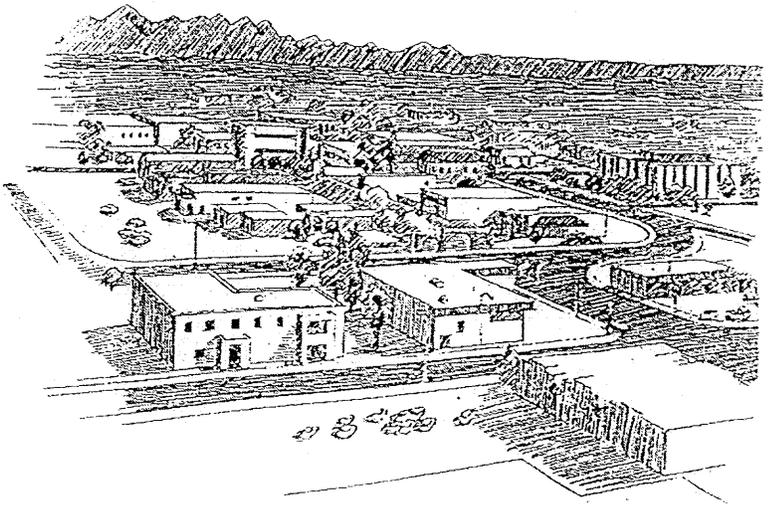
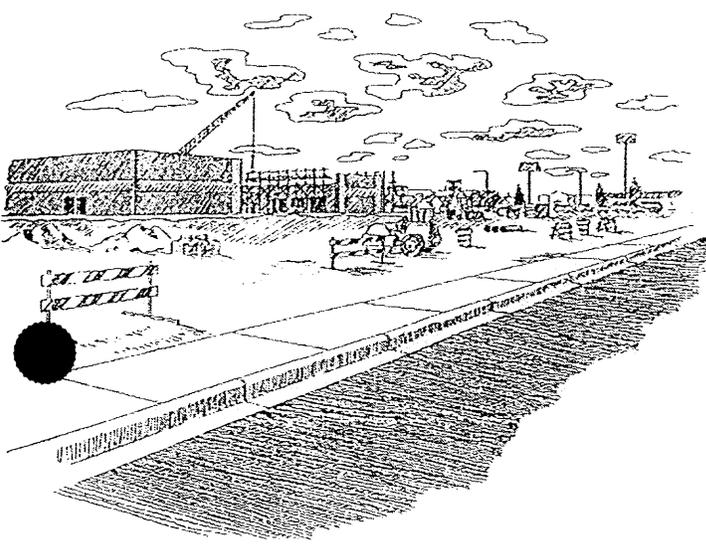
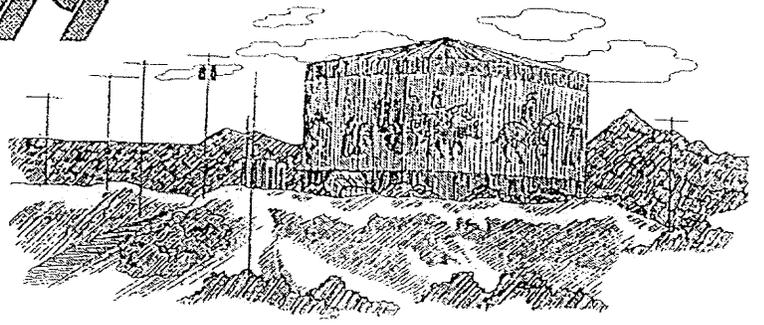
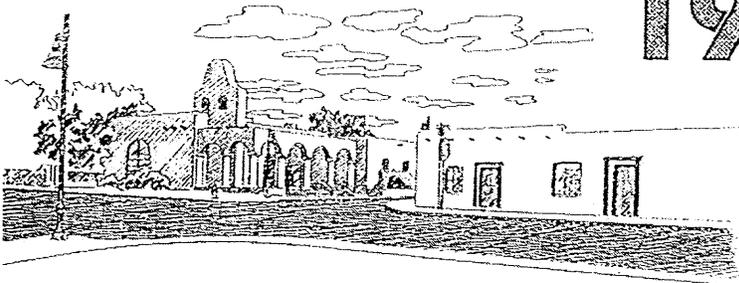


City of Las Cruces

Comprehensive Plan

1999



L as Cruces City Plan

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Purpose

The City Plan is intended to briefly present and promote the City of Las Cruces by identifying the many favorable characteristics or amenities available within the community. Additionally, it is the foundation from which the Comprehensive Plan's elements and subsequent planning efforts are derived. The City Plan establishes a vision for the City and summarily identifies the supporting core goals established within each element of the Comprehensive Plan. Due to the City Plan's context within the Comprehensive Planning Framework, it is in essence, an "umbrella" to all other planning documents and efforts.

The Changing Fabric

Las Cruces is located in the scenic Mesilla Valley in south central New Mexico. Located at the junction of three major highways, Interstate 10, US Highway-70, and Interstate 25, Las Cruces is 45 miles north of El Paso, Texas and Juarez, Mexico and 225 miles south of Albuquerque. Although many consider the environs harsh, given the desert and mountainous setting, residents and visitors alike consider the beauty contained therein unique and in its own right, compatible and complementary to the river valley it surrounds.



A diversity of cultures flourishes in our City, accented by a rich, colorful history. In addition to the physical, cultural, and social amenities associated with Las Cruces, the economic and educational aspects also flourish. It is these features/characteristics which help define the community's fabric. As we grow, the fabric changes, and decisions must be made as to how we will adjust to this change in order to establish the kind of city we would like to see in the future. Efforts aimed at preserving and improving amenities and providing additional benefits must continue in order to provide the "quality of life" residents and visitors would like to see within the City of Las Cruces. It is with this in mind that future planning strategies begin to take on greater significance as a means of not only identifying and documenting past and present issues which have and continue to affect our lives, but also, examining ways in which we may enhance the community in which we live, work, and play.

Las Cruces Amenities/Characteristics

Natural Setting and Scenic Beauty - Nestled within the Chihuahuan Desert, Las Cruces encompasses a panoramic natural landscape inclusive of picturesque desert mesas set against a green Rio Grande valley with fields of chile and cotton, groves of pecan trees, and acres of vineyards and vegetables. Desert mesa and river valley blend with dramatic mountain ranges: the Organs, San Andres, and Franklin Mountains to the east, the Caballo Mountains to the north, and the Robledo Mountains to the northwest. The Rio Grande carves its way throughout the valley floor and serves as a water source for the recharge of aquifers and the irrigation of those orchards, fields and crops found within the rich fertile valley.



Mild Climate - On average, Las Cruces enjoy 350 days of sunshine annually. Typically, daytime temperatures are mild and range from 94° in summer months to 59° in the winter. With a climate such as ours, it's understandable why residents and visitors alike, find Las Cruces to be a desirable community. The environment lends itself well to the enjoyment of all outdoor activities for people of all ages.

Recreational/Entertainment - Las Cruces is home to many events which include, but are not limited to, the Whole Enchilada Fiesta, the International Mariachi Conference, the Renaissance Craftfaire, and Arte Picante. Additionally, the City maintains an abundance of recreational programs which range from organized league sports (i.e. softball and baseball, etc.) for adults and youth, to the more tranquil enjoyment of parks whether in their natural or developed setting. In addition to City sponsored or

supported activities and facilities, numerous other public and private facilities, ventures, and events which provide recreation and entertainment opportunities are available. These include, but are not limited to, the various art galleries, theater groups, and symphonies which also enhance the area's deeply-rooted culture and history.

Cultural/Natural History - Museums are very much a strong presence within the community. The Cultural Complex (Branigan Cultural Center and Las Cruces Museum of fine Art and Culture), Las Cruces Museum of Natural History, Log Cabin Museum, the newly established Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, and others, find a home in Las Cruces. Each facility identifies and showcases some of the area's unique cultural and historical significance. Aside from the museum system, galleries, the theater, two historic districts, and adjacent communities also help define and emphasize related cultural/historical importance. Area architecture and its various interpretations, both traditional and contemporary, is yet another element which symbolizes the history of Las Cruces.

Economic Opportunity - Las Cruces and the surrounding area prosper in terms of economic activity. Within close proximity to foreign and/or untapped markets, a variety of large and moderate sized companies are locating within and around our community seeking to tap available workforce, ports of entry, accessible transportation corridors/modes, technology, and other related resources. Population increases have also fostered growth in the retail/service and tourism sectors of the economy.

Because of all sector growth, employment opportunities are on the rise and thus, help maintain the area's economic vitality. Both the private and public sectors offer sound employment opportunities within the community and region. Government (Federal, State, County, and Municipal) sources provide a substantial employment base specifically through local government, White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico State University, and the Las Cruces Public Schools.

Education - Las Cruces' primary, secondary, and post-secondary area schools have grown considerably to meet increased demand. These facilities, whether public or private, play an important role in our community. Each strives to orient curriculum offerings and provide the necessary resources in order to meet the educational, technological, and vocational training goals and/or demands required in today's world. Area primary and secondary schools consistently receive high scores for academic achievements. The Dona Ana Branch Community College, in addition to its technical/vocational offerings, is valued for its nationally recognized Adult Basic Education Program. New Mexico State University remains a major research university, prominent in areas which include, but are not limited to, agronomy and civil engineering. NMSU also serves as a regional center for art and cultural activities and is home to the American Southwest Theater Company.

Personal, Health, and Medical Facilities - Health care facilities are well represented within Las Cruces and the surrounding area. Such facilities range from the Memorial Medical Center complex which has grown significantly to keep up with health/medical needs of the community to smaller outpatient facilities such as Family Medical Center. Such facilities focus on a wide range of services including, but not limited to, Behavioral disorders, prompt care, urgent care, and the treatment of ongoing illness. In addition, personal care and special needs facilities are on the rise in the community and due to the area's population characteristics, provide service orientation toward the elderly via independent, assisted, and nursing care.



These characteristics reflect only a handful of the amenities and/or characteristics found within Las Cruces. For every amenity that an individual considers important, several other amenities may be considered equally if not more important in the views of another resident or visitor within the community. Therefore, the collection or combination of community characteristics as perceived by all individuals should be considered equally valuable and thus, protected to the extent possible to make Las Cruces a viable, enjoyable, and aesthetically pleasing community.

Although Las Cruces is unique in its own right, it should be noted that what Las Cruces has evolved over many years. Since the area's settlement, planning for growth and change has enabled leaders and decision makers opportunities to chart the course through which community advancement would take place. What follows, is a synopsis of the City of Las Cruces planning effort which takes us to the past and brings us to the present.

A Brief Planning History

The first planning document written for the City of Las Cruces was the 1906 Sign Code. Las Cruces first adopted a zoning ordinance in 1930, which was later revised into the "City Plan for Las Cruces, New Mexico". Adopted in 1955, the City Plan not only established zoning districts, but also identified desirable characteristics to be planned for in the Central Business District. Items such as parking, tree planting, minimizing curb cuts, and adequate lighting were addressed. Our first Subdivision Code was written and adopted a year later, in 1956. In 1960-61, an update to the 1955 City Plan was prepared. In essence, this update revisited issues raised in the 1955 City Plan and embellished on economic, transportation, recreation,

and other miscellaneous opportunities that were available to the City.

These basic planning documents foreshadowed tremendous growth in our City. With the establishment of White Sands Missile Range in 1945 and the NASA Research Facility in the early 1960's, the City grew in population from 12,375 in 1960 to 37,857 in 1970. As these facilities attracted more and more people to the area, the City and County governments, the Las Cruces Public Schools, and New Mexico State University also grew and became major employers for our area.

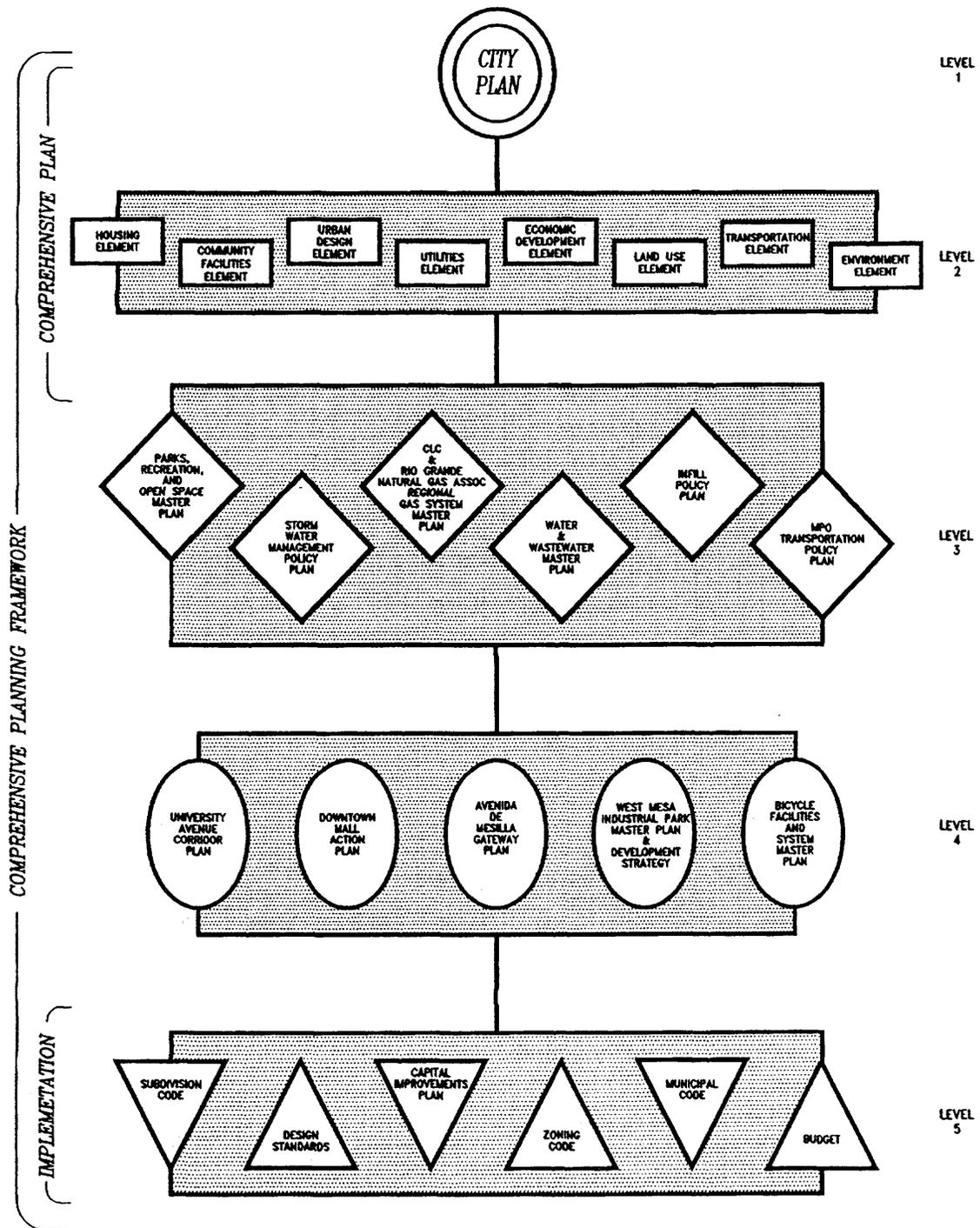
In 1968, a Comprehensive Plan was adopted for Las Cruces. Written by Harland Bartholomew & Associates of St. Louis, Missouri, the Plan addressed the Economy, Population, Land Use Issues, Major Streets, a Downtown Business District, Schools/Parks/Recreation, Public Buildings, Public Utilities, Housing, Annexation, Capital Improvements, and Planning Administration. The 1968 Plan was an extensive planning document, but it could not keep up with the issues brought forth by continued City growth. The population increased to 45,060 in 1980, and with it came an approximate 50% increase in housing units from 1970. Continued growth required that the 1968 Plan be updated. In 1982, the 1968 Plan was revised by EDAW and Associates of San Francisco, California and the Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan Citizen's Advisory Committee. After several adjustments to the draft, the City ultimately adopted the 1985 Comprehensive Plan. This Plan addressed traditional issues, but was considered contemporary in that it contained eight key elements which included Land Use, Economic Development, Housing, Transportation, Community Facilities, Urban Design, Utilities, and Environment. It served as a general policy tool, but fell short in providing more detailed guidance regarding policy issues. Some issues such as office uses, schools, and parks and recreation were either summarily addressed or neglected entirely.

