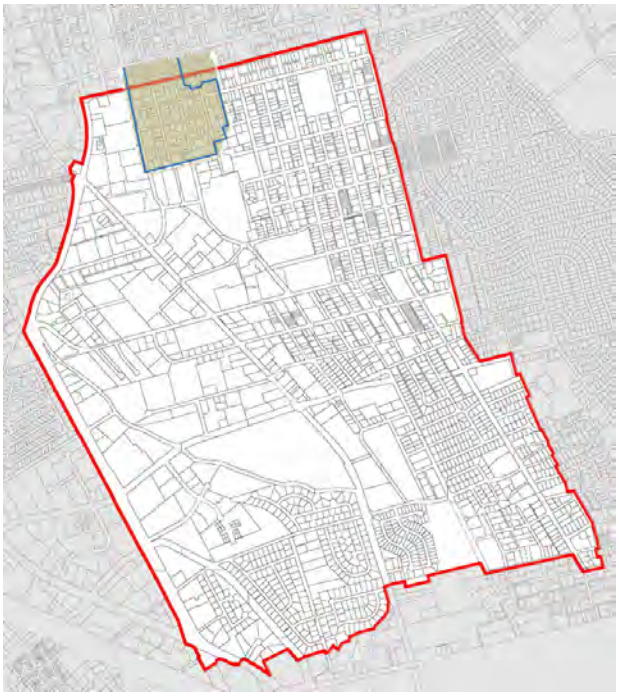


View of the corridor as it passes by Las Cruces High School.

South Mesquite Neighborhood



Aerial view showing a grid-like neighborhood pattern with modest dwellings.



The Mesquite Street Neighborhood is the oldest historic district in the city of Las Cruces with one of the largest collections of adobe houses in New Mexico. The neighborhood is protected by the South Mesquite Overlay District which extends to the north of the MRA boundary. A non-profit community organization named Las Esperanzas Inc. has lead efforts to protect and improve the neighborhood.

Public Realm

The public realm consist of a grid of narrow streets with small, walkable blocks. Sidewalks are minimal but vehicular traffic appears to be low.

Private Realm

Buildings are mostly modest, one-story structures. Many have low garden walls defining the private yard. Where the walls are in good condition, they contribute to the overall character of the neighborhood.

Previous Planning Efforts

- Mesquite Neighborhood Design Plan

Issues and Opportunities

- Maintain neighborhood scale and character
- Determine what hasn't yet been implemented from the Neighborhood Design Plan
- The MRA destination can help improve the neighborhood's physical infrastructure (i.e., funding facade/site improvements, streets and sidewalks, etc.)



One of the many historic adobe structures in the neighborhood.

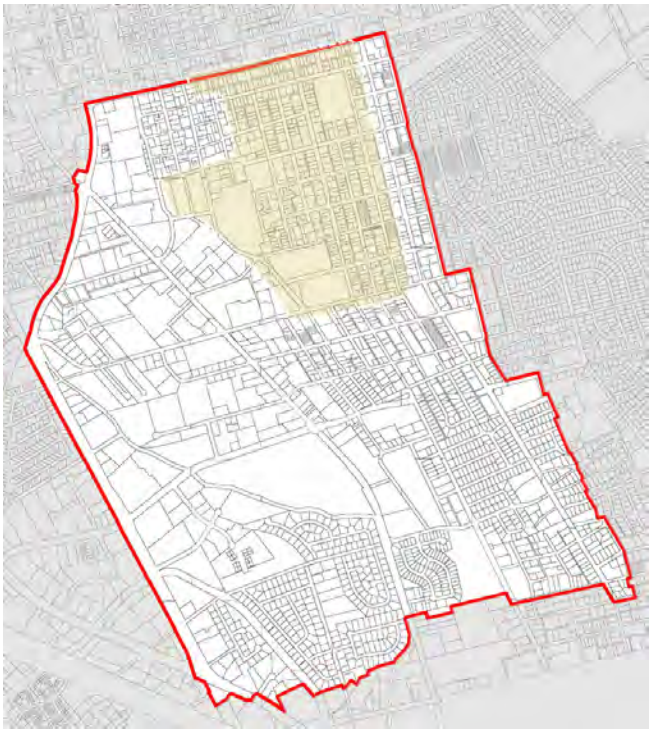


Some streets lack pedestrian facilities, but traffic is low so they likely function as "shared streets".

Chiva Town Neighborhood



Aerial view (Google Earth) showing large "super blocks" with little connectivity.



The Chiva Town Neighborhood is a primarily single-family residential neighborhood with several notable amenities. The neighborhood is conveniently located near downtown and the commercial districts on S Solano and El Paseo. Valley View Park anchors the neighborhood, and Valley View Elementary is within walking/biking distance of the neighborhood.

Public Realm

The neighborhood has a good block structure organized by a traditional street grid, Most blocks have alleys, but they appear underutilized with most parking in the front of the structures. Most streets have narrow sidewalks that are next to the curb.

Private Realm

The condition of existing buildings and properties varies considerably with well-kept houses next to properties that are in a state of disrepair.

Previous Planning Efforts

- Infill Policy Plan
- Lift Up Las Cruces

Issues and Opportunities

- Off-street parking and access could be improved in this area
- Improve and activate alleyways in this area.



Espina Street may be a good candidate for a north/south bike corridor.

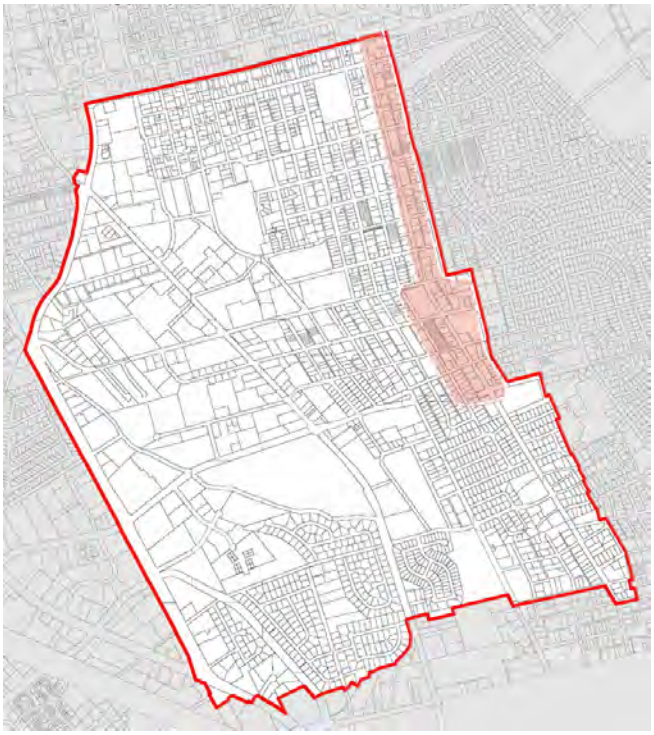


Alleys can be better utilized through activation.

S Solano Corridor



Aerial view (Google Earth) showing large “super blocks” with little connectivity.



The S Solano corridor exhibits a mixture of small, mostly local, businesses, that rely on economical rent. It exemplifies many of the attributes of an early auto-oriented commercial corridor with minimal landscaping, unregulated parking, and minimal pedestrian facilities. Example businesses include jewelry repair, restaurants, mobile phone shops, self-storage, furniture and appliances, entertainment (Sky Zone), cannabis shops, and auto-service businesses. There are very few residential uses directly on the corridor.

Public Realm

S Solano Drive is three lanes with a bike lane. The corridor has been identified in Elevate Las Cruces as a "Mixed-use Corridor" and the Active Transportation Plan calls for buffered bike lanes. Pedestrian facilities are poor with unshaded sidewalks and numerous curb cuts. There is no shared parking to support a walkable environment.

Private Realm

The built environment consists mainly of one-story buildings, with minimal landscaping. Shade is almost non-existent. Shallow lots, most about 130 feet deep, limit the amount of parking and drive throughs. Parking is unorganized and sometimes accessed directly from the street, interrupting the bike lane and sidewalk.

Previous Planning Efforts

- El Paseo - S Solano Corridor Recommendations
- Las Cruces Active Transportation Plan
- Elevate Las Cruces

Issues and Opportunities

- Clarify the vision for the corridor - examine ROW allocation.
- Property owners need assistance with aesthetic improvements, including landscaping, facade improvements, signage and shared parking, where feasible.
- Trash removal and dumpster locations are problematic.
- Lots are smaller than conventional pad sites. Difficult to meet some of the city's zoning requirements.
- Impact fees may impede improvements to the properties.



Much of the corridor lacks shade and landscaping.



There is a noticeable improvement to the street character where trees are present.

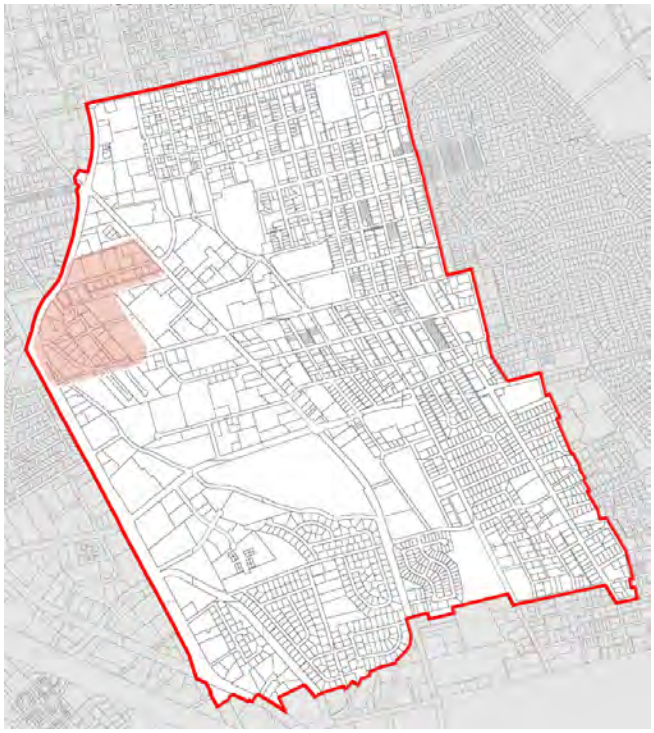


Example of residential uses that are present on the street.

Wyatt Drive/Perkins Medical Park



Aerial view of Wyatt Drive / Perkins Medical Park.



This character area contains is comprised of two sub-areas with some similar characteristics, primarily related to the smaller size of the lots and potential for walkability. This area also has significant vacancy at the moment; however, there are several planned development projects planned for the future, particularly between Campo Street and El Paseo Road.

Public Realm

Wyatt Drive is an extension of Campo Street. The street is bordered on the south by relatively shallow lots (approx. 100 feet) with a rear alley. Lots on the north side are deeper (approx. 300 feet) and also feature a rear alley.

Private Realm

The Perkins Street Medical Park is a cluster of mostly medical related professional offices that are clustered around a "square". The area is noticeably greener than surrounding areas. It is somewhat disconnected from the surrounding area which may impede security and access.

Previous Planning Efforts

- Elevate Las Cruces

Issues and Opportunities

- Realizing the vision for Wyatt Dr. to accommodate residents and businesses.
- Improve connectivity for the Perkins Medical Park.
- Security and vandalism has been identified as a problem in this area.



View along Wyatt Drive.

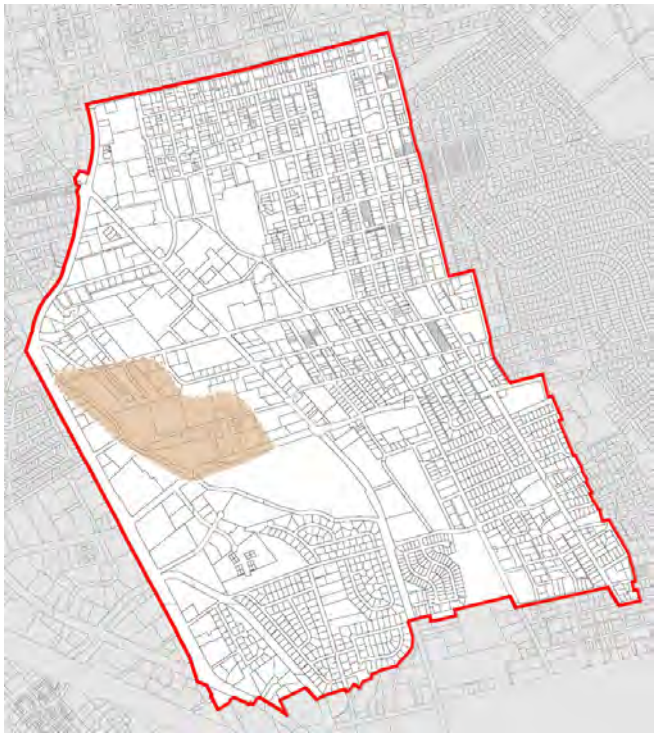


The Perkins Street Medical Park appears as an oasis of green compared to other portions of the study area.

Montana/Foster Neighborhood



Aerial view of Montana/Foster Neighborhood.



This area, between Idaho and Montana, and South Main and El Paseo, consist of a variety of multi-family developments which range from a mobile home park to senior housing and assisted living. It is loosely defined as a neighborhood, but neighborhood identity and cohesion is likely limited due to the lack of connectivity and central gathering space.

Foster Road, which runs through the center of the area, has potential to provide pedestrian/ bike/transit access to El Paseo.

The Las Cruces Lateral running along the western boundary has potential to facilitate pedestrian and bike connections to the larger area.

Public Realm

Montana Ave. and Foster Ave. are the two main corridors that provide access to these neighborhoods but do not have through access due to the drainage canal that borders this area to the west. The drainage corridor itself offers the opportunity to provide multi-modal connectivity to other parts of the city.

Private Realm

This area has a cluster of different residential enclaves including the mobile home park (Patio Mobile Home Park), duplexes along Burley and Non Burt Lanes, Montana Meadows and Vista Montana Apartments along Montana Ave. There is a hospice care facility, self-storage uses, and miscellaneous commercial and institutional uses along Montana closer to El Paseo.

Previous Planning Efforts

- Elevate Las Cruces

Issues and Opportunities

- Consider enhancements or amenities that reinforce neighborhood identity here.
- The proposed public housing rehabilitation on Burkley and Bon Burt is an opportunity to provide improved housing and reinforce neighborhood identity.



View along Montana Ave. The vacant land on the south side is an opportunity for infill development.



View looking west down Foster Ave.

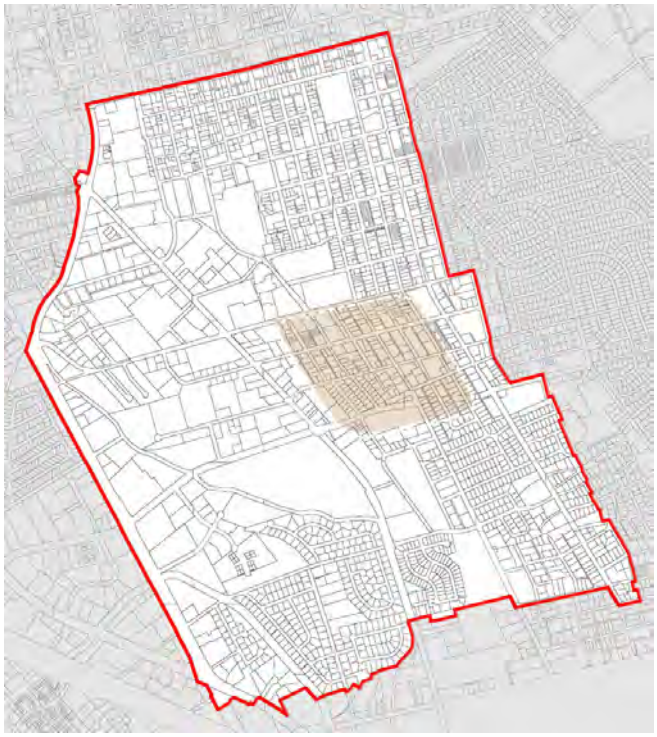


View looking west along E Idaho Ave.

Foster Road Neighborhood/S. Chiva Town



Aerial view of Foster Road Neighborhood.



This area, between Idaho and Missouri, and S Solano and El Paseo, is a primarily residential area consisting of single family houses and small apartment buildings. It is unclear whether this area has a strong neighborhood identity (confirm through public engagement activities).

The area has a well-defined street grid which facilitates good circulation. However, it lacks an identifiable center.

Public Realm

Many of the streets are fairly narrow residential streets, typically with sidewalks along the curbs. S Espina is a bit wider and provide connectivity north and south to other areas in the MRA. These blocks have existing alleys with utilities along the alleys but many of them need to be better maintained. The east-west streets provide through connections to adjacent areas in the MRA and Missouri and Idaho Aves convey the bulk of the traffic east and west.



View along Espina which runs through the neighborhood.

Private Realm

These blocks are mostly single-family detached and attached residential, especially along Duranzo and Esperanza Street. There are some multi-family uses along Idaho and along Espina and Alamo Streets.



A popular pocket park and public art installation on Missouri.

Previous Planning Efforts

- Elevate Las Cruces

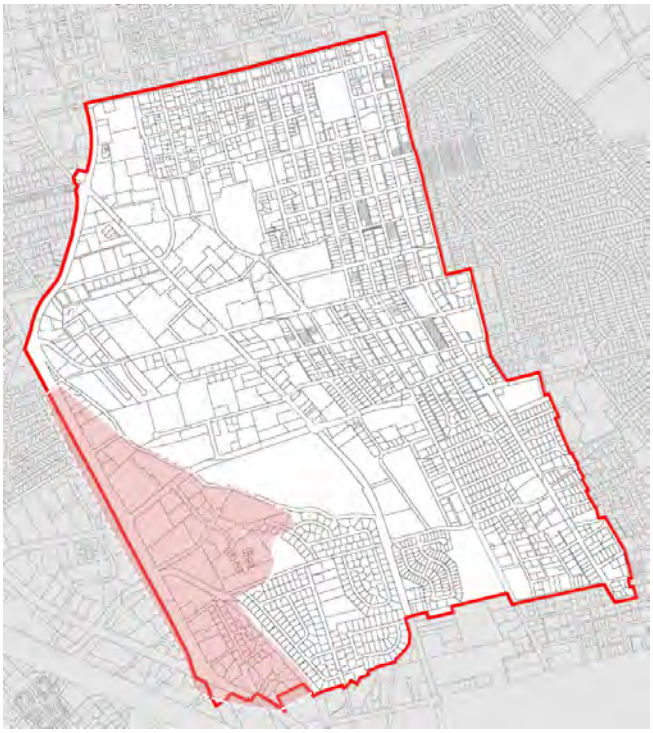
Issues and Opportunities

- Understanding the existing neighborhood identity will support strategies to uplift this identity.

East of Main



Aerial view of East of Main Neighborhood.



"East of Main" is a wedge shaped area bounded by the Las Cruces Lateral and the ditch to the east and South Main to the west.

The area has large parcels and considerable vacant land. Large parcels are being developed with a combination of institutional and professional uses. There is also a condominium development partially developed at the end of Calle de Ninos.

Connectivity is poor due to the lack of a street grid and the ditches which create barriers to the east. However, the ditches are also an opportunity to enhance bike/pedestrian connectivity.

Public Realm

This area is bounded by Main Street, a major north-south arterial to the west and is bisected by E. Boutz and Farney Road. Main Street along this section is a 4 lane divided roadway with turn lanes at key intersections. It lacks sidewalks or shade for comfortable and safe walking.

Private Realm

There is a lot of undeveloped land in this area of the MRA. Several newer developments such as the residential at the end of Calle de Ninos are not completely built out. There are some auto sales uses along Main Street and some institutional and medical service uses along Calle de Alegra. There is potential for a lot more infill and intensification in this area, subject to sewer availability

Previous Planning Efforts

- Elevate Las Cruces

Issues and Opportunities

- The area lacks a well-defined block structure and street grid, limiting connectivity.
- Inadequate sewer service in some areas.
- There is an opportunity to provide more amenities, like a trail, along the existing ditches.



South Main Street looking north.



Boutz Road looking east toward mountains.



Ditch just north of Boutz Road.

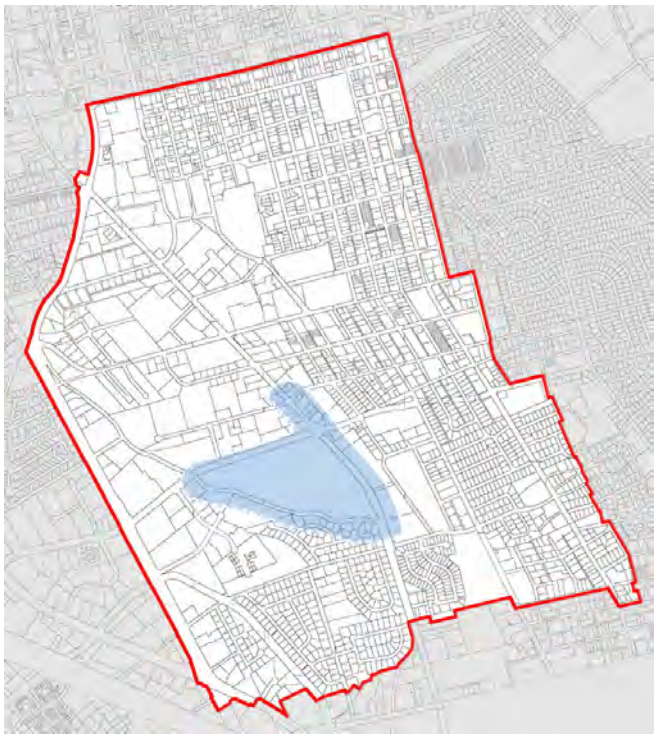


Social institutions are prevalent in the area.

Las Cruces High School



Aerial view of Las Cruces High School.



Las Cruces High School is the largest public institution in the study area and a point of pride for the community. The large campus has multiple buildings and sports fields. The Las Cruces Lateral, running along the southwestern border of the site has potential to enhance bike and pedestrian access for students. The high school is also bordered by two arterials, El Paseo and Boutz Road. It is reported that many students walk to lunch along El Paseo and that pedestrian safety could be improved, especially at the intersection of El Paseo and Boutz Road.

Public Realm

This area is bounded by two large arterials - Boutz Rd. and El Paseo. These corridors are major barriers to pedestrians, especially high school students who may live in adjoining neighborhoods that either walk or bike to the high school. There is an overhead pedestrian connector over El Paseo connecting the school facilities on both sides of the El Paseo.



El Paseo as it passes by the high school.

Private Realm

This area consists one large scale institutional use, Las Cruces High School at the southwest corner of El Paseo and Boutz. The area has some smaller retail and fast food uses along El Paseo north of Boutz.



Intersection of El Paseo and Boutz Rd. High pedestrian activity reports.

Previous Planning Efforts

- Elevate Las Cruces

Issues and Opportunities

- Ditch could be utilized for bike and pedestrian access.
- Boutz Road is a candidate for bike and pedestrian improvements.
- Improve pedestrian safety at the intersection of El Paseo and Boutz, and north along El Paseo.

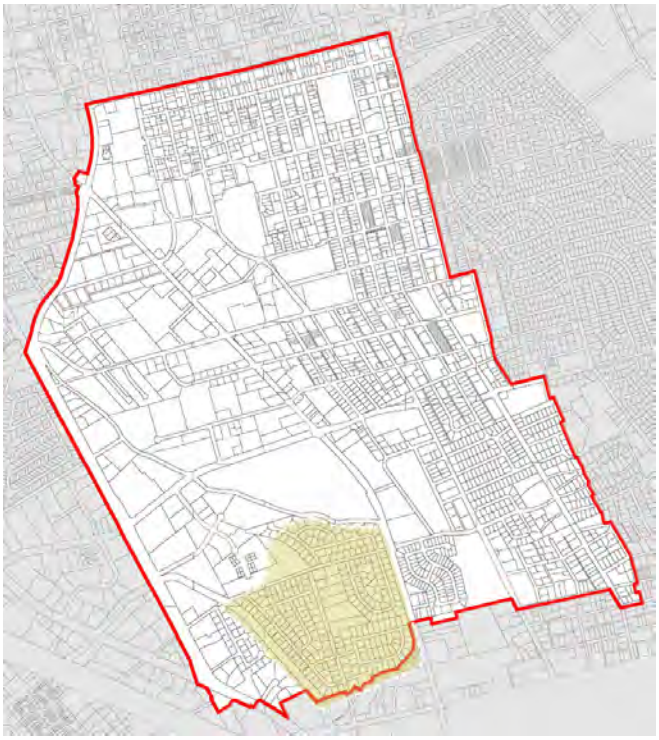


Vehicular entry to high school on Boutz Rd.

Crescent Park/Heritage Farms



Aerial view of Crescent Park/Heritage Farms Neighborhood.



This area consists of single family neighborhoods which are noticeably greener than other parts of the study area. Many houses date from mid-century and the area has been studied by NMSU as a candidate for historic district designation.

The area has a loose block structure with narrow streets shaded by trees in the private property. While there is little landscaping in the right-of-way, the well kept front yards create a comfortable environment for walking and biking.

Public Realm

The neighborhood has a curvilinear block structure typical of post WWII neighborhoods but still has connectivity to the perimeter roadways of Farney Ln. and El Paseo. Most streets have narrow sidewalks that are next to the curb. The newer sections built in 1960s have a few cul-de-sacs off of Crescent Dr. There is the potential to connect to the north through the future trails along the drainage canal running along the northern edge of the neighborhood.



View along Farney Lane looking east.

Private Realm

The neighborhoods are mainly single-family residential with homes built in the 1950s and 60s. There is one block along Turrentine Dr. with deeper lots and homes that are not part of the two subdivisions of Crescent Park and College Park.



View along El Paseo with Crescent Park on the right.

Previous Planning Efforts

- Elevate Las Cruces

Issues and Opportunities

- As a stable residential area, the best strategy may be to maintain the status quo.
- The canals running along the western boundary, and on the east along El Paseo, have been identified for future trail connections.

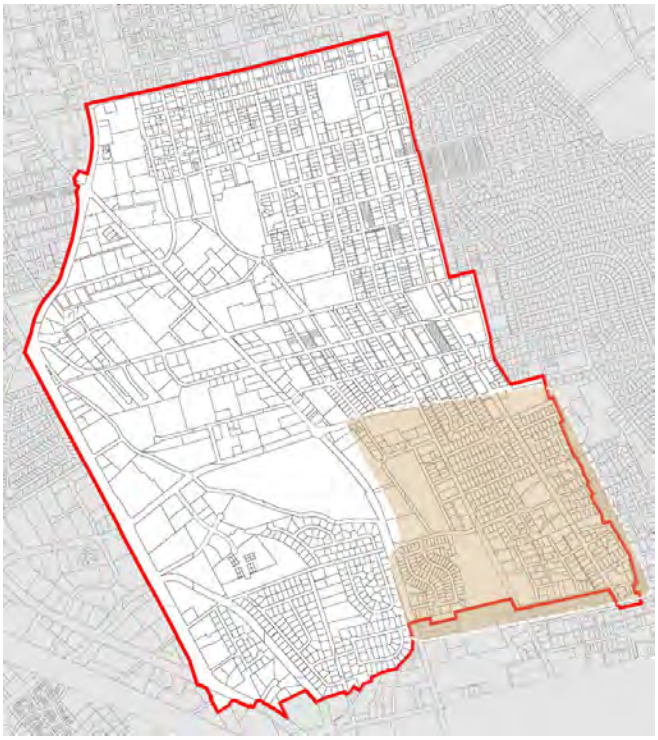


View along Turrentine Drive.

Frenger Park/University Village



Aerial view of Frenger Park/University Village Neighborhood



This area is primarily residential with a variety of housing types including single family, small apartment buildings and a mobile home park. The area also has some commercial uses along Espina Street. Two parks, Frenger Park and Gomez Park provide the neighborhood with ample greenspace and are also utilized for storm water management. Some security concerns have been raised relative to the parks. With its close proximity to NMSU, the area provides housing for students and the local workforce.

The areas has a well-defined street grid with good connections to the parks. Most streets have sidewalks. Espina Street has been identified as a candidate for buffered bike lanes in the Las Cruces Active Transportation Plan.

Public Realm

This area has compact and connected residential blocks with sidewalks along most streets. However, the sidewalks are not well maintained and lack shade to make comfortable for walking. The streets are generally low speed and low traffic making them attractive for walking and biking. Additionally, this quadrant is also the location for two major public parks: Frenger and Gomez Parks. However, better connectivity, infill along Farney Lane and programming of the parks can help activate the park as a gathering space for the neighborhoods.

Private Realm

Other than Heritage Farm which was developed in 2004, most of the residential blocks in this quadrant were developed in 1950s and 1960s. Most of the residential is single-family detached homes. But there are some mobile homes between Milton Ave and Monte Vista along Espina and some apartments and townhomes/ duplexes along Monte Vista.

Previous Planning Efforts

- Elevate Las Cruces

Issues and Opportunities

- Espina Street acts as the spine of the neighborhood and has potential as a high quality bike corridor.
- With planned improvements, the two parks provide an amenity for future development, especially along the park edges.
- The neighborhood-oriented commercial uses should be supported and enhanced.
- New senior housing will add additional “eyes on the parks”.



Single family houses on Farney Lane.



Frenger Park which doubles as storm water management.



Example of apartment building on Espina Street.

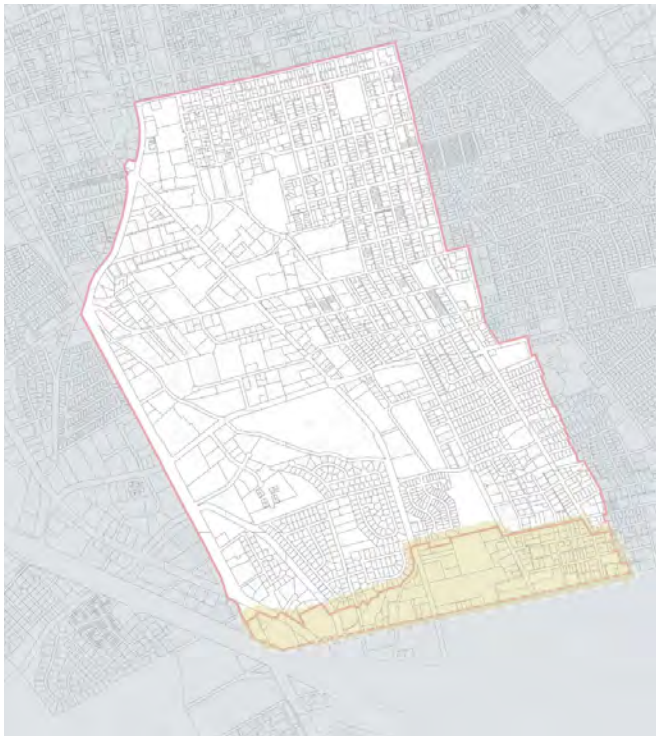


Commercial shopping center on Espina Street.