As implementation of the 1985 Comprehensive Plan took place, Las Cruces continued to grow and based on 1990 census statistics, was an integral part of one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the United States. Accordingly, in comparison with 1980 figures, Las Cruces' population increased by 38%, housing stock increased by 45% and due to annexation policy during that decade, the City physically extended its boundaries to just under 37 square miles. This growth, and the development which followed, prompted the need to reexamine planning policy and update, where appropriate, the existing Comprehensive Plan.

In 1992 Planning Staff embarked on the update to the 1985 Comprehensive Plan. In preparation for the update process, staff established a framework for the development of plans and the ordinances which implement them. As illustrated (Exhibit 1), the framework contains five levels, each involving a different level of detail and/or focus. Level 1 represents this document (City Plan) which introduces in a general nature, the City's vision and the core goals reflected within the individual elements which ultimately comprise the 1998 Comprehensive Plan. Level 2 represents the individual elements themselves and significantly expands on the core goals found within the City Plan. Level 3 represents planning documents which draw

from the individual elements and develop more detailed policy regarding a specific geographic area or issue. Level 4 represents planning documents which take Level 3 efforts a step further and have a similar focus with much greater detail. The last level, Level 5, represents the implementation component of the planning process. This level is usually represented by regulations or ordinances which put into law the policy and direction outlined in the first four levels. Examples of documents which will result from framework implementation are shown in Exhibit 1.

[Exhibit 1]



Throughout the update process, Staff emphasized the need to create a Plan which was more policy oriented, with greater emphasis on the planning process and the goals, objectives, and policies which would support this concept and ultimately help shape the physical, social and economic characteristics of our community. To this end, the 1998 Comprehensive Plan offers policy which not only provides greater guidance on issues which impact the community, but also seeks to integrate existing policy and provide enough flexibility to accommodate policy which may be forthcoming.

No one policy within the 1998 Comprehensive Plan is intended to overshadow any other. All related policy should ultimately support a vision for our community that results from the application of sound planning principles in a logical manner and that allows Las Cruces to continue to grow physically, socially, and economically. If the application is successful, no adverse impacts to the tangible and less tangible characteristics/amenities that make Las Cruces a favorable and enjoyable community will result.

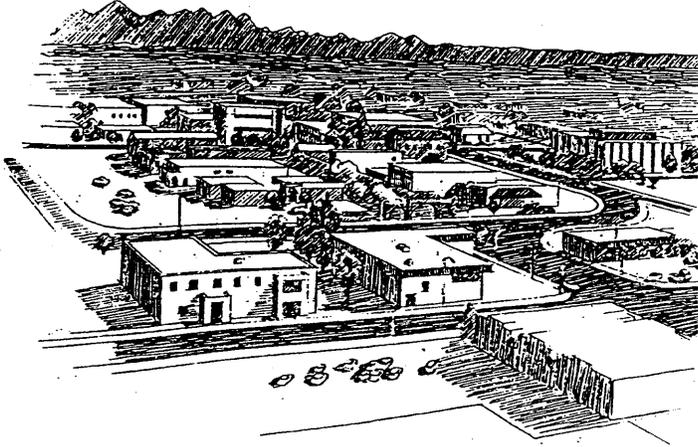
Following an extensive public review process and the culmination of updates to each individual element, the City Council on March 1, 1999, adopted the 1999 City of Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan. The Plan, is intended to serve as a policy guide for the residents, City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, staff, and any other board, commission, and/or committee involved in the physical, economic, and social development of our community. Since the Plan is visionary and long range in scope, it is intended to be flexible and is, therefore, subject to change through continued development and refinement of policies as determined by the ever changing needs of the Las Cruces community. As such, please examine the following sections as they identify the vision of Las Cruces and the eight core goals which will help attain this vision.

Vision

Establish a community which is supportive and pursues the furtherance of the quality of life residents and visitors envision and desire. In support of this, the City should endeavor to create a built environment which is compatible with and communicates sensitivity to the natural environment. The design and layout of our City should: 1) effectively promote compatibility among differing land uses; 2) preserve desirable vistas/views and open space as appropriate; 3) allow for efficient travel through the use of adequate transportation routes; 4) communicate through building and landscape design, aesthetic quality and established Southwest architectural vernacular and heritage, whether through traditional or contemporary expressions; 5) promote the creation of safe neighborhoods that offer affordable housing opportunities for all socio-economic groups; 6) convey a unified planning strategy with adjacent communities; and finally, 7) provide opportunities for growth in all vital economic sectors of our community in order to sustain the types of services needed to preserve and strengthen community vitality.

In an effort to reinforce and ultimately achieve this vision, the City must sensitively apply sound planning principals in a responsible and logical manner. In so doing, eight core goals have been developed and are instruments from which each element of the 1998 Comprehensive Plan derives its focus.

Core Goals



Land Use

Achieve an urban form which supports and enhances our unique environment.

Written policy supports and addresses:

- ◆ Mixed land use and compatibility issues
- ◆ Orderly growth through sound growth management principles
- ◆ An urban form which supports and enhances our built and natural environment.

Community Facilities



Provide high quality parks, recreation, and community services for our community.

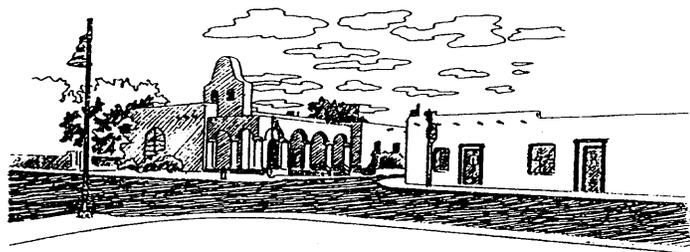
Written policy supports and addresses:

- ◆ Provisions for a comprehensive, attractive, cost- and resource-efficient system of parks, in a balance of sizes and types, and recreation facilities
- ◆ A balance of services such as medical and human, transportation, schools, libraries, museums, etc. meeting the needs of all segments of the City's population
- ◆ Enhanced police and fire services for the safety and general welfare of our community

Urban Design

Preserve and enhance our natural, visual, and historical/cultural resources.

Written policy supports and addresses:

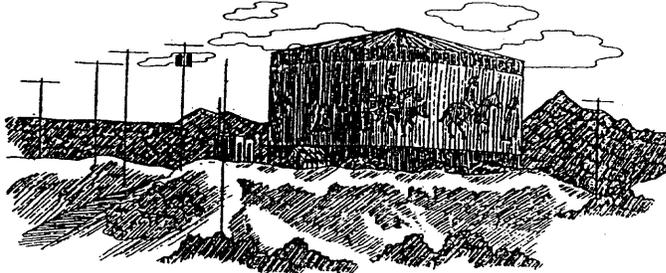


- ◆ Fostering a unique and attractive character for Las Cruces to support an image which is distinct from surrounding communities
- ◆ Preserving and enhancing Las Cruces' natural, visual, and historical/cultural resources while reinforcing an overall urban form and character that communicates sensitivity to its physical setting
- ◆ Maintaining sensitivity to the City's image through the careful application of aesthetic and environmental guidelines to its neighborhoods and districts

Utilities

Achieve optimum efficiency in the planning and operation of our City's utility systems.

Written policy supports and addresses:

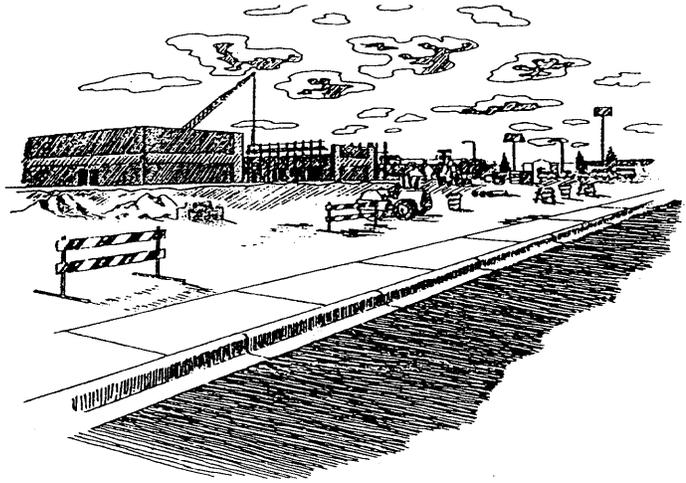
- 
- ◆ Provisions for an adequate, affordable, and reliable supply of safe, clean drinking water
 - ◆ Provisions for dependable wastewater service in order to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the community
 - ◆ Efficient energy resources and conservation techniques
 - ◆ Reliable, economical, and environmentally conscious solid waste collection and disposal
 - ◆ Coordinated approach to utility extension/availability in context with all relevant plan policy

Economic Development

Establish and maintain a stable, diversified economy.

Written policy supports and addresses:

- ◆ Development policies that allow retention, expansion, and attraction of existing and new businesses and industries in and to Las Cruces
- ◆ Provisions for a highly trained and motivated work force for Las Cruces' businesses and industries
- ◆ The promotion and enhancement of Las Cruces and the Mesilla Valley as a tourist destination

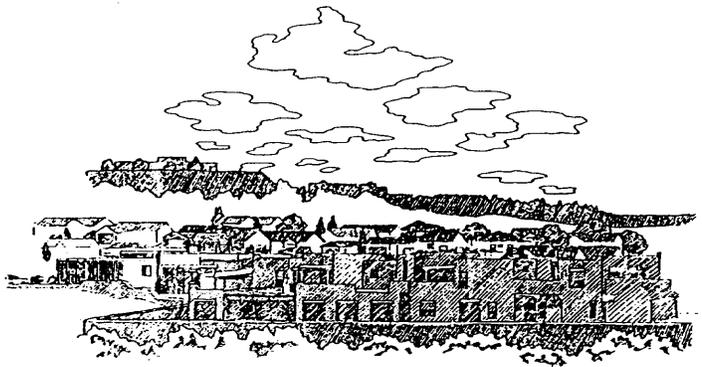


Housing

Promote a balance of housing types for our City.

Written policy supports and addresses:

- ◆ Housing availability and affordability
- ◆ Housing and neighborhood preservation
- ◆ Neighborhood enhancement and creation

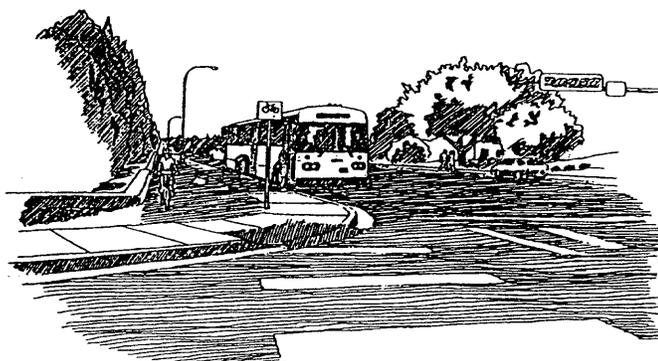


Transportation

Provide a multi-modal transportation system which efficiently supports the needs of our citizens.

Written policy supports and addresses:

- ◆ Development of a thoroughfare system that efficiently, effectively, and economically maximizes traffic movement while being sensitive to our natural environment
- ◆ Establishment of a safe, dependable, and comfortable public transportation system available to all sectors of the public
- ◆ Promoting bicycles as a viable mode of transportation
- ◆ Provisions for adequate airport facilities to benefit area users and economy
- ◆ Provisions for a safe and viable railroad service accommodating both passenger and commercial transportation needs
- ◆ Procedures for the establishment of intermodalism, facilities, and services for all transportation users



Environment

Protect our surrounding natural environment.

Written policy supports and addresses:

- ◆ Protection and maintenance of the existing natural environment (air, water, soil, flora/fauna, etc.) from development and human activities which contribute to its pollution, erosion, and deterioration



Vision Quest

The following, identifies milestones the City has achieved as a means of reaching stated goals, objectives, policies, and ultimately, its vision. Updates to this section will occur as milestones are reached.