University Corridor - *Proposed Boundary Extension*



Aerial view of University Corridor



This area is primarily commercial and hospitality that serves the University and Las Cruces Convention Center. There are several multi-family residential units oriented toward students, as well as a few older single-family residential neighborhoods just north of the commercial corridor. There are also several large vacant properties that could be key opportunity sites for future development.

This area is zoned as the University District Overlay, which is a unique zoning catgory that allows greater flexibility to developers and land owners while encouraging the development of a vibrant, mixed-use University District. Future recommendations for the MRA are largely aligned with the guidance of the Overlay. Review of future proposed developments should take into consideration both documents. As of summer 2025, there is a Corridor Study underway for University Avenue.

Public Realm

This area is notably framed to the south by University Avenue. The corridor is surrently undergoing a planning process and has had improvements made over teh years to try to achieve community goals for walkability. These include improved intersections and the additional of a separated multiuse trail on the south side of the road. The neighborhoods north of the corridor are serviced by local roads laid out in an irregular grid pattern. Much of the block structure is disrupted by large parcels. Sidewalks are irregular.

Private Realm

Commercial properties dominate the landscape along the corridor, while the residential areas to the north are comprised primarily of multi-family units, with some single-family homes along Mesa Avenue and Plain Street. Some residential properties in this area are notably neglected and could benefit from exterior improvements and rehabilitation. Also, there are several large, vacant properties that are opportunity sites for infill development.

Previous Planning Efforts

- University Avenue Cross Section Reallocation Study and Design
- University District Plan

Issues and Opportunities

- Multiple vacant parcels contribute to sense of neglect and blight; however, these also offer an opportunity for future development
- Street and pedestrian connections should be improved; much of the multifamily areas lack safe passageways.



Vacant parcel with graffiti along University Ave.



Vacant commercial property.

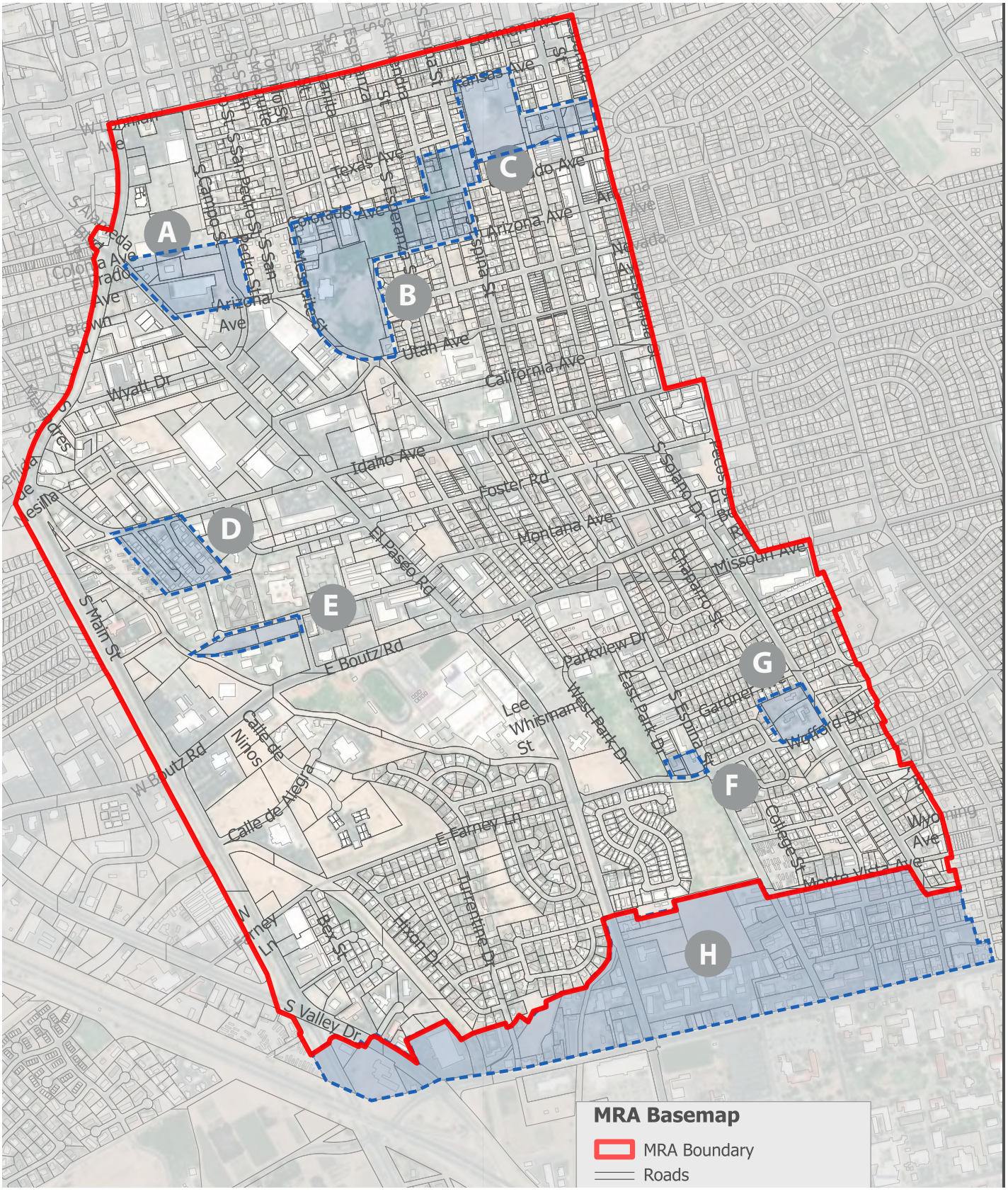


Large undeveloped property on Turrentine Drive.



Undeveloped property on Plain Street

Proposed Opportunity Sites



The planning team identified numerous sites in the study area that are candidates for catalytic projects and more detailed planning efforts. Some sites were identified by city staff and stakeholders as targets of redevelopment. Others were identified by the planning team as opportunities to accelerate positive transformation of an area or street.

A This site, between El Paseo and Campo Street, was purchased by F.Y.I. who has proposed a mixed-use project with housing and small commercial uses. It should connect to the Paseos Verdes project on the east side of Campo Street. The nearby former Video 4 will be the future site of the Boys and Girls Club and should be considered as a future key destination in the area that will bolster development. Wyatt Dr. should also be considered for an improved transit stop in the future.

B This opportunity site will look at potential improvements to Valley View Park, focusing on the northern edges of the park and on ways to improve the adjacent storm water detention area.

C The site of the old brickyard is a good candidate for infill housing. In addition, there is an opportunity to connect the drainage way to the arroyo to the east.

D This is the site of existing public housing which has been identified for redevelopment by the Las Cruces housing authority.

E This site is a good candidate for infill housing.

F This is a small site that is situated between the Frenger and Gomez Parks and that could help “activate” the parks and reinforce the parks as a community destination.

G Representatives of the Unitarian Universalist Church indicated interest in developing affordable housing on its property. This site could serve as a model for other church sites in the area.

H Expand the boundary of the MRA to include parcels north of University Avenue for design consistency and vision alignment.

MARKET **ANALYSIS**



Regional Context

Historical & Forecasted Employment Growth

Prior to the Global Financial Crisis ("GFC"), employment growth exceeded national averages in Doña Ana County relative to the nation, growing at a compound annual growth rate ("CAGR") of 2.8% versus the national average of 0.8% from 1998 to 2008 (refer to Chart 1).

However, struggles to rebound from the GFC, driven in part by a hard-hit government sector, slowed employment growth significantly throughout the region. Employment growth from 2010-2019 slowed to 0.7%, trailing the national growth rate of 1.6% over the same period.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic shutdowns impacted regional employment, causing a decline of 3.8% or approximately 2,800 jobs in 2020. Despite this setback, the region was able to recover all lost jobs by 2022.

Despite the robust pandemic recovery of record-breaking job growth, regional growth is expected to moderate in the years to come. This moderation is in line with national trends, as an aging population and slowing population growth, low unemployment rates, and productivity gains through advances in technology and AI are likely to constrain employment gains moving forward. Oxford Economics expects the county will average 685 net new jobs annually through 2033, or a CAGR of 0.7%, which outpaces the projected national CAGR of 0.5%.

Job growth is likely to be concentrated in areas of the county experiencing higher household growth, leaving the El Paseo & S Solano MRA ("MRA") at a disadvantage. Areas with higher household growth rates will naturally attract more businesses and services to meet the demands of the increasing population.



Key Regional Economic Sectors

Historically, the Government sector has been the primary source of employment for Doña Ana County, accounting for roughly 26% of all county jobs in 2023 (refer to Chart 2).

Numerous federal government operations in the county contribute to the Government sector's outsized share of regional employment, including the White Sands Missile Range, NASA's White Sands Test Facility, the Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Border Patrol Operations and Training—in addition to local and state government jobs.

While the Government sector is the largest industry in the county, the Education & Health Services sector has comprised the largest share of new job growth over the last decade,

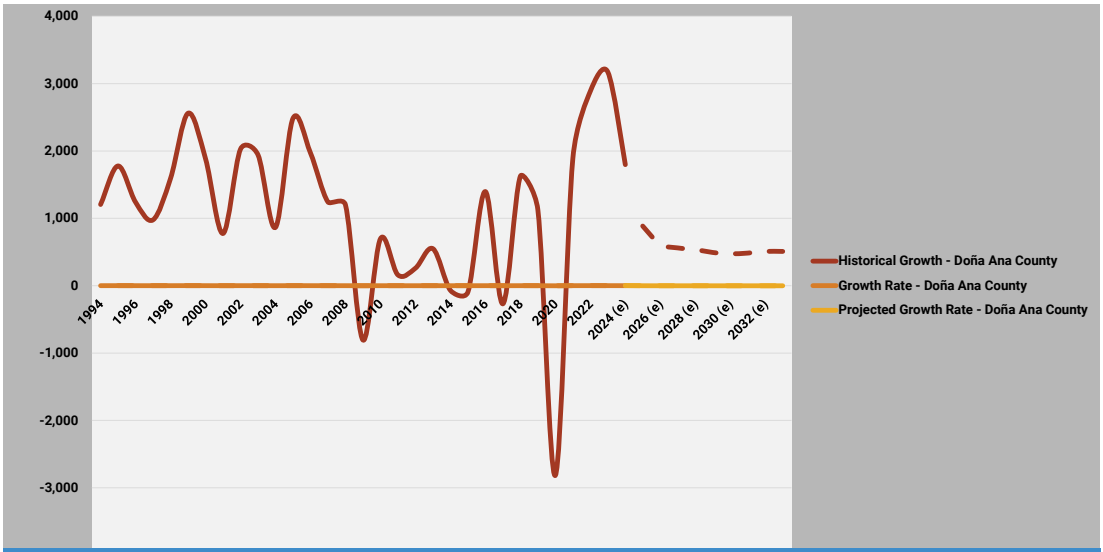


Chart 1. Historical Employment Growth Trends

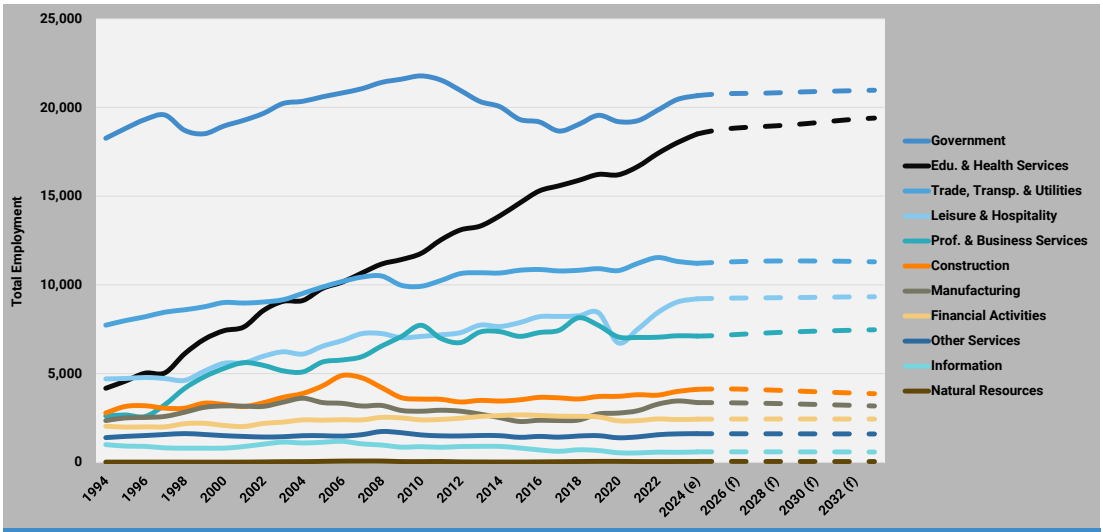


Chart 2. Historical and Forecasted Non-Agricultural Employment by Industry

encompassing nearly 60% of job growth from 2010 to 2023.

Key contributors to the growth in the Education & Health Services sector include New Mexico State University, though its stagnating enrollment over the past decade indicates that other sources are likely driving a greater share of growth in the sector. The expansion of health services—highlighted by the addition of Three Crosses Regional Hospital and the enhanced services at MountainView Regional Medical Center and other medical facilities—has increased healthcare capacity to support the region's aging population.

Historical & Forecasted Household Growth

Closely linked with employment trends, household growth in Doña Ana County has decelerated since the GFC. From 2010 to 2023, the county's household growth averaged 1.1% annually, a significant drop from the 2.3% annual growth rate observed in the decade preceding the GFC. Notable spikes in employment growth during 2018-2019 and the post-pandemic period aligned with elevated household growth rates during these times.

However, Oxford Economics projects household growth to moderate, along with employment growth. Over the next decade, Oxford projects household growth will average 275 new households annually, or an average annual growth rate of 0.3% (refer to Chart 3).

While household growth is expected to moderate throughout the nation, Doña Ana County is anticipated to slightly outpace both New Mexico and the United States in terms of annual household growth from 2023 to 2028 at a rate of 0.7% annually. The MRA is anticipated to follow historical trends of under performing relative to the county, with annual household growth expected to average 0.2% annually through 2028 (refer to Chart 4).

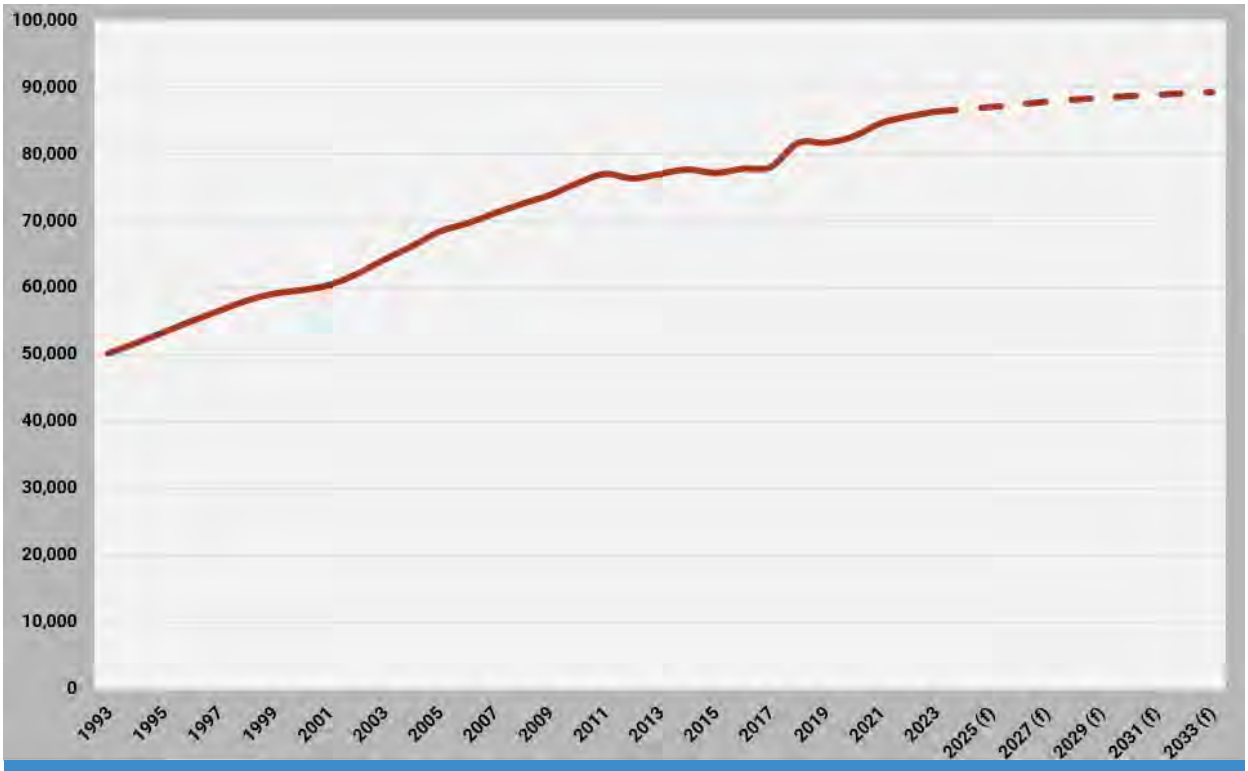


Chart 3. Historical & Forecasted Households

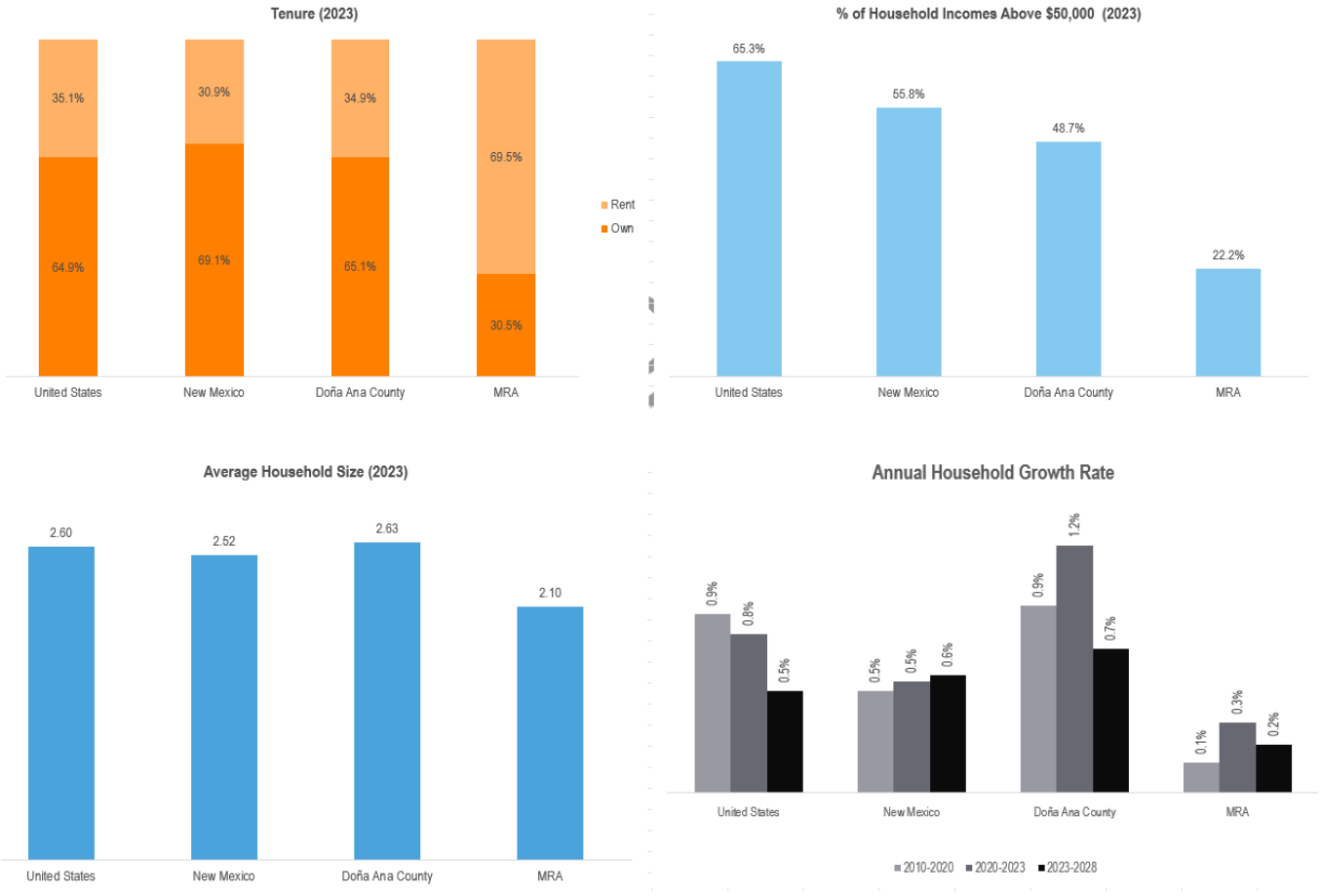


Chart 4. Comparison of Key Demographic Characteristics

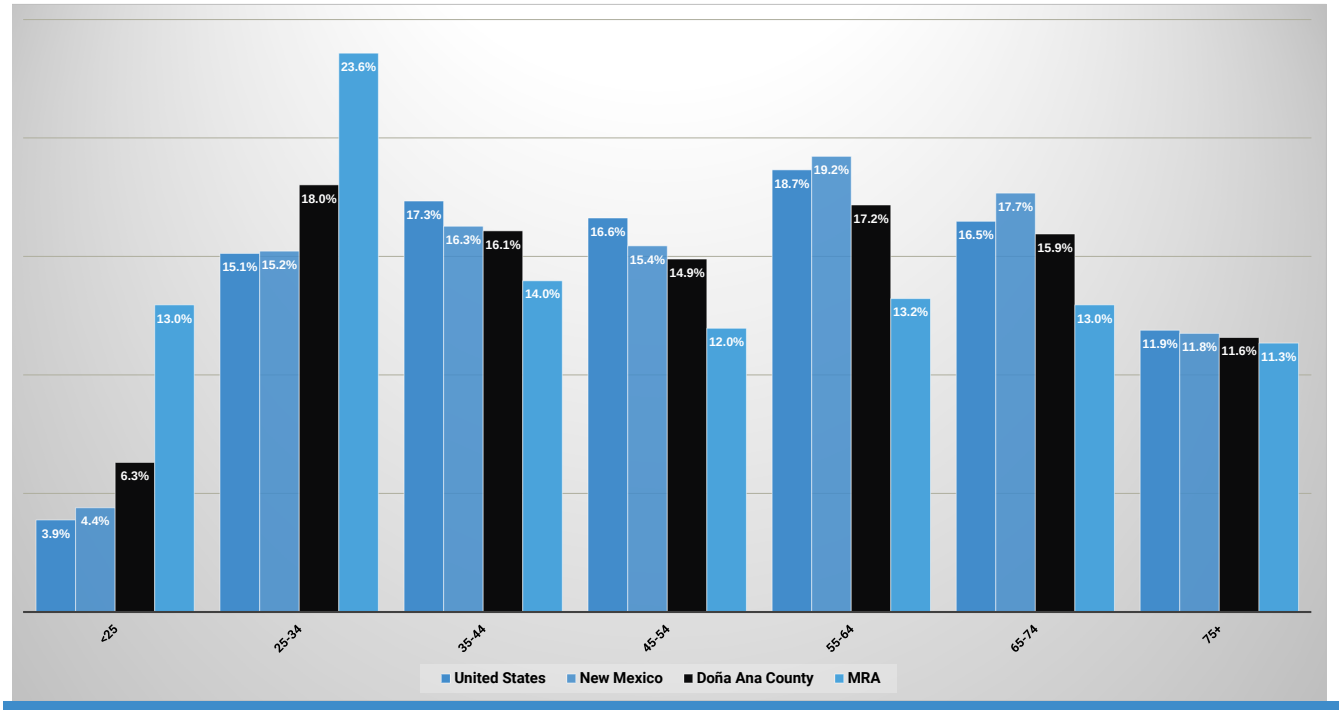


Chart 5. Household Distribution by Age

Demographics

Overall, the MRA skews younger and less affluent than the county. Approximately 37% of MRA households are under the age of 35, compared to only 24% in the county. However, the county still has a larger share of households under the age of 25 relative to the state and the nation, given the presence of NMSU (refer to Chart 5). Over the next five years, households over the age of 75 are expected to represent the fastest-growing segment as Baby Boomers age in place, while ESRI also projects significant growth in the 35-44 age group (refer to Exhibit I-8). The retention of post-graduates, young professionals, and families will be a key strategy in keeping talent in the region.

Moreover, household incomes are notably lower in the MRA, with nearly half of households earning less than $25,000 (refer to Chart 6). In contrast, just 22% of MRA households earned more than $50,000 in 2023, compared to nearly half of households in the county (refer to Chart 6). The substantial student population in the area partly accounts for the county's lower affluence compared to the state and nation.

Renter tenure in the MRA is significantly higher when compared to both the county and the state. Nearly 70% of households in the MRA rent as opposed to only 35% in the county and 31% in the state (refer to Chart 5). Lower incomes of households in the MRA make homeownership unattainable for a vast majority of households, explaining high renter tenure rates.

Over 65% of the population in Dona Ana County and the MRA are of Hispanic origin, and this share is expected to increase slightly through 2028. While only around 20% of the nation's population is of Hispanic origin, the national share is also expected to increase (refer to Chart 7).

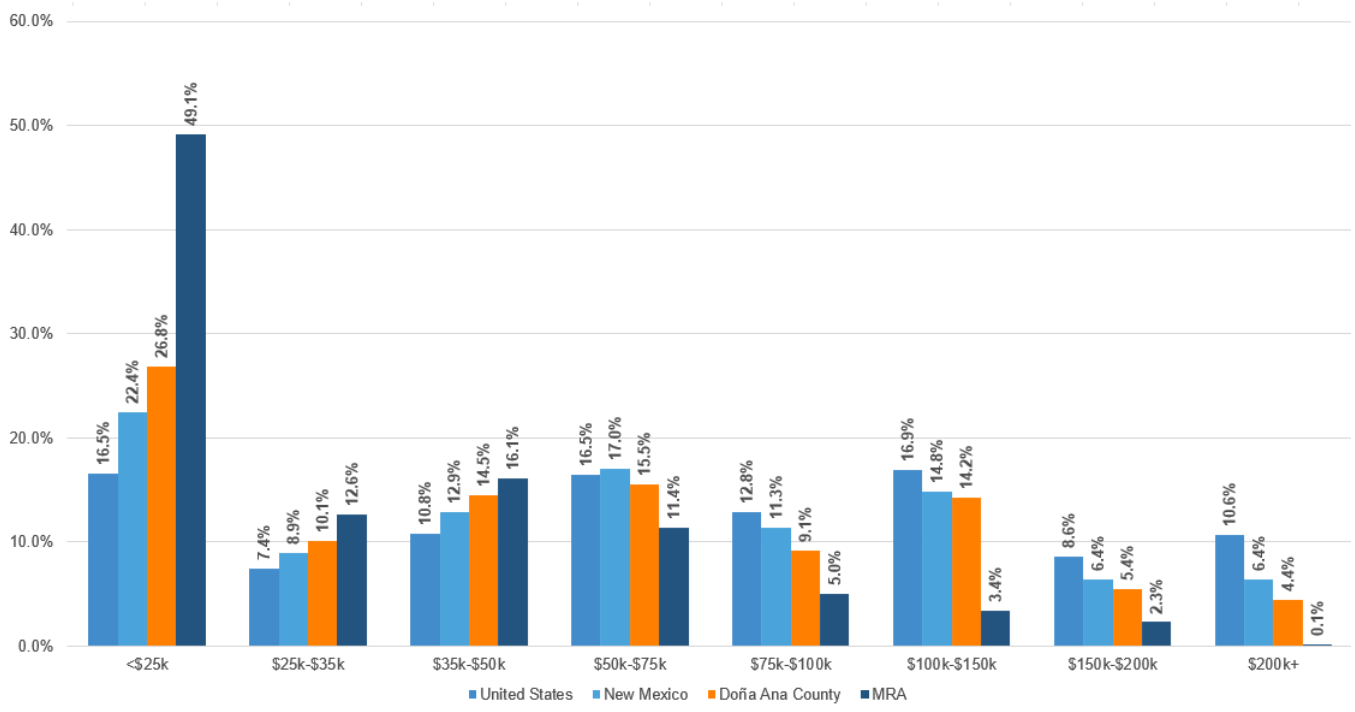


Chart 6. Household Distribution by Income

Education Attainment

Education attainment in Doña Ana County is slightly less than the state or the nation, with only 40.9% of Doña Ana County residents holding an associates degree or higher. The MRA has a slightly lower share with an associates degree or higher at 37.7% (refer to Chart 8).

Continuing to invest in school programs and support for local students will be an opportunity to increase graduation rates for high school, community college, and university students at NMSU. Increasing educational attainment and improving local talent will be a vital component for long-term regional growth and prosperity

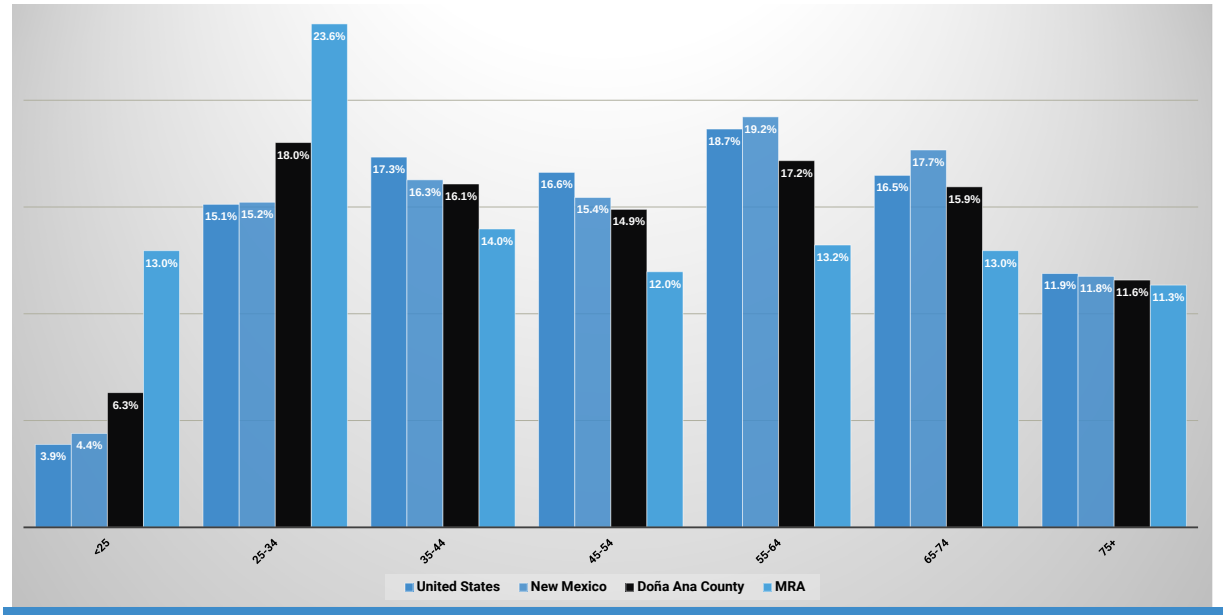


Chart 7. Hispanic Population (%)

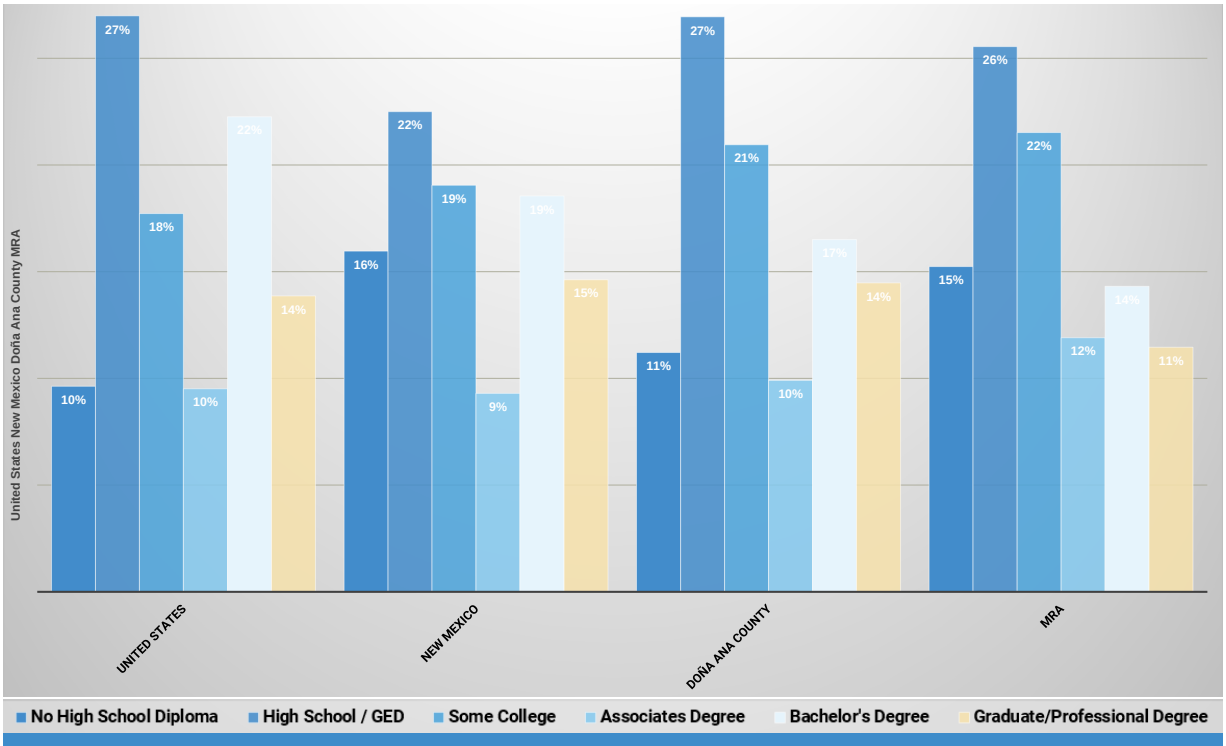


Chart 8. Educational Attainment of Population 25+

For-Sale Market & Opportunity

Resale Market Trends

During the GFC, permitting activity in the region was muted as developers and capital markets navigated financial challenges, frozen capital markets, elevated bankruptcies, and uncertainty. Following, permitting activity in the region steadily increased throughout the 2010s, generally keeping pace with household growth. The region witnessed a peak in permitting activity during the pandemic, driven by higher household growth rates compared to the majority of the 2010s. This activity has since declined, driven in part by rising interest rates and increased financing challenges for builders and developers in capital markets (refer to Chart 9).

The share of multifamily permits of overall residential permits reached its peak in the early 2000s, though multifamily development could make up a larger share moving forward due to affordability challenges. In the MRA particularly, RCLCO sees a potential opportunity for greater multifamily development to deliver more units at a more attainable price point for both for-sale and rental housing. Multifamily housing can include smaller-scale townhomes, duplexes, or quadplex products, in addition to apartments.

From 2014 to 2020, year-over-year median sale price growth in Doña Ana County averaged roughly 3.1%. The resulting housing demand surge during the COVID-19 pandemic significantly increased median sale prices as inventory in the county became constrained. Price appreciation peaked at 17.9% in 2021, though has since declined to 4.6% thus far in 2024 as inventory levels have increased. The region still has not witnessed a price decline following the pandemic, pointing to continued demand for housing, despite a high interest rate environment. (refer to Chart 10).

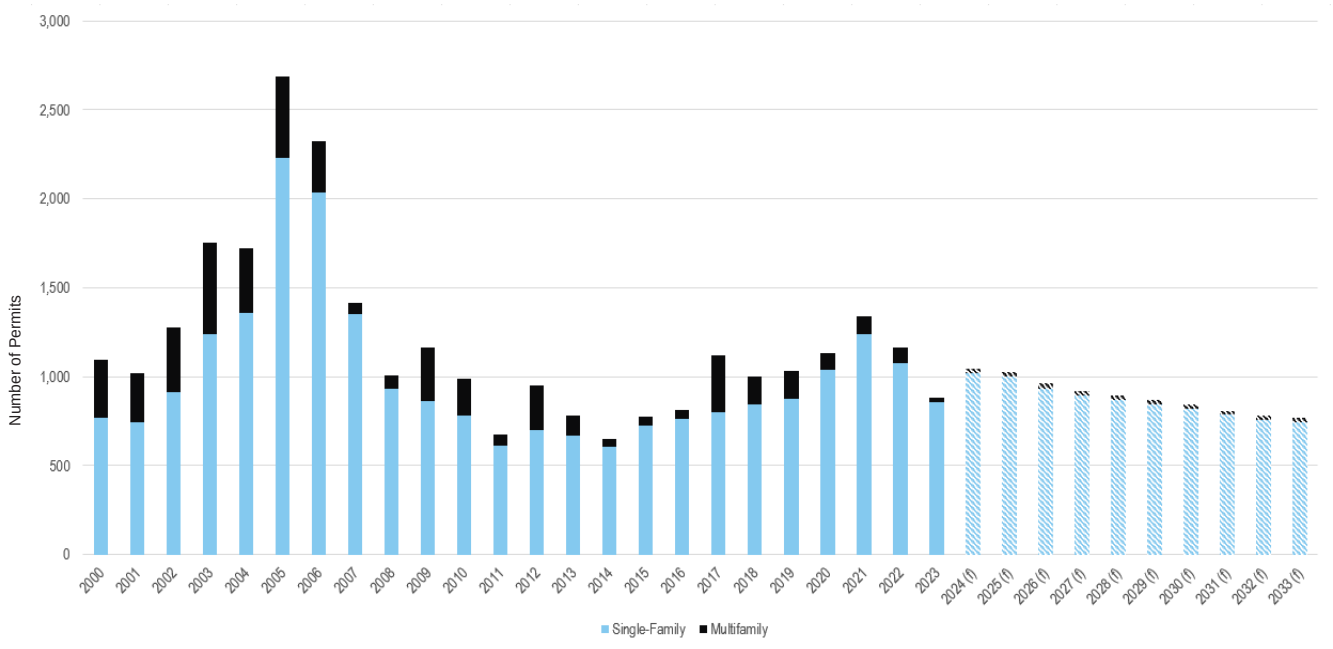


Chart 9. Historical and Forecasted Single-Family and Multifamily Permits

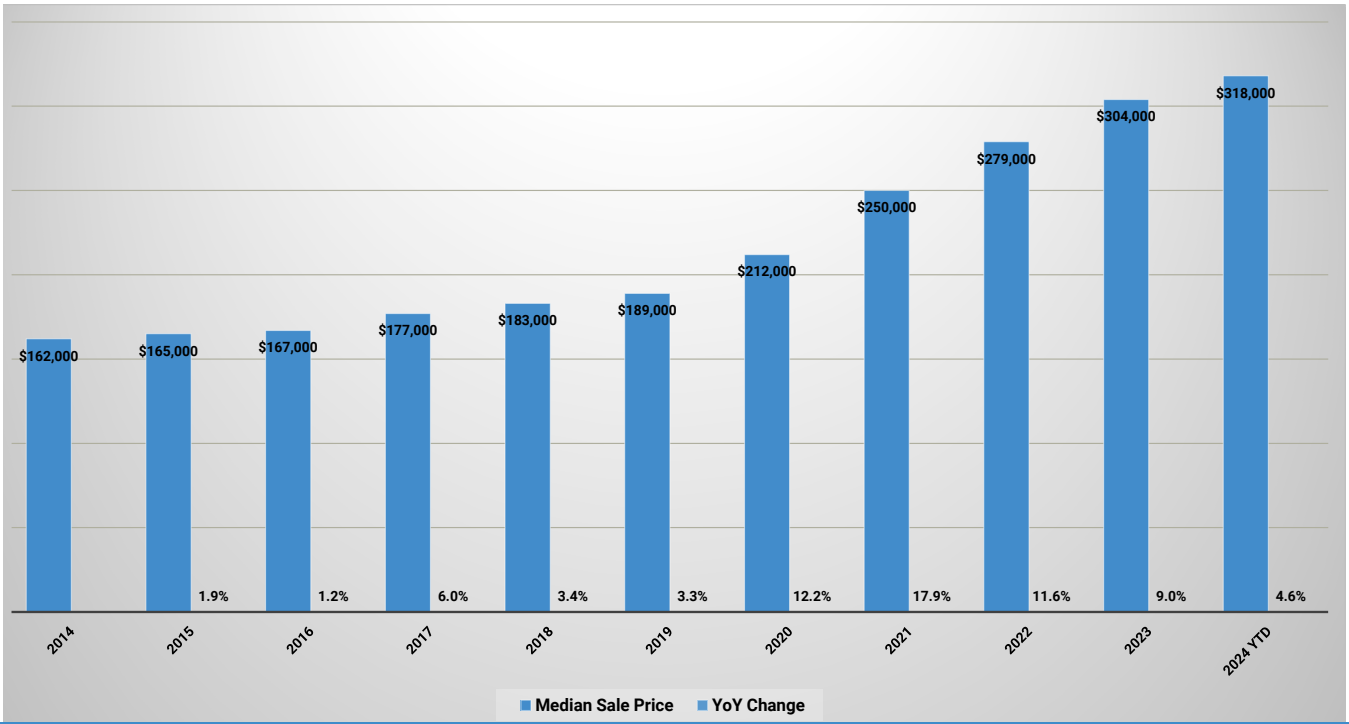


Chart 10. Median Sale Price (Doña Ana County, 2014 - 2024 YTD)

With a 70.8% increase in median sale price from 2019 to April 2024, affordability has become an increasing challenge in the region, especially paired with higher interest rates. Finding ways to keep for-sale housing affordable will be a key challenge in addressing the county's housing gap.

For-sale inventory has been steadily declining from its peak in 2017, leading to declining months of inventory from 4.4 months in 2017 to its all-time low of 2.6 months in 2021 Compared to a healthy market average of 5.0 to 6.0 months of inventory, Doña Ana County's housing market has been constrained over the past several years. Increased inventory levels since 2022 have increased months of inventory to 3.8 months today, though the market remains undersupplied, especially at attainable price points (refer to Chart 10).

For-Sale Demand & Opportunity

RCLCO employed a demographically driven demand model to assess the potential for for-sale housing within the MRA. The model considers regional household growth, households in turnover, as well as owner propensities to arrive at projected owner housing demand. This demand is then segmented by price range, product type preferences, and the share that could consider new housing. An MRA capture of this demand was then applied to the total demand pool based on historical sales by price band.

RCLCO anticipates cumulative demand for roughly 30 to 35 units of new single-family homes and another 70 to 75 units of new "missing middle" housing through 2040, which includes more affordable and denser townhome, duplex, and quadplex style products. If improvements to

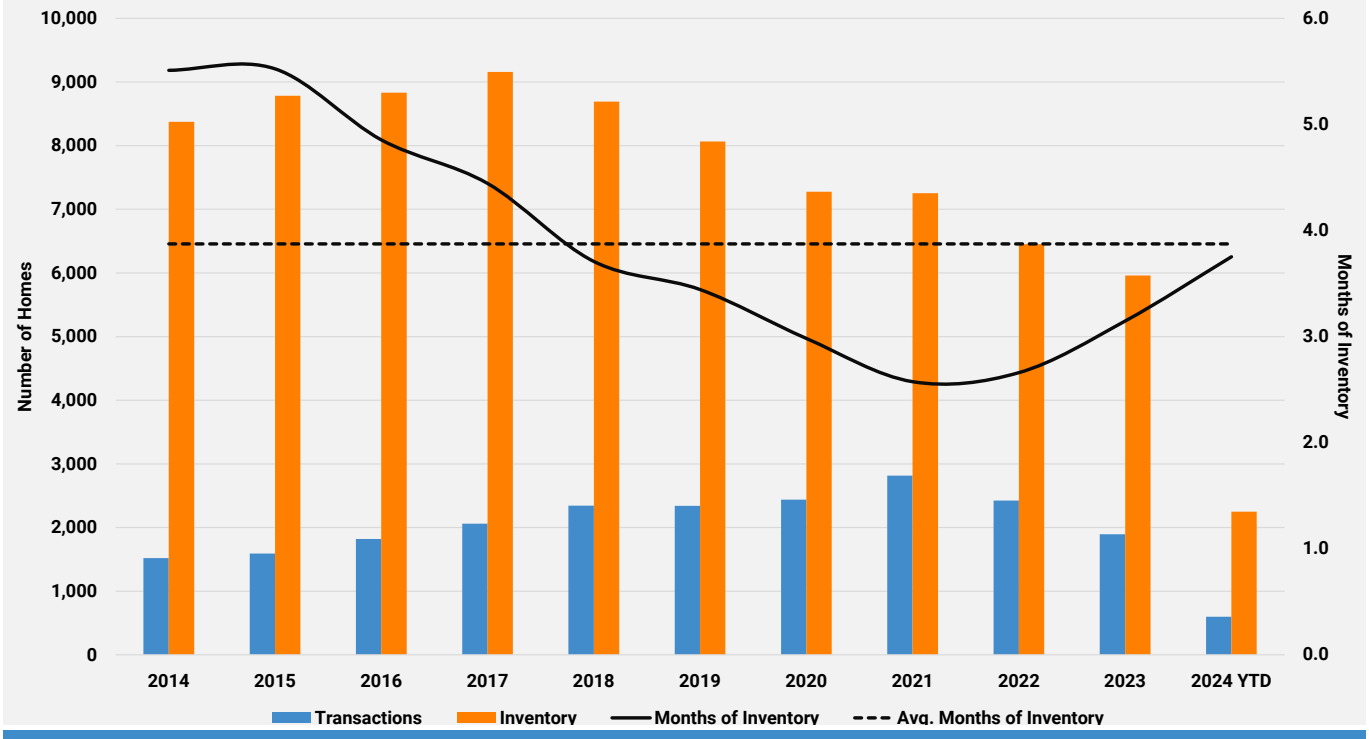


Chart 11. Transactions, Inventory, Months of Inventory (Doña Ana County, 2014 - 2024 YTD)

the MRA are realized and perceptions of the area evolve, greater demand could be achieved. In this upside scenario, RCLCO projects cumulative demand for 55 to 65 new single-family units and another 105 to 130 new missing middle units by 2040 (refer to Opportunity Matrix).

It is worth noting that most new developments will be infill-oriented, focusing on existing empty lots or replacing structures that are no longer inhabitable and cannot be saved. The City of Las Cruces should consider incentives and programs to spur reinvestment in the MRA. Additionally, housing clearance policies should also be considered. These policies remove dilapidated or substandard housing, which can reduce public health risks, enhance neighborhood aesthetics, and improve safety for residents.

In addition to new housing demand, RCLCO sees an opportunity to repair existing housing structures, which would likely be more cost-effective than new construction. Recent housing transactions in the MRA indicate that nearly 84% of housing inventory falls below $250,000, with just over half transacting for $150,000 to $250,000 (refer to Chart 12). Renovating existing housing stock could tap into greater demand at lower price points (below $250,000), further increasing overall opportunity in the MRA.

Incentives to repair existing structures will be needed to stimulate activity in the MRA. These can take the form of property tax abatements over a fixed time, such as five or 10 years. Such incentives will be needed to promote serious reinvestment in the MRA and should be considered by the City.

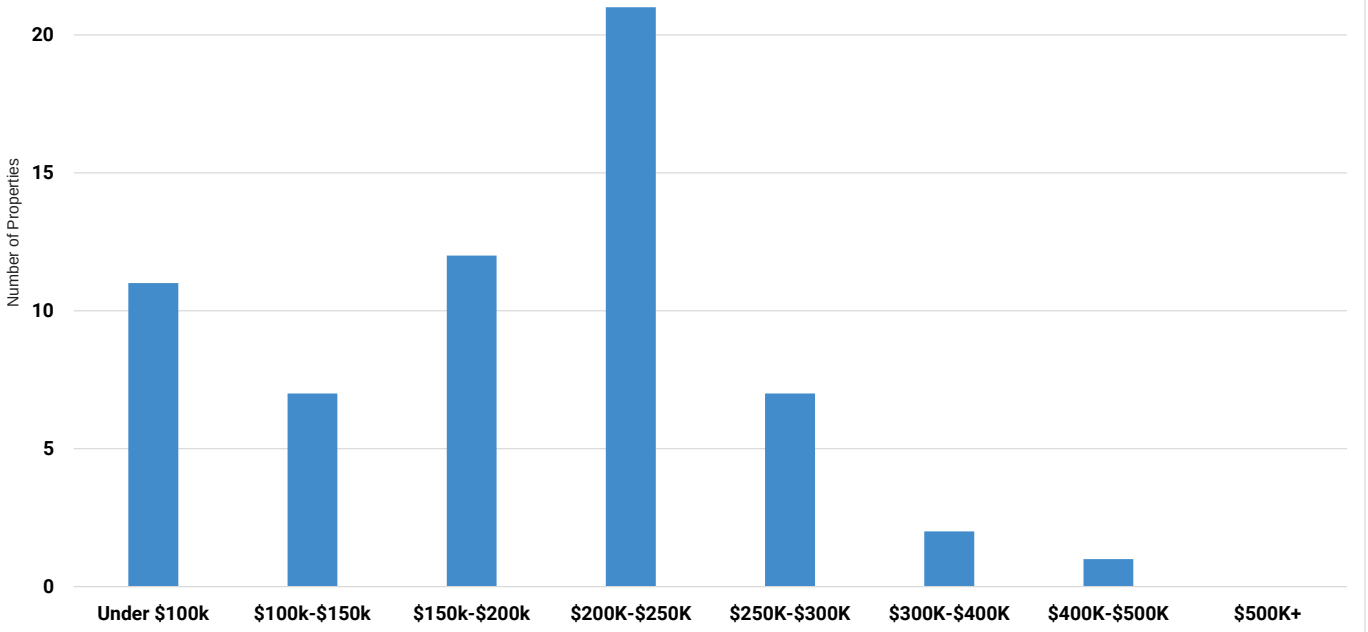


Chart 12. Distribution of Sales by Price Band MRA Two Years Trailing

Rental Market & Opportunity

Rental Market Trends

Historically, the rental market in Doña Ana County has remained balanced, despite fluctuating deliveries over the past decade. Of the roughly 1,570 units delivered since 2009, over 95% have been absorbed, alluding to strong demand for rental apartments (refer to Chart 13).

Vacancies in the market have remained healthy over the long term, averaging 5.0%. New supply in recent years, paired with record-high rent growth in 2021 and 2022, has increased vacancies slightly from an all-time low of 1.6%. Despite the increase, vacancy rates that are too low—usually under 4.0%—can be unhealthy for a market, allowing for increased pricing and reduced mobility, which can hinder economic growth.

Effective rent growth in the market tends to have an inverse relationship with vacancy rates. Record rent growth in 2021 and 2022 was common in many markets across the county as properties pushed rents and reduced concessions following the pandemic. Since then, effective rent growth in Doña Ana County has declined from its peak of 9.5% in 2022 to 1.4% in May 2024 Effective rent growth projections indicate relatively flat rents in 2024 before returning to longer-term averages between 2.0% and 3.0% by 2025.

Given the healthy state of the rental market, paired with affordability challenges of home ownership, provides an opportunity to capitalize on rental housing in the MRA. Rental housing can take various forms, including multifamily apartments, townhomes, quadplexes, duplexes, or even single-family homes. RCLCO particularly sees an opportunity for denser plex or townhome products and eventually multifamily products in the MRA.

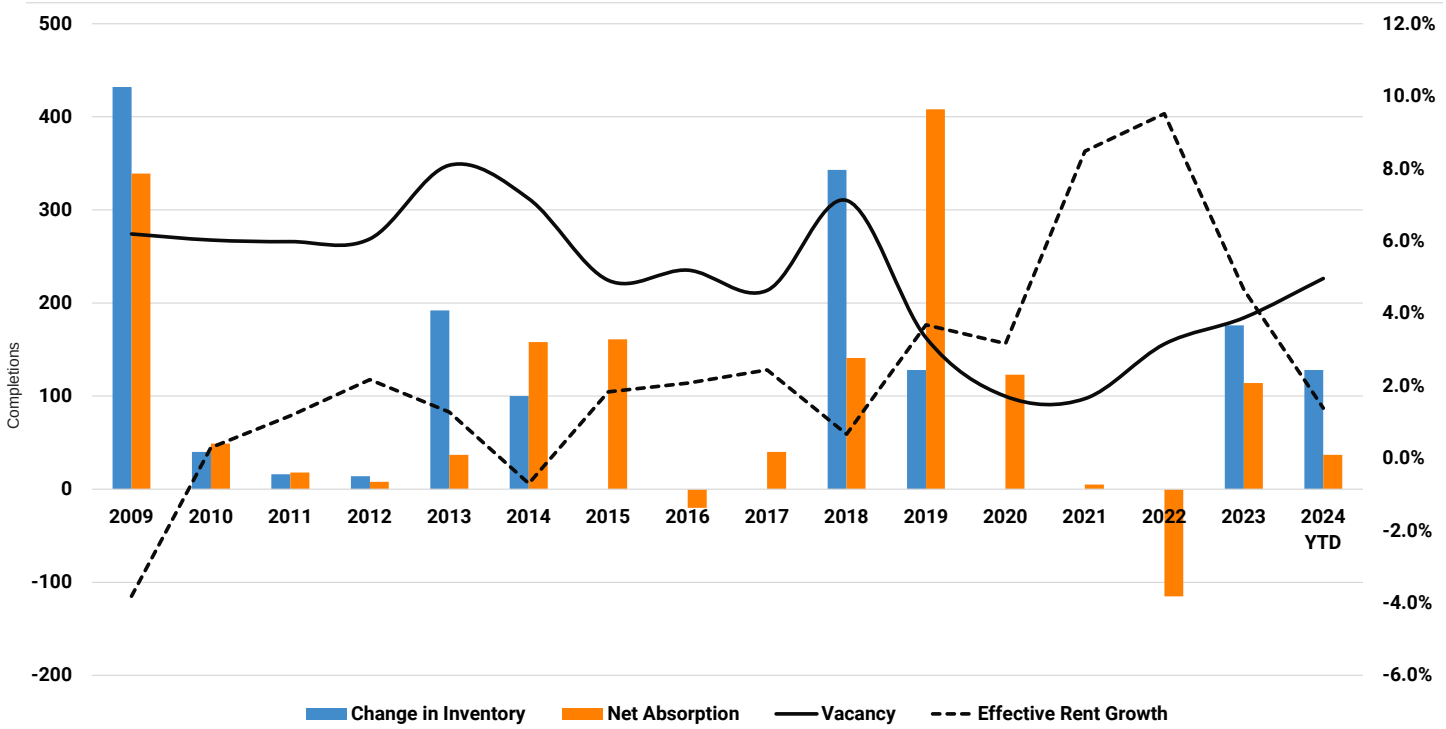


Chart 13. Completions, Absorption, Vacancy, and Rent Growth (Doña Ana County, NM, 2009 - 2024 YTD

Rental Demand & Opportunity

To understand renter demand, RCLCO used a similar methodology outlined in the for-sale demand section but for renter households. Given affordability challenges, lower incomes in the MRA, and existing high renter propensities, RCLCO envisions more opportunities for rental housing over for-sale housing through 2040.

RCLCO estimates cumulative demand for roughly 135 to 150 new single-family attached units and another 155 to 170 new multifamily units by 2040. Like for-sale demand, RCLCO incorporated an upside scenario in which demand could be exceeded if the area's improvements are realized faster. The upside scenario projects cumulative demand for 195 to 215 new single-family attached units and an additional 205 to 230 new multifamily units over the next 15 years (refer to Opportunity Matrix).

In the near term, RCLCO recommends focusing on smaller-scale rental projects consisting of infill single-family attached townhomes or flex products. As the area continues to improve and perceptions change, support for larger multifamily projects in roughly 50-unit phases could be supported over the mid-to-long term.

RCLCO believes little rental demand will stem from NMSU students due to the university's housing needs already being met and flatting enrollment. Given this, most rental projects should be geared toward market-rate housing that is not student-oriented, though affordable units should be incorporated into market-rate projects as funding is allowed or available.

Additionally, many MRA residents may be opposed to the introduction of denser housing options in the area. Strong community engagement throughout the process, transparency, and highlighting the benefits of denser, more affordable housing can help mitigate misconceptions from community members.

Instead of spreading activity throughout the MRA, RCLCO recommends concentrating rental and commercial redevelopment into a few key catalytic clusters. These catalytic areas can serve to communicate the future of the MRA, help activate critical corridors, and spur future private development and investment.



Existing housing.

Commercial Market & Opportunity

Retail Trends

RCLCO surveyed the retail market in Doña Ana County to understand regional retail performance. County deliveries since 2011 have remained modest, averaging 38,000 square feet annually. Deliveries have fallen slightly in recent years compared to the 2010s. Retail demand in the county remains robust, even with the rise of e-commerce, as all newly delivered space since 2011 has been absorbed (refer to Chart 14).

Due to strong demand, retail vacancies have remained healthy over the long term, averaging 3.8%. Currently, vacancies have fallen from their peak in 2020 at 6.2% to 2.6% today. Overall, limited deliveries, paired with strong demand for new retail space point to an opportunity for more new retail moving forward.

Retail Gaps

RCLCO completed a retail analysis to understand existing retail gaps within the MRA. This analysis analyzes the prevalence of certain retail categories in the MRA versus Doña Ana County. Categories examined include Auto & Gas, Entertainment & Fitness, Food & Beverage, Grocery & Drug, Hard Goods, Services, and Soft Goods. RCLCO assessed the number of establishments as well as visitation for each retail category in the MRA relative to Doña Ana County.

Overall, the MRA is home to 11% of retail establishments but only captures roughly 9% of retail visitors, demonstrating that MRA retail businesses likely under perform in capturing visitor interest. If the MRA captured an equal share of visitors to establishments, it could attract an additional 152,000 visitors annually, the equivalent to a 20% boost in visitation. This discrepancy highlights the need for strategic initiatives to attract more visitors and boost the performance of retail businesses within the MRA.

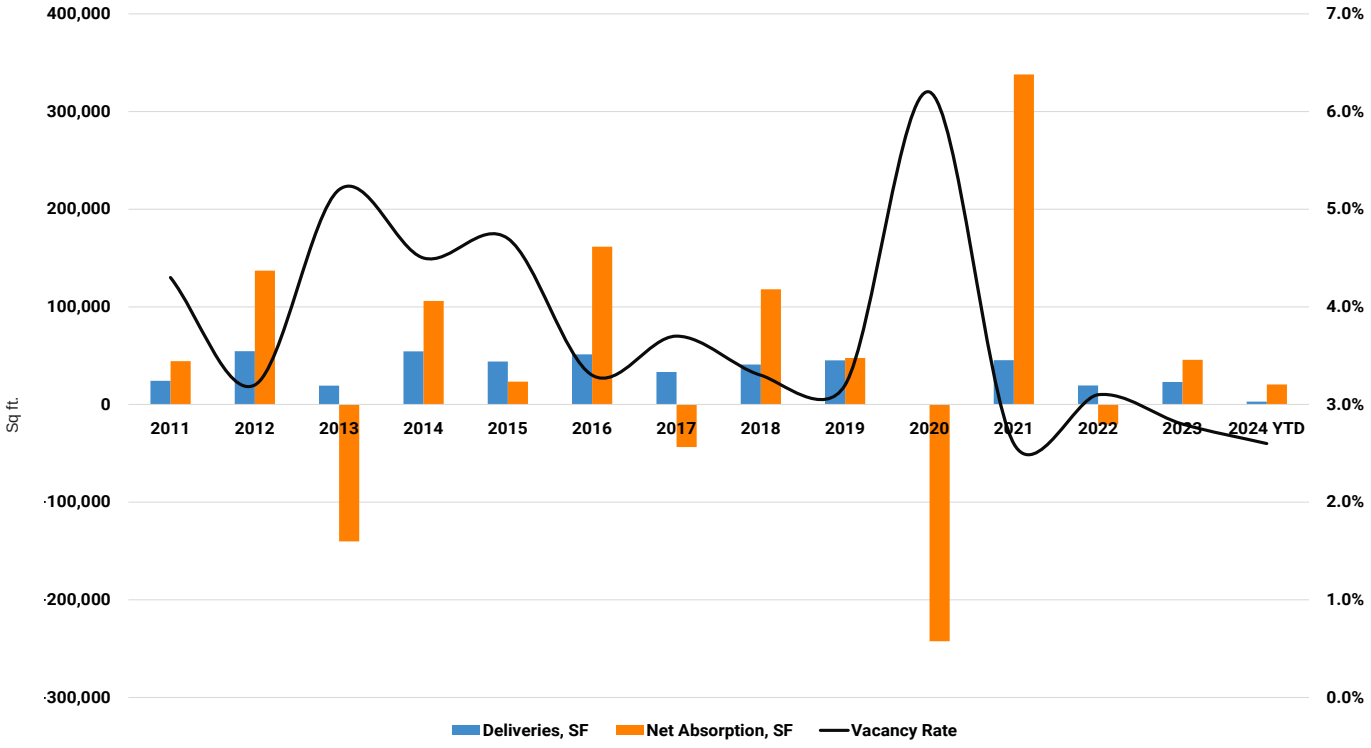


Chart 14. Retail Completions, Net Absorption, and Vacancy Rate (Doña Ana County, NM, 2011-2024 YTD)

RCLCO then calculated multipliers for each retail category based on its performance relative to the overall average MRA capture of county establishments or visitation. These multipliers can inform the performance of certain retailer categories in the MRA. If a retail category captures a higher share of visitors (visitation multiplier over one) but has a lower share of establishments in the MRA relative to the county (establishment multiplier under one), it suggests a category outperforms in the MRA. The opposite is true for underperformance.