<u>Land Use Element</u>	<u>Housing Element</u>	<u>Community Facilities Element</u>	<u>Utilities Element</u>
◆ Approved 12/16/96 (Resolution # 97-200)	◆ Approved 5/4/98 (Resolution # 98-342)	◆ Approved 3/1/99 (Resolution # 99-263)	◆ Approved 1/5/98 (Resolution # 98-227)

Accomplishments

<u>Economic Development Element</u>	<u>Transportation Element</u>	<u>Urban Design Element</u>	<u>Environment Element</u>
◆ Approved 5/4/98 (Resolution # 98-340)	◆ Approved 8/10/94 (Resolution # 97-165)	◆ Approved 5/4/98 (Resolution # 98-341)	◆ Approved 10/19/98 (Resolution # 99-155)

Acknowledgements

The following boards, committees, organizations, and staff members have contributed substantially to the efforts involved in the update to the 1985 Comprehensive Plan. Their guidance and vision is greatly appreciated.

City Council

Ruben Smith, Mayor
Councillor Karen Stevens, Mayor Pro-Tem
Councillor Jose V. Fietze
Councillor J. Henry Gustafson
Councillor Jack Valencia
Councillor Tommy Tomlin
Councillor John Haltom

Planning and Zoning Commission

Vincent Dovydaitis, Chairman
Nancy Binneweg, Vice-Chair
Edward Anthony Amaya, Secretary
Chris C. Perez
Henry Young
Pablo Montoya
Dolores M. Halls

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Dolores Archuleta, Chair
Dr. John H. Welch, D.P.E., Vice-Chair
Mark Lopez
Priscilla Navarro
Michael S. Hart
Mike Davis
Susan Roberts

Miscellaneous Organizations/Groups

Las Cruces Housing Authority
Las Cruces Home Builders Association
Mayor's Business Advisory Group
Mesilla Valley Habitat for Humanity
Tierra del Sol Housing Corporation
Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance

Metropolitan Planning Organization

Councillor John Haltom
Councillor Tommy Tomlin
Councillor J. Henry Gustafson
Commissioner Dora Harp
Commissioner Gilbert Apodaca
Commissioner Ken Miyagishima
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GLOSSARY

- Accessible Vehicle:** A public transportation vehicle that does not restrict access, is usable, and provides allocated space and/or priority seating for individuals who use wheelchairs.
- Accessory Unit:** A self contained living quarter attached to and under the same roof as the main dwelling, created by: 1) the conversion of an existing single family dwelling; or 2) the addition to an existing single family dwelling; or 3) the incorporation of applicable areas into a new single family dwelling design which is subsequently constructed, and which contains independent kitchen (cooking/culinary) facilities.
- ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990):** This Act mandates sweeping changes in building codes, transportation and hiring practices to prevent discrimination against persons with disabilities, not just in projects involving federal dollars, but all new public places, conveyances, and employers. The significance of ADA in transportation is mainly felt in terms of transit operations, capital improvements, and hiring.
- ADT (Average Daily Traffic):** Daily traffic at a particular location. Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) denotes average daily traffic is averaged over one calendar year.
- AASHTO:** American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.
- Bicycle Facilities:** A general term denoting improvements and provisions made by public agencies to accommodate or encourage bicycling, including parking facilities, mapping all bikeways, and shared roadways not specifically designated for bicycle use (AASHTO).
- Bicycle Lane (Bike Lane):** A portion of a roadway which has been designated by striping, signing, and pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicycles (AASHTO).
- Bicycle Path (Bike Path):** A bikeway physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic by an open space or barrier and either within the highway right-of-way or within an independent right-of-way (AASHTO).
- Bicycle Route (Bike Route):** Any roadway upon which a bicycle lane is not designated but which may be legally used by bicycles.

- Bikeway:** Any road, path, or way which in some manner is specifically designated as being open to bicycle travel, regardless of whether such facilities are designated for the exclusive use of bicycles or are to be shared with other transportation modes (AASHTO).
- Biomass Energy:** Biomass energy is a form of stored solar energy, because plants and trees depend on sunlight to grow. There are three ways to use biomass energy: it can be burned to produce heat and electricity, changed to a gas-like fuel such as methane, or changed to a liquid fuel, for example, ethanol and methanol.
- Capacity:** Maximum hourly rate at which pedestrians or vehicles can reasonably be expected to traverse a given point or section of roadway during a given time-period under prevailing roadway, traffic, and control conditions.
- Corridor:** An area of land whereby the movement of goods and people could occur upon further investigation.
- Demand Response Service:** Any system of transporting individuals, including the provision of designated public transportation service by public entities and the provision of transportation service by private entities, including but not limited to specified public transportation service, which is not a fixed route system.
- Development Review Committee (DRC):** A formal group of representatives employed by the City whose duties include reviewing subdivision or development related proposals and resolving conflicting comments, recommendations or design differences between City reviewing departments and/or developers. The DRC shall have the authority to hear appeals and grant waivers to the City Design Standards on engineering issues. The DRC's decision shall be final unless overruled by the Planning and Zoning Commission or City Council. The DRC may also make parking and access control recommendations that may be granted by Planning and Zoning Commission or Board of Adjustment action on specific developments.
- Energy from Garbage:** Solid waste can be burned to generate electric power. Solid waste also produces methane gas. Wells can be drilled to release this gas. Pipes from each well carry the methane gas to a central point where it is cleaned. The gas can then be burned to produce steam in a boiler, or it can be used to power generators to produce electricity.

- Fair Housing:** Provisions adopted by the City pursuant to Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 which complement applicable Federal and State laws regarding discriminatory housing practices which may occur on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or handicap.
- Freeway:** Controlled access, multi-lane, high speed roadway designed for the safe unimpeded movement of large volumes of traffic.
- Frontage Road:** Road parallel to multi-lane divided roadway which separates local traffic from higher speed through traffic.
- GIS (Geographic Information System):** A computerized data management system designed to capture, store, retrieve, analyze, and report geographic/demographic information.
- Geothermal Energy:** The process of harvesting energy directly from the heat of the earth. The heat rising from the magma warms underground pools of water known as geothermal reservoirs. Wells can be drilled to tap into geothermal reservoirs. This is called direct use of geothermal energy, it provides a steady stream of hot water that is pumped to the earth's surface so its heat can be used. Steam can also be used to rotate turbines that generate electricity.
- Grade Separation:** The intersection of two or more transportation facilities where no access ramps are provided between the two.
- Headway:** The interval of time for a transit vehicle's round trip passing a specified point.
- Highway:** A general term denoting a public way for purposes of vehicular travel, including the entire area within the right-of-way (AASHTO).
- Home Occupations:** Home occupations are those business which are conducted in a residence and are conducted in a manner which comply with City requirements.
- Housing For Older Persons:** Housing which: 1) the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary has determined is specifically designed for and occupied by elderly persons under a Federal, State, or Local government program; or 2) is occupied solely by persons who are 62 or

older; or 3) when designed as a facility, is occupied by at least one person who is 55 or older in at least 80 percent of the occupied units and which has significant services for older persons unless a waiver to this provision is obtained.

Hydropower:

The most common form of hydropower uses dams on rivers to create large reservoirs of water. Water released from the reservoirs flows through turbines, causing them to spin. The turbines are connected to generators that produce energy.

Incentives:

Incentives are those actions which the City can legally provide to a private person or organization towards obtaining a result that will meet public goals. Incentives as used within the text of the Comprehensive Plan may include such things as legal modifications or waivers in zoning requirements, development standards and similar regulations.

Infill:

Infill is the concept of utilizing for building or similar development purposes, those lots and small parcels of land within the developed areas of the City. In all instances, infill addresses those lots which already have sufficient City services immediately available to them.

Intermodal:

The term referring to the interaction between people, goods, services, and different modes of transportation. For example, an intermodal facility is where a user or commodity transfers from one mode of transportation to another in route to a destination. Intermodal transportation is the movement of persons or goods involving the use of at least two modes of transportation.

**ISTEA (Intermodal Surface
Transportation Efficiency
Act of 1991):**

This act mandates broad changes to the way transportation decisions are made by emphasizing diversity and balance of modes and preservation of existing systems over construction of new facilities, especially roads, and by proposing a series of social, environmental, and energy factors which must be considered in transportation planning, programming, and project selection. It controls the allocation of federal funding for highway and other surface transportation programs in the U.S. The Law is set to expire in September of 1997.

Intermodal Transportation: The movement of persons or goods involving the use of at least two modes of transportation (ie; truck, rail, car, etc.)

Leap-frog development: Leap-frog growth shall be defined as any development proposed beyond the predominantly urbanized area and lacks readily available infrastructure. Such development bypasses areas of vacant or rural land and requires the extension of new roads utilities, and other facilities in accordance to City specifications.

LOS (Level of Service): The term used to indicate the amount of congestion. LOS is based on factors such as speed, travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort, convenience, and safety. Level of service designations range from A to F, with LOS A representing no congestion and LOS F having

There are six levels of service assigned letter grades of "A" through "F". "A" is the highest level of driver comfort, while "F" is the lowest. Each LOS is defined below*:

LOS A. Traffic is the most free flowing. Vehicles are unaffected by other traffic. The driver is free to change lanes at will with little or no consideration to speed, local weather conditions, or other considerations. The level of comfort and convenience to the traveler, including pedestrians, is excellent.

LOS B. Traffic flow is stable. The presence of other traffic users becomes noticeable. The driver may still select any speed but the ability to maneuver begins to decline. The presence of other vehicles begins to affect a driver's behavior. The driver does not have a totally open road.

LOS C. The range of traffic flow is stable. However, the driver's range of choices are beginning to be significantly affected by the volume of traffic. Maneuvering is only accomplished by an alert driver.

LOS D. Traffic flow is still stable, but on the fringe of breaking down. The driver is in a high density of vehicles where both speed and freedom to maneuver are severely restricted. Drivers experience a poor level of driving comfort. The slightest increase of traffic volume will cause a break down in traffic flow. This LOS is the transition zone between acceptable and unacceptable levels of traffic.

LOS E. The street is at capacity or slightly over. Speeds are low but consistent. Maneuvering is accomplished by forcing into another lane. Driver frustration is high. Minute increases in traffic volume or the slightest traffic incident cause the street to fail in its ability to carry the maximum number of vehicles. Several motorists complain to local officials.

LOS F. The amount of traffic approaching a point is beyond the amount that can get past. Long lines form. There is stop and go traffic. Drivers experience extreme frustration. Complaints pour into city, state, and federal transportation offices.

**Transportation Engineering and Planning (Second Edition)* by C.S. Papacostas and P.D. Prevendouros, published by Prentice-Hall. as commented by Alfred R. Pagan in *Better Roads*, November 1995, page 38)

Mixed-use development: A mixed-use development concept which encourages combining several different land uses within the same area. For example, a development might include a hotel and a number of retail businesses within the same building or the same contiguous development.

Mode: A method by which the movement of people and goods are transported out. (i.e. a "car" or a "bicycle" or a "bus".)

MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization): The agency designated by the Governor (or Governors in multi-state areas) to administer the federally required transportation planning process in a metropolitan area. An MPO must be in place in every urbanized area of 50,000 population.

Multi-Modal: A transportation term, multi-modal indicates the use of more than one type of transportation system; for example bicycles and automobiles are two separate modes of transportation.

NMSHTD (New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department): The state agency responsible for the administration and maintenance of the state and federal highway systems in New Mexico.

Neighborhood:

An area of the community with characteristics that distinguish it from other areas. It generally has definition by physical boundaries, such as arroyos or other drainage channels and major roads. Often times a neighborhood can be centered around a school, a park or encompass a single subdivision.

Para-Transit:

Demand Response and/or Dial a Ride programs meeting the transportation needs of those individuals eligible under Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other Federal Transportation Programs who are otherwise unable to utilize standard fixed public transportation route systems.

Paratransit:

Alternative forms and sizes of public transportation vehicles that are accessible and used for the transportation of persons with disabilities.

Park-And-Ride:

Parking garages and/or pavement used for parking passengers' vehicles, either free or for a fee, while they use public transportation system facilities. Park-and-Ride lots are generally established as collector sites for rail or bus service. They may also serve as collector sites for vanpools and carpools. They sometimes serve as transit centers.

Park Classifications:

Neighborhood Parks are intended to serve those who live in a neighborhood area and should generally serve a population of 500 to 7,000 and should generally serve the population located within a 1/2 mile radius. Neighborhood parks generally vary from .5 acres to 9.9 acres but should typically range from 1 to 1.5 acres in size. Commercial amusements, circuses, carnivals, craft fairs, etc., are prohibited; only recreational activities and neighborhood affairs, such as, concerts, block parties, etc., should be permitted.

Community Parks are intended to serve all residents living in Las Cruces. Community Parks should range from 10 to 100 acres in size. Recreational activities, concerts, craft fairs, and small amusements may be permitted.

Regional Parks are intended to serve all of Las Cruces and surrounding communities. Regional Parks are generally 100 acres or greater. All types of recreational activities and high intensity uses, such as amusements (carnivals and circuses), concerts and craft fairs should be permitted.

- Passive Solar Heating:** A passive solar home or building naturally collects the sun's heat through large, south-facing windows, which are just one aspect of passive design. Sunspaces, landscaping, window treatments, are other examples of strategies used for this technique.
- Peak Hour:** An hour during which the maximum amount of travel occurs in a 24-hour period.
- Photovoltaic energy:** The utilization of photovoltaic (PV) cells, sometimes called solar cells to turn the sun's energy directly into electricity. Currently, PV systems are mostly used for water pumping, highway lighting, weather stations, and other electrical systems located away from power lines. PV systems only produce electricity when the sun is shining, these remote systems need batteries to store the electricity.
- Policy Committee:** The Metropolitan Planning Organization's forum for cooperative decision-making and policy guidance. It is composed of elected officials representing all local governments within the planning areas.
- Renewable Energy:** Renewable energy systems use resources that are constantly replaced (although some must be carefully monitored so they are not depleted before they can be replaced) and are usually less polluting than traditional sources of energy.
- ROW (Right-Of-Way):** Denoting land, property, or interest therein, usually in a strip, acquired for or devoted to transportation purposes; or the right of one mode to proceed in a lawful manner in preference to another mode.
- Roadway:** Any public facility used for the vehicular transport of people, goods, or services, exclusive of private or public easements or alleys. Also synonymous with street, corridor, thoroughfare, road, avenue, byway, etc.
- Rural Residential Use:** Residential units which occur at a density of less than or equal to two dwelling units per acre.
- SOV (Single Occupant Vehicle):** A non-commercial vehicle with only one occupant.