Retail gaps are ultimately identified if a specific retail category has a lower share of both establishments and visitation relative to the county, which is true for both Food & Beverage as well as Grocery & Drug retailers. Future retail can focus on filling these particular voids, which are also critical to healthy community development.

Office Trends

Like retail, Doña Ana County's office market has demonstrated robust fundamentals, though office has seen fewer deliveries than retail. On average, only 18,000 square feet of office space have been delivered annually since 2011—compared to 38,000 square feet of retail space annually. Long-term vacancies in the market averaged 7.2% before the pandemic, but the county experienced a surge of new demand in the years following. With over 400,000 square feet of vacant office space absorbed between 2021 and 2023, vacancies in the market have plummeted to under 1.0% (refer to Chart 15).

Such low vacancies can be unhealthy for a market, so new supply is needed to balance the office market moving forward. RCLCO sees an opportunity for more office space in both the county and MRA to meet demand. However, most new office space will naturally develop in the areas of the county experiencing the most household growth, leaving opportunity in the MRA more limited.

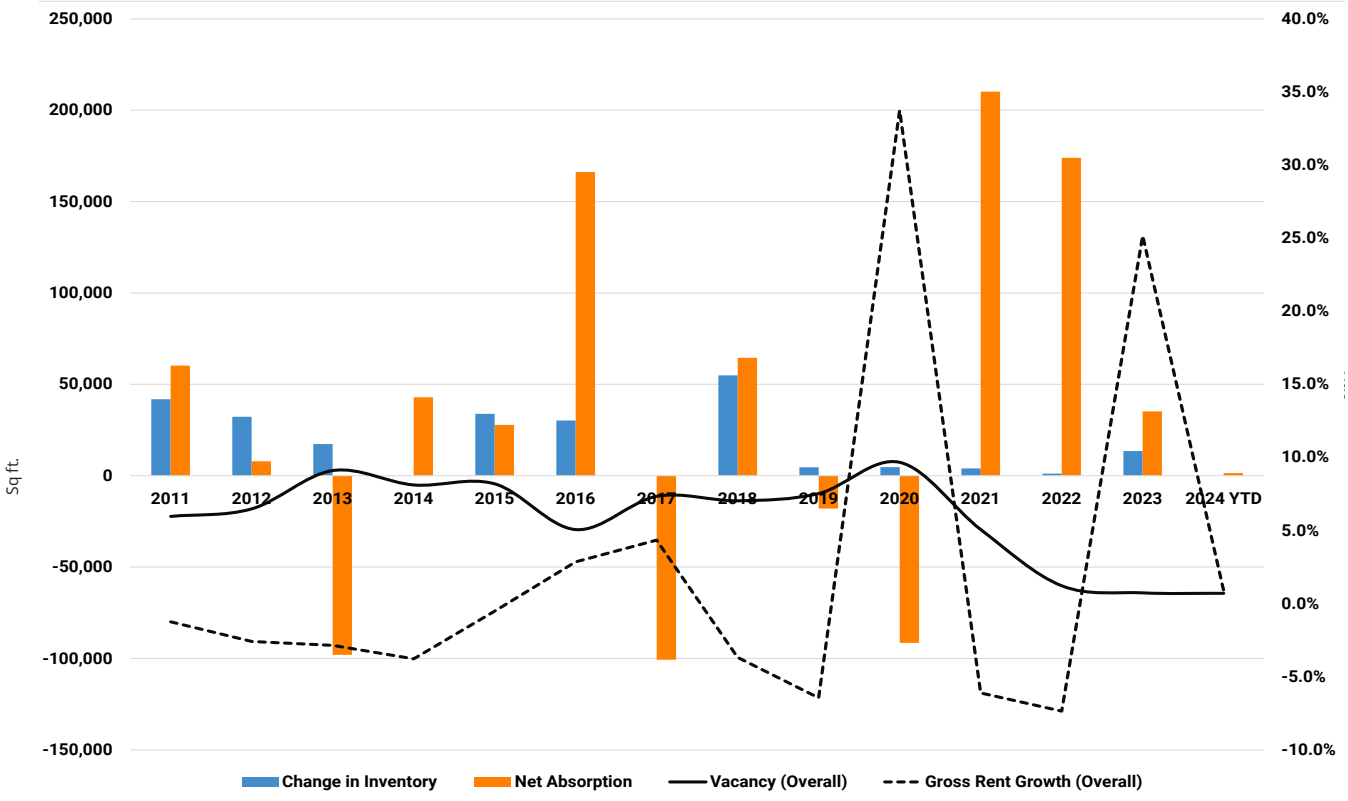


Chart 15. Office Completions, Net Absorption, and Vacancy Rate (Doña Ana County, NM, 2011-2024 YTD)

Commercial (Retail & Office) Opportunity

RCLCO evaluated the demand for commercial uses within the MRA using U.S. Census County Business Patterns data. This analysis used Census-defined NAICS codes to distribute retail and office demand by specific categories (such as clothing stores or commercial banking). From there, RCLCO used the County Business Patterns data to understand the ratio of households per establishment for each use in Doña Ana County. As the number of county households increases, the number of supportable establishments also increases, yielding new demand. This new demand was then converted into square footage based on typical sizes of establishments in each category. The MRA capture of this demand was based on the MRA's share of new household growth relative to the county. This capture is increased in the upside scenario, assuming the MRA improvements attract more households to the immediate area.

Overall, RCLCO projects modest demand for commercial uses over the mid-and long-term, given the MRA's lower share of household growth relative to the county and the current stock of existing vacant commercial space. By 2040, RCLCO anticipates demand for 23,000 to 26,000 new square feet in the base scenario, and 56,000 to 62,000 new square feet in the upside scenario. This demand will primarily be geared towards neighborhood-oriented retailers and services, rather than big box stores (refer to Opportunity Matrix).

Beyond new demand, an opportunity exists to restore existing commercial space. As MRA improvements are implemented and area perceptions change, a focus should be placed on bringing in more tenants to fill existing commercial space, in addition to new space. Similar to residential incentives, the implementation of incentives, such as commercial tax abatements, facade improvements, and other programs by the City will help draw businesses to the MRA and spur reinvestment in existing commercial buildings.



Existing commercial.



Existing retail.

Opportunity for Other Uses

Senior Housing Opportunity

Given that the demographics of the MRA skew younger and more mixed-income, RCLCO believes there is less opportunity for market-rate senior housing within the MRA. The younger population implies a lower demand for senior living accommodations compared to areas with older demographics. Younger residents typically prioritize different types of housing and amenities, such as affordable family housing, rental apartments, and recreational facilities that cater to their lifestyles and growing families (refer to Opportunity Matrix).

Hospitality Opportunity

Historical hotel occupancies in Doña Ana County have remained relatively stagnant over the past decade, averaging 56% prior to the pandemic. This figure falls short of the 65% occupancy level commonly regarded as indicative of a healthy market. The pandemic hurt hotel performance with impacts on travel, a trend seen across the globe. Since then, hotel occupancies peaked at 63% in 2022 as travel rebounded but have since returned to 58%—slightly above pre-pandemic averages (refer to Chart 16).

Limited growth in occupancy hints at recent hotel deliveries satisfying new demand. With recent additions to the hotel supply just outside the MRA, including the Hampton Inn and Suites as well as the Courtyard by Marriott, RCLCO believes there is little opportunity for additional hotel keys within the MRA through 2040 (refer to Opportunity Matrix).

Affordable Housing Opportunity

While there are already several affordable housing projects in the pipeline, additional affordable housing can be provided to meet various levels of low-income households, beyond just very low-income households. Meeting demand for households that fall within the 70% to 80%+ annual median income (“AMI”) is also important to ensure all lower income households have an opportunity to access safe and affordable housing. This broader range of affordable housing options can help prevent displacement, promote economic diversity, and support the stability and growth of the MRA by accommodating families and individuals who might otherwise be underserved by current housing initiatives.

For future strategies, RCLCO believes that affordable housing can be effectively integrated into market-rate housing developments, instead of stand-alone affordable developments. This integration should be pursued whenever possible to address ongoing affordability challenges in the community.

To encourage this integration, incentives can be provided to developers who include affordable units in their projects. By doing so, the community can ensure a diverse and inclusive housing market that meets the needs of residents across different income levels (refer to Opportunity Matrix).

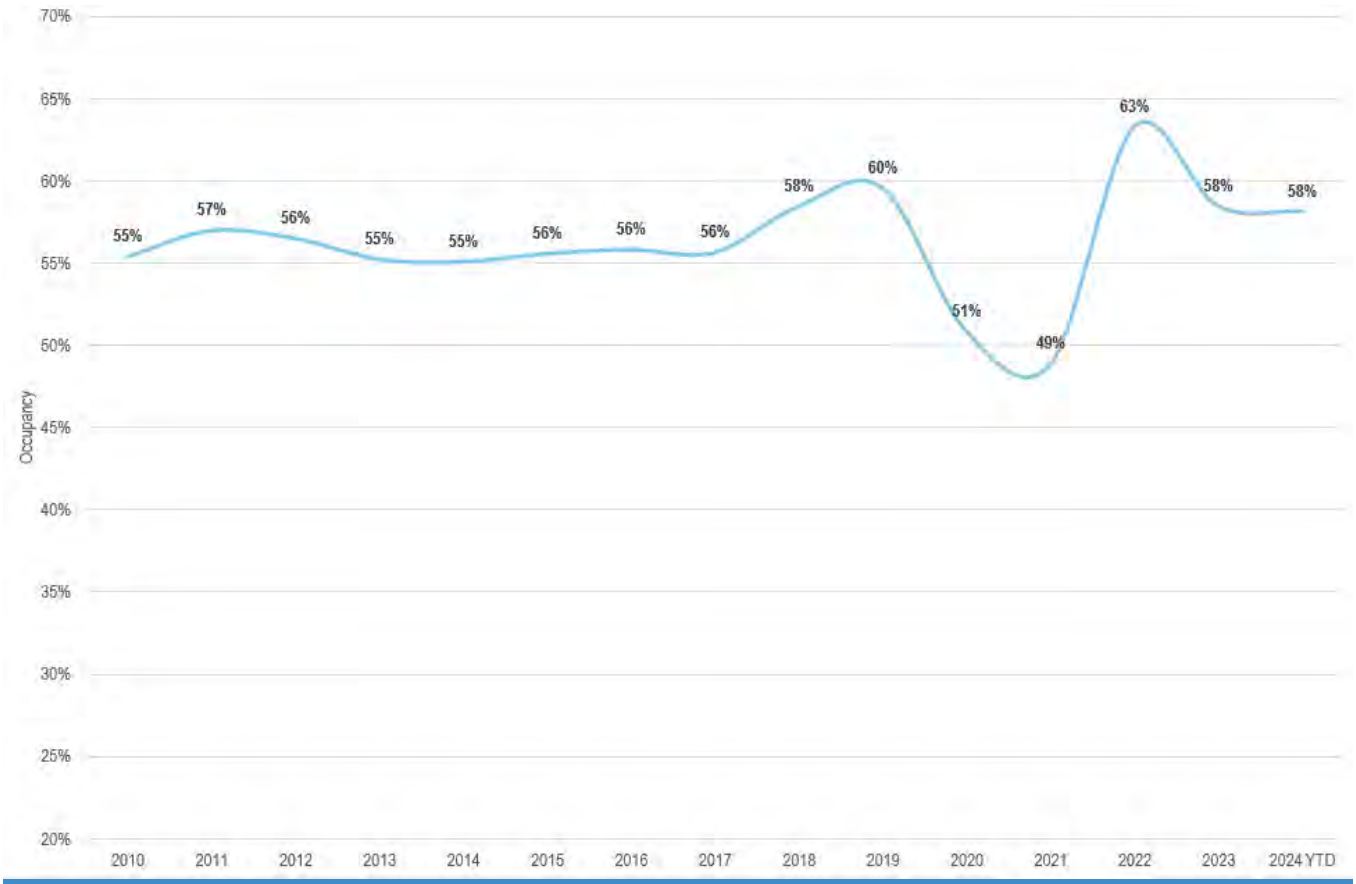


Chart 16. Historical Hotel Occupancy Rates

Opportunity Matrix

Land Use	Overall Opportunity	Typical Density	Opportunities
For-Sale Single-Family Detached ("SFD")	LOW/ MODERATE	5 - 6 DU/AC	• In addition to new housing demand, opportunities to repair existing housing remain plentiful and will likely be more cost effective than new construction • The city remains open to allowing denser housing, including duplex, quadplex, or townhome product, which could greatly increase affordability; more opportunity exists for these "missing middle" housing types • Limited land availability on the outskirts of Las Cruces could push new residential development inward
For-Sale Missing Middle (Townhomes, Duplexes, etc.)	MODERATE	8 - 12 DU/AC	
Rental SFA, Plex, etc.	MODERATE	8 - 12 DU/AC	• High ownership costs and affordability challenges could increase demand for rental housing • More opportunity exists single-family attached rental housing over the mid-term. This housing can be built on a smaller scale versus multifamily apartments to meet demand in smaller increments
Rental Multifamliy, Garden Apartments	MODERATE	20 - 30 DU/AC	
Commerical Neighborhood Retail, Neighborhood Office, and Medical Office	LOW/ MODERATE	0.2 - 0.3 FAR	• The MRA has a lower share of Grocery & Drug as well as Food & Beverage establishments relative to the county; opportunities exist to fill these retail voids • Despite limited demand for new retail spaces, changing perceptions and improving the area could bring more tenants to existing vacant commercial space
Senior Housing	LOW	N/A	
Hospitality Limited Service Hotel	LOW	N/A	
Affordable Housing	MODERATE/ HIGH	N/A	• With incomes in the MRA lower than the overall county; affordable housing can meet the needs of the local community with accessible housing options • Expanding affordable housing can also decrease the unhoused population, enhancing the overall perception of the MRA

	El Paseo / S Solano MRA Supportable New Cumulative Demand	
Challenges	**Mid-Term (By 2035)**	**Long-Term (By 2040)**
• Ongoing affordability challenges with high interest rates keeps homeownership out of reach in the near-term • High construction and labor costs keep the cost of new housing high, further limiting opportunity for affordable housing options within the MRA • More demand exists at lower price points (under $250,000), limiting demand for new construction; renovating existing housing could tap into lower demand buckets	BASE: 20 - 25 Units UPSIDE: 35 - 40 Units	BASE: 30 - 35 Units UPSIDE: 55 - 65 Units
	BASE: 40 - 50 Units UPSIDE: 70 - 75 Units	BASE: 70 - 75 Units UPSIDE: 105 - 130 Units
• Likely little demand from students for rental housing, given the University's needs are met and flattening enrollment • Many local residents may be opposed to allowing denser multifamily housing in the area • Multifamily garden apartments will likely not be supportable until the long-term, given the demand needed to support their scale	BASE: 95 - 105 Units UPSIDE: 130 - 145 Units	BASE: 135 - 150 Units UPSIDE: 195 - 215 Units
	BASE: 90 - 100 Units UPSIDE: 115 - 130 Units	BASE: 155 - 170 Units UPSIDE: 205 - 230 Units
• Perceptions around crime and homelessness in the area may deter new tenants in the near-term, despite lower rents • Slow household growth over the long-term limits demand for new commercial space; if improvements to the area are realized, additional demand is likely over the mid-term and long-term	BASE: 14,000 - 15,000 Square Feet UPSIDE: 29,000 - 32,000 Square Feet	BASE: 23,000 - 26,000 Square Feet UPSIDE: 56,000 - 62,000 Square Feet
• MRA households skew younger, with the 35-44 age group expected to see the most growth in the next several years. Demographics in the MRA do not currently align with a strong opportunity for market-rate senior housing		
• Stagnant occupancies in the county paired with recent hotel additions just outside the MRA signal limited demand for new hotel keys in the immediate area		
• Occasionally, all affordable developments can have a negative perception; mixing development in with market-rate units can provide a new approach	• Affordable housing is dependent on funding and programs available; this housing should be integrated into market-rate developments where possible. Incentives can be offered to developers for including affordable housing in market-rate developments.	

ILLUSTRATIVE VISION
PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK



Community Engagement

Community Design Workshop

The MRA Team hosted a 3-day community workshop at Real Life Church, located within the MRA. These meetings were open to the public and promoted across Las Cruces, and targeted towards MRA area residents, employees, and business owners.

The first community meeting, hosted on Monday, September 9th, was the kickoff meeting and included a presentation about the MRA planning process and small group discussions about key issues and opportunities to address. Day two of the workshop focused on the neighborhoods and the experiences of residents in the MRA. Participants were divided into groups focusing on a different section or neighborhood within the MRA to discuss needs related to specific areas. The last day of the 3-day workshop had nearly 100 participants, where the MRA team reported on the previous two days' conversations and presented early concept ideas for the catalytic projects to be included in this plan.

To engage area youth and students, the MRA team worked with high-school students from Las Montañas to develop context-specific ideas for redevelopment on their school property, which is located in the MRA boundary. Students later presented their designs for redevelopment on their school property at the final community open house.

During the three-day site visit, the MRA team also hosted a series of additional focus group meetings to target stakeholders in the redevelopment process. This process convened different participants like City of Las Cruces staff, business owners, developers, and residents of neighborhoods within the MRA. Following stakeholder-specific presentations, targeted discussions about elements of redevelopment in this area. These groups contributed their expertise on their respective topics, which has been incorporated throughout the MRA Plan.










Photos from the 3 Day Community Workshop - Sept. 2024.

Community Preference Survey

Between October 2024 and January 2025, the El Paseo & S Solano MRA team conducted a public opinion survey to better understand the community preferences surrounding redevelopment in the El Paseo & S Solano MRA – 2,055 people responded.

Key Survey Takeaways

- Improving public safety is critical to the revitalization strategies presented in the MRA Plan.
- Most respondents favored the transformation of the central corridor, El Paseo Rd, into a more functional street for all transportation users, including buses, cyclists, and pedestrians.
- Respondents value the area's residential neighborhoods and parks; enhancing these assets will be essential to center in the redevelopment process.
- Preferences for neighborhood elements like housing, community spaces and programs, and neighborhood identity can be found in the full survey report the Appendix

Top Priorities for Redevelopment

- Security and public safety (60%)
- El Paseo transformation (44%)
- Neighborhood enhancement (35%)
- Business support (32%)
- Park improvements (28%)

This survey built on feedback and ideas curated from the first round of community engagement in the community workshop. The results inform the strategies and recommendations included in the MRA Plan.

Overall Illustrative Vision

Based on the team's assessment of the existing conditions, market conditions, and the community workshop, a vision for the MRA started evolving. This vision supports the MRA focusing on projects and improvements that:

- Promote a thriving, pedestrian-friendly community with a renewed focus on sustainable development and equitable growth
- Prioritize infrastructure improvement, environmental sustainability, social equity, historic preservation, and public safety and health
- Focus on vibrant nodes of economic and community activity, with expanded commercial and retail spaces, enhanced recreational amenities for families, and housing options that address the city's pressing need for additional affordable and workforce housing
- Create a model of revitalization that fosters inclusivity, preserves cultural heritage, and ensures the well-being of all residents

Although the above elements of the vision are affirmed through this process, their applicability should be focused on specific locations for maximum effectiveness.

The MRA area is large (just less than 1,200 acres), and the city's capacity to effect change on the whole MRA is limited. Despite this, City of Las Cruces staff should consider expanding the MRA boundary. It may sound counterintuitive but expanding the boundary to encompass the rest of the parcels along University Ave. would support the success of this redevelopment plan by allowing for more cohesive project implementation along University Ave.

To account for the size of the MRA, there are nodes of opportunity to start catalyzing redevelopment based on investment already underway.

These focused area investments build on the following physical vision for the MRA:

Reinforce El Paseo Road as the primary connection between Downtown and the University. Currently the corridor is automobile-oriented, as El Paseo is conceived as a commercial corridor and a primary vehicular connection between downtown and the university. The plan envisions taming traffic on El Paseo and improving the pedestrian realm along the corridor, supporting the redevelopment of underutilized properties along the corridor. Still, it has the potential to evolve with more pedestrian and transit trips that can support additional density along the corridor.

Encourage a mix of commercial and housing development along El Paseo. With large assemblages of underutilized commercial buildings and large parking lots, El Paseo has the potential to accommodate more growth, especially multi-family residential. While more housing is desperately needed within the MRA, the new multi-family developments should integrate well with commercial uses along the corridor, create walkable blocks connecting residents to the corridor, and provide amenities for residents and shoppers alike. Walled or gated residential projects that are physically separated from everything around them should be discouraged. Incentives should focus on attracting vertical mixed-use buildings at key locations along the corridor.

Reinforce S Solano as a local business corridor. S Solano consists of small lots and blocks and primarily has local businesses that are smaller in scale and provide local neighborhood needs. Future redevelopment along the corridor should focus on encouraging more local businesses that are smaller in scale (6,000 sq. ft. or smaller) to continue this trend. This would allow businesses to be supported entirely by foot or bicycle traffic and reduce the need to provide ample surface parking lots.

Make improvements to Valley View Park and connect Arroyo to the northeast. The focus will be to add more "eyes on the park" with development around the park's edges that activates the edges and provides residents much needed amenities such as playgrounds, trails, picnic areas, etc. The goal is to extend this trail amenity to the northeast along the drainage area with the future redevelopment of the brickyard property.

Facilitate appropriate development on key infill sites. The city and private interests are working on additional housing (of various types and price points) within the MRA area. The goal is to further this effort by looking at proximate sites for additional residential development.

Reinforce neighborhood identity. As such, many of the neighborhoods in the MRA area either do not have an identifiable name or defined boundaries. This plan starts to define general boundaries and characteristics for the different neighborhoods in the plan area. The key will be to work with neighborhood representatives to develop a plan that best addresses their immediate needs and concerns, and help grow neighborhood pride and ownership.

Address security concerns. Security is a significant concern in the MRA area. Some of it is real and some of it is perception. The City knows that failing to address this will limit the MRA's ability to attract new development and sustain a healthy business environment.

Utilize the drainage ditches for trail connections. As part of a city-wide effort, plans are underway to implement trails along several of the area's drainage ditch corridors. The goal will be to ensure that new development in the MRA provides seamless bicycle and pedestrian connections to these future trails to maximize their utility.


E LOHMAN AVE
S CAMPO ST
S SOLANO DR
E IDAHO AVE
MISSOURI AVE
BOUTZ RD
FARNEY LN
E UNIVERSITY AVE

Nodes of Opportunity

Brickyard District & Valley View Park

- Opportunity for mixed use, missing middle residential.
- Great connections to Valley View Park and trail extension to Young Park.
- Adjacent to the historic district, the character of buildings can reflect this.
- Opportunity for a small institutional space; should complement the residential feel of the area.
- **Strategic Recommendation Ties: Mobility, Housing, Community Places and Programs, Neighborhood Identity, Sustainability**

Paseos Verdes & Family Services District

- Build on the momentum of what is already being invested here by the City, nonprofit and business partners, and faith organization
- New mixed-use could be an example of best practices for urban design and sustainable building standards.
- Higher density housing opportunity.
- Build density and walkability along the main commercial corridor.
- Create better sidewalk/pedestrian realm experience.
- Continues to prioritize non-vehicular, safe connections with a focus on connecting students/youth/families to services in the area.
- Gateway opportunity along Campo and El Paseo into the corridor.
- **Strategic Recommendation Ties: Housing, Economic Development, Mobility, Public Health & Safety, Sustainability.**

Foster Montana Residential

- Opportunity for residential redevelopment at Jardin Verdes.
- New small park as a central gathering space for residents.
- Mixed use/commercial fronting Foster Rd.
- Potential for infill development south of Montana.
- New trail along the Las Cruces Drain, connecting from Main Street to High School and University.
- **Strategic Recommendation Ties: Housing, Community Places and Programs, Neighborhood Identity, Sustainability.**

Frenger/Gomez Parks

- Implement park redevelopment plans that include family/recreation-oriented amenities.
- Corner of Espina and Farney Ln.
- New housing development partnership with Unitarian Church.
- **Strategic Recommendation Ties: Housing, Community Places and Programs, Neighborhood Identity, Sustainability.**

STRATEGIC **RECOMMENDATIONS**



The following chapter contains significant strategic recommendations broken into different sections. Each section includes a central theme to consider in the redevelopment process and suggestions on integrating redevelopment, catalytic projects, and MRA tools to address community priorities.

The recommendations presented in the following chapter reflect key concerns and opportunities shared with the MRA team through various community engagement efforts, including the community design workshop, survey, and various stakeholder interviews. These are aligned with the community's highest priorities, including residents, business owners, and other stakeholders.

The sections are organized, as follows:

- Public Safety
- Housing
- Transportation & Mobility
- Community Places & Programs
- Neighborhood Identity
- Economic Development
- Sustainability



Public Safety

The most significant concern for the MRA Plan to address is enhancing public safety in the area. The MRA has unique safety challenges given the high-traffic corridors, high rate of vacant buildings, and concentrated commercial activity that characterize the region.

Personal interviews, focus groups, and a community workshop all revealed a significant need for improving the perception and experience of safety in the MRA area. This was confirmed in the community preference survey, which consistently ranked enhancing safety and security as the highest priority for the MRA planning effort.

This section includes strategies intended to support existing efforts in public safety, including policing, community-based safety, and public health initiatives.

Build on safety programs for businesses and residents

There are ongoing efforts to improve safety across Las Cruces. The nature of the MRA, with its proximity to city centers, high-traffic corridors, and numerous businesses, requires targeted interventions that may be supplementary to existing programs.

Continue to strengthen the relationship between LCPD Community Outreach and residents/businesses. The efforts undertaken by LCPD to improve public safety across Las Cruces can be expanded within the MRA. Targeted programs, including security assessments for businesses and safety presentations for residents, should be coordinated alongside redevelopment efforts. Most importantly, the LCPD Community Outreach and MRA teams should continue working together to build and strengthen relationships between LCPD and MRA constituents.

Host bike rodeos & bike safety outreach. LCPD should conduct bike rodeos in the MRA area during school and community events to increase engagement and visibility and provide bike safety education for children in the neighborhoods.

Advocate for policy reform to provide more support services. At the City level, the MRA team can leverage resources to advocate for policies that support the successful implementation of this MRA Plan, including initiatives to improve public safety. Encourage elected officials and area representatives to advance policies and programs at the city level to improve city services, including the expansion of public health and safety resources.

Make physical improvements for health and safety

Infrastructure improvements in the MRA can significantly enhance public health and safety through the built environment. This includes not only the addition of new infrastructure, like lighting or traffic calming measures, but also upgrades to existing assets, like parks and public spaces, to address health and safety needs of the community.

Prioritize lighting in parks and on key walking corridors. There is a need to improve and expand the lighting infrastructure throughout the MRA, especially along high-traffic routes like El Paseo and S Solano. Based on the environmental design theory, this strategy aims to provide illumination and increased visibility to deter unwanted

behaviors. MRA funding can be used to finance this critical safety improvement.

Create more shade. To improve comfort and make the area more desirable, the availability of shade will need to be improved. The style of commercial development in the MRA, with the numerous large asphalt parking lots, increases the heating effects experienced in the already hot Las Cruces climate. Also, exposed public spaces, like bus stops and sidewalks, will need to increase the shade available to make these places hospitable in the heat.

Create a Vacant Property Task Force. Vacant properties were identified as a source of criminal and unwanted activity, adding to the area's undesirable look. Business owners agreed that vacant properties detract from the commercial viability that has previously existed and deter potential customers from the area. The MRA designation allows public funds to be dedicated to public benefit, including increasing safety in the area. A focused effort on managing and activating otherwise vacant buildings is necessary to address the high priority of dealing with vacancies in the MRA.

Collaborate with service providers

Lastly, the MRA contains several service providers already supporting health and safety efforts in the area.

Build awareness of and connect recipients to nonprofit resources & services. Local organizations like Mano y Mano, Casa de Peregrinos, Community of Hope, and Las Montanas High School are examples of active groups working to provide essential services that improve quality of life for those in need.

Relevant MRA Tools

- Public-private partnerships with local institutions to provide programming and facility enhancements and enhance collaboration with public safety officials, business owners, and residents.
- Business Improvement Districts (BID)

Housing

Implementing a diverse array of housing options is essential for the success of the MRA plan. The market analysis section of the existing conditions report highlights specific opportunities for affordable and market-rate housing. Despite a slowdown in supply due to rising interest rates and construction costs, demand for housing at all price points remains robust in Las Cruces. The plan particularly emphasizes opportunities for multi-family housing to tackle affordability challenges and smaller-scale options such as townhomes, duplexes, quadplexes, and patio homes, available for rental and sale.