STIP (Statewide
Transportation Improvement
Program):

A 3-5 year program of transportation projects to be funded through NMSHTD with federal and state funding.

Separation:

Anything that delineates the travel area for a specific mode such as, a concrete barrier, a painted stripe, etc.

Solar Thermal
Electric Power:

These systems concentrate sunlight to produce heat. This heat boils water to make steam. The steam rotates a turbine which is attached to a generator that makes electricity.

Solar Water Heating:

A solar collector, usually a flat-plate collector, is mounted on the roof of a building/residence. The collector is a rectangular box with a transparent cover that faces the sun. Small tubes run through the box, carrying the water or other fluid such as antifreeze to be heated. The tubes are mounted on a metal absorber plate, which is painted black to absorb the sun's heat. The back and sides of the box are insulated to hold in the heat. Heat builds up in the collector, and as the fluid passes through the tube, it heats up.

Street Classifications:

Major arterials shall be designed to have a large traffic carrying capacity, providing movement rather than direct property access. Direct property access shall be limited to major traffic generators, generally large scale developments of ten acres or more, or smaller high intensity uses.

Minor arterials shall be designed to have a medium traffic carrying capacity, with emphasis on providing movement rather than direct property access,. Direct access should be limited to medium scale developments, generally three acres or larger.

Collector Streets shall be designed to meet the requirements of both movement and property access, providing a connection between arterials and local streets. Direct access from single unit residential driveways to this type of street shall be strongly discouraged.

Local Streets shall be designed to facilitate direct access to individual properties. These streets shall be designed to encourage neighborhood identity. Through traffic shall be strongly discouraged.

- Strip Commercial:** In areas where commercial development fronts on a street, normally one-half to one block deep, this area many times is referred to as a strip commercial development. An example of strip commercial development is El Paseo Road between main Street and Boutz Road.
- TAC/TC (Technical Advisory Committee):** Sometimes referred to as the "TC", Technical Committee. A subcommittee of the Policy Committee. It is composed of staff members representing all local governments within the planning area. The TC provides technical and professional advice to the Policy Committee.
- TIP (Transportation Improvement Program):** A three year transportation investment strategy, required at the metropolitan level, which addresses the goals of the long range plans and lists priority projects and activities for the region. (At the state level, the TIP is also known as a State TIP or "STIP").
- Technical Rescue Team:** A group or team of professional rescuers that are trained to respond to and mitigate incidents above and beyond the normal scope of duty. Technical Rescue Teams are teams that respond to incidents that require special training and methods in areas including, but not limited to, confined space rescue, high angle rescue, water rescue, trench rescue, and building collapse which require special equipment and skills.
- Trail:** An unpaved or dirt bicycle facility having its own right-of-way or grade-separated right-of-way whose primary purposes is to provide access to recreational facilities or is used for recreational purposes.
- Transit:** Movement of large numbers of people through a transportation corridor by means of publicly-owned or franchised facilities capable of carrying large numbers of people in a single vehicle. The words, "public transportation" may also be used to refer to a more generalized meaning of the large or mass movement of people.
- Transportation Network:** The sum total of any mode or transportation facility, whether in part or in whole, whereby the movement of people, goods, services, or information occur.
- Trip end:** Either the origination or destination of a single trip (ie; home, work, or non-work).

Urban Residential Use: Residential units which occur at a density of greater than two dwelling units per acre.

VMT (Vehicle Miles Traveled): Used as an area-wide measure. It may be calculated by summing data on a link bases or by multiplying average trip length (in miles) by the total number of vehicle trips.

Vehicle Classification: Typology of vehicles based on axles, axle groups, and axle spacing. In the United States, all types of vehicles are grouped into thirteen categories for federal reporting.

Wind Power: The use of wind turbines which drive generators that produce electricity, much like steam turbines. Wind power is considered an indirect form of solar energy (as the wind is driven mainly by temperature differences on the surface of the earth that are caused by sunshine).

Xeriscape: Derived from the Greek work *xeros* which means dry. The goal of xeriscape is to create a visually attractive landscape that uses plants selected for their water efficiency. Properly maintained, a xeriscape can easily use less than one-half the water of a traditional landscape. (From the State Engineer Office; Water Conservation Program).

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Land Use Element:

The physical development of a city involves development of a wide variety of land uses. The presence of these uses and their respective activities affect every aspect of a city's quality of life, as well as the city's ability to perform physical planning for the future.

The Land Use Goal of the Las Cruces City Plan, and the purpose of the City Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element, is to "achieve an urban form which supports and enhances our unique environment". Our environment, a southwestern setting of desert, mountains, arroyos, mesas, and river valley, is also a quickly growing urban area. Thus, a direction for land use planning in the City of Las Cruces must be established which will balance the needs of our citizens with preserving our rural and natural environment.

The Las Cruces City Plan Land Use Goal suggests the need to establish clear policy direction for land use and zoning which will allow all traditional land uses to work together in an interrelated manner. This "synergetic" approach, i.e., assembling land use and zoning policies into a mutually connective and supportive system, is basic to the success of land use planning, and shall be the conceptual point of departure in the revision and implementation of the Land Use Element.

Planning Process:

This document represents a revision of land use policies in the 1985 City Comprehensive Plan Goals and Objectives. An analysis of the 1985 policies revealed the need for revision to make the Land Use Element more responsive to the needs of our growing City, as well as to establish the Land Use Element as the guiding policy document for the revision and application of the 1981 City Zoning Code.

The Land Use Element revision process consisted of the following:

1. Initial review of the 1985 Land Use Element to determine the extent to which current land use policy addresses all traditional land uses in the City.
2. Review of current City-wide land use patterns to determine the extent to which current land use policy has effectively guided logical, efficient, and environmentally sensitive land use planning.
3. Review of land use policy of the cities of Albuquerque, NM, El Paso, TX, Phoenix, AZ, and Tucson, AZ to determine the current level of land use policy being utilized in other southwestern cities.

4. Comparison of current City land use policies with those of other southwestern cities mentioned previously to determine the level of local land use policy compatibility with other cities in the region.
5. Review of the 1981 City Zoning Code to determine the extent to which zoning policy serves all traditional land uses within the City, and reinforces current land use policy.
6. An inventory of current land uses in the City by type and location was performed. Forecasts of population and population-related issues were created. Percentages of current land uses and current population and population-related issues were compared and then related to population forecasts to ascertain future land use needs.
7. A report was completed, compiling all information gathered in land use and zoning research. This report included a review and analysis of current land use and zoning policy, examples of land use policies from other cities in the region, recommended revisions and/or additions to current land use and zoning policy, and a rough draft of an outline to guide the Land Use Element revision.
8. The land use report was submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review. Recommendations were made on the content of the report, and staff was directed to draft a revision of the Land Use Element.
9. Upon completion of a draft, notification of the existence of the draft and two public hearings to discuss the draft were sent to neighborhood associations within the City, the Town of Mesilla, and various boards and associations and public entities, such as the Las Cruces Homebuilders Association, the Board of Realtors, and the Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce. Public notification was both posted in City buildings as well as in the Las Cruces Sun News. Notification included where one could find a copy of the draft (City Clerk's Office, Public Information Office, Branigan Memorial Library, and the Planning Office) as well as the time and location of the two public hearings (April 18, 1995, in the County Courthouse and April 26, 1995, in the City Council Chambers).
10. The two public hearings were held with a number residents from the community at large in attendance as well as representatives from the neighboring town of Mesilla. These hearings gave citizens an opportunity to comment on the draft of the Land Use Element. Staff also met individually with a representative from the Las Cruces Homebuilder's Association.
11. A series of work sessions were held with the Planning and Zoning Commission to review public input on the draft Land Use Element revision and to make revisions where needed until a final draft was completed. The final draft of the Land Use Element was recommended for approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission at a Public Hearing on September 26, 1995.

12. The final draft of the revised Land Use Element was submitted to City Council for review through a series of work sessions. A resolution to approve the revised Land Use Element passed and was adopted as the City Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element at a Public Hearing on December 16, 1996.

THE CITY OF LAS CRUCES

Historical Growth:

In 1851, Dona Ana County was established in what was the southern half of Valencia County. With the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo ending the Mexican-American War in 1848, all the land east of the Rio Grande river in the region was acquired by the United States. As a result, many newcomers settled in Dona Ana Village to establish farming in the fertile Mesilla Valley. Overcrowded conditions in Dona Ana led to the establishment of the village of Las Cruces in 1849. The original Las Cruces townsite today is located at the center of the City, known as the Mesquite/Original Townsite Historic District (FIGURE 1). The village of Mesilla was established in 1850 and was located on the west side of the Rio Grande (the river flowed between Las Cruces and Mesilla at that time). Mesilla was an area of dispute as to its Mexican or American sovereignty until the Gadsden Purchase of 1854, which enlarged the American territory in the county to the west side of the Rio Grande. Although both Las Cruces and Mesilla were founded at similar times, Mesilla became more popular as an important center for exchange of material goods and for stagecoach stops. Las Cruces and Mesilla prospered following the Civil War from an increase in agricultural acreage under irrigation, and also from ranching and mining.

In 1881, a group of Las Cruces entrepreneurs formed the New Mexico Town Company with the goal of attracting the Santa Fe Railroad to build a rail line near the growing village. The Town Company bought up many farms west of Las Cruces, gave the railroad land for right of way and a depot, and divided the remaining property into residential lots for the New Mexico Town Addition subdivision. This area was later named the Alameda-Depot Historic District. The route that was established for the Santa Fe Railroad bypassed Mesilla, giving Las Cruces a link with the rest of the nation that resulted in increased commercial growth. Mesilla eventually declined as a commercial center. Higher education was also to find a place in the area. Las Cruces College was founded in 1888, three miles south of Las Cruces near the small town of Mesilla Park. In 1889, the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts was created by the Territorial Legislature of New Mexico under the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 (the New Mexico constitution was amended in 1960 to change the name of the college to New Mexico State University).

Severe droughts in the 1890's caused agriculture and ranching in the area to decline. The Rio Grande flooded annually, causing significant losses in crops and livestock. These losses brought about the construction of Elephant Butte Dam near the town of Hot Springs (later named Truth or Consequences), completed in 1916.

The dam and its system of smaller dams and channels, permanently woven into the City's geography, gave farmers water control and provided water against drought. This irrigation project contributed to bringing the Mesilla Valley to the forefront of agricultural production in the United States.

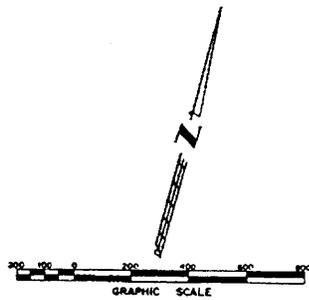
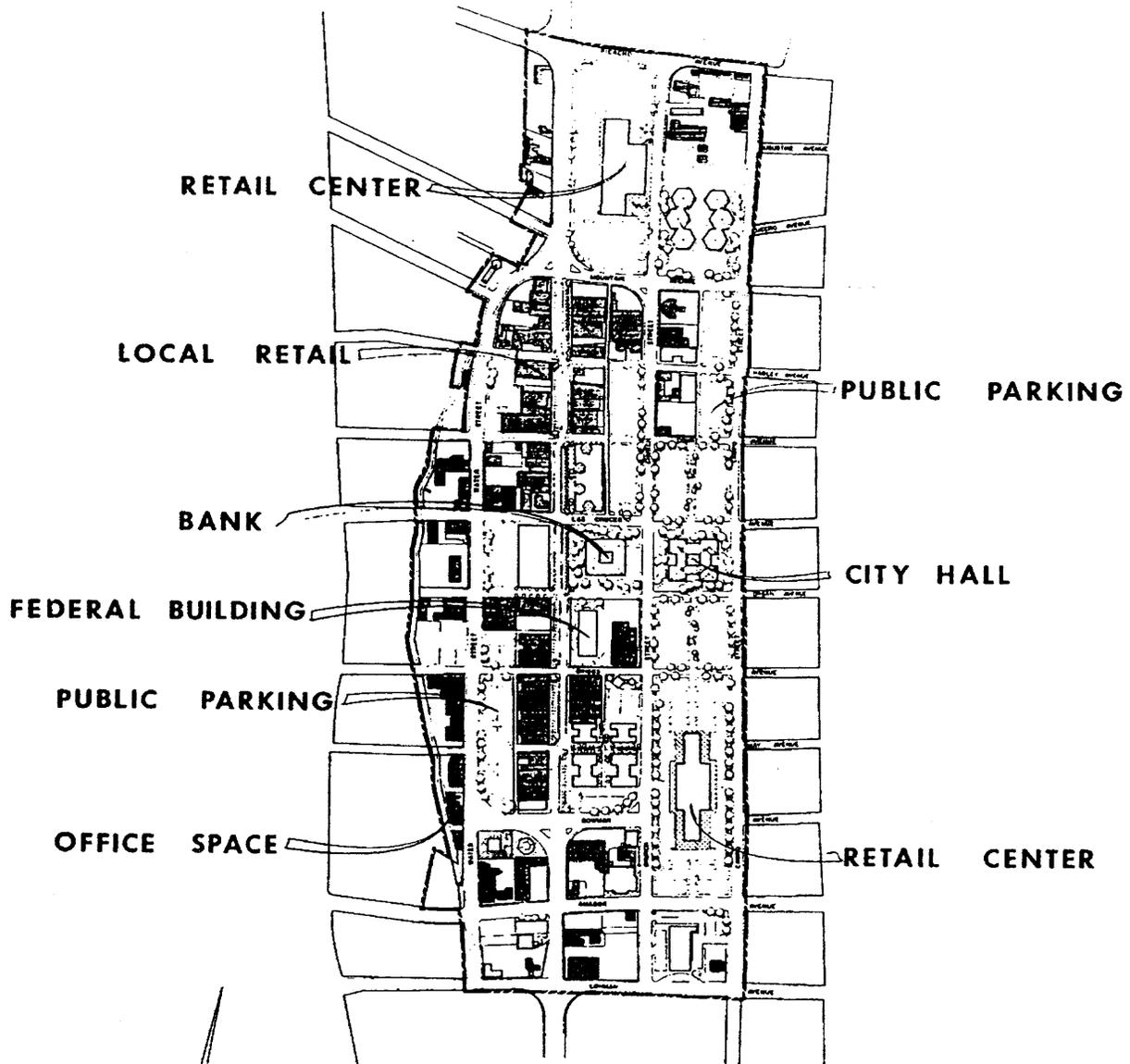
By 1955, the Central Business District had been established to the west of the original townsite. As Main Street developed into the City's major north-south thoroughfare and the major entrance to the City from the north, a commercial land use corridor began to emerge north of the CBD. Mesquite Street, running parallel to Main, became a major north-south roadway, as well as a major entrance to the original townsite from the north. Agricultural areas remained in the north and south of the old west side. Valley became an important west side north-south roadway, while Amador and Picacho began to emerge as the main central east-west roadways. The Picacho Avenue area was primarily residential east of the railroad, with many hotels established to the west. Picacho's hotel development not only identified the area as a major corridor, but as the only major entrance to the City from the west. The east side was characterized by more modern gridded subdivisions and a layering of land use intensities, from Main Street's CBD area and commercial corridor to medium density and then single family residential areas. Also, commercial and high-density residential nodes were established at road intersections along Solano Drive.

From 1950 to 1960, the City's population increased 138% to 29,367. This decade was the fastest growth period in Las Cruces history and brought major physical and economic changes. The establishment of White Sands Proving Grounds in 1945, and later the NASA Research Facility, influenced the northeasterly growth of the City along Main St./U.S. Highway 70. New Mexico State University also continued to grow, having added a graduate school and a College of Education during the decade, with a College of Business Administration and Economics to be added in 1964. The growth of NMSU influenced the growth of the City further south to Mountain Avenue (later named University Avenue). To the east, the 1950-60 decade saw the construction of a new north-south highway, Interstate Highway 25.

In 1967, an Urban Renewal Plan for downtown Las Cruces was approved. Designed with the goal to revitalize the downtown area, the Plan guided the removal of substandard residential and commercial buildings, upgrade of existing buildings, and construction of new buildings. Main St. was closed and converted to a pedestrian mall, the focus of the renewal project, with Church and Water St. converted to a one-way loop surrounding the mall (FIGURE 2).

Nation-wide, the Urban Renewal program enjoyed much success as a mechanism for social and economic revitalization of urban downtown areas. In Las Cruces, the merits of the downtown plan are still being evaluated. The economic success of the Downtown Mall has wavered since its completion in the mid 1970's, which has influenced a reduction of citizen patronage in the area. The extensive structural modification to the downtown area to create the mall has also removed much of downtown's original character. Efforts are still being organized to improve the physical design and social activity of downtown.

Figure 2



LEGEND	
EXISTING STRUCTURES TO REMAIN	
PROJECT BOUNDARY	

NOTE THIS IS A SCHEMATIC PLAN ONLY

ULTIMATE DEVELOPMENT PLAN		
DOWNTOWN PROJECT		
URBAN	RENEWAL	PROJECT
U.S. G-4		

By 1969, City growth continued along North Main/U.S. 70, avoiding the wide flood plain south of the highway and east of I-25. Main's commercial corridor continued north and south of the business district, with commercial corridors also growing along Mesquite , Lohman/Amador, El Paseo, Picacho, and Solano. The industrial area between Amador and Hadley west of the railroad continued to grow, with smaller industrial areas developing throughout the City. Large subdivided single family residential areas were established along the City's perimeter, with scattered medium and high density residential areas serving to buffer single family areas from commercial areas. Agriculture was still prominent in the northwest and southwest areas of the City.

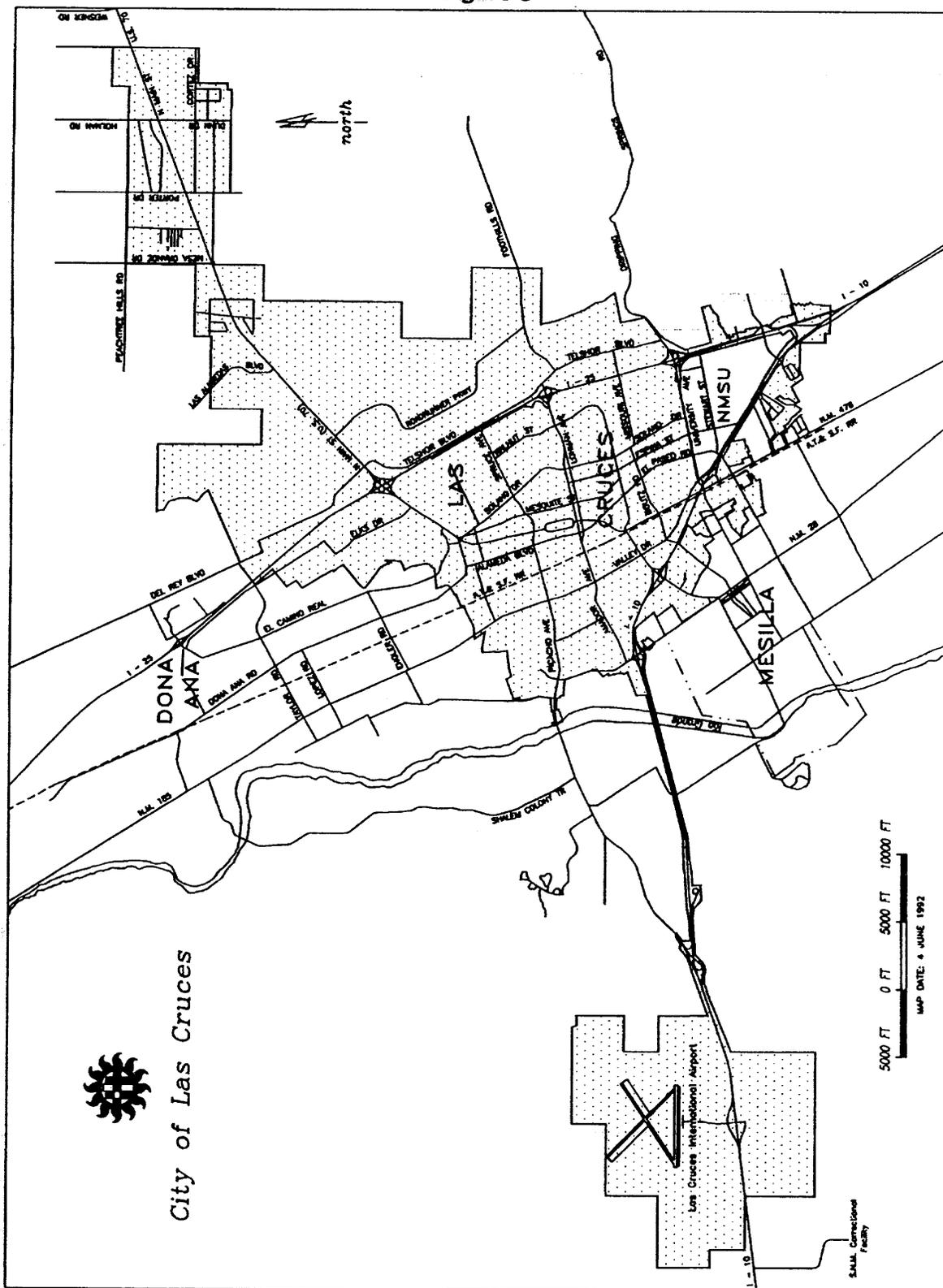
By 1970, the City's population had increased to 37,857. The decade from 1970 to 1980 saw the construction of another interstate highway, Interstate 10, along the southwestern border of the City. I-10 established a dividing line between Mesilla Park and the agricultural activity in that area from the rest of the City. This decade also saw the construction of the Las Cruces Dam east of Interstate 25 between U.S. 70 and Lohman Avenue, and the beginning of residential development east of the dam. By 1980, Las Cruces had reached a population of 45,086.

Las Cruces continued to grow along U.S. 70, but also expanded north and south along the highway with planned residential development as well as development of mobile home communities. Agricultural activity continued along the City limits on the northwest and southwest areas. The Amador-Hadley industrial corridor continued to grow westward, approaching the Rio Grande. The NMSU campus became surrounded by irregularly-shaped annexed areas including Mesilla Park, with no significant City growth to the south to date. With a 1990 population of 62,126, the City of Las Cruces today continues to be a fast growing urban area (FIGURE 3).

References:

The Las Cruces Historic Buildings Survey, Dona Ana County Historical Society
New Mexico State University Master Plan, NMSU, 1990.
Las Cruces, New Mexico, Chamber of Commerce, 1984.

Figure 3



Map Generated by Technical Support/G.I.S. Staff

Planning and Zoning:

The City's first zoning code was written in 1930. The code established five zoning districts: Residential, Commercial, Light Industrial, Heavy Industrial, and Unrestricted. A cumulative zoning code, each higher density zone permitted uses from the less dense zones: the commercial zone included all residential uses, for example. Thus, the residential zone was the only zone created in 1930 which offered any level of distinction by land use.

The City's tremendous growth from 1930 to 1955 not only necessitated revision of the 1930 Zoning Code, but also development of the City's first comprehensive plan. The 1955 City Plan for Las Cruces was a highly detailed study of the area. Addressing such issues as population, climate and topography, mineral resources, tourism, transportation, zoning districts, parks and recreation, city boundaries, and flood protection, the City Plan presented a clear picture of the progress Las Cruces had made as a city.

In implementing the City Plan, the 1955 Zoning Code created a greater variety of zones, or more flexible zoning than the 1930 zoning code. The 1955 Code established an Agriculture and Flood Protection District ("A" zone), permitting agricultural uses, public parks and other recreational uses less prone to significant loss of human life and property damage as a result of flooding.

The Code also created three new residential zones, though additive in nature: R-1 for single family residential areas, and the R-2 medium density and R-3 high density residential areas intended to serve the Central Business District and other major employment areas within walking distance. No policy was created to establish standards for urban design compatibility among these residential densities.

A Central Business District (CBD) zone was created, to be located at the heart of the City, as "...all arteries of traffic feed into in and pump out of it over the major traffic streets..." as stated in the Plan. Urban commercial decentralization was already a problem for many cities as identified by the 1955 City Plan, thus the CBD zone was designed to not only establish a shopping environment, but to focus on creating spaces for socializing as well as for parking. Provisions were also made to establish large off-street parking areas, wide sidewalks, and tree planting.

An evolution from the former Unrestricted zone, the Transient district ("T" zone) was designed as a motor vehicle-oriented transitional zone between residential and commercial areas. Transient district uses included all residential zone uses with a variety of retail, auto service, and motel and trailer court uses.

A significant level of growth occurred in the City during the next three years, necessitating several amendments to the 1955 Code. Among these were the creation of two new Agriculture zones, A-1 and A-2, and the division of the Transient district into two zones, T-1 and T-2. The A-1 district was designated a flood control district, permitting agricultural and residential uses. The A-2 district was designated a Rural Agricultural district with a large variety of agricultural-related uses, creating a more distinctly agricultural zone. The T-1 district included all residential uses and a variety of service establishments, while the T-2 district included all T-1 uses with higher intensity service and amusement uses.

With the City's fastest growth period occurring during the 1950's, a new comprehensive plan for the City was needed. The 1969 Comprehensive Plan addressed economic development, population, land use, transportation, the central business district, schools, parks and recreation, public buildings, utilities, housing, annexation, capital improvement, and planning administration. The 1969 Plan not only illustrated the reality of the City's complexity, but also the more contemporary approach to city planning. In the land use section, policies were developed for each general category of land use, projected land area needs for each land use category were calculated, and a future land use plan map was created to illustrate the form of the City's projected future land use needs. Despite the lack of specific policy for each individual land use and their respective densities, as well as standards for achieving compatibility among land uses, the future land use map was generally accurate concerning the form in which groupings of residential, commercial, and industrial uses would take in the years to follow.

The 1969 Zoning Code brought a higher level of flexible zoning consistent with the needs of a larger, and growing City. A new residential zone was created, R-4, which combined high density residential and professional office uses, establishing the City's first office-type zone. The T-1 and T-2 zones were reclassified as commercial zones C-1 and C-2 and remained essentially the same with many uses overlapping between them. A C-3 Planned Commercial District was created for planned modern shopping and commercial facilities of integrated design. The industrial/manufacturing zone was divided into two zones, M-1 (light manufacturing) and M-2 (heavy manufacturing), also with many overlapping uses. Another new zone, LSRP (Large Scale Residential Project) was added, as was the PC (Planned Community) zone which established for community-scaled planned development. Neither the LSRP nor the PC zoning districts were used extensively.

In 1981, the City Zoning Code was again revised to account for further growth and the need for more flexible zoning. New rural residential zones were created, following the 1986 annexation of large areas of the East Mesa, to provide a greater variety of rural living styles: RA (rural residential), UR (urban ranch), EE (equestrian estate), RE and RE-M (residential estates, RE-mobile home) and an R-1M (single family/mobile home). These new zones also established a greater number of zoned areas for mobile homes, quickly becoming inexpensive

housing alternatives for the City's lower income population. A new office zone, O-1, was created specifically for professional office development: smaller office uses were placed in the R-4 zone. The C-3, PC, and LSRP zones were replaced by residential, commercial, and mixed use planned unit development (PUD) overlay zones which require a number of land use and urban design standards intended to encourage high quality development and compatibility with adjacent development.

The City's constant pace of growth into the 1980's illustrated the need for more specific policy-oriented planning, and thus necessitated the revision of the 1969 Plan. The 1985 Comprehensive Plan emphasized goals, policies, and programs in order to meet the planning needs of Las Cruces. While more policy oriented, the 1985 Plan policies were too broad in scope to provide for an effective land use planning tool. In terms of land use, the 1985 Plan improved planning focus on specific land uses; however, not all land uses were addressed nor were standards for compatibility among land uses. Specific policies for parks and recreation, schools, and public buildings, while necessitating some degree of individual planning, are also land use-related issues not fully addressed in the 1985 Plan.