The MRA area contains a substantial amount of underutilized land suitable for redevelopment and residential and commercial infill. The city has several planned and funded social housing developments. The following housing strategy aims to enhance the success of these ongoing projects by pinpointing housing opportunities near existing city initiatives. However, since some sites are relatively dispersed throughout the expansive MRA area, it is crucial to concentrate MRA incentives in locations that can yield multiple benefits for the community and stimulate new redevelopment and infill efforts.

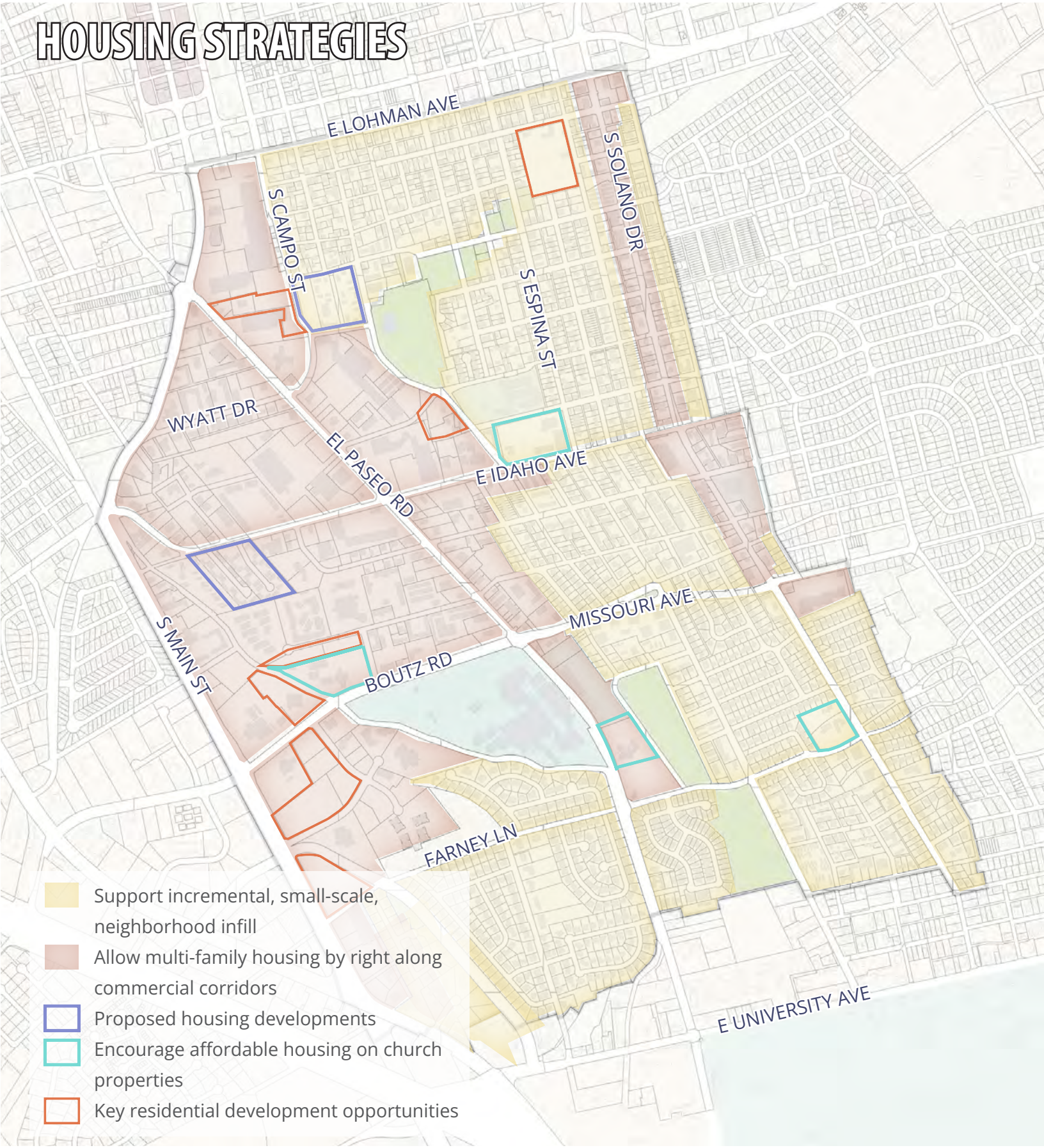






Examples of housing in the MRA

HOUSING STRATEGIES



Housing Strategies Map

Increase housing diversity

Encourage many types of housing.
Allow for a range of housing projects to be built in the MRA. This diversity, from larger apartments to smaller duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes, allows housing to occur incrementally and help with affordability.

Encourage infill and density in appropriate areas

Allow larger urban multi-family projects to be located along El Paseo and other commercial corridors.
Some larger underutilized parcels are located along El Paseo and S. Main Street and can accommodate higher intensity development due to roadway capacity, access, and feasibility.

Housing Type - Urban Multifamily







SCALE

3 – 5 stories with step downs next to existing single-family lots

DESIGN PRIORITIES

- Development to define small, compact blocks (no more than 400 feet per block face)
- Buildings built at or close to the sidewalk with parking at the rear
- Ground floors along major streets (El Paseo, S. Main, Boutz) to be built to commercial standards (commercial uses not required) with doors and windows along primary streets
- Generous sidewalks (min. 10’ wide) along all public and private streets
- Larger projects can include private open spaces such as courtyards, balconies, patios, roof top terraces, playgrounds, etc.

WHERE RECOMMENDED

El Paseo, S. Main Street, Boutz (west of El Paseo)

Although S Solano is a central commercial corridor, most commercial development is smaller scale, locally owned businesses that back up to residential uses. Residential development along S Solano should respect the neighborhood scale and infill should focus on small apartments, townhomes, and multi-unit homes.

Build on existing momentum and assets. Focus on new housing opportunities on sites in proximity (adjacent or within ¼ mile radius) of the currently proposed projects in the MRA. Also, focus on opportunities to partner with local churches, like First Christian Church and Unitarian Universalist Church, and non-profits that aim to provide affordable housing.

In the remainder of the MRA, evaluate how the zoning changes in Realize Las Cruces would impact the potential for new infill housing and recommend modifications to facilitate context sensitive infill in the neighborhood areas of the MRA.

Housing Type - Town Homes







SCALE	2-3 stories, min. lot width of 22’
DESIGN PRIORITIES	• Development to define small, compact blocks (no more than 400 feet per block face) • Buildings built at or close to the sidewalk with parking at the rear • Ground floors to address the street with porches, stoops or other architectural elements • Generous sidewalks (min. 8’ wide) along all public and private streets • Parking at the back of the lot accessed through rear alleys or shared driveways
WHERE RECOMMENDED	All other streets except along significant roadways (El Paseo, S Main, Boutz west of El Paso)

Housing Type - Duplexes, Triplexes, Quadplexes

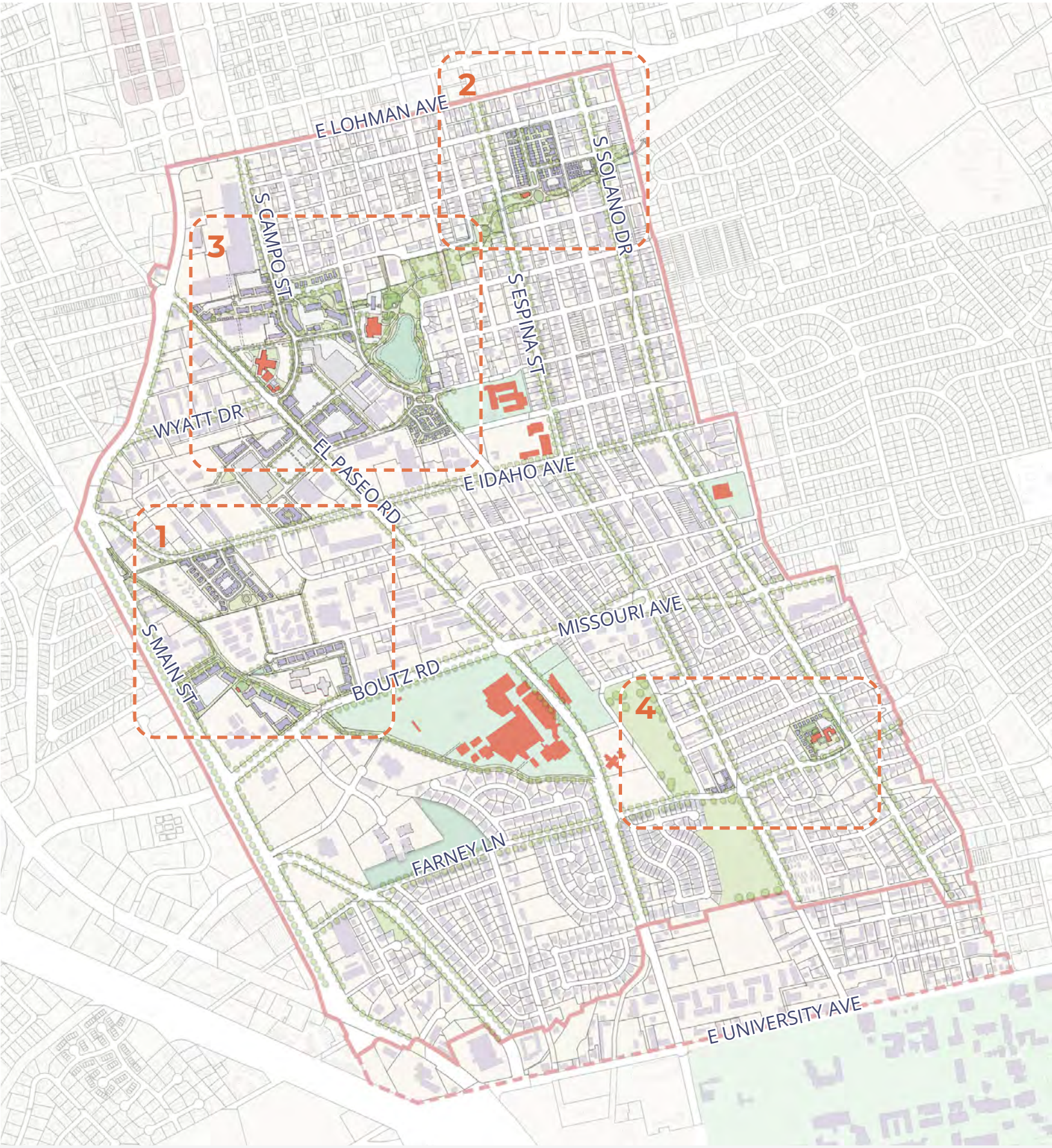




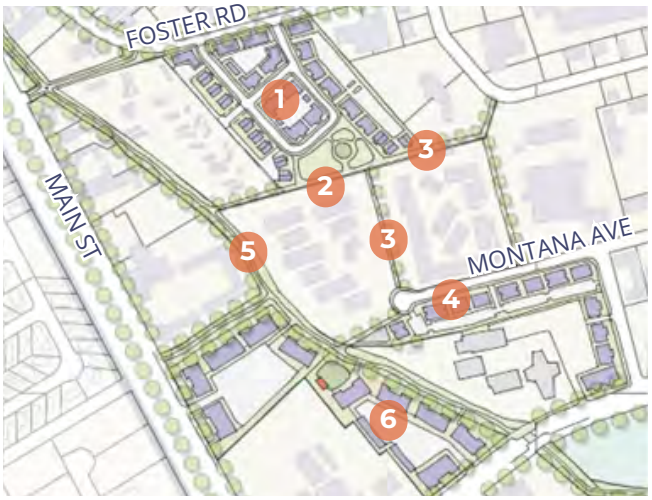


SCALE	1-2 stories (establish min. lot parameters based on prevailing lot patterns)
DESIGN PRIORITIES	• Buildings built with a shallow setback (10’ – 15’) along the street with parking at the rear • Ground floors to address the street with porches, stoops or other architectural elements • Generous sidewalks (min. 6’ wide) along all public and private streets • Parking at the back of the lot accessed through rear alleys or shared driveways
WHERE RECOMMENDED	All other streets except along significant roadways (El Paseo, S Main, Boutz west of El Paseo)

Potential Development in MRA



1. Burley Court/Idaho, Montana



1. Proposed housing redevelopment.
2. Community park.
3. Pedestrian connections to enhance access to park from surrounding residential.
4. Opportunity site for new housing.
5. Bike/ped trail along existing ditch drain.
6. Infill opportunity sites with trail connections.

This location has two potential sites: a redevelopment of a Housing Authority site on Burley Court, and a private development project along Montana Ave. There is also potential for private redevelopment along the drainage route connecting Boutz to Main Street behind the Chevrolet dealer. Most of this area could accommodate more dense multi-family developments. It can be designed with pedestrian connections along public streets and amenities such as connections to trails along the drainage way.

2. Brickyard



1. Existing brickyard site showing a mixture of housing types.
2. Extension of the Arroyo across S Solano.
3. Existing Valley View Park.

The former brickyard property on Kansas Ave between Espina and Chaparro Streets has the potential to be redeveloped into more housing. This may be feasible after the development of the FYI and Paseo Verdes Projects, which elevate the market to make this site more viable for redevelopment. In the meantime, the city should reach out to the current property owners and potential developers to stimulate interest in the redevelopment of the property. The MRA team could offer up funding for a Phase I environmental assessment of the property as an incentive so that future brownfield grants could be pursued for the redevelopment of the property, as needed.

The redevelopment concept plan shows mainly townhomes with some more extensive single-family or duplex uses along Kansas Ave. The southern edge would be a greenway that links Valley View Park to the west and the arroyo to the east. Some small apartment buildings could line the greenway along the Las Cruces arroyo.

3. F.Y.I/Paseo Verdes



1. Proposed Paseos Verdes housing development.
2. Proposed FYI mixed-use center.
3. Future Boys and Girls Club location.
4. Vacant building proposed for adaptive reuse.

This location has the benefit of being adjacent to the Paseo Verdes project with potential to connect further east to Valley View Park and trail. The housing at this location could be a 2-3 story small apartment building oriented east-west along the lot with parking tucked between the lots to the north. Some commercial and mixed use could be located along Campo Street and El Paseo, at either end of the development. It includes potential redevelopment of the parking lot to the north of FYI, which the Las Cruces School District owns. Paseo Verdes is a project currently undertaken by the Housing Authority and combines a mix of senior and workforce housing on this 7-acre site.

4. S Solano/Wofford



1. Proposed police sub-station and/or mixed-use neighborhood center with cafe to activate parks.
2. Existing church site showing opportunity for affordable housing development on church site.

The property owned by the UUC just north of their church on S Solano could be a good model for utilizing area churches as redevelopment partners. This location is near Frenger and Farney Parks and could benefit from improving Wofford/ Farney Lane as a pedestrian and bike corridor. The housing type recommended here should be compatible with the single-family nature of the neighborhood around. A cottage court type of development with duplexes, triplexes, or patio homes, for rent or sale, with a central open space, could add a unique element to this part of the MRA. In addition, there is potential for small-scale retail or mixed-use buildings to anchor the intersection of Farney and Espina Streets.

Transportation & Mobility

In terms of mobility, the El Paseo & S Solano MRA area currently reflects the transportation priorities of the past 100 years, that is, moving from point A to point B in a private automobile. Streets were design, or retrofitted, to maximize automobile speed and flow while minimizing, or eliminating, pedestrian accommodations. These transportation choices are reflected in the development of low-density, scattered buildings surrounded by large parking lots.

Today, transportation is changing. Cities have realized that it is virtually impossible to design your way out of traffic congestion, for each new roadway expansion induces more traffic and greater automobile dependency. And with the realities of climate change becoming more apparent, we must look to more energy efficient ways to move about the city. New autonomous and electric power technologies may either exacerbate these issues or help be part of the solution.

Who Designs the Streets?

The most challenging problem facing any street design is how the limited space of the right-of-way (i.e., the width of the public property) is allocated for various mobility functions, such as vehicular lanes, bike lanes, and sidewalks. The decisions about how limited space is allocated will have to balance the competing objectives for traffic flow, pedestrian comfort and safety, and bike safety. This will be especially critical with regard to El Paseo which aspires to be a multi-modal transportation corridor, but which has limited right-of-way which will necessitate some compromises.

To ensure that various viewpoints are represented at the table when these decisions are made, the organization of an MRA Street Design Advisory Committee is recommended which would include community representatives, transportation advocates, and transportation planners who would study various solutions and make an informed, non-binding, recommendation to Council. The Advisory Committee could include:

- Residents in the MRA area
- Business owners in the MRA area
- MRA board representative
- Bike/pedestrian advocate(s)
- Traffic engineers and transportation planners
- Transit representatives
- University representatives
- Land use planners

The committee would work closely with the street designers to evaluate various design solutions and provide a final recommendation to city leaders. The goal of this group is to provide a well-rounded perspective on the needs and impacts of future design decisions. Of course, the ultimate decision would be left to Council.

Mobility Strategies

The following section outlines various strategies that can be applied in the MRA area to enhance mobility. These strategies may help inform issues that arise and that are not specifically addressed in this document.

The Basics of Sidewalk Design

The sidewalk is the fundamental and necessary component to facilitate walkability. But not all sidewalks are equal. A wide, shaded, sidewalk, with some protection from moving traffic, encourages pedestrian activity much more than a narrow sidewalk that is adjacent to moving traffic.

A high-quality sidewalk may be divided into three

zones as shown in the example diagram. These zones are:

Sidewalk Clear Zone (SW). The paved area which is unobstructed by any permanent or non-permanent elements and allows for unobstructed passage along the route.

Frontage Zone (FR). The area between the sidewalk clear zone and the building frontage intended for control and use by the building owner and/or tenant.

Furnishing Zone (FZ). The area between the sidewalk clear zone and the curb or vehicular lane. The sidewalk furnishing zone is intended for the placement of street trees and street furniture including seating, pedestrian lighting, waste receptacles, fire hydrants, traffic signs, newspaper vending boxes, bus shelters, bicycle racks, and public utility equipment. It also offers a layer of protection between the pedestrian and moving traffic.

The Importance of Street Trees

Street trees play an important role in creating more comfortable, safe and sustainable streets, delivering multiple benefits including:

- A layer of protection between the pedestrian and moving traffic
- Providing a traffic calming effect by narrowing the cone of vision
- Shade, which helps lower temperatures
- Absorbing carbon from the air, and,
- Mitigating storm water by absorbing ground water runoff

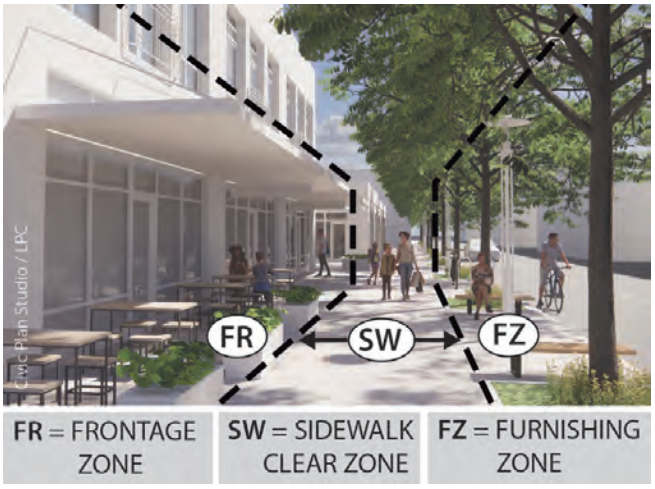
Intersections Need Special Attention

Most crashes involving drivers and pedestrians occur at street intersections, especially intersections between multi-lane arterials. The desire to minimize congestion by the addition of right and left turn lanes, leads to wider pedestrian crossings which increase a pedestrian's exposure time to conflicts with automobiles.

NACTO (National Association of City Transportation Officials) provides good tools for improving pedestrian, bike and vehicular safety at intersections. An example of these tools is shown in the Figure on the next page.



This sidewalk provides no shade and offers no separation from moving traffic. In addition, there is no pedestrian scaled lighting to help navigate and make pedestrians more visible to drivers.



The diagram shows the three zones of a high-quality sidewalk.



An illustration from the NACTO Urban Street Design Guide. The guide highlights several strategies for improving pedestrian and bike safety including "bulb-outs" to minimize crossing distance, pedestrian safety islands, and the reduction or elimination of turn lanes.

Universal Design

Universal Design in street and sidewalk design is crucial for creating inclusive environments that accommodate the diverse needs of all users, including people with disabilities, the elderly, and families with children. By prioritizing accessibility and usability, we enhance safety, encourage walking and cycling, and foster a sense of community. Thoughtful design promotes equity, ensuring that everyone can navigate public spaces confidently and independently. All street designs and mobility solutions should aim to incorporate best practices of Universal Design.

Embrace Micromobility

Micro-mobility refers to personal transportation devices which are usually electrically powered and include e-bikes, scooters, and other forms of electrically powered devices. Micro-mobility is well suited for short trips within the neighborhood or as a way to get to work and school. With it's proximity to the University, the MRA area is well situated to take advantage of this transportation trend.

In terms of street design, micro-mobility works best when it shares the bike lane. It does not belong on the sidewalk, nor does it mix well with moving traffic over about 20 mph. This puts even more emphasis on the need for dedicated bike/micro-mobility facilities on roads that are classified as collectors and arterials.



Scooters and e-bikes are becoming a more popular form of personal transportation. In particular, college students are a natural fit with the proximity of the University.

Utilize and Maintain Alleys

Alleys provide many benefits for creating a walkable environment. By accommodating parking and service at the rear of the building, alleys free up the street frontage to allow the building to interact with the sidewalk and street. They also help to keep trash, grease traps, and other unsightly utilities and equipment away from the sidewalk. Where current alleys are present, they should be maintained and utilized. The alley right-of-way should not be abandoned for private use unless there are other accommodations for parking and service within the block.

Encourage "de facto" alleys: As properties develop, encourage the use of cross access easements at the rear of the properties to create de facto alleys that can be used for service vehicles and parking access.

Ditch to Trails

There are numerous ditches running through the MRA area that can be utilized to enhance walkability and bikeability. The city is already in the planning stages to utilize these potential trail routes to connect housing, businesses and schools.



There are numerous blocks in the MRA that have alleys. Where feasible, alleys can facilitate vehicular access and move parking to the rear of the site.

Relevant MRA Tools

- Help establish a Street Design Advisory Committee to study and make recommendations on proposed mobility improvements.
- Co-lead with the City, a feasibility study to solidify the preferred design solution for El Paseo Road.
- Use MRA funds to assist in the design and implementation of mobility improvements.
- Consider financial incentives to encourage the planting of street trees along sidewalks, whether on public or private property.



MOBILITY IMPROVEMENTS

- Complete street retrofit - Planned
- Complete Street Retrofit - High Priority
- Complete Street Retrofit - Medium Priority
- Ditch to Trail - Planned
- Recommended Pedestrian Connection
- Alleys
- Priority Street Intersection Improvements
- Proposed Trail Crossings



El Paseo Road

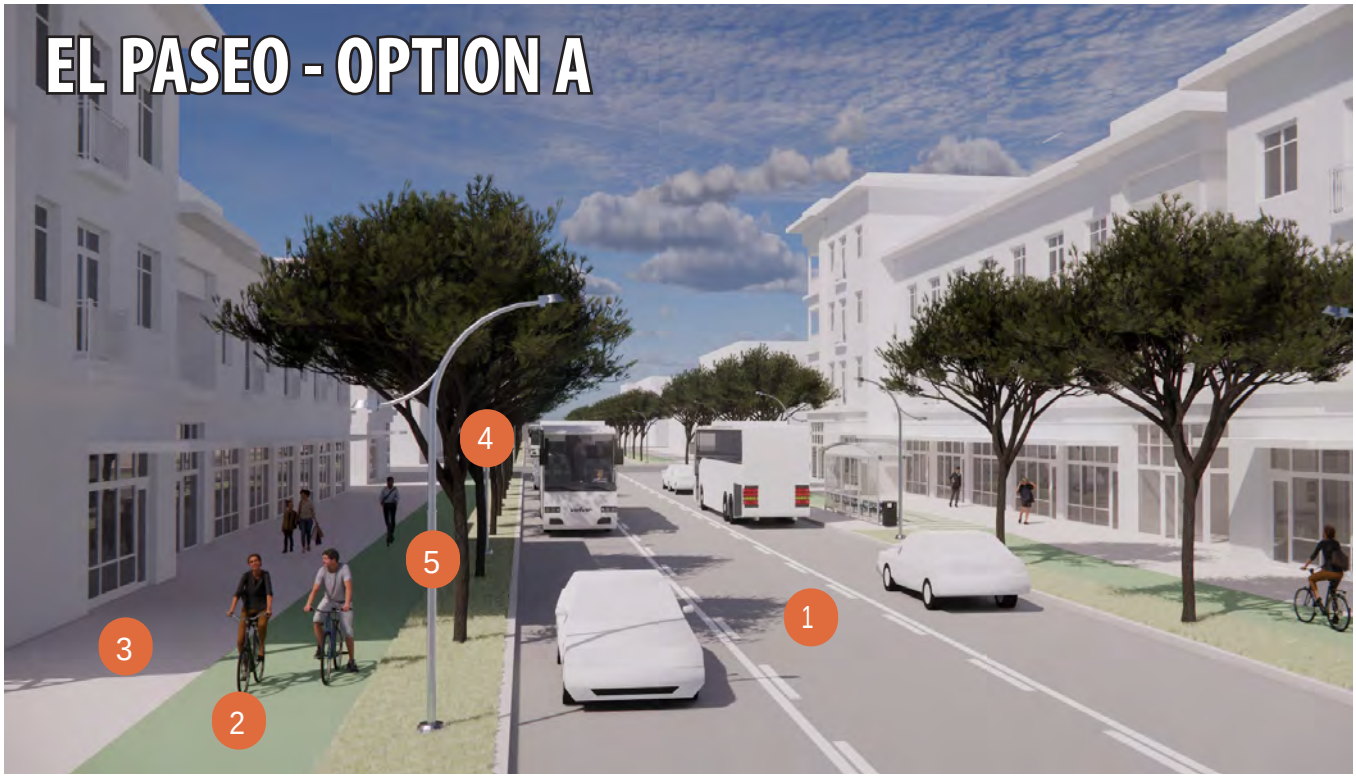
During this planning process, the community identified the retrofit of El Paseo Rd. as a priority for the MRA study area. This reflects its importance to the community due to its past history as the commercial hub of Las Cruces. In addition, many residents expressed the idea that the street should function as a "grand boulevard" or "promenade", linking the downtown to the University.

As shown in the photo above, the existing roadway is prioritized for vehicular traffic to the detriment of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. In the community survey, respondents indicated a strong preference - 57% compared to 44% - for a more balanced street design that allocates space for bikes and micro-mobility, pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

The illustrations and design concepts shown on the following pages represent a range of possible solutions that could be considered as part of a joint City/MRA feasibility study focused on solidifying the preferred design solution, along with projected construction costs, in order to move into the funding and final engineering phase. Please note that these are concepts that serve as a starting point. Design and feasibility studies still need to be conducted to ensure emergency vehicle access and proper circulation.

1. The 5-lane roadway encourages higher speeds and increases the pedestrian exposure when crossing the roadway.
2. Sidewalks are unshaded and unprotected, without a buffer between the sidewalk and moving traffic.
3. Frequent curb cuts create more conflict points with unmotorized vehicles, which increases the potential for crashes.
4. Buildings are set back behind parking lots, impeding pedestrian access.

EL PASEO - OPTION A



This option offers a more balanced approach to mobility and incorporates high-quality facilities for vehicles, bikes and micromobility, and pedestrians. Improve transit stops, especially near Albertsons.

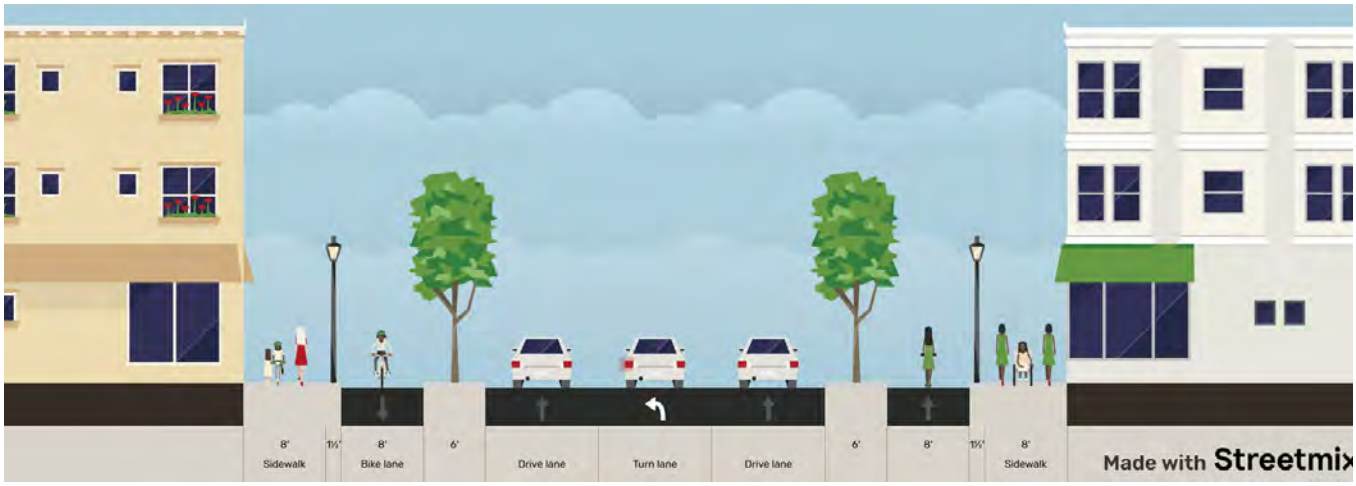
PROS:

- Provides a safer, more comfortable environment for bicyclists and pedestrians.

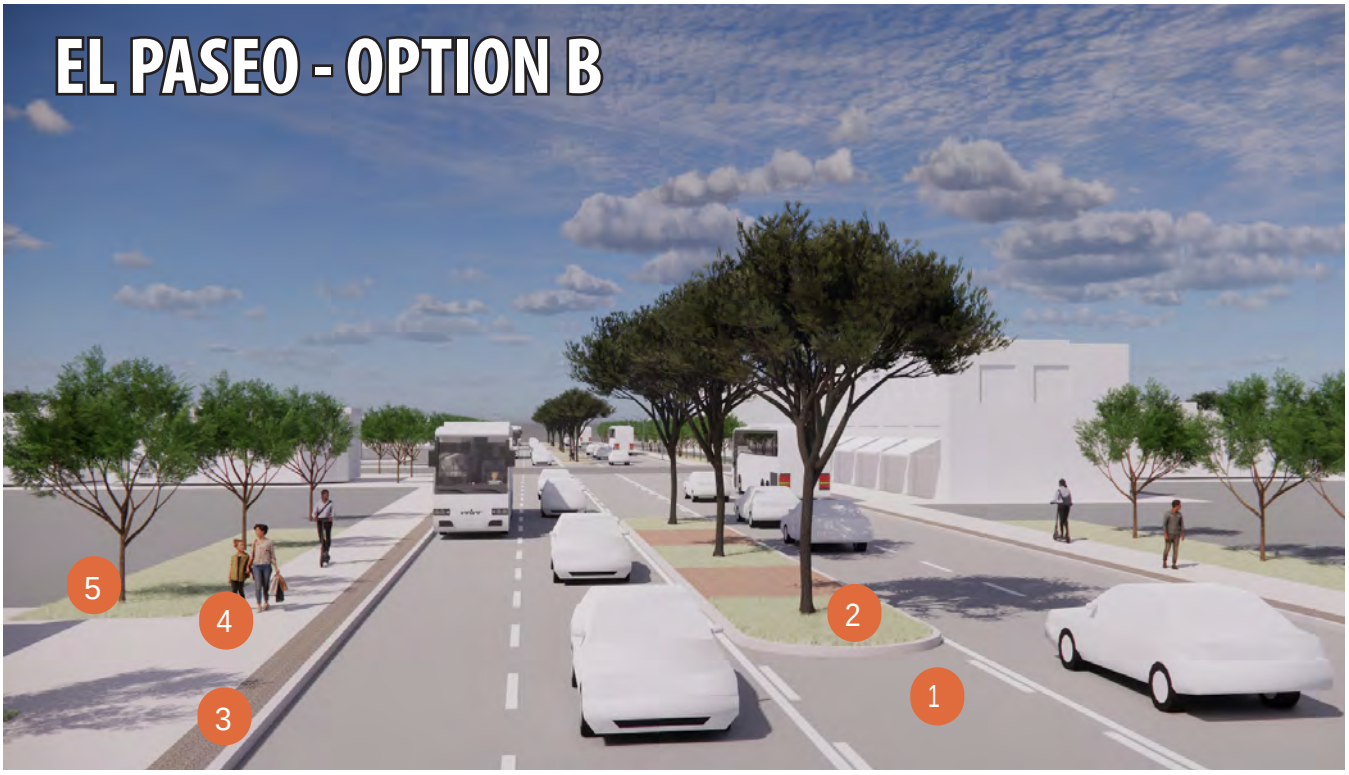
CONS:

- Reduces vehicular traffic capacity.
- May be more expensive option.
- No dedicated transit lane.
- Difficult to implement on some blocks without significant reduction in curb cuts.

1. Reduce travel lanes from five to three, with a center turn lane.
2. Protected bike and micro-mobility lane.
3. Wide sidewalk.
4. Street trees for shade.
5. Two-level lighting for vehicles and pedestrians/bikes.



EL PASEO - OPTION B



This option retains the existing five-lane configuration but adds a center median where feasible. The median facilitates mid-block pedestrian crossings and improve the aesthetics of the street. Improve transit stops, especially near Albertson's.

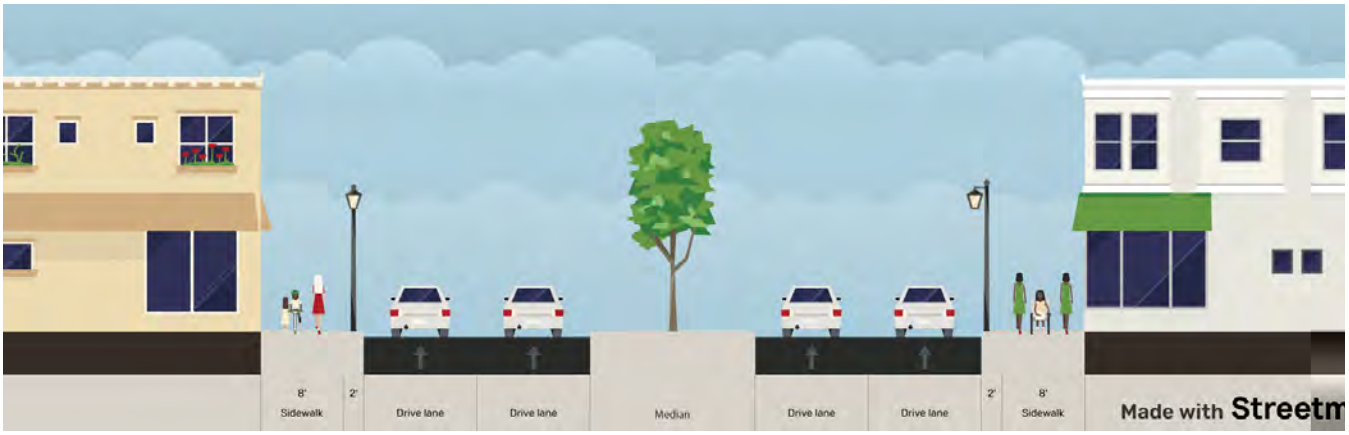
PROS:

- Maintains current traffic volume capacity.
- Less expensive option (maintains current curb line).
- Maintains the option for a dedicated transit lane.
- Medians provide opportunities for shorter pedestrian crossings.

CONS:

- Does not provide designated bike facilities and is less pedestrian friendly.
- Shade is not guaranteed as implementation occurs on the private property.

1. Retain five-lane configuration.
2. Add center landscaped median with trees in place of turn lane where feasible.
3. Hardscape or landscaped buffer with two-level street lighting for vehicles and pedestrians/bikes.
4. Shared use path for pedestrians and bikes.
5. Landscaping and trees implemented within private property.



S Solano Drive

S Solano Dr. has different needs than the other major corridors, El Paseo Rd. or Main. Because the adjacent properties are shallow, it has not seen the growth in car-oriented, "big box" development that has occurred on El Paseo. The corridor is home to a mix of small businesses including restaurants, supplies stores, warehouses, and some residential. Because of its limited capacity for large commercial developments, it may have more short term potential for walkability and bikeabilty than its busier neighbor, El Paseo Rd. As with El Paseo, S Solano would need to undergo design and feasibility studies prior to determining a final preferred street section for improvements.



The street consist of three lanes including a center turn lane, and unbuffered bike lanes which are minimal width. The lack of shade along the sidewalk discourages walking.



An alley off of Utah Street runs parallel behind S Solano. If impediments were removed, alleys could function as intended and provide vehicular access and facilitate trash removal.

Redevelopment Challenges

Property owners report some challenges when it comes to redevelopment and adaptive reuse of existing buildings. Many of the site development standards in the zoning ordinance, such as landscaping and dumpster access, are geared toward larger, suburban sites which have more space to accommodate the requirements. One way address this, would be to establish an overlay zone which would amend the development standards to calibrate them to smaller sites. Another solution would be to provide site planning assistance and financial assistance to help property owners meet the intent of the landscape standards.

For any possible design solutions, transit stops will need special consideration. If opting for a 2 lane street section, assess additions of bus pull-ins/pull-outs to reduce impositions on the flow of traffic.

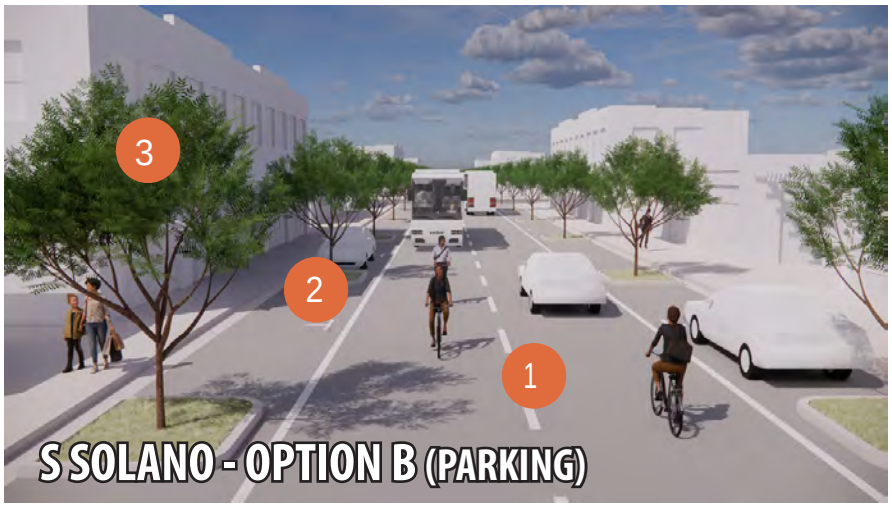
Relevant MRA Tools

- Lead an effort to create an overlay, or other zoning tool, to address site design impediments.
- Provide assistance design and planning assistance for property owners to help guide them to better site planning solutions.
- Provide financial assistance for landscaping and building improvements to improve the appearance of the corridor.



The diagram here shows the street according to current plans with buffered bike lanes. Street trees are outside of the existing R.O.W.

1. Lane reduction from three to two lanes.
2. Buffered bike lanes on both sides, per Active Transportation Plan recommendations.
3. Encourage/require street trees on private property to provide shade along sidewalk.
4. Pedestrian-scaled lighting.



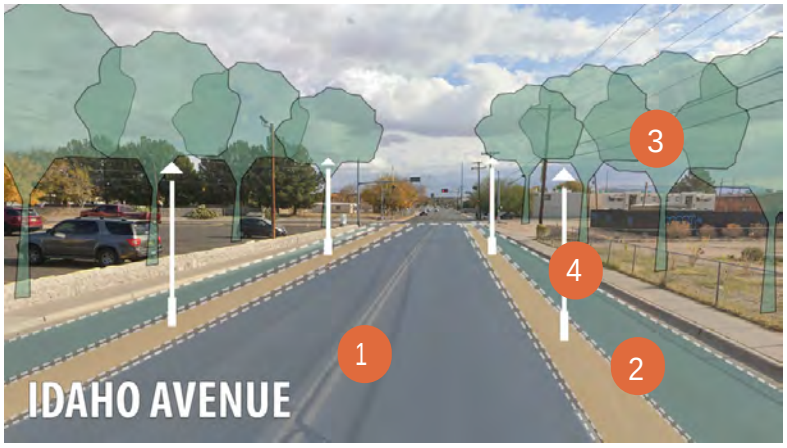
1. Lane reduction from three to two lanes, retain existing curb line.
2. Parallel parking spaces between tree planters.
3. Street trees provide shade within the public R.O.W.



1. Lane reduction from three to two lanes, retain existing curb line.
2. Protected bike lanes on each side.
3. Street trees provide shade within the public R.O.W. and protect bike lanes from moving traffic.

Recommended Street Retrofits

These following diagrams show conceptual retrofits of prioritized streets in the MRA. These concepts incorporate recommendations of the Active Transportation Plan. An attempt has been made to work within the existing R.O.W. (except where indicated otherwise) and within the curb-to-curb dimension in order to minimize cost associated with drainage infrastructure relocation. However, this results in a vehicular lane reductions for some roadways. A more in-depth feasibility study of each roadway segment will be needed to make final decisions on lane reductions and other design elements.



1. Lane reduction from four to two lanes to accommodate separated bike lanes.
2. Separated bike lanes on both sides, per the Active Transportation Plan recommendations.
3. Encourage/require street trees on private property to provide shade along sidewalk.
4. Provide lighting along bike lane or sidewalk.



1. Lane reduction from four to three lanes to accommodate separated bike lanes.
2. Separated bike lanes on both sides. Note: the Active Transportation Plan does not designate this street for protected bike lanes, but its proximity to the high school should give it reconsideration.
3. Encourage/require street trees on private property to provide shade along sidewalk.
4. Provide lighting along bike lane or sidewalk.



1. Lane reduction from three to two lanes.
2. Buffered bike lanes on both sides (per Active Transportation Plan).
3. Encourage/require street trees on private property to provide shade along sidewalk.



1. Narrow wide lanes with striping.
2. Buffered bike lanes on both sides (per Active Transportation Plan).
3. S Campo has potential as a high-quality pedestrian environment. Consider an expansion of the R.O.W. where feasible to accommodate a tree lawn and sidewalk.
4. Provide pedestrian-scaled lighting.
5. Need to include adequate space for transit stops.



1. Narrow lanes with striping.
2. Buffered bike lanes on both sides (per Active Transportation Plan).
3. Utilize MRA tools to implement a landscaped edge with street trees and lighting on private property along sidewalk.
4. Reduce number of curb cuts to improve pedestrian safety.
5. Provide pedestrian-scaled lighting.



1. Narrow wide lanes with striping.
2. Buffered bike lanes on both sides (per Active Transportation Plan).
3. Encourage/require street trees on private property to provide shade along sidewalk.
4. Pedestrian-scaled lighting.



1. Narrow wide lanes with striping.
2. Buffered bike lanes on both sides (per Active Transportation Plan).
3. Encourage/require street trees on private property to provide shade along sidewalk.
4. Pedestrian scaled lighting.

TRANSIT


E LOHMAN AVE
S CAMPO ST
S SOLANO DR
S ESPINA ST
WYATT DR
EL PASEO RD
E IDAHO AVE
MISSOURI AVE
S MAIN ST
BOUTZ RD
FARNEY LN
E UNIVERSITY AVE
Bus Route 2
Bus Route 6
Bus Route 6
Bus Route 8
Recommended Enhanced Pedestrian Connection

Transit

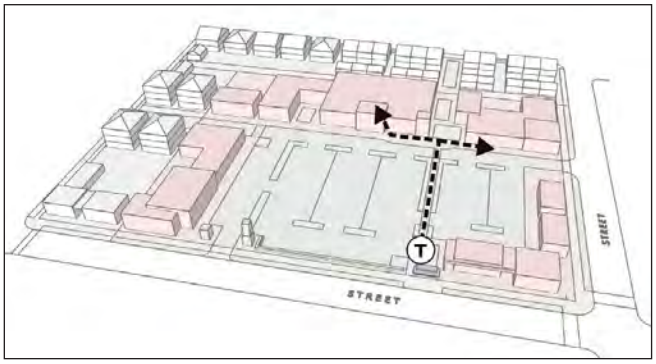
The MRA area is well-served by the Roadrunner Transit. Five of the city's eight bus routes pass through the MRA boundary. Additional routes are not planned at this time, but headways could be shortened to accommodate increased ridership. A strong and utilized transit system is an integral part of moving toward a more sustainable future.

There are several strategies that can be employed to support, and increase, transit usage. The most important of these is to create a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment in order to access the bus stops and the rider's destinations. This may include mid-block crossings on mutlti-lane arterials to facilitate access to transit stops, and enhanced pedestrian connections on private properties to access goods and services.

Focus on sidewalks.
There is a symbiotic relationship between transit usage and walkability. Transit cannot reach its full potential if it delivers riders to an environment that is hostile and even dangerous to pedestrians. By improving pedestrian comfort and safety, ridership will increase and transit will become more attractive for a broader cross section of the population.

Prioritize food access and social services.
Prioritize convenient access to groceries, drug stores and other essential goods. When planning new development, locate stops near these destination and provide a safe and comfortable pedestrian path to the front door.

Support the link between bikes and transit.
Bikes and micro-mobility can help extend the reach of transit, especially in areas where the pedestrian environment is not ideal. To encourage the link between bikes and transit, consider bike storage shelters and bike share stations at major destinations and transit hubs.



Provide direct and safe access from transit stops to major destinations, like grocery stores.



Provide shaded pedestrian paths from transit stops to the front doors of major destinations.



Bike storage shelters facilitate the link between transit and bikes, extending the reach of transit.

Relevant MRA Tools

- Help fund planning, design and implementation of pedestrian improvements to access transit service and major destinations.
- Help fund shaded bus shelters and bike storage facilities to improve rider comfort and encourage multi-modal trips.
- Advocate for policies to require good pedestrian connections on private properties such as sidewalks through parking lots.

Community Places & Programs

Woven throughout the MRA's residential neighborhoods and high-traffic corridors are public spaces that invite people to spend time in the area and create a unique identity to the district. Several parks are currently used to host recreational activities or local sports games, but other spaces have yet to be fully realized. The potential places and programs yet to be hosted in the MRA are opportunities to support its revitalization. Activating these community spaces, through infrastructure, placemaking elements, or programming, is a vital redevelopment strategy because it builds on existing assets in the MRA to improve the quality of life for residents. Several existing and potential community spaces in the MRA can be enhanced to support the area's revitalization.

Create Welcoming Gathering Spaces

The MRA has existing infrastructure, like parks and streets, which could be enhanced to invite more people. Physical improvements to public spaces, like shade structures and benches, can support neighborhood vitality by creating a comfortable space where residents gather and spend time. Other enhancements, like welcome signage and public art, help reinforce a sense of place and invite visitors to the area.

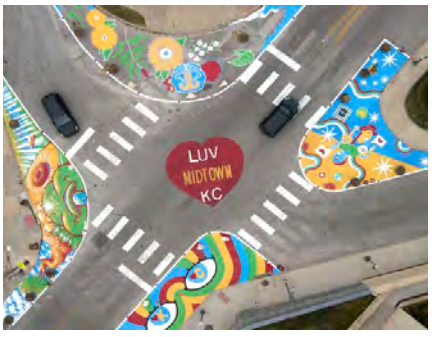
Gateway at Wyatt/Campo and El Paseo

This essential gateway into the MRA has the potential for significant redevelopment that can set the tone for the remainder of the district as a welcoming, distinct place within Las Cruces. Plans for future family-oriented services and destinations like the Boys and Girls Clubs and FYI make this an ideal location for additional improvements. The MRA team could work with developers or property owners to create a placemaking element such as a pocket plaza or an enhanced sidewalk project in addition to any ongoing or anticipated intersection redevelopment.









Gateway at Espina and Farney

This key intersection in the MRA anchors the two public parks and potential for modest infill at the NW corner of the intersection. This could include a trail connection to the parks and enhanced landscaping to reinforce a visual connection to the park.









Placemaking in community spaces. In addition to welcoming gateway signage, park amenities, like benches, tables, and shade structures, invite people to gather and enjoy public spaces. These enhancements can be considered "placemaking" by improving an area to feel more comfortable, enjoyable, and inviting.

Improve recreation options for families

Recreational amenities for families in the MRA can be improved to revitalize the area. In addition to existing park improvements, uplifting existing community assets, like parks and programs, will accommodate more residents and make the MRA family-friendly. Additionally, community spaces can be transformed to provide positive outlets for local children and young adults, whether it's a safe place to hang out with friends or other events and programs geared toward youth. These amenities can be planned for multiple generations of users and invite in entire families, from babies to seniors.

Explore private indoor recreation center. There is the potential to create an indoor recreation space within the MRA. Many residents expressed that this was a need and a potential gap in services that are provided locally. This space would provide enjoyment of the recreational amenities available to residents. The site could also accommodate outdoor recreation, like sports courts, and additional shops and housing. Notably, an indoor recreation center would offer reprieve from the hot weather in the summer months. Though the City does not have the capacity to pursue this at the time, they could try to work with a private entity to fill this community need.

Implement Gomez/Frenger Park plans. The Frenger/Gomez Park Plans have already been completed. These renovations align with a community interest in park improvements, and once constructed, will improve the park and recreational amenities for nearby neighbors and city residents. The Frenger Park designs call for a nine-hole disc golf course, multi-sport court, playground facilities, and other dynamic park amenities. The plan includes a new, pedestrian-prioritized crossing connecting Frenger Park to Gomez Park across Farney Lane. Gomez Park would be renovated to include a new walking path with exercise equipment and improve the existing field space.



Activate Valley View Park. Valley View Park has great potential to be redeveloped into a community space. The park is adjacent to an existing storm water retention area, which could be enhanced with a walking trail along the park perimeter and featuring a native desert landscape.



Revive all-ages programming. All-age programs could be hosted in newly enhanced community spaces to support MRA revitalization further. By offering meaningful activities for all generations, neighborhoods and park spaces transform into lively, inclusive, and resilient spaces where families want to live, work, and play—leading to long-term revitalization and sustained community growth.



Neighborhood Identity

Neighborhoods form the backbone of community life. Nurturing strong neighborhoods helps to foster a sense of pride and stewardship. There are several ways that the MRA designation can help strengthen neighborhoods which will, in turn, improve the entire area.

Neighborhood Mapping

The Neighborhood Map was derived from a mapping exercise conducted at the community workshop. During the workshop, it became apparent that some existing neighborhoods had strong identities and recognized boundaries, while others were less defined. In fact, some areas, including areas that had apartments and homes, could not be identified by name. For these neighborhoods, the participants proposed names, such as “Big Sky” because of its location on Montana Avenue. These names are only suggestions and other names may emerge, but the important thing is to recognize these areas as neighborhoods and help nurture their identity and sense of community. To this end, a recognized name is a good place to start.

The Key to Walkability

Neighborhoods should be thought of as the “low hanging fruit” in terms of walkability. After all, many daily trips start from the home, so locating amenities and services close to homes reduces the trip distance and increases the chances that the trip will be made on foot or by bike. The ideal neighborhood would have its own school, market, and park within walking distance of neighborhood residents. This ideal scenario may not be feasible in the short term, but should guide future planning and redevelopment.

Another factor that supports neighborhood walkability is that most neighborhood streets experience relatively low, and slow, traffic which provides a safer pedestrian environment. When neighborhood streets do experience increased speeds, traffic calming measures should be used to enhance safety.


E LOHMAN AVE
HISTORIC SOUTH MESQUITE
S CAMPO ST
S SOLANO DR
S ESPINA ST
CHIVA TOWN
WYATT DR
EL PASEO RD
WYATT TRIANGLE
E IDAHO AVE
FOSTER ROAD
MONTANA / "BIG SKY"
MISSOURI AVE
S MAIN ST
BOUTZ RD
TWIN PARKS / GOMEZ PARK
"EAST OF MAIN"
FARNEY LN
HERITAGE FARMS
CRESCENT PARK
E UNIVERSITY AVE
NEIGHBORHOODS
Historic Neighborhood
Recognized Neighborhood - strong identity
Emerging Neighborhood - weak identity
Potential Neighborhood

Safety and Security

The issue of safety was a reoccurring theme brought up during the planning process, and when asked how the MRA should support Neighborhoods, participants of the community survey chose neighborhood watch programs as their second most popular choice just behind other enhancements such as entry signs and street trees. In addition to neighborhood watch programs, the MRA can support other safety initiatives such as street lighting.

Partner with Lift Up Las Cruces

In 2022, the city began the "Lift Up Las Cruces" program to provide support for neighborhoods. The annual program works with residents to identify their needs and concerns, then allocates resources to make improvements prioritized by the residents. This can include such things as road improvements, bus shelters and lighting.

The MRA can help support and expand this program by providing additional funding for neighborhoods within the MRA boundary. Currently, the Chiva Town neighborhood is already receiving support from this program.

Relevant MRA Tools

- Support and partner with the Lift Up Las Cruces program to support additional neighborhoods within the MRA boundary area.
- Provide financial assistance for facade and site improvements.
- Recognize and support emerging neighborhoods.

Economic Development

The vision and goals for the El Paseo and S Solano corridors and adjacent neighborhoods highlight the importance of a community-focused approach to building the vibrant hubs of economic activity desired within the MRA. MRA designation enables strategies that support public investments that serve private businesses and provide financing mechanisms that generate revenue for reinvestment with the MRA boundary. The proposed redevelopment strategies are also aligned with making the area desirable for employees, business owners, and entrepreneurs. In addition to MRA tools, local and regional economic development resources are available to help local businesses thrive.

Address Vacant and Dilapidated Properties

Vacant and dilapidated buildings in the MRA are a key concern of community members, business owners, and city staff. The MRA Designation Report found that in 2023, there were nearly 90 vacant parcels in the MRA, as well as at least 30 unoccupied buildings and considerable deterioration of commercial and residential buildings. Vacancies and poor building conditions can deter potential investment in the area and attract crime and other hazards. Commercial building vacancies underutilized or failing to generate GRT (gross tax receipts) can also negatively impact local tax revenue. It will be critical to revitalize, redevelop, and repurpose vacant and dilapidated structures to attract new investment and support economic development within the MRA.

Infrastructure investments that enable development. The MRA designation enables the City of Las Cruces to make infrastructure investments necessary for redevelopment. Specifically, the designation allows for public infrastructure financing through TIFs, state and federal grants, or developer incentives. Funding can be used to address the physical conditions of public infrastructure, like road and sidewalk repairs. These improvements can support economic development by making the area more attractive, incentivize businesses to relocate and expand, and make the area more accessible for patrons.

Vacant building ordinance. The City of Las Cruces currently uses a nuisance ordinance (CLC § 18) to address concerns about vacant or dilapidated structures. To more effectively address vacant buildings, it is best practice to adopt a vacant building ordinance that holds property owners accountable for the condition of their buildings. One piece of this could include a vacant building register, requiring property owners to acknowledge the condition of their property and declare vacancy, even for a penalty fee. The MRA would greatly benefit from an enforceable ordinance that penalizes vacant property owners and incentivizes them to activate their property. For more information, see New Mexico MainStreet's "Vacant Building Ordinance White Paper".

Public land donations. Where there are publicly held or condemned vacant properties, the City of Las Cruces can donate land for redevelopment projects proposed in this MRA plan. The donations could be a sale for below market value, delayed payment to the city until a project has stabilized, a long-term lease at a below market rate, or donation. Land donation in strategic areas, like near the proposed nodes of opportunity, can be strategically used to enable commercial development and redevelopment on otherwise underutilized land.

Local Business Support

Another priority for residents and business owners is supporting the local businesses along the key commercial corridors of El Paseo, S Solano, and S. Main. An MRA designation allows the city to provide more targeted support for businesses as an economic development strategy, since commercial activity in the MRA is essential for maintaining the vitality and vibrancy of the district. Existing businesses can benefit from revitalization as the area becomes more desirable for residents, customers, and employees. The following ways to support small businesses are based on owners' feedback.

Promote resources to support existing small businesses. Resources for small businesses are available at the local and regional level, including The Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce, WESST Las Cruces, Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance, and the Las Cruces Small Business Development Center. These organizations provide local business and entrepreneurial support, programs and events, and business/professional development opportunities. The MRA Team can connect these groups to business owners and entrepreneurs in the MRA to grow a local network through new and strengthened relationships. These initiatives, organizations, and non-profits will be a critical way to address area-specific needs and help businesses thrive in the MRA.

Support entrepreneurship and workforce development programs. Another way to help local businesses thrive in the MRA is to develop local youth, recent NMSU graduates, and potential entrepreneurs into high-quality employees and business owners. This includes supporting potential entrepreneurs and businesses looking to relocate or expand their operation. There is potential for a business incubator to serve the surrounding commercial areas and support new entrepreneurs and employment support for residents looking for work in a newly revitalized area. Other institutions and employers, including NMSU and the City of Las Cruces, could expand MRA employment training and programming opportunities to serve the area's businesses better. The City of Las Cruces can also target investments in local companies that offer employment opportunities and training to community residents.

Economic Development Tools

There are many tools that the City can use to begin to finance and implement its vision for the MRA. A few of these include Tax Increment Development Districts, Tax Increment Financing and Business Improvement Districts. The table on the following pages describes these tools and provides a comparison of their costs and benefits, as well as suitability in different situations.

	Tax Increment Development District (TIDD)	Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	Business Improvement Development District (BIDD)
Brief Description	Special districts that utilize tax increment financing to fund public infrastructure & encourage economic development within a designated area.	A financing method that captures future tax revenues from a designated area to fund current improvements, aiming to stimulate economic development.	Districts formed by property owners to fund enhancements & services beyond those provided by local governments, focusing on public realm & streetscapes, safety & security, marking & events, economic development.
Eligible Improvements	Public infrastructure such as roads, utilities, parks, and development incentives. Can fund some private improvements if justified.	Similar to TIDDs, but focuses exclusively on public infrastructure improvements that enhance economic growth & property values.	Improvements & services that benefit the business district, including beautification projects, marketing, security, & maintenance services.
Cost Recovery Mechanism	Utilizes the incremental increase in a) gross receipts taxes & b) property taxes generated within the district to repay bonds issued for infrastructure projects.	Captures the incremental increase in a) property taxes resulting from the rise in property values within the district to repay bonds or fund projects directly, likely generating less revenue than a TIDD.	Levies additional assessments or taxes on property owners within the district to fund improvements & services. Cannot directly issue bonds.
Jurisdiction / Authority	Established by local governments with state approval; oversight typically involves municipal & state entities to ensure alignment with goals.	Implemented by municipal governments; oversight is primarily local, with some state guidelines to ensure proper use & effectiveness.	Created & managed by property owners or business entities within the district; oversight is often a combination of local government & district-appointed boards.
Complexity	High; involves coordination between multiple government entities, developers, & financiers, with stringent approval processes & regulatory compliance.	Moderate; requires detailed planning & projections, with approvals needed from local authorities & adherence to specific regulations.	Variable; complexity depends on the scale of improvements & local regulations, but generally involves organizing property owners & managing additional assessments.

	Tax Increment Development District (TIDD)	Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	Business Improvement Development District (BIDD)
Uses			
Large-Scale Infrastructure	Effective	Effective	Not suitable / effective
PPP Development / Redevelopment	Effective	Effective	Not suitable / effective
Beautification, Branding, Business Support	Not primary focus	Not primary focus	Effective
Public Safety & Maintenance Improvements	Not primary focus	Not primary focus	Effective

Sustainability

The MRA should implement measures that consider both environmental and economic sustainability of redevelopment in this area. This will not only improve the attractiveness and desirability of the area as a place to live, work, and play in the future, but it will also align with overall sustainability goals and resiliency for the City of Las Cruces.

Promote Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) & Low Impact Development (LID) Design Strategies in New Projects

Create plans for improved drainage basin & recreation space near Valley View.
There is an existing drainage basin at the southern terminus of Valley View Park (also south of the Library and Munson Center). This area is functional but also presents a unique opportunity to showcase creative green stormwater infrastructure in and around the basin. The space could be made more attractive and usable by creating a walking path around the perimeter and creating small drainage pathways that connect to the larger basin. Each of these drainage packets could be landscapes with drought-tolerant plants and small resting areas that would greatly improve the attractiveness of this part of the neighborhood.