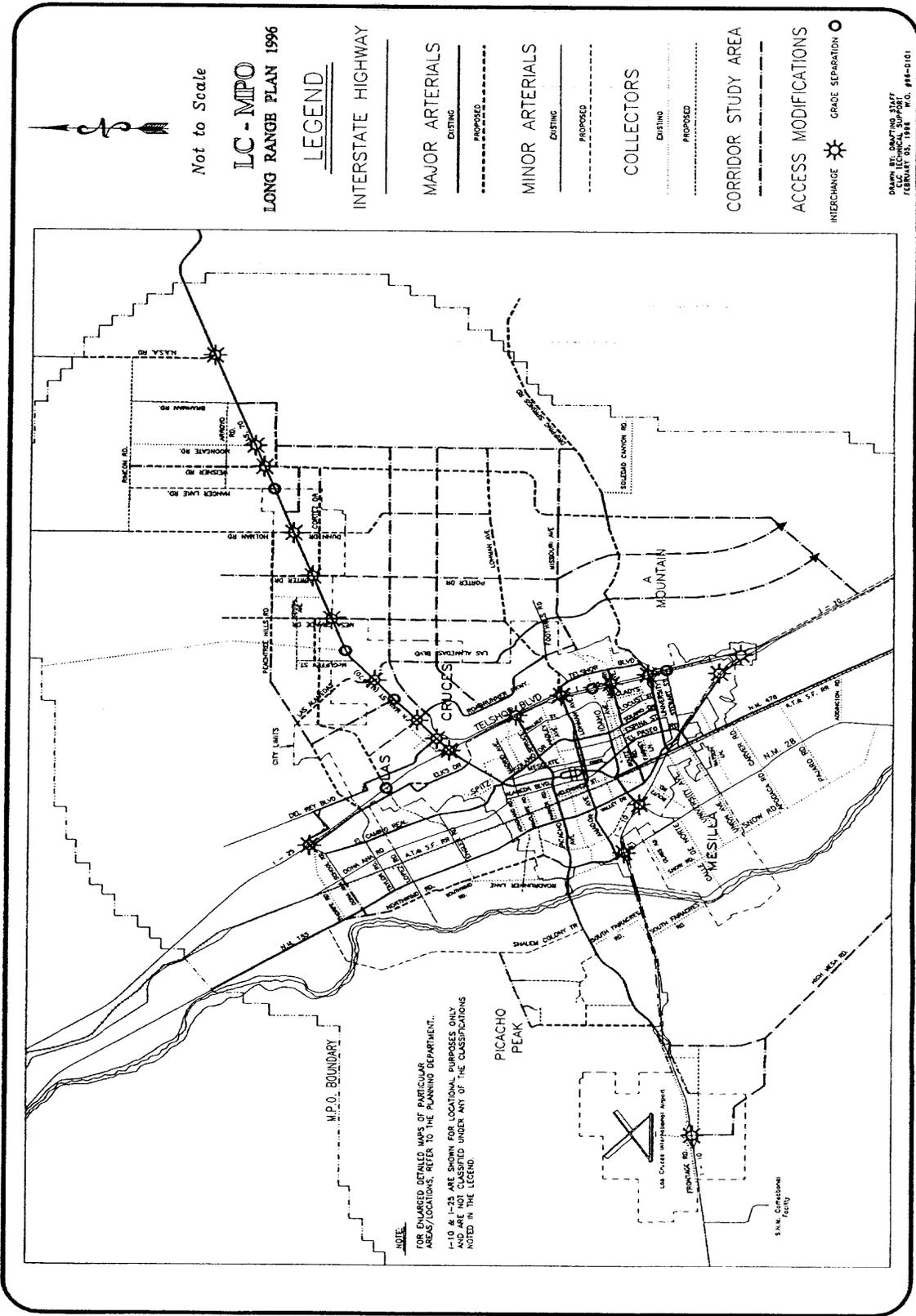
Impact of City Policy on City Growth:

As coordination of all land uses by policy is crucial to effective land use planning, coordination of land use policy with other City growth-related policy is also important in the land use planning picture. Current policy in transportation, wastewater facilities, and storm water management could significantly influence the overall growth of the City: broadening the scope of land use planning to coordinate with this policy will go far to ensure that future City growth is accomplished in a more consistent and cost-efficient manner.

The Transportation Plan of 1994 contains roadway planning policy for the area as approved by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), comprised of Dona Ana County, the City of Las Cruces, and the Town of Mesilla. The Transportation Plan provides a guide for transportation planning, construction, and maintenance of an integrated transportation network for the Las Cruces Urbanized Area. The network discussed in the Plan includes thoroughfares, rail, air, bicycle, and pedestrian systems that allow both commercial, public, and personal travel within and through the region. Thus it is easy to see how growth in Las Cruces may be affected by transportation planning.

1996 MAJOR THOROUGHFARE PLAN

Figure 4



The Wastewater Facilities Master Plan, completed in 1981, established a facilities planning area which includes Las Cruces, Mesilla, Dona Ana village, and New Mexico State University (FIGURE 5). As the map indicates, the City has outgrown the Plan's eastern boundary. With the extension of water services to the new Oñate High School on U.S. 70 at Mesa Grande, significant growth in the surrounding East Mesa is expected. In order to establish positive relationships with the Mesilla Valley, the Rio Grande, and Dona Ana with respect to their unique identities, clear growth policy is needed for the entire City.

The purpose of the Storm Water Management Policy Plan, completed in July 1991, is to establish consistent storm water management throughout the City and promote sound drainage practices in land development. A point of importance in the Plan concerning land use planning are policies designed to preserve natural arroyos on the East Mesa as open space recreation corridors and to establish recreational use and landscaping of on-site water detention systems. Development of land use policy for open space networks should include the open space policies of the Storm Water Plan.

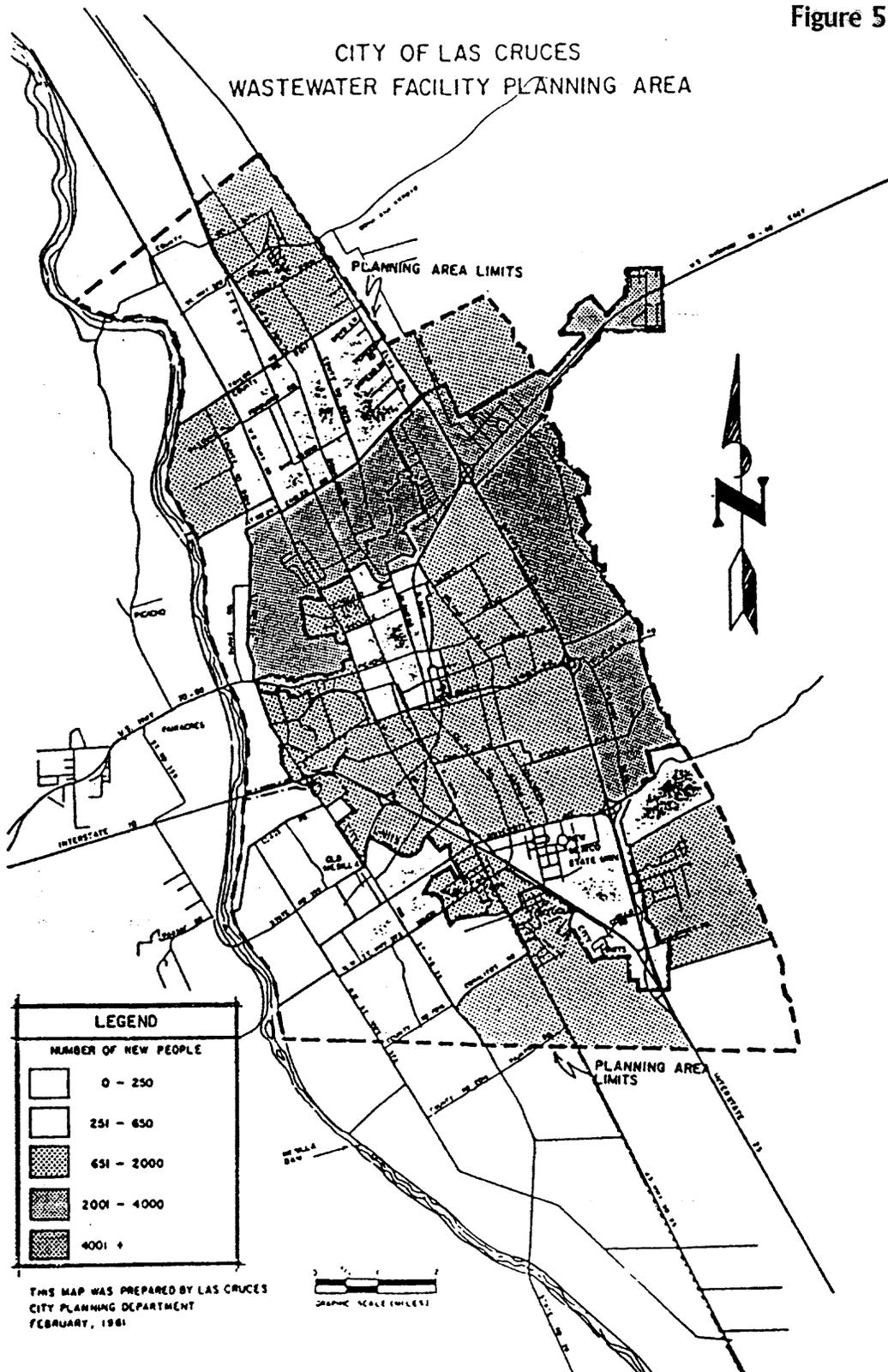
Current Issues:

Land use issues facing Las Cruces today are products of the City's history. Each new generation of City growth created a new generation of planning issues, motivating the creation of comprehensive plans to address these issues. While the City's most extensive growth took place from 1950 through 1980, Las Cruces will continue to grow at a noticeable pace.

This revision of the Land Use Element is designed to address present land use issues and offers a vision of what kind of city Las Cruces can be in the future. The following are land use-related issues to be addressed in this Land Use Element:

1. Current land use policy does not address all traditional land uses. In order to establish positive relationships among land uses, it is necessary to formulate policy to address all land uses. This is basic to successful land use planning.
2. Current zoning policy is not compatible with existing land use policy. The Land Use Element must be the guiding policy document behind revision, interpretation, and application of the Zoning Code.
3. Standards for land use compatibility have not been fully addressed by existing policy. Compatibility of differing types of land use is crucial to maintaining and enhancing our urban fabric.

Figure 5



4. Traditionally, planning policy in other areas has not been included within the scope of land use planning. Policy in areas of transportation, utilities, and drainage will have a tremendous impact of the future growth of Las Cruces. A new tradition must be established to coordinate policy from a broad range of planning areas in order for planning of land use to truly be effective.
5. A clear picture of the City's distinct areas and their character has not been drawn. Our City's unique places, and their land use and urban design character, must be identified, preserved, and enhanced through planning.
6. There is currently no coordination between City growth policy, planned City growth, and an urban form for the City. A conceptual urban form should be established for the City, and urban growth policy should reflect the urban form. Planned growth should reflect both urban form and urban growth policy.
7. Local and national land use and population percentages should be included in the evaluation of existing conditions in Las Cruces. Future land use and population projections should be provided as a component of the direction for the City set by policy in the Land Use Element.

LAND USE INVENTORY/CITY POPULATION PROJECTIONS

In addition to current issues (previously described), the City has studied additional data to determine how the Land Use Element should be updated. This data includes an exploration into population projections, land use inventories, and land use assumptions.

Since its founding in 1849, Las Cruces has always experienced population growth. According to population projections, as seen in Table 1, this growth trend is expected to continue through the year 2000. Population projections give an indication as to the size of our future population. The City has derived population projections for Las Cruces and are based to some extent on previous population studies done for the area by New Mexico State University and other entities (see Table 1). Further information concerning population in Las Cruces may be found in the Las Cruces Population Report.

Table 1: Growth Scenarios in Las Cruces, NM

YEAR	LOW	PROJECTED POPULATION	MEDIUM	PROJECTED POPULATION	HIGH	PROJECTED POPULATION
2000	1.5%	71,445	2.5%	77,658	3.5%	83,870
2010	1.7%	83,591	2.7%	98,626	3.7%	111,901

Source: A Summary of Population Data and Projections for Las Cruces and Dona Ana County, January 12, 1993.

Along with ascertaining population projections, the Planning Department also utilizes land use inventories for the entire City at a parcel specific level. The first complete inventory was compiled in 1986/1987. This effort was followed by the most recent inventory completed in 1991. The results of each inventory effort may be seen in Tables 2 and 3 respectively.

Table 2:
Land Use Inventory 1986/1987

CATEGORY	ACREAGE	PERCENTAGE
Agricultural	1458.53	9.00
Commercial	1227.56	7.00
Industrial	373.71	2.00
Miscellaneous	770.30	5.00
Parks	180.84	1.00
Institutional	916.70	5.00
Residential	4582.05	27.00
Vacant	7382.56	43.00
Water-ways	35.90	1.00
TOTALS	16,928.15	100.00

Source: 1986/1987 Las Cruces Land Use Inventory Survey.

Note: Number of parcels per category not available. Additionally, slight variation in terms of land use classification may exist when compared with 1991 results.

**Table 3:
1991 Land Use Inventory**

CATEGORY	ACREAGE	PERCENTAGE
Agricultural	1929.73	8.00
Commercial	3952.23	16.00
Industrial	632.27	2.58
Miscellaneous	86.88	0.35
Parks	209.87	0.86
Institutional	1360.15	5.56
Residential	6756.65	27.61
Vacant	8494.35	34.72
Water-ways	1046.24	4.30
TOTALS	24468.37	100.00

Source: 1991 Las Cruces Land Use Inventory Survey.

Note: No attempt has been made to isolate 1986/1987 geographic area within 1991 results for comparison purposes. Annexations as of the inventory date are included in the totals.

When comparing the two tables, one must consider that the City's corporate boundaries in terms of acreage, increased by approximately 14,000 acres as a result of annexation activity during the 1980's. As a result of this increase and the land use trends that were established, the most prominent change in land use occurred within the commercial category; commercial land use from 1986/1987 to 1991 more than tripled in acreage. All other categories remained relatively stable in comparison.

A number of land use assumptions were adopted by the City, January 1995. This report, like the City's projections, also finds the future population in Las Cruces increasing. The report also projects an increase in the number of housing units being built through the year 2015. The report, also in concurrence with new building permit and subdivision applications, notes that new growth will occur primarily in the eastern portion of Las Cruces. High Range, Las Alturas, Las Alamedas, Los Colinas and the East Mesa are all examples of areas which are currently experiencing growth in the City.

Population projections, land use assumptions, specific land use information along with building permit and subdivision information gives planners, developers, and the general public an idea of what geographic direction the future population and new development is headed. By analyzing these data, the City as a whole can be closely monitored and studied thus allowing

a tremendous opportunity to gauge establishing trends, determine potential problem areas in development patterns, and provide insightful land use policy recommendations. It is through these data that the policies and objectives found in the Land Use Element have been derived.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

The Goals and Policies of the Land Use Element shall support the Land Use Goal of the Las Cruces City Plan, to "Achieve an urban form which supports and enhances our unique environment". In doing so, land use planning in Las Cruces shall be performed with respect for our southwestern environment of desert, mountains, arroyos, mesas, and river valley. Although growth is occurring in all directions, Las Cruces shall emphasize systematic growth on the East Mesa and focus on coordinating appropriate development with open space and public facilities within our urban core. To make efficient use of existing infrastructure, the City shall promote infill development wherever possible.

To fulfill this goal, a progressive step-by-step approach to land use planning shall be established with the following concepts:

1. Individual land uses shall be identified and defined by policy.
2. Relationships among land uses shall be defined by policy in order to facilitate an interactive and supportive urban fabric of land uses.
3. Neighborhoods shall be established as the focus of land use relationships in the City's urban fabric. This focus shall be defined by policy in terms of land use relationships within neighborhoods.
4. The City has areas where neighborhoods exist in groups and are served by a variety of non-residential land uses within their area. These "sectors" are components of larger areas identified in the Land Use Element as "Planning Areas".
5. "Planning Areas" are large areas within the City which contain a group of sectors and have unique aesthetic, economic, and social qualities. The establishment of Planning Areas shall lend guidance to third and fourth level comprehensive planning for sectors and neighborhoods, respectively. Planning Area designation will also involve establishing relationships among Planning Areas as well as within them.
6. The interaction of land uses within and among planning areas gives rise to the City's urban form and the direction(s) in which the City will grow. Urban form and urban growth shall be established by policy.

The Land Use Element Goals and Policies are organized into six categories:

- I. **LAND USES**
Individual land uses and land use interconnection.
- II. **GROWTH MANAGEMENT**
Land use management policy for mixed use/multi-phase development.
- III. **PLANNING AREAS**
Establishment of planning areas as unique areas in the City.
- IV. **URBAN FORM**
A physical outline form for the City.
- V. **URBAN GROWTH**
A direction for City growth which reflects urban form policy.
- VI. **FUTURE CONCEPTS**
Concepts for future land use development.

Land Use Goals and Policies are not rigid rules designed to be enforced in all land use-related situations, but are designed to provide the City with land use planning guidance in a majority of circumstances. As Las Cruces continues to grow, the needs of our citizens will also grow. Creating policies designed to engage our environment in our City's growth process demands that such policies grow and change over time: this defines the concept of a city's comprehensive plan as a "living document".

I. **LAND USES**

Goal 1 of the 1985 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element directs the City to "...develop the physical structure of the City in a manner which provides a sense of community and reflects a logical, efficient, aesthetic and environmentally sound overall urban form". This goal suggests that land use and zoning policy must work together in a systematic manner in order to produce the overall "picture" suggested by the goal statement.

In assembling land use and zoning policies into a connective and supportive system, this "synergetic" approach necessitates that all land uses, and conditions under which land uses interact, be defined by policy in the Land Use Element. Land Use Element policy must then be supported through implementation in the City Zoning Code.

GOAL 1: Create an interconnected and supportive system of land use policy for the City.

Objective 1: Establish a policy link between the Land Use Element, the City Zoning Code and all other applicable policy and regulatory documents.

Policies:

1.1 All land uses, and conditions under which land uses interact, shall be defined by policy in the Land Use Element.

1.2 Land Use Element policy shall be reflected in the City Zoning Code.

Agriculture

With an extensive irrigation channel system and a long growing season, the Mesilla Valley is one of the most productive agricultural areas in the United States. Agriculture comprises an important sector of the Las Cruces area's economic base, and can continue to provide a relatively stable employment sector for our population. Consistently high quality products, and agricultural research activities by New Mexico State University insure that the Las Cruces area will continue to play a strong role in our region's agricultural industry.

Agriculture in the Mesilla Valley not only represents a viable sector of the local economy, but also represents our regional cultural heritage. Our quality of life is greatly enhanced by agriculture economically, culturally, and environmentally as it contributes significantly to our open space which connects us to our natural surroundings. For these reasons, agriculture should be considered a viable and compatible land use in the Land Use Element.

Objective 2: Establish policies to support the viability of agriculture and the co-existence of agriculture with other land uses.

Policies:

2.1 Agricultural zones with minimum lot sizes of five or more acres are encouraged to be grouped wherever possible to support agricultural activities and to create continuous areas of open space.

2.2 Agriculture and ranching activities are encouraged in the fringe areas of the City.

2.3 Land use mechanisms such as Land Trusts, Greenbelt Tax Status, and Transfer of Development Rights are becoming more widely used as ways to preserve agriculture as a land use and a cultural heritage. The City shall encourage the use of these mechanisms to support continued agricultural activity in the Las Cruces area.

Residential Uses

Nowhere in our City is citizen pride and community involvement seen more clearly than in our urban neighborhoods. Our neighborhoods are identified by distinct combinations of geography, culture, lifestyles, and architecture reflecting our Southwestern heritage. Neighborhoods such as Old Town, Alameda-Depot, Country Club, Loma Heights, Telshor, and Las Alturas reflect the rich diversity of our community and the true quality of life to be found in Las Cruces. Policy shall be established to preserve our existing urban neighborhoods, and to insure that new neighborhoods are designed to create distinct areas for urban residential living.

Rural residential areas are typically found on the outer rim of the urban area, in many cases delineating City limit borders. In rural areas, citizens find inexpensive living opportunities, engage in agricultural and/or ranching activities, or simply enjoy the openness of the rural environment. Overall, the City values rural areas for their open space and clear views to the surrounding mountains and mesas, as well as for their cultural heritage and economic viability in agriculture and ranching. Policies shall be established to maintain and enhance rural residential living.

Objective 3: Establish land use policy, for the purposes of the Land Use Element, for urban and rural residential uses which supports the unique lifestyles of these areas.

Policies:

- 3.1 An urban residential use shall be so designated where these uses occur at a density of greater than two dwelling units per acre. A rural residential use shall be so designated where these uses occur at a density of less than or equal to two dwelling units per acre.
- 3.2 Rural and urban residential land uses may be distinguished via differing characteristics. A rural residential area may not possess all City services/infrastructure and may lack nearby commercial nodes and centers. A rural area may also be characterized by farming (as may be seen in the Valley), large-sized lots or by a ranching lifestyle (as may be seen in the East Mesa).
- 3.3 An assortment of lot sizes should be provided for single-family residential developments to promote a variety of lifestyles within the community. With small urbanized lots (such as 3,500 square feet parcels) to large tracts of land (five acres in size), the City shall address all segments of the population.
- 3.4 High density uses shall be encouraged to concentrate in and around transportation and communication corridors, thereby supporting a mixed distribution of uses. Lower and rural density residential uses shall be located away from such corridors.

- 3.5 All residential development shall address the following urban design criteria: compatibility to the adjacent neighborhood in terms of architectural design, height/density, and the provision of landscaping. Architectural and landscaping design standards for residential uses shall be established in the Comprehensive Plan Urban Design Element.
- 3.6 Residential neighborhoods shall not be divided and/or redeveloped for non-residential uses unless it can be shown that demand for housing in a neighborhood is diminishing or that a need for a more compatible land use relationship can be demonstrated.
- 3.7 Group homes and shelters shall not be concentrated in any one neighborhood or City area. The City shall encourage the dispersal of these uses throughout the City in locations where they are compatible with neighborhood or City area building densities.
- 3.8 Development or redevelopment of major dedicated right-of-way near neighborhoods shall be designed or redesigned to mitigate daily impacts on the neighborhoods.
- 3.9 Low density housing shall not front on, or have direct access to, major collector or arterial streets.
- 3.10 High density residential uses shall be located and designed to minimize traffic flow through adjacent neighborhoods, and should locate on or near existing or future planned transit routes.
- 3.11 The City's infill policy shall be consistent with neighborhood land use policies.
- 3.12 Affordable housing throughout the City shall be retained where feasible.
- 3.13 Affordable housing developments shall be encouraged to locate throughout the City where they are compatible with surrounding densities.
- 3.14 The City shall encourage urban residential development on the East Mesa.
- 3.15 The City shall encourage urban residential cluster development along major arroyos where such development lends to the preservation of arroyos in their natural state.
- 3.16 The City shall encourage rural residential uses in the north and south fringe areas of the City.
- 3.17 The City shall permit only residential uses which front the North Alameda Corridor beyond the northeastern and northwestern corner lots from the intersection of Picacho

Avenue and North Alameda Boulevard to Three Crosses Avenue. The City shall, therefore, not permit commercial and/or office uses which front the North Alameda Corridor beyond the northeastern and northwestern corner lots from the intersection north of Picacho Avenue and North Alameda Boulevard to Three Crosses Avenue.

Historic Districts

Previous land use policy encouraged the City to establish local historic district designations to maintain and enhance historic residential and commercial areas. The Alameda-Depot neighborhood and the Old Town/Mesquite St. area (Original Townsite) have been designated Historic Districts by the State and Federal governments, but have no local historic designation which protects their historic character.

In addition to creating historic districts, the City intends to establish overlay zones in these areas. Overlay zones will provide the means of allowing the flexibility that are needed to create special land use and urban design policies exclusively designed to preserve and enhance the unique characteristics of our historic districts.

Objective 4: Establish land use policy to preserve and enhance local historic areas.

Policies:

- 4.1 The Alameda-Depot area (a) and the Old Town/Mesquite St. area (b) shall be designated as local historic districts (FIGURE 6).
- 4.2 Overlay zones shall be created in the historic districts as a means of providing flexible standards to address historical considerations.
- 4.3 Specific land use and urban design policy for local historic districts shall be established in fourth level planning documents. Issues addressed will include, but not be limited to: permitted land uses, setbacks, lot size, accessory buildings, and design issues. This policy shall be reflected in the Zoning Code where appropriate.
- 4.4 The Land Use Element and historic district policy shall observe City infill policy for development standards within the historic districts.

Commercial Uses

The history of Las Cruces shows the development of the City's street network in a north/south orientation. With few major east/west roads to create major intersections, commercial corridors became the only feasible way to meet the retail and service needs of our quickly growing City. Main, Solano, El Paseo, Lohman/Amador, and Picacho are the City's main commercial corridors. Policies to discourage commercial corridor patterns were not

Figure 6

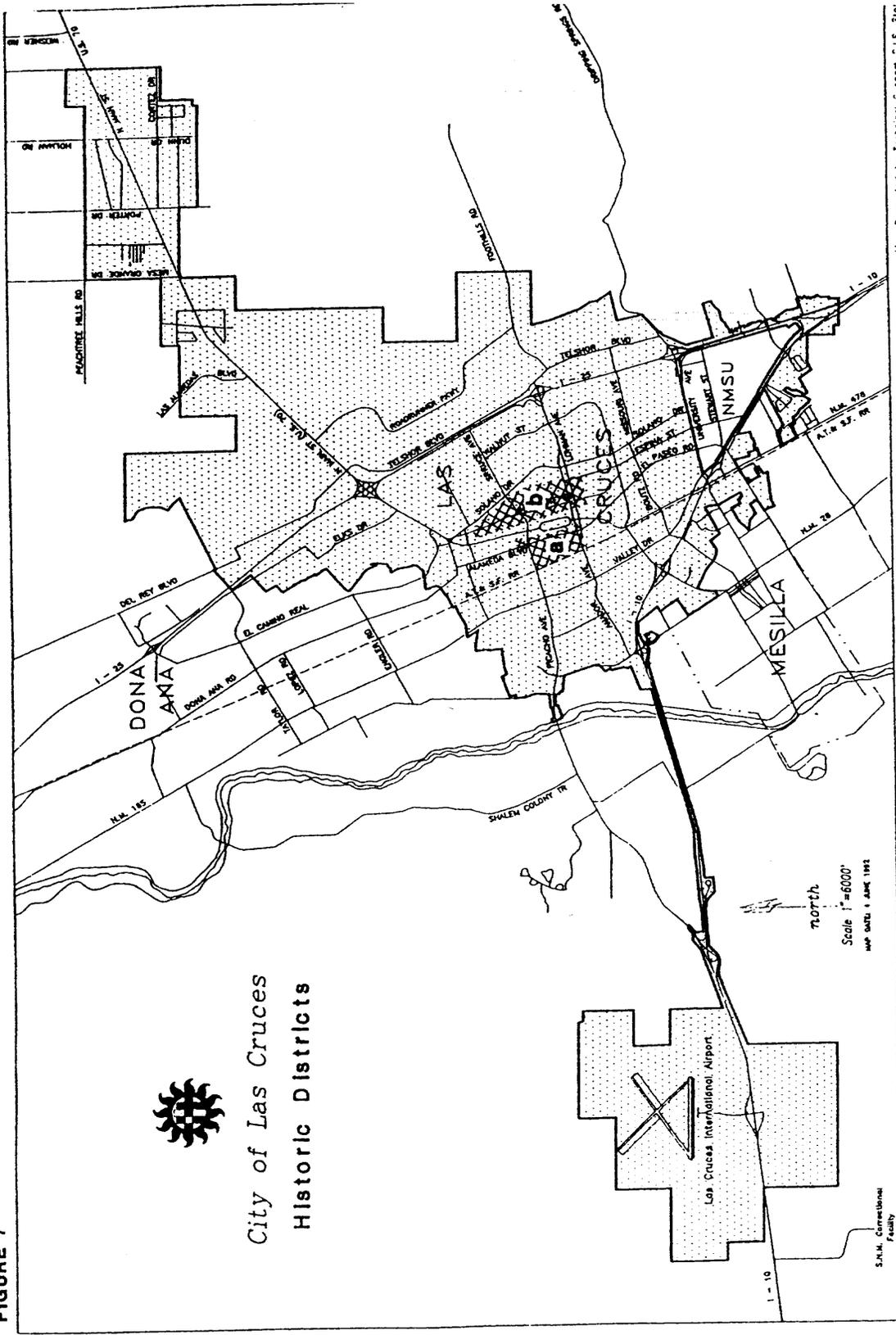


FIGURE 7



City of Las Cruces
Historic Districts

established until the adoption of the 1985 City Comprehensive Plan. By this time, commercial corridors were well established in the City.