Ensure all future streetscape improvements feature GSI practices.
Every trail and streetscape improvement project presents another opportunity for adding green stormwater infrastructure throughout the MRA. Runoff from impermeable surfaces can be diverted from stormwater drains (reducing load on overall system and improving function during large rainfall events) and into packets of landscaped areas, allowing for more efficient use of water and slower absorption of said water into the groundwater table. These practices should also be implemented wherever impervious surfaces are installed in new developments (including parking lots).

Expand shade coverage in the MRA.
Throughout the planning process, many community members voiced the need for better shade coverage throughout the MRA in order to make the area more walkable and comfortable for pedestrians. Additional tree canopy would also provide significant cooling benefits for the City by providing shade and facilitating evapotranspiration, thus helping to lower temperatures. Lastly, trees have the benefit of improving overall air quality and reducing heat stress.

Shade structures should also be added at bus stops in the MRA. These shelters should include



design features that enhance cooling effects (use materials that promote airflow, reflect solar radiation). Green infrastructure should be incorporated adjacent to shelters where possible.

Incentivize renewable energy design.
Consider zoning incentives, such as expedited permitting or density bonuses, for new residential and commercial development that incorporate rooftop solar or are pre-wired for PV systems.

Expand Mobility Choices

Expand mobility options, especially for walking, biking and transit.
All future developments in the MRA should consider their impact on overall mobility and circulation through the district. The El Paseo and S Solano corridors (and surrounding areas) offer key north-south connections between downtown and NMSU. There are also key east-west connections that offer ways to get from neighborhoods and the freeway to Mesilla. Additionally, the MRA is host to major schools, employment centers and shopping districts. Each of these destinations within and beyond the MRA adds load to the overall traffic of the area. The more transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure are added and improved, the more options they provide residents to move without the need of a vehicle. Consequently, the MRA should continue to make investments to improve both of these and incentivize private development to include these, as well.

Ensure future public investments are fully accessible.
For many years, public spaces have been built in a way that prioritizes use by fully able-bodied individuals, often making some spaces entirely inaccessible to anyone who is differently-abled. As the MRA represents a more historic part of Las Cruces, it is no exception to this practice. However, future development and public investments offer an opportunity to begin to change this standard of practice, but making public space and future buildings fully accessible to all community members.







FINANCING AND **IMPLEMENTATION**



Action Plan

A variety of MRA and general economic development tools can be utilized to achieve the goals of the El Paseo & S Solano MRA plan and implement the catalytic projects recommended by the plan. MRAs provide a special exemption to the State of New Mexico's "anti-donation" clause and allow for the direct collaboration of public and private interests. To support local businesses and new development in the area, the success of the MRA plan likely relies on employing the primary MRA tools (public-private partnerships and tax increment financing), additional MRA tools, and other economic development tools.

In this section, we will discuss the highest priorities that the City and partners should focus on in the years to come, or, catalytic projects, outline a full set of actions to achieve recommended strategies, and, finally, discuss the menu of tools and resources that can be used to achieve each of these.




E LOHMAN AVE
S CAMPO ST
S ESPINA ST
S SOLANO DR
WYATT DR
EL PASEO RD
E IDAHO AVE
S MAIN ST
BOUTZ RD
MISSOURI AVE
FARNEY LN
E UNIVERSITY AVE
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7
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8

Catalytic Projects

The following catalytic projects represent high impact potential projects that should be prioritized as investments by the City in order to activate future private development. In some instances, they will require significant mobilization of resources, partners, and time, but they will be essential to bring about the vision that the community has for the future of this area. The next several pages provide more detail about these seven identified projects.

1. El Paseo Transformation
2. El Paseo Commercial and Residential Redevelopment
3. S Solano Business Revitalization
4. Valley View Park Activation
5. Infill as Redevelopment
6. Public Safety improvements
7. Improve Trail Connections
8. Community and Neighborhood Placemaking

1. El Paseo Transformation

Reinforce El Paseo Road as the primary connection between Downtown and the University

Currently, the corridor is automobile-oriented, as El Paseo is conceived as a commercial corridor and a primary vehicular connection between downtown and the university. The plan envisions taming traffic on El Paseo and improving the pedestrian realm along the corridor, supporting the redevelopment of underutilized properties along the corridor. Still, it has the potential to evolve with more pedestrian and transit trips that can support additional density along the corridor.

ACTION STEPS

- Conduct a preliminary feasibility and schematic design phase to look at several design options along with the cost implications of each. Make a final recommendation to the Council on the preferred design option. Use this study to identify funding sources for the next phase.
- Proceed with engineering and construction based on the preferred option identified in first bullet.

TIME FRAME

- Short Term: Begin initial feasibility and design phases immediately, within one year of MRA Plan adoption. Establish budget and identify funding sources.
- Medium-Long Term: The implementation of transformation will likely take 5+ years to complete.

FUNDING SOURCES

- City of Las Cruces ICIP
- NMDOT Funding
- FHWA Funding – IIJA, RAISE, SS4A

KEY PARTNERS

- **City of Las Cruces Community Development Department & Public Works**
- NMDOT
- Las Cruces Police Department

2. El Paseo Commercial and Residential Redevelopment

Encourage a mix of commercial and housing development along El Paseo

With large assemblages of underutilized commercial buildings and large parking lots, El Paseo has the potential to accommodate more growth, especially multi-family residential. While more housing is desperately needed within the MRA, the new multi-family developments should integrate well with commercial development along the corridor, create walkable blocks connecting residents to the corridor, and provide amenities for residents and shoppers alike. Incentives should focus on attracting vertical mixed-use buildings at key locations along the corridor.

ACTION STEPS

- Remove existing zoning barriers, and other administrative barriers, that may impede residential development along the corridor.
- Support existing businesses by implementing corridor stabilization programs, including facade and landscaping improvements, physical enhancements, expanding safety programs, etc.
- Work with existing private property owners to subdivide large parcels to accommodate future development opportunities and infrastructure as needed.
- Attract future commercial and residential development that is aligned with the MRA vision, especially in the identified opportunity sites/nodes, through public-private partnerships.

TIME FRAME

- Short term: Implement business support 1-2+ years into the redevelopment process.
- Medium-Long term: Prepare the land and infrastructure for future redevelopment in the medium-term, 3-5 years.

FUNDING SOURCES

- Public-private partnerships
- MRA tools, including a potential TIF or BID
- Public land donations

KEY PARTNERS

- **City of Las Cruces Community Development Department**
- City of Las Cruces Economic Development Department
- City of Las Cruces Public Works Department

3. S Solano Business Revitalization

Reinforce S Solano as a local business corridor

S Solano consists of small lots and blocks and primarily has local businesses that are smaller in scale and provide local neighborhood needs. Future redevelopment along the corridor should focus on encouraging more local businesses that are smaller in scale (6,000 sq. ft. or smaller) to continue this trend. This would allow businesses to be supported entirely by foot or bicycle traffic and reduce the need to provide ample surface parking lots.

ACTION STEPS

- Support existing business by implementing corridor stabilization programs, including facade and landscaping improvements, physical enhancements, expanding safety programs, etc. Provide design assistance to help property owners implement and envision improvements.
- Connecting business owners to existing resources and programs offered by local groups.
- Review permitting processes to ensure site design standards are flexible for the unique qualities of the S Solano corridor while encouraging human-scale and design and pedestrian safety.
- Collaborate across city departments to support the potential creation of a S Solano business organization.

TIME FRAME

- Short-medium term: Start coordinating with resource providers early on, within first year, then build out more substantial programs between 1-3 years into redevelopment.

FUNDING SOURCES

- MRA – potential TIF, TIDD, BID
- Public-private partnerships
- Committing staff/MRA Team capacity
- Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico, Economic Development Retention and Revitalization Grant 2025

KEY PARTNERS

- **City of Las Cruces Economic Development Department**
- Small business owners in MRA
- Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce
- NMSU Small Business Development Center
- Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance

4. Valley View Park Activation

Make improvements to Valley View Park to establish as a destination and connect Arroyo to the northeast

The focus will be to add more "eyes on the park" with development around the park's edges that activates the edges and provides residents much needed amenities such as playgrounds, trails, picnic areas, etc. The goal is to extend this trail amenity to the northeast along the drainage area with the future redevelopment of the brickyard property.

ACTION STEPS

- Complete master plan for Valley View Park. Work with stakeholders, including residents, local schools, the Senior Center, and Library to develop vision for park improvements. The master plan should include the storm water detention basin and examine the feasibility of providing amenities in the basin for public use.
- Initiate collaboration with EBID to plan for trail connection along Las Cruces Arroyo, between Valley View Park and Young Park.
- Implement the master plan improvements.
- Activate the newly renovated park with community programs and events.

TIME FRAME

- Short-medium term: Complete master planning process that is currently in progress.
- Medium term: Implement park improvements and buildout, 3-5 years into redevelopment.

FUNDING SOURCES

- NMORD Trails+ and Outdoor Equity Grants
- NM Quality of Life Grants/Regional Recreation Centers
- City of Las Cruces ICIP

KEY PARTNERS

- **City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department**
- City of Las Cruces Quality of Life Department
- Elephant Butte Irrigation District
- Local schools, particularly Valley View Elementary School

5. Infill as Redevelopment

Facilitate appropriate development on key infill sites, like the "Brickyard" and Foster and Montana sites

The City and private interests are working on additional housing (of various types and price points) within the MRA. The goal is to further this effort by looking at proximate sites for additional residential development.

ACTION STEPS

- The old Featherweight brickyard site has been identified as a key infill site. The project could help fill in missing housing and incorporate an extension of the Valley View Greenway toward the arroyo. The MRA can help fund an initial feasibility study, which would include an environmental assessment of the site and a conceptual development plan ("Blueprint").
- Support efforts to develop a mixed-use center as proposed by FYI behind Sutherland Lumber between El Paseo and Campo Street.
- Support implementation of the Paseos Verdes project.
- Facilitate development on area key infill sites by working with property owners to identify market opportunities. Highlight development sites on the MRA website.
- In coordination with the city, provide professional level design assistance to create preliminary development plans for key sites. Ensure zoning and infrastructure are in place to allow for development.
- Create and publicize a concise resource guide for housing/affordable housing development tools that can be shared with potential developers (ex: brownfield redevelopment, LIHTC, HTF, CDBG, etc.).

TIME FRAME

- Short term: Provide or establish professional level design services and resource guide for potential developers.
- Medium-long term: Full project implementation.

FUNDING SOURCES

- Public-private partnerships
- Public land donations or acquisitions
- MRA – potential TIF, TIDD, BID
- NMED Brownfields Program

KEY PARTNERS

- **City of Las Cruces Community Development Department**
- City of Las Cruces Economic Development Department
- Property owners

6. Public Safety Improvements

Address security concerns in the MRA that contribute to the public's perception of the area

Security is a significant concern in the MRA Area. Some of it is real and some of it is perception. The City knows that failing to address this will limit the MRA's ability to attract new development and sustain a healthy business environment.

ACTION STEPS

- Continue to strengthen the relationship between LCPD Community Outreach and residents/ businesses through pop-up events, bike rodeos, and public education campaigns.
- Consider a police sub-station at Farney Lane and E Park Drive. May be combined with commercial development with active uses (cafe, convenience store, etc.)
- Advocate for policy reform at the city level to provide more support services located in the MRA.
- Work with business owners to establish private security presence to help support police presence.
- Invest in physical improvements to add more lighting, improve sidewalks, and shade to improve public health and safety.

TIME FRAME

- Short term: Begin collaborating with LCPD and other service providers immediately upon redevelopment.
- Short-medium term: Add infrastructure improvements, like additional lighting.
- Ongoing: Continue to develop and strengthen relationships, programming throughout the entirety of the redevelopment period.

FUNDING SOURCES

- Partnerships with LCPD for safety and security resources
- Community Action Agency of Southern New Mexico (CAASNM) funding

KEY PARTNERS

- **Las Cruces Police Department**
- Las Cruces Police Department Community Outreach Team
- Lift Up Las Cruces Team
- Local service providers
- Local businesses and property owners

7. Improve Trail Connections

Utilize the drainage ditches for trail connections to improve overall walkability

As part of a city-wide effort, plans are underway to implement trails along several of the area's drainage ditch corridors. The goal will be to ensure that new development in the MRA provides seamless bicycle and pedestrian connections to these future trails to maximize their utility.

ACTION STEPS

- Collaborate with EBID to implement trail plan for Las Cruces lateral.
- Conduct analysis for Las Cruces Arroyo trail plan.

TIME FRAME

- Short term: Increase trail connections within 1-3 years of redevelopment.

FUNDING SOURCES

- NMDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Funding
- NMORD Trails+ Grant

KEY PARTNERS

- **City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department**
- Elephant Butte Irrigation District
- NMSU and Las Cruces High School
- Mesilla Valley MPO
- NMDOT
- NMORD

8. Community and Neighborhood Placemaking

Reinforce neighborhood and area identity through targeted and district-wide improvements to public spaces

Many of the neighborhoods in the MRA area do not have an identifiable name or defined boundaries. This plan starts to define general boundaries and characteristics for the different neighborhoods in the plan area. The key will be to work with neighborhood representatives to develop a plan that best addresses their immediate needs and concerns and helps grow neighborhood pride and ownership.

ACTION STEPS

- To reinforce identity, assist with neighborhood signage programs (street sign toppers, etc.), neighborhood markers, gateways, and public art.
- Continue to organize neighborhood cleanups and property improvement days in the MRA.
- Continue to dedicate city staff capacity to supporting neighborhood groups and associations.

TIME FRAME

- Short term: Empower existing neighborhood organizations to begin enhancements as soon as possible.
- Medium term: Build out more stable funding, programming around local beautification.
- Medium-Long term: Gateway/welcoming signage are more substantial projects that require additional funding and effort to implement.

FUNDING SOURCES

- Keep Las Cruces Beautiful Funding
- MRA Funding
- Partnerships/sponsorships with local businesses, banks, or large corporations in Las Cruces willing to sponsor neighborhood beautification projects, either through direct funding or in-kind donations (e.g., materials, labor, etc.).

KEY PARTNERS

- **City of Las Cruces Quality of Life Department**
- Keep Las Cruces Beautiful
- Neighborhood groups, associations, and watches
- City of Las Cruces Community Engagement Office
- Las Cruces High School

Key Actions

To help the City prioritize and move forward with key strategies for the MRA, we've created the following table which helps to outline the necessary actions, timing, relative cost, responsible agents, and potential resources. For timing, the following are assumed timeframes:

- Short: 0-2 years
- Mid: 2-5 years
- Long: 5-10 years
- Ongoing

Relative costs are created with the following assumptions:

Relative Cost	
$	Able to be implemented using discretionary funding available to the planning director or other department head
$$	Able to be implemented using discretionary funding available to the city manager or equivalent
$$$	Requires a line item in the annual city budget developed by the city manager and approved by city council or other governing board
$$$$	Requires a line item in the capital improvements program
$$$$$	Requires third-party funding such as grants or partner resources

	TIMING	RELATIVE COST/ RESOURCES	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	NOTES
GENERAL				
Create an MRA board to oversee and champion plan actions.	Short	$$	City Manager's Office & ED	Need Council action on creating an MRA Board; need dedicated staff members to support the mission of the MRA Board.
Create an MRA webpage to showcase key information about the area, highlight opportunity sites and ongoing projects - tie to ED page.	Short	$	ED/IT	Needs to be constantly monitored and updated for maximum effectiveness
PUBLIC SAFETY				
Outreach: Continue to strengthen the relationship between LCPD Community Outreach & residents/ businesses	Short	$	LCPD	
Bike safety: Continue to host bike rodeos & bike safety outreach.	Short	$	LCPD Community Services	
Improved lighting: prioritize lighting in parks, neighborhoods, and on key walking corridors.	Short	$$	Community Development Department, Parks and Recreation	
Police sub-station: Assess feasibility for a Police Substation (potentially near Frenger and Gomez Parks)	Mid	$$	LCPD	
Address vacant properties: Create a vacant property task force; continue to strengthen code enforcement within the MRA	Short	$	MRA board	
Support Neighborhood Initiatives: Support Neighborhood Watch Programs & consider expanding to business watch	Short	$	Community Engagement Office	

	TIMING	RELATIVE COST/ RESOURCES	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	NOTES
HOUSING / LAND USE				
Zoning Strategies: Expand housing entitlements within existing commercially zoned properties. Encourage zoning strategies that provide more housing options that are compatible in scale with existing neighborhood character.	Short	$/$$	City Planning Department	This objective may be accomplished with text amendments to the zoning ordinance. However, the city may also want to consider design standards for new development which would require a more extensive process.
Promote development sites: Facilitate development on key infill sites by working with property owners to identify market opportunities. Highlight development sites on the MRA website.	Short	$	Economic Development Community Development	
Design Assistance Program: In coordination with the city, provide professional level design assistance to create preliminary development plans for key sites. Ensure zoning and infrastructure are in place to allow for development	Mid	$$	Economic Development Community Development	Led by Economic Development with assistance from Planning Department. May require contract design services with outside consultant.
Create Resource Guide: Create resource guide for housing/affordable housing development tools (state/ federal) that can be shared with potential developers (ex: brownfield redevelopment, LIHTC,)	Short	$	Economic Development	
Brickyard Site: fund an initial feasibility study of the old Featherweight brickyard which would include an environmental assessment of the site and a conceptual development plan (“Blueprint”).	Mid	$$	Economic Development Public Works	Led by Economic Development with engineering support from Public Works. Outside consultant needed to conduct environmental studies.
Church sites: Work with existing community assets (churches) and non-profits to provide housing options and assist with potential development	Short	$	Community Development	
Support Housing Authority projects: Support upcoming and ongoing housing projects, including Paseo Verdes, FYI Development, and Jardines Verdes.	Short	$	Housing Authority	Leverage MRA designation to provide funding opportunities for proposed housing projects.
Housing Incentives: Consider reduction of impact fees, TIA requirements (remove red tape) for future development; consider setting up a fund for assist developers with cost of landscape/greenspace requirements (what are funding gaps for affordable housing?)	Short	$	Economic Development Community Development	
Land banking: Set up a system to acquire vacant and underutilized properties to position them for redevelopment which might include demolition of existing buildings.	Mid	$	Economic Development Community Development	
Infrastructure: advocate for infrastructure improvements that may be needed to facilitate development along the Idaho corridor.	Short	$	Community Development	

	TIMING	RELATIVE COST/ RESOURCES	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	NOTES
MOBILITY				
MRA Street design technical advisory committee: establish a community advisory committee to participate in the street design process and make a final (non-binding) recommendation to council on the community's preferred design solution.	Short	$	City Manager's Office with Community Development	Assemble a broad representation of mobility stakeholders, business owners and residents.
El Paseo Road - Step 1: Conduct a preliminary feasibility and schematic design phase to look at several design options along with the cost implications of each. Make a final recommendation to Council on the preferred design option. Use this study to identify funding sources for the next phase.	Mid	$$$	City Manager's Office with Community Development and Public Works	Contract with consultant to lead the design and public engagement process. Establish street design technical advisory committee prior to this task; Combine this task with schematic design options for Idaho, Boutz, Missouri, Solano, and Espina.
El Paseo Road - Step 2: Proceed with engineering and construction based on the preferred option identified in Step 1.	Mid	$$$$$	Public Works	Will require multiple funding partners.
Idaho/Boutz/Missouri - Step 1: Following the process for El Paseo, conduct a feasibility and schematic level design phase for a complete streets retrofit of Idaho Avenue and Boutz Road/Missouri Ave, with the goal of establishing the preferred design options.	Mid	$$$	Public Works	See notes above
Idaho and Boutz/Missouri - Step 2: Proceed with engineering and construction based on the preferred option identified in Step 1.	Mid	$$$$	Public Works	
S Solano / Espina: Follow the two-step process established above for complete streets improvements to Solano Drive and Espina Street. This project may also include the feasibility of utilizing the existing alleys, especially behind S Solano Road.	Mid	$$$	Public Works	
Intersections: Depending on the timing for complete street retrofits, the MRA/city may want to address immediate safety concerns at key intersections - especially those near schools. These safety improvements can be spearheaded by the appropriate city department. The MRA may advocate for short term improvements on behalf of the community (example, the intersections of Idaho and Solano, Montana and El Paseo, and Boutz and El Paseo)	Mid	$$$	Public Works	
Slow zones: Advocate for "slow zones" on neighborhood streets and near schools.	Short	$$	Public Works with Community Development	Fund public outreach, signage and traffic calming measures.
Micromobility: Accommodate small electrically powered vehicles that are compatible with bikes by implementing complete street retrofits.	Short	$	Public Works and NMSU EPA grants	Prioritize supportive infrustructure for electric vehicles, such as EV charging stations in public parking areas.

	TIMING	RELATIVE COST/ RESOURCES	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	NOTES
Alleys: Establish a policy that encourages the use of existing alley ways for vehicular access and back-of-house services, especially those located behind commercial properties. See also S Solano/Espina project above.	Short	$	Public Works with Community Development	
Ditch to Trails: Transform local ditches (Las Cruces Lateral and Arroyo) as pedestrian/bike corridors and connections to key destinations (University, Downtown, Mesilla)	Short	$$$	Public Works with Community Development	Some projects already under way
COMMUNITY PLACES & PROGRAMS				
Gateway: Create a gateway at Campo and El Paseo with signage and other placemaking elements. Explore potential for a civic anchor institution in conjunction with redevelopment	Long	$$$$	Economic Development Community Development Local businesses & developers	
Parks: Implement the Frenger and Gomez Parks plans.	Long	$$$$	Parks and Recreation	
Valley View Park: Activate Valley View Park with a walking trail, landscaping, and other public amenities	Mid	$$$$	Parks and Recreation	Already in the process of planning and design
Revive all-ages programming in the parks: partnerships with schools (recreation, sports, outdoor classrooms)	Short	$	Parks and Recreation Community Development	
Neighborhood clean up events: help organize neighborhood cleanups in partnership with neighborhood associations and block groups	Short	$	Community Development Neighbors	
NEIGHBORHOODS				
Neighborhood Identity: Reinforce neighborhood identity by recognizing existing neighborhood boundaries and names. Support identity for emerging neighborhoods by encouraging the adoption of new neighborhood names and boundaries where none exist. This process was started during the MRA planning process.	Short	$	Community Engagement Office; Neighborhood Associations/ Organizations	
Reinforce identity: Assist with neighborhood signage programs (street sign toppers, etc.), neighborhood markers, gateways and public art.	Short	$	Neighborhood Associations/ Organizations	
Partner with Lift Up Las Cruces: Support the city's program, Lift Up Las Cruces, in their efforts to work with neighborhoods to identify needed improvements. This could include funding support from the MRA.	Short	$$	Lift Up Las Cruces	
Improve walkability: Advocate for neighborhood "slow zones", sidewalk repairs, pedestrian scaled lighting, and street trees along neighborhood streets.	Medium	$	Community Development Department	
City Support: Advocate for city staff to support Neighborhood Organizations (watch, association, etc.); Create neighborhood liaison position to facilitate this.	Short	$	Community Engagement Office, Neighborhood Associations/ Organizations	Expand existing community liason work to include neighborhood coordination

	TIMING	RELATIVE COST/ RESOURCES	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	NOTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
Vacant building ordinance: Advocate for Adoption and enforcement of a vacant building ordinance	Short	$	Economic Development Community Development	Work with Nusiance Abatement Team
Donate public land (publicly held or condemned) to activate properties	Mid	$	Community Development	
Promote existing resources to support small businesses: Implement small business grant and loan program	Short	$$$	Economic Development	Create clear program guidelines and expectations for new businesses; work with NMSU small business center and local Chamber.
Development Review Committee: Add professional level design assistance to create preliminary development plans for key sites; supplement to standing DRC services	Short	$$	Economic Development DRC	Ensure zoning and infrastructure are in place to allow for development.
Promote Brownfield Redevelopment: Advocate for cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield sites in the MRA.	Mid - Long	$$$$	Economic Development	
Promote Revitalization Incentive Program: Provide incentives and grants for facade, site, landscape improvements, pedestrian improvements, safety, upgrade longevity of a commercial buildings. Implement weatherization program for commercial properties; encourage adaptive reuse of older/vacant properties	Short - Mid	$$$	Economic Development DRC	Implement ideas for programs that have been developed by Economic Development
Assess feasibility of TIDD or BIDD (business improvement v. tax increment) - comparison tool for different funding mechanisms (TIFF, TIDD, BIDD)	Short	$	Economic Development Property Owners & local businesses	See Case Studies for examples
Support public safety actions and initiatives Refer to Public Safety Section. Support safety initiatives that allow businesses to stay open later during certain times (i.e. First Friday, etc.)	Ongoing	$$	Economic Development LCPD	
Promote development sites: Create a list of available commercial space in the area.	Short	$	Economic Development Borderplex	Could take the form of a property spotlight - work with Borderplex (site readiness list)

	TIMING	RELATIVE COST/ RESOURCES	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	NOTES
SUSTAINABILITY				
Amenitize Storm Water: Improve drainage basin in Valley View Park to allow for usable recreation space	Mid	$$$	Parks and Recreation Public Works Sustainability	
Green Stormwater Infrastructure: Ensure all future streetscape improvements incorporate GSI practices	Ongoing	$$	Community Development Sustainability Public Works	Consider permeable pavements to manage stormwater runoff, espcially in the flood zone.
Expand shade: Support programs to incentive planting of trees within the public ROW and private property adjacent to sidewalks.	Short	$	Sustainability	Incorporate complementary cool pavement materials
Expand shade: Add shelters at bus stops with passive cooling features	Short	$$$	Transit Public Works Sustainability	Utilize materials and designs that promote airflow and reduce heat accumulation, reflective materials for roofs, green infrastructure adjacent, where possible.
Expand mobility options: Refer to Mobility section.	Mid	$$$	Transit Community Development Public Works	
Universal Accessibility: Ensure all future developments are fully accessible	Ongoing	$$$	Planning Public Works Community Development	
Energy efficiency: Create/Promote incentive programs for energy-efficient developments, adaptive reuse	Short	$	Sustainability EMNRD Community Development	Work with EMNRD to access Sustainable Building Tax Credits.
Follow guidelines for water conservation and stormwater management	Ongoing	$	Utilities Sustainability Public Works	Work with City Water Conservation Program Coordinator

Tools, Resources & Financing

Primary MRA Tools

Public-Private Partnerships

Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) are a fundamental component of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code, facilitating agreements between the public and private sectors to achieve goals that neither could be accomplished independently. The MRA framework enables municipalities to collaborate closely with private developers through development agreements, ensuring projects align with community objectives. Through the MRA, the City can provide land, parking facilities, public amenities, financial resources, and tax incentives to stimulate private development, while developers and property owners pay and manage the redevelopment process.

Development agreements outline the responsibilities of each party in the site redevelopment process, with clear performance measures for the timing of each phase. These agreements ensure that the public/private partnership benefits the community and supports goals outlined in the MRA Plan or other policy documents. The various types of development agreements include:

- **Purchase Agreement:** A contract between a developer and the City to sell City-owned land to the developer.
- **Lease Agreement:** A contract between a developer and the City for leasing City-owned land or property to the developer.
- **Owner Participation Agreement:** A contract between a property owner or developer and the City to allow for the development of property owned by a party other than the City, typically the owner or developer.

Private entities involved in public projects may also receive property tax exemptions under the Redevelopment Code for the tax increment following the City's acquisition of the property. The private entity must still pay taxes based on the property's value before acquisition, with the exemption applying only to increases in value after that. The exemption lasts up to 7 years.

Tax Increment Financing ("TIF")

For larger-scale projects, or projects with significant master infrastructure costs, TIFS can serve to develop and revitalize underutilized areas. TIF can provide a consistent funding source for redevelopment projects identified in the MRA plan. A TIF financing district allows the local government to capture future increases in property tax and gross receipts tax revenues generated within the district to fund public improvements like infrastructure, redevelopment projects or other community development initiatives. The MRA plan as developed through public input identifies the projects and types of projects that can benefit from upfront investments that lead to future value increases.

Tax Increment Development District ("TIDD")

Within the MRA, the municipality can leverage tax increment financing by establishing either a TIF District, which can be applied only to designated blighted areas through a simple City Council approval, or a Tax Increment Development District ("TIDD"), which can be applied to an area without an official blighted designation but must be adopted through either the petition of 51% of property owners or by referendum. TIDDs can use Gross Receipt Tax (GRT) increment as the revenue stream, which can have advantages over an increment based on property taxes like TIF

Districts, which may rise more slowly than new GRT revenue. A TIDD structure based on GRT increment is likely better positioned to capture the success of MRA incentives.

The TIF/TIDD can be used in the following ways:

Funding Redevelopment Projects or Public Improvements

The tax increment collected by the TIDD is used to finance specific redevelopment projects in the MRA, such as infrastructure improvements, building renovations, or public amenities. The funds can also be used to support private development that is aligned with the MRA's goals. By offering TIF funding within an MRA, municipalities can attract private developers to participate in large-scale projects that may not be financially feasible without assistance.

Permanent MRA Fund

The Redevelopment Code allows the local government to form a Metropolitan Redevelopment Fund to hold redevelopment funds in reserve until they can be utilized for specific projects or to fund MRA programs annually. TIF funds can be supplemented by general fund contributions, capital outlays, or grants, and managed through an MRA fund to ensure that project funds specific to the MRA District remain consistently available and appropriately managed.

Additional MRA Tools

In addition to public-private partnerships and TIF funds, the MRA structure can implement the following benefits, processes, and programs to incentivize new housing production, improve commercial corridors, and produce positive community impact.

Direct Contribution of Municipal Assets or Loans/Grants

Within the MRA boundaries, the City can offer small-scale city assets or infrastructure improvements to individual property owners or businesses under the fair value provision, bypassing the complexities of a P3 development agreement. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or easement agreements may benefit individual property owners or businesses, provided a corresponding public benefit exists.

Zoning Flexibility and Streamlined Approval Process

Projects in MRAs can benefit from expedited permitting, zoning flexibility, and other regulatory incentives. The Redevelopment Code also has a provision to allow the City to create zoning code ordinances, amendments, and exceptions that will apply to only the MRA. These ordinances can include provisions to increase site utilization/ productivity such as reduced setbacks, increased building heights, and reduced on-site parking requirements. The City can also use an expedited development plan review as an additional incentive. These tools can reduce the barriers to entry for private development in the MRA, saving both time and financial resources that can often serve to make projects more viable.

Impact Fee Reductions

The City can offer property owners/businesses a waiver of development or permit fees when the development plans are consistent with the MRA Plan's goals and projects. A waiver or a decrease in fees typically charged to developers to cover infrastructure and public service costs (e.g., roads, schools, utilities) can further lower upfront costs and encourage housing construction.

Demolition Assistance Program

A demolition assistance program can provide financial or technical support to property owners or local governments to demolish dilapidated or unsafe buildings. It can provide one-time grants to eligible participants to remove hazardous structures and enhance public safety within the MRA boundaries, while also helping reduce the upfront costs associated with redevelopment.

Brownfield Redevelopment Program

This program focuses on cleaning and redeveloping brownfields – sites that may be contaminated with hazardous substances, pollutants, or other environmental risks. The goal is to transform these underutilized or abandoned properties into productive spaces like housing, businesses, or parks. The program may offer one-time tax credits to developers who clean up brownfield sites within the MRA boundaries. These transferable tax credits incentivize environmental remediation, abatement, and demolition activities, aiding the redevelopment of brownfield sites for commercial, retail, or mixed-use purposes.

Weatherization Program

Aimed at improving energy efficiency, this program can help enhance the energy performance of homes or buildings, especially for low-income households. The MRA can fund essential upgrades, such as insulation, sealing gaps, installing energy-efficient windows, cool roofs with high-albedo, and updating heating and cooling systems. These improvements help reduce energy costs, improve comfort, and lessen environmental impact.

Revitalization Incentive Program

To promote the redevelopment of existing retail centers, the MRA could offer financial incentives through reimbursements for permanent building and site improvements made by businesses or commercial property owners within the MRA boundaries. Eligible improvements can include façade enhancements, building safety repairs, structural and mechanical/electrical/plumbing (MEP) upgrades, and other projects that contribute to the long-term quality of commercial buildings.

Landscape Improvement Program

Landscaping has the potential to impact the overall appearance of commercial centers significantly. Many existing retail and commercial centers within the MRA boundaries have minimal landscaping and local businesses may not have the funding to make exterior improvements. Therefore, offering a landscaping incentive may entice business owners to undertake minor improvements to their property.

Small Business Grants and Loans

Small business grant and loan programs can be implemented in collaboration with the City to provide funding to entrepreneurs for starting, expanding, or sustaining their businesses, particularly for retail locations within the MRA. These programs support job creation, innovation, and economic growth, targeting underserved sectors or demographics, including minority- and women-owned businesses.

Additional Economic Development Tools

Low-Income Housing Tax Credit ("LIHTC")

Overseen by the IRS and implemented through Housing NM, the LIHTC program incentivizes private investment in affordable housing. Developers awarded LIHTCs raise equity by selling tax credits to investors, lowering project costs. Units must serve households earning 60% or less of the area median income, with rents capped for affordability, with restrictions typically lasting from 15 to over 30 years. States allocate credits, offering 9% for new construction and 4% for rehabilitation or projects using other funding.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

CDBG is a federal program administered by HUD to support community development projects benefiting low- and moderate-income residents. It provides flexible funding to state and local governments for housing rehabilitation, public infrastructure, and economic development. At least 70% of funds must assist low-income individuals and public input is required in planning. Funds are distributed through formula grants to entitlement communities and smaller municipalities via state programs, addressing urban poverty, blight, and economic needs.

HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)

The HOME program can also be an additional funding resource for projects and non-profit developers within the MRA, as other organizations and projects have successfully leveraged HOME funds in Las Cruces. Eligible projects include new construction, rehabilitation, and rental assistance for homes affordable to households with incomes at or below 80% of the area median income (AMI), with additional preferences often given to very low-income families (under 50% AMI). HOME funding can also support housing for special populations, such as individuals experiencing homelessness or people with disabilities, fostering broader community development and affordable housing opportunities.

Choice Neighborhoods Program

The Choice Neighborhoods program combines public and private funding to support locally driven strategies to transform struggling neighborhoods with distressed public or HUD-assisted housing. This initiative takes a comprehensive approach to neighborhood revitalization by improving distressed HUD housing and economic and social challenges faced in the surrounding neighborhood. This program relies on a community-wide planning process, inviting local leaders, residents, and stakeholders, including public housing authorities, city officials, schools, law enforcement, business owners, nonprofits, and private developers, to collaborate and develop a revitalization plan and implementation strategy. These improvements include addressing vacant properties, enhancing housing options, supporting businesses, improving services, and upgrading schools.

Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD)

RAD was developed to help public housing authorities (PHAs) maintain and enhance public housing properties by tackling the significant backlog of deferred maintenance across the country. This program provides long-term assistance contracts that help finance property improvements to rehabilitate and repair the existing public housing stock. This support is available to owners of properties involved in seven different HUD programs, three of which are active: Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation, Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy, and Section 202, Project Rental Assistance Contracts.

State Tax Abatement Programs

In addition to the property tax exemptions allowed under the Redevelopment Code, the State of New Mexico offers additional programs that provide a temporary reduction or elimination of property taxes for developers or property owners, including the Industrial Revenue Bond ("IRB") program which provides up to 100 percent exemption of project property from taxes for the life of the related bond indebtedness. The Community Development Incentive Act ("CDIA") is another example, where counties and municipalities are allowed to exempt up to 100 percent of the commercial personal property of a new business facility for a maximum of 20 years.

The following table demonstrates how these tools can be combined to support key El Paseo & S Solano MRA initiatives:

Tools	Implement Catalytic Projects	Local Business Support	Support Small-Scale Commercial & Residential Development	Support Nonprofit Developers & Affordable/Mixed-Income Communities
Public-Private Partnerships	✓			✓
Tax-Increment Financing	✓			✓
Direct Contribution	✓		✓	✓
Streamlined Approvals Process	✓		✓	✓
Impact Fee Reductions	✓		✓	✓
Demolition Assistance	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brownfield Redevelopment	✓		✓	✓
Weatherization		✓	✓	✓
Revitalization Incentive		✓	✓	✓
Landscape Improvement	✓	✓	✓	✓
Small Business Grants/Loans		✓		
LIHTC	✓			✓
CDBG	✓			✓
HOME	✓			✓
IRB/CDIA Tax Abatements	✓		✓	✓
Choice Neighborhoods	✓	✓	✓	✓
RAD				✓

Additional Resources

City Tools

Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan (ICIP)
Agency: City of Las Cruces and/or Doña Ana County (through State)
Type: Capital Outlay
Description: The City and County may also seek to fund infrastructure projects through their infrastructure capital improvement plans. Although funds are limited, these funds may be used as matching funds to secure larger grants and/or loans by outside agencies (e.g. matching road funds for a street reconfiguration on a state highway).

General Obligation Bonds/General Funds
Agency: City of Las Cruces and/or Doña Ana County (through State)
Type: Capital Outlay
Description: The City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County may seek GO Bond money or a direct appropriation for infrastructure costs using the County's existing general fund or by issuing new bonds to pay for capital improvements.

Industrial Revenue Bonds
Agency: City of Las Cruces and/or Doña Ana County
Type: Bond
Description: The City of Las Cruces and/or Doña Ana County can issue Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRB) to expand and relocate commercial and industrial projects. IRB financing is available for land, buildings, and equipment for headquarters office buildings, warehouses, manufacturing facilities, and service-oriented facilities not primarily engaged in selling goods and commodities at retail. IRB-financed projects are exempt from ad valorem tax as long as the bonds are outstanding, and the issuing agency holds the project title. Bonds may be issued in different series with variable principal amounts, interest rates, and maturities to accommodate acquiring assets with different useful lives.

Local Gross Receipts Tax Option (LOGRT)
Agency: City of Las Cruces
Type: Tax Funds
Description: As part of the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA), Las Cruces residents may vote to raise the local gross receipts tax to help fund additional economic development projects within the City. The state collects the tax as part of the statewide gross receipts tax and redistributes it to the community for local projects. In general, LOGRT provides the community with revenue to fund services or projects related to arts and cultural activities or revitalization projects.

Gross Receipts Investment Policy (GRIP)
Agency: City of Las Cruces
Type: Tax Funds
Description: The City may pass a Gross Receipts Investment Policy (GRIP) ordinance that would allow property owners who develop his or her property to be reimbursed up to 50% of the owner's gross receipt taxes for infrastructure development costs incurred by the property owner (such as water, sewer, and roadway improvements). The ordinance is intended to incentivize development in key areas. Both new retail and certain targeted commercial businesses are eligible for this reimbursement, which is distributed through a city-managed GRIP fund based on the total attributable direct sales gross receipt taxes paid by an eligible project.

Lodgers Tax
Agency: City of Las Cruces
Type: Tax Funds
Description: The City may use the existing lodgers tax to promote the corridor's attractions and events for visitors. The tax may also be used to acquire, establish, and operate tourist-related facilities.

State & Federal

Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant
Agency: New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Department
Type: Community Grant
Description: The New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant program empowers communities to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities by funding the planning, development, and improvement of trails and related infrastructure. Designed to boost local economies, strengthen outdoor industries, and foster community well-being, this grant program supports projects that connect people to nature, promote equitable access, and inspire stewardship of New Mexico's landscapes. By investing in outdoor recreation, this grant drives economic growth, enhances quality of life, and ensures lasting benefits for residents and visitors alike.

Transportation Alternatives and Recreational Trails Programs
Agency: MPO/NMDOT
Type: Capital Outlay
Description: The New Mexico Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funds can generally be used for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and activities, in addition to other projects related to economic development, increased safety, and increased accessibility. The New Mexico Department of Transportation has a competitive process to afford TAP/RTP funds, based on how well each project proposal addresses the program's goals.

Cooperative Agreements Program (COOP) Local Government Road Fund
Agency: NMDOT
Type: Capital Outlay
Description: The New Mexico Department of Transportation sets aside money yearly for local government road improvements. This program assists local governments in improving, constructing, maintaining, repairing, and paving highways and streets with matching funds from NMDOT.

The Public Project Revolving Fund (PPRF)
Agency: New Mexico Finance Authority
Type: Community Loan
Description: The PPRF is an up to $500,000 revolving loan fund that can be used to finance public infrastructure projects, fire and safety equipment, and public buildings. Both market rate-based loans and loans to disadvantaged communities at subsidized rates are made from PPRF funds.

The Local Government Planning Fund (LGPF)
Agency: New Mexico Finance Authority
Type: Community Grant
Description: The LGPF provides capital necessary for proper planning of vital public projects, including infrastructure, preliminary engineering reports, long-term master plans, water conservation plans, asset management plans, economic development plans, affordable housing plans, flood inundation maps, archaeological clearances, or energy audits. Applications are accepted monthly, and grants are made on a reimbursement basis.

Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grants
Agency: U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA)
Type: Community Grant
Description: EDA solicits applications from applicants in rural and urban areas to provide investments that support construction, non-construction, technical assistance, and revolving loan fund projects under EDA's Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs. Grants and cooperative agreements made under these programs are designed to leverage existing regional assets and support the implementation of economic development strategies that advance new ideas and creative approaches to advance economic prosperity in distressed communities.

The EDA provides strategic investments on a competitive-merit-basis to support economic development, foster job creation, and attract private investment in economically distressed areas of the United States.

Federal Transit Authority Transit-Oriented Development Grants
Agency: FTA
Type: Capital Outlay
Description: The Pilot Program for TOD Planning helps support FTA's mission of improving America's communities through public transportation by providing funding to local communities to integrate land use and transportation planning with a new fixed guideway or core capacity transit capital investment. Comprehensive planning funded through the program must examine ways to improve economic development and ridership, foster multimodal connectivity and accessibility, improve transit access for pedestrian and bicycle traffic, engage the private sector, identify infrastructure needs, and enable mixed-use development near transit stations.

Private/Foundation/Nonprofit

The Loan Fund
Type: Community Loans
Description: The Loan Fund funds projects, programs, and businesses to improve New Mexicans' economic and social conditions. They offer small business and micro-loans to aspiring small business owners at an affordable rate. The fund also grants loans for real estate and equipment for certified development companies (CDC/504) and non-profits looking to finance equipment, inventory, building renovations, operating capital, and business expansions.

DreamSpring New Mexico
Type: Community Loans and Business Support
Description: DreamSpring provides small businesses with various low-interest loan options, ranging from $1,000 to $2,000,000 for multiple needs. The organization's mission is "to increase access to business credit, make loans, and provide training and support that enables entrepreneurs to realize their dreams and be catalysts for positive economic and social change." These loans can support small businesses looking to launch or expand, helping to further support economic vitality in the MRA.

W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Type: Community Grants
Description: The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) is a philanthropic organization that supports children, families, and equitable communities. Through its grants, the foundation seeks to create lasting change and improve the quality of life for vulnerable populations, especially children of color and low-income communities. They fund projects and programs to enhance education, health and well-being outcomes, racial equity, and economic security.

McCune Foundation
Type: Community Grants
Description: The McCune Foundation is a private philanthropic organization that provides grants to nonprofit organizations working to improve the quality of life for individuals and communities, with particular emphasis on education, health, and social services. It supports projects that address critical social issues, promote community engagement, and foster systemic change across New Mexico. Grants are typically awarded to organizations and initiatives demonstrating a clear and measurable impact on their communities. The foundation prioritizes proposals that align with its core values, including equity, inclusion, and sustainability. Funding is offered in the form of programmatic and operational grants to support projects at various stages of development.

Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico
Type: Community Grants

Description: The Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico (CFSNM) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for individuals and communities in southern New Mexico. CFSNM administers a wide range of grant programs that support initiatives in various sectors, including education, healthcare, arts and culture, social services, and environmental sustainability. The foundation serves as a resource for individuals and organizations seeking to make a difference, fostering collaboration and leveraging charitable giving to address the region's most critical issues. The foundation prioritizes projects and organizations that work toward creating positive change in southern New Mexico, focusing on addressing the region's unique challenges and opportunities.

New Mexico Foundation

Type: Community Grants

Description: The New Mexico Foundation is a nonprofit organization that works to improve the lives of residents across the state by supporting initiatives that promote economic development, education, healthcare, the arts, and social justice. Grants are focused on educational programs, community-based initiatives, health and wellness services, and efforts that promote equity and social inclusion. The foundation seeks to invest in initiatives that help build stronger, more resilient communities, and support the state's continued growth and development.

United Way of SW NM

Type: Community Grants and Scholarships

Description: The United Way of Southwest New Mexico (UWSWNM) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving lives and building stronger communities in the region. Through its funding initiatives, the organization provides grants to local nonprofits, community groups, and initiatives that align with its mission of creating lasting positive change in the region, especially for projects and programs related to education, financial stability, and health and well-being.

Case Study: MRA P3s

Public-Private Partnerships.

Public-private partnerships, also known as P3s, are an effective strategy for redevelopment. Since the MRA designation of the El Paseo and S Solano area enables P3s without violating the state's anti-donation clause, the City of Las Cruces can play an active role in the area's redevelopment alongside private developers.

Redevelopment can be successful when public sector oversight and incentives is combined with private sector technology and efficiency to execute desirable projects.

ULI's Ten Principles for Successful Public Private Partnerships

1. Prepare properly for public/private partnerships.
2. Create a shared vision.
3. Understand your partner and key stakeholders.
4. Be clear on the risks and rewards for all parties.
5. Establish a clear and rational decision making process.
6. Make sure all parties do their homework.
7. Secure consistent and coordinated leadership.
8. Communicate early and often.
9. Negotiate a fair deal structure.
10. Build trust as a core value.

Farmington, NM

The City of Farmington successfully implemented one of the MRA Plan Projects: the Harvest Food Hub and Kitchen at San Juan College. The new space promotes local agriculture by providing a physical place for local food distribution and a commercial kitchen for entrepreneurs.

Role of the City.

Planning. The City of Farmington supported the development of the Downtown MRA Plan and Animas Action Hub Plan, both of which identified the need for a local food incubator and distribution center. These planning documents provided support for funding and implementation.

Land Acquisition. The MRA Plan identified the potential for the City of Farmington to support land acquisiton for the project.

Program Facililtation. The City of Farmington facilitated connections between the program partners and Farmington Municipal Schools to offer local produce in local schools.

Project Partners.

San Juan College. SJC providid facility and project management support. They also integrated existing food entreprenuership and food systems curriculum to jumpstart activities at the Hub.

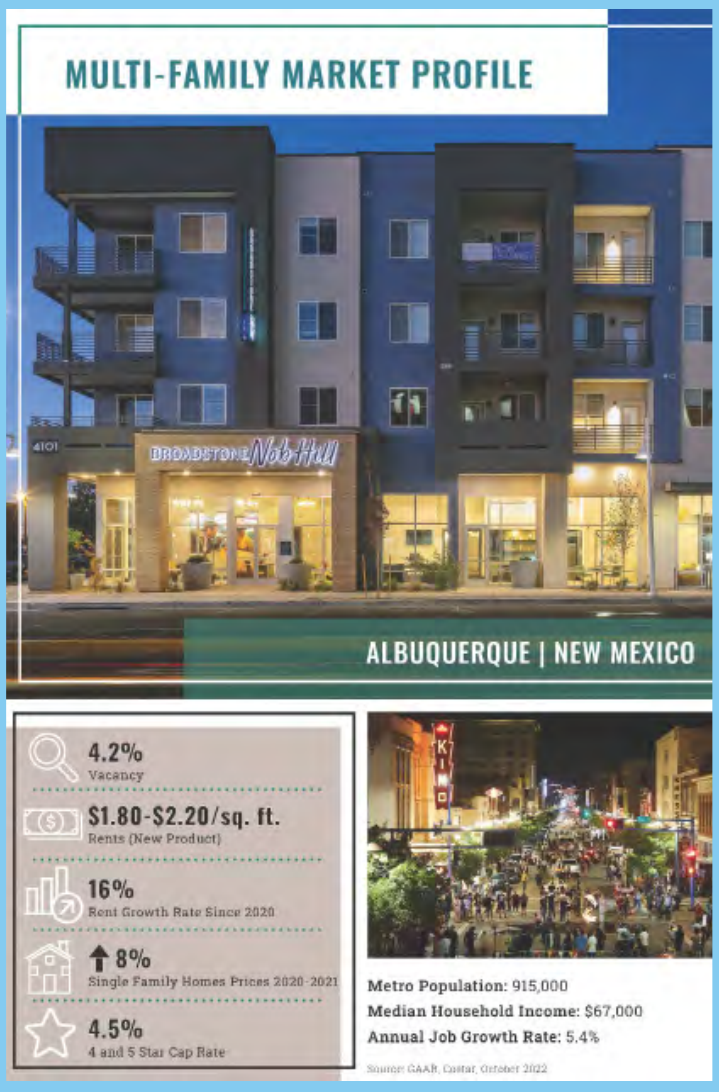
NMSU. NMSU's Local Food, Local Places grant funding supported project execution by covering operating costs for the first 5 years of programming and facility needs.

Factors in Success.

Project Location. The success of this project can be attributed to the MRA Plan, which identified specific projects for different areas within the broader MRA boundary. This clear distinction helped support the project's location and implementation, as the planning process demonstrated the feasibility of the idea in that particular area. As a result, the project was highly specific to the area, leveraging both existing and potential assets to ensure its success.

Albuquerque, NM

The City of Albuquerque has a dedicated Metropolitan Development Agency housed within the Economic Development Department. The agency oversees nearly 20 different MRA areas across the city. To fully utilize the public-private partnership benefit that an MRA provides, the agency has complied useful data for desired development to attract developers and provide them with the information they need to begin their process. This includes market data, as well as MRA incentives that would apply to developers.





Case Study: Successful MRA Projects

Ruidoso, NM

As a prime tourist destination with a large service and hospitality industry, most of Ruidoso's workforce has to commute into the village to access their jobs. Businesses identified this as an issue for hiring and expansion as it limits the workforce that is willing to commute in.

In 2023, the Village of Ruidoso commissioned a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan to identify potential development opportunities along a critical commercial corridor, Mechem Drive. The MRA Plan identified several Village-owned The Village was able to attract private developers lots as ideal locations for workforce housing.

Following the designation of the MRA area and adoption of the plan, the Village was able to contract with private developers and have since begun construction on 10 workforce housing units at 603 Mechem Drive.

The Village has also partnered with a local realtor company to manage the units and ensure workforce housing eligibility. **The public-private partnerships that enabled the project to come to life are a direct result of the MRA designation which allows such partnerships.**



603 Mechem workforce housing, modular units.

Farmington, NM

Since the initial 2009 MRA Plan adoption and subsequent update in 2019, the City of Farmington has invested several million dollars across their MRA sub-areas, or districts.

Historic Downtown.

- $12 million Complete Streets revitalization
- Over 16 new businesses attracted to the area
- Additional blight removal along Arrington St.

Animas District.

- Demolition of a blighted petroleum complex
- Creation of a Outdoor Recreation Incubator with 2 new businesses
- Partnered with San Juan College to create the Harvest Food Hub and Kitchen

Civic Center Neighborhood.

- $10 million Civic Center renovation

Healthcare Hub.

- Removal of blighted Anasazi Inn
- Construction of Three Rivers Estates retirement and elder care facility



Main St. Redesign Plans, completed in 2020, as advised in the MRA Plan.

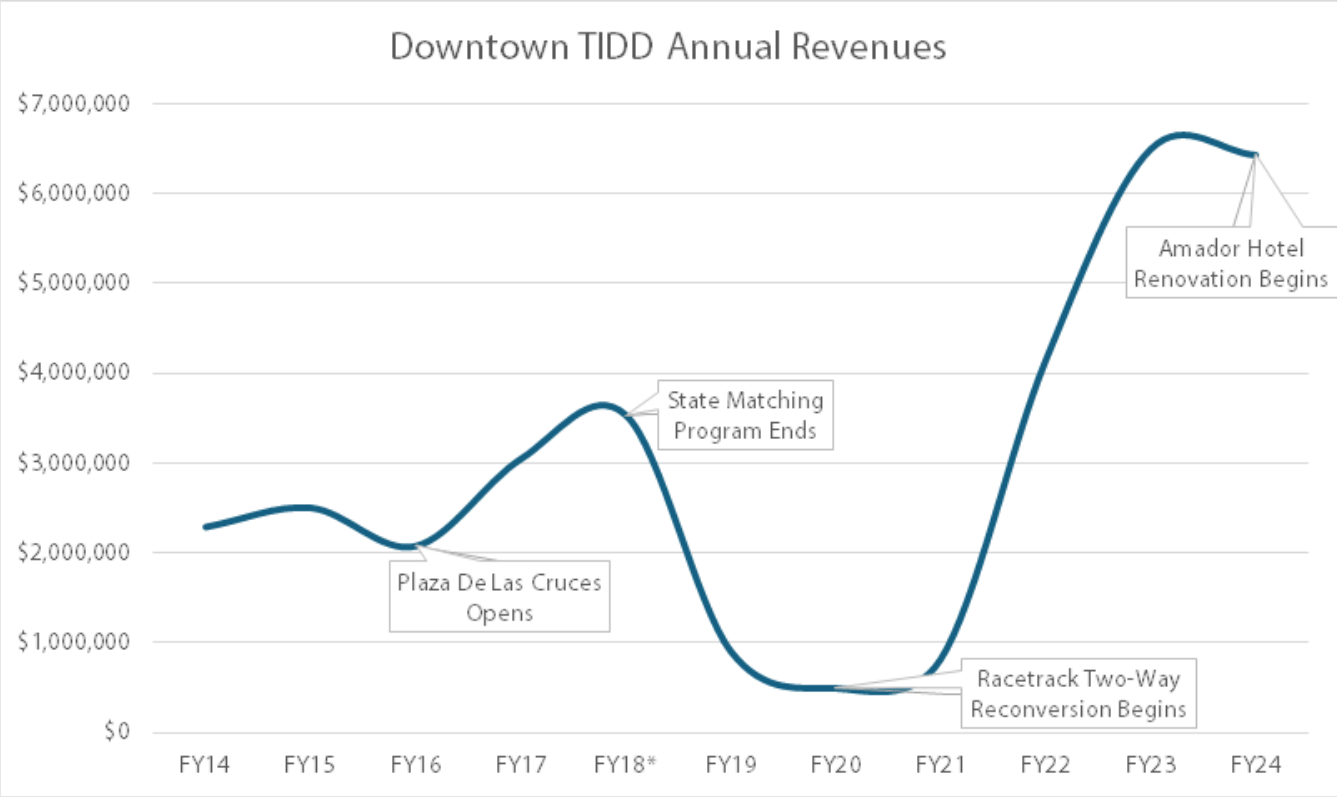
All of these projects were made possible through the establishment of the MRA area. This designation allowed for dedicated funding toward redevelopment, P3s, tax abatements, and other incentives that spurred both public and private investment in previously blighted areas.

Case Study: Downtown TIDD

In 2009, Las Cruces established a Tax Increment Development District (TIDD) in the Downtown/MRA District, funding it through increments from property taxes and gross receipts tax (GRT) revenue. The TIDD was approved by a majority of property owners in the district, with initial projects outlined in the 2006 Downtown MRA Plan. Additionally, the City negotiated with the State of New Mexico to secure its share of the increment revenue and revenue from Doña Ana County, although the state's matching program ended in 2018.

The projects detailed in the MRA Plan have since received funding approval from the Las Cruces City Council and are managed by City staff. Since its creation, the TIDD has financed streetscape upgrades on Main Street, the reconversion of the one-way street couplet (the "Racetrack") around Downtown, the construction of the new Plaza De Las Cruces, and the renovation of the historic Amador Hotel. The MRA also manages the Renovate Main Street program, which offers matching grants of up to $25,000 per project to improve and rehabilitate Main Street properties for retail, restaurant, and entertainment businesses.

Notably, the TIDD has generated more revenue for the district than initially projected, with more than half of the income coming from the GRT increment rather than the property tax increment. Including the State and County portions has significantly boosted revenue, resulting in a larger pool of funds available for Downtown redevelopment. The TIDDs success is mainly due to the development of larger-scale projects that have contributed to a marked increase in property values and GRT revenue.



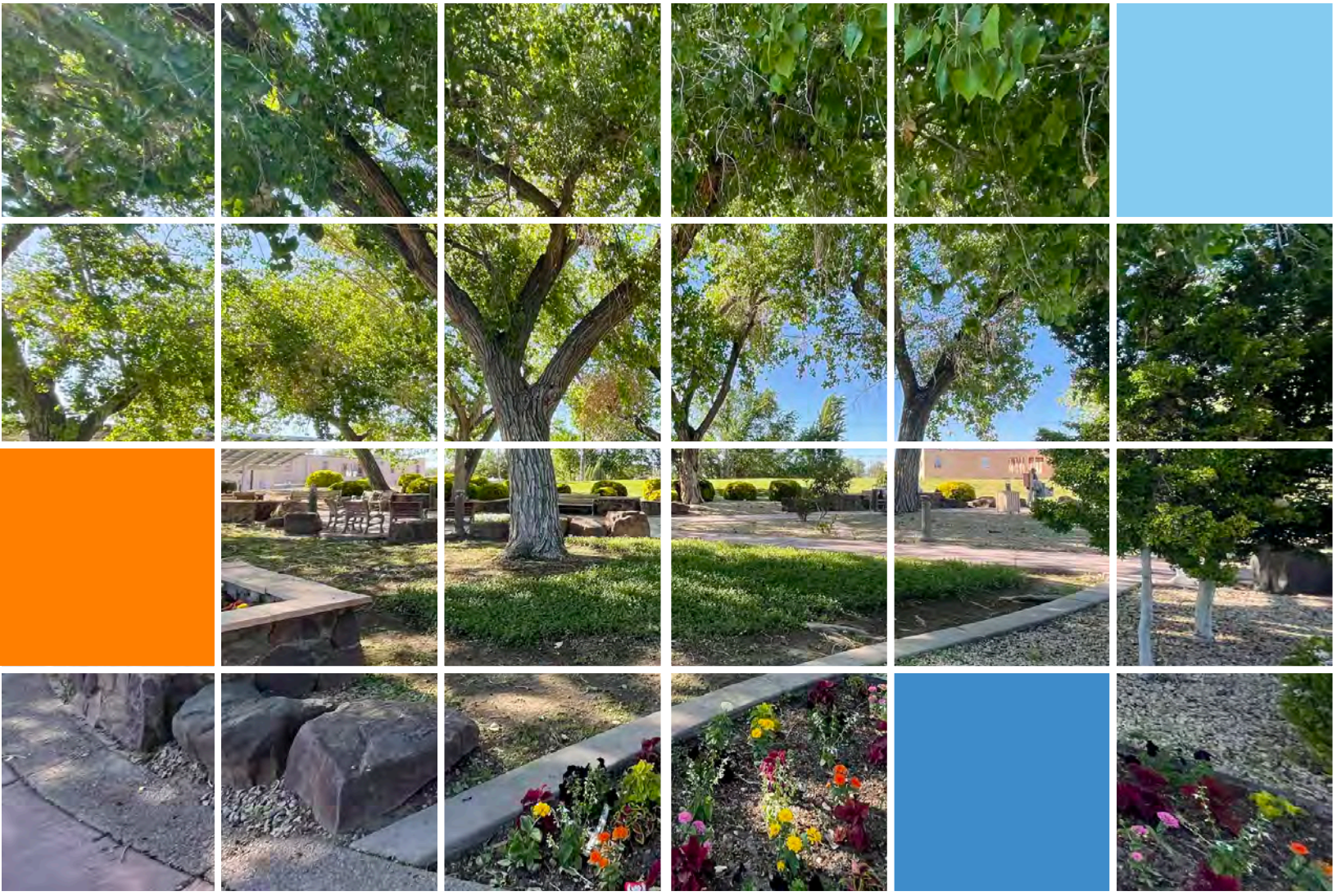
Conclusion

By using a combination of the tools and resources provided above, leveraging lessons learned through case studies in other communities, and following the steps outlined in the priority projects, we can ensure that the El Paseo and S Solano Metropolitan Redevelopment Area transforms successfully into the place envisioned by the community: a safe, economically thriving, and pedestrian-friendly neighborhood that is anchored by its history and valuable assets, while being open to necessary change that allows it to fully meet the needs of area residents and community members across Las Cruces. It will take city leadership, staff capacity, and the advocacy of stakeholders and residents to carry out the projects identified here in order to realize that vision.

We want to thank each and every person who contributed their time, energy, and resources to making this important step in that process possible.







El Paseo and South Solano
MRA PLAN