Previous land use policy emphasized commercial node or center development patterns, discouraged strip commercial patterns, directed new commercial development to existing commercial areas, and promoted neighborhood commercial uses. While much of the contemporary commercial development has developed according to these policies, the City's commercial corridor patterns have been sustained by directing new commercial development to these existing commercial areas. The creation of new commercial land use policy, based on geography and population and with a higher degree of distinction of land uses and development standards, will better serve the commercial needs of the City. Such policy will allow greater discretion in the application of commercial zoning based on existing and expected future demand.

Commercial development should take the form of nodes or centers wherever possible. Further strip commercial development should be discouraged, particularly in neighborhood areas. However, in the absence of major intersections and/or large lots, corridor or strip patterns, if properly designed, may be maintained in order to provide needed services to an area.

Commercial business zoning shall be categorized based on use, intensity, scale, and compatibility with its environment. In addition, those commercial uses less intensive in use may be placed in categories of higher intensity to encourage multi-use commercial nodes or centers.

Objective 5: Establish land use policy, for the purposes of the Land Use Element, to serve commercial demand on a low intensity, medium intensity, high intensity, and regional commercial basis.

Policies:

5.1 Low intensity commercial uses shall be defined as those commercial uses which generate small-scale retail and service activities as a convenience to adjacent neighborhoods which also include home occupations (home businesses). Low intensity commercial uses shall be established according to the following criteria:

Home Occupations

1. Home occupations shall be permitted only where they are compatible with the neighborhood in which they are located and are intended to:

- a. Protect residential areas from any negative impacts associated with home occupations.
 - b. Allow residents a broad choice in the use of their homes as a place for income and livelihood.
2. Home occupations do not have to be located in a low intensity use category, but are required to have a Business Registration. Home Occupations shall meet all applicable standards of the Zoning Code, Uniform Fire Code, Municipal Code and all other applicable documents.

Low Intensity Commercial Uses

1. A maximum of 1,500 gross square feet shall be permitted for low intensity commercial uses. Special uses are required for any business which is greater than 1,500 square feet, but may not exceed 2,000 square feet. Special uses to allow additional square footage are permitted for single uses only.
2. Low intensity commercial uses may locate within the same property or adjacent to one another as long as the total gross square footage does not exceed 1,500. In cases where a low intensity commercial use is proposed and exceeds 1,500 gross square feet, the property must be reclassified. The number of uses within each development may be unlimited, but are restricted to a total of 1,500 square feet. Low intensity commercial uses may not locate adjacent to one another.
3. The location of low intensity commercial uses shall be considered on a case-by-case basis: criteria shall include location on a street of local capacity and above, accessibility, and consideration of the level of traffic and environmental impacts.
4. Low intensity commercial development areas shall generally not locate within one-quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) mile of other commercial development areas.
5. The City shall pursue multi-modal access standards (auto, bicycle, and pedestrian transit) for low intensity commercial uses.
6. Low intensity commercial development shall address the following urban design criteria: compatibility to adjacent development in terms of architectural design, height/density, and the provision of landscaping for site screening, parking and loading areas. Architectural and landscaping

standards for low intensity commercial uses shall be established in the Comprehensive Plan Urban Design Element.

7. Adequate space for functional circulation shall be provided for parking and loading areas.
8. The City shall encourage the development of low intensity commercial uses to allow for maximum shopping convenience with minimal traffic and encroachment-related conflicts to adjacent uses.

5.2 Medium intensity commercial uses shall be defined as those commercial uses which provide retail and service activities within a neighborhood area. Medium intensity commercial uses shall generally serve a population of 5,000 to 30,000 people and shall be established according to the following criteria:

- a. Generally 1,500 but not to exceed 5,000 gross square feet shall be permitted for a medium intensity commercial use or center. A business may apply for a special use when said business is greater than 5,000 gross square feet, but may not exceed 6,000 square feet.
- b. Medium intensity commercial use and centers shall be located on minor collector streets, or at the intersection of streets equal to or greater than collector capacity. Mid-block locations shall be considered on a case-by-case basis: criteria shall include street capacity, distance from an intersection where appropriate, accessibility and shared vehicular access with other uses where appropriate, and consideration of the level of traffic and environmental impacts.
- c. An unlimited number of low or medium intensity commercial uses may be located adjacent to one another as long as the combined total of the uses does not exceed 5,000 gross square feet.
- d. With the exception of low intensity commercial businesses, medium intensity commercial uses shall not be located within one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) mile of other commercial areas.
- e. The City shall pursue multi-modal access standards (auto, bicycle, and pedestrian transit) for medium intensity commercial use and centers.
- f. Medium intensity commercial development shall address the following urban design criteria: compatibility to adjacent development in terms of architectural design, height/density, a provision of landscaping for site screening, parking and

loading areas. Architectural and landscaping design standards for medium intensity commercial use shall be established in the Comprehensive Plan Urban Design Element.

- g. Adequate space for functional circulation shall be provided for parking and loading areas.
- h. The City shall encourage the development of medium intensity commercial centers to allow for maximum shopping convenience with minimal traffic and encroachment related conflicts to adjacent uses.
- i. Low intensity commercial uses are permitted in medium intensity commercial areas.

5.3 High intensity commercial use shall be defined as those commercial uses which generate retail, service, and wholesale activities within a specific sector within the City. High intensity commercial use and centers shall generally serve a population of 15,000 to 85,000 people and shall be established according to the following criteria:

- a. Generally 5,000 but not to exceed 75,000 gross square feet shall be permitted for a high intensity commercial use, with generally 200,000 square feet permitted for a high intensity commercial center. A high intensity commercial center becomes a regional commercial use when the center contains one anchor store greater than 75,000 gross square feet.
- b. High intensity commercial uses and centers shall be located at the intersection of minor arterial streets, or any intersection with a major arterial street. Mid-block locations shall be considered on a case-by-case basis: criteria shall include street capacity, distance from an intersection where appropriate, accessibility and shared vehicular access with other uses where appropriate, and consideration of the level of traffic and environmental impacts.
- c. The City shall pursue multi-modal access standards (auto, bicycle, and pedestrian transit) for high intensity commercial use and centers.
- d. High intensity commercial development shall address the following urban design criteria: compatibility to adjacent development in terms of architectural design, height/density, and the provision of landscaping for site screening, parking, and loading areas. Architectural and landscaping standards for high intensity commercial use shall be established in the Comprehensive Plan Urban Design Element.

- e. Adequate space for functional circulation shall be provided for parking and loading areas.
- f. The City shall encourage the development of high intensity commercial centers to allow for maximum shopping convenience with minimal traffic and encroachment-related conflicts to adjacent uses.
- g. High intensity commercial use and centers should not locate adjacent to rural or low density residential uses.
- h. Low and medium intensity commercial use are permitted in high intensity commercial areas.

5.4 Regional commercial uses shall be defined as those commercial uses which generate retail, service, and wholesale activities designed to serve the City and regional market area where such uses require the development of large commercial facilities and may generate a high degree of traffic. Regional commercial uses and centers shall generally serve a population of greater than 85,000 people and shall be established according to the following criteria:

- a. Regional commercial uses shall generally have a gross square footage of greater than 75,000, with centers having a square footage generally greater than 100,000. A high intensity commercial center becomes a regional commercial use when the center contains one anchor store greater than 75,000 gross square feet.
- b. Regional uses and centers shall be located at the intersection of major arterial streets and limited access freeways.
- c. The City shall pursue multi-modal access standards (auto, bicycle, and pedestrian transit) for regional commercial uses and centers.
- d. Regional commercial development shall address the following urban design criteria: compatibility to adjacent development in terms of architectural design, height/density, and the provision of landscaping for site screening, parking and loading areas. Architectural and landscaping design standards shall be established in the Comprehensive Plan Urban Design Element.
- e. Adequate space for functional circulation shall be provided for loading areas.
- f. The City shall encourage the development of regional commercial centers to allow maximum shopping convenience with minimal traffic and encroachment-related conflicts to adjacent uses.

- g. Regional commercial uses and centers should not locate adjacent to rural or low density residential uses.
- 5.5 Special Districts, such as the Central Business District, University Avenue Corridor, Historic and any future overlay zone shall be evaluated for appropriate uses in accordance with low, medium, high, and regional commercial land use policy.
- 5.6 The City shall encourage the development of new commercial uses in the East Mesa area.

Office Uses

In the spectrum of land uses, office uses may serve an important role in providing a transition between commercial and residential uses, establishing business, personal and professional services that can function without generating large volumes of vehicular traffic. For the purposes of implementing clear office land use policy, relationships must be established to insure that transitional roles designed for neighborhood and professional offices are well-suited to the type of residential and commercial areas which they serve.

Office uses will be arranged according to their intensity, scale, and how each particular use will act (some businesses may have a gross square footage which would categorize them as a neighborhood office use, but may actually serve a population which would actually categorize them as a professional office use). Therefore, those office or commercial businesses less intensive in use may be placed in categories of higher intensity. For example, neighborhood office and medium intensity commercial use may be permitted in high intensity commercial areas.

Objective 6: Establish office use policy, for the purposes of the Land Use Element, to identify neighborhood and professional office uses within the City as transitional uses.

Policies:

- 6.1 Neighborhood office uses shall be defined as those office uses which generate small-scale professional service activities between uses. There shall be no goods or merchandise prepared or sold on the premises of these uses. Neighborhood office uses and centers shall be established according to the following criteria:
- a. Generally 1,500 gross square feet shall be permitted for a neighborhood office use or center.
 - b. The location of neighborhood office uses and centers shall be considered on a case-by-case basis: criteria shall include location on collector or minor arterial streets as identified in the transportation element, distance from an intersection

where appropriate (a coordinated mixture of uses rather than office/commercial uses as a predominant use), accessibility and shared vehicular access and parking when two offices are adjacent to one another, and consideration of the level of traffic and environmental impacts.

- c. There shall be no limit to the number of uses in one development, but no more than two (2) neighborhood office developments may locate adjacent to each other. A neighborhood office use and center shall be considered as one development.
- d. The City shall pursue multi-modal access standards (auto, bicycle, pedestrian, transit) for neighborhood office uses and centers.
- e. Neighborhood office development shall address the following urban design criteria: compatibility to adjacent development in terms of architectural design, height/density, and the provision of landscaping for site screening, parking and loading areas. Architectural and landscaping design standards for neighborhood office uses shall be established in the Comprehensive Plan Urban Design Element.
- f. Adequate space for functional circulation shall be provided for loading areas.
- g. The City shall encourage the development of neighborhood office centers to allow for maximum service convenience with minimal traffic and encroachment-related conflicts to adjacent uses.
- h. Neighborhood office uses are also permitted in medium intensity, high intensity, and regional commercial areas as well as professional office areas.

6.2 Professional office uses shall be defined as those office uses which generate larger-scale business and professional service activities. There shall be no goods or merchandise prepared or sold on the premises of these uses, with the exception of those activities which serve the primary use. Professional office uses and centers shall be established according to the following criteria:

- a. Generally 2,500 gross square feet and above shall be permitted for a professional office use or center.
- b. Uses and centers shall be located on streets of collector level and above.
- c. The City shall pursue multi-modal access standards (auto, bicycle, pedestrian, transit where available) for professional office uses and centers.

- d. Professional office development shall address the following urban design criteria: compatibility to adjacent development in terms of architectural design, height/density, and the provision of landscaping for site screening, parking and loading areas. Architectural and landscaping design standards shall be established in the Comprehensive Plan Urban Design Element.
- e. Adequate space for functional circulation shall be provided for loading areas.
- f. The City shall encourage the development of professional office centers to allow for maximum convenience with minimal traffic and encroachment-related conflicts to adjacent uses.
- g. The City shall encourage the development of professional office uses and centers in the Central Business District and in the East Mesa area.
- h. Professional office uses are also permitted in medium intensity, high intensity, and regional commercial areas.

Industrial/Manufacturing Uses

Land use policy for manufacturing and industrial uses shall be established according to light (high-technology, electronics), standard (manufacture of consumer goods, food processing), and heavy (cement manufacture, refinery) manufacturing categories. Location of these uses shall be determined by their level of adaptability to surrounding uses and our natural environment.

Objective 7: Establish land use policy, for the purposes of the Land Use Element, for light, standard, and heavy industrial and manufacturing uses.

Policies:

- 7.1 Light industrial uses shall be defined as those industrial uses which generate research, development, warehousing and manufacturing activities with minimal impact to the surrounding environment. Light industrial uses and parks shall be established according to the following criteria:
 - a. Uses shall be located on, or have direct access to, collector and arterial streets.
 - b. The City shall pursue multi-modal access standards (auto, bicycle, pedestrian, transit where available) for light industrial uses and centers.

- c. Light industrial use and park development shall address the following urban design criteria: compatibility to adjacent uses in terms of architectural design, height/density, and provision of landscaping for site screening, parking and loading areas. Architectural and landscaping design standards shall be established in the Comprehensive Plan Urban Design Element.
 - d. Adequate space for functional circulation shall be provided for loading areas.
 - e. The City shall encourage the development of light industrial parks to allow for minimal traffic and encroachment-related conflicts to adjacent uses.
 - f. The City shall encourage the development of light industrial uses and parks in the West Mesa Industrial Park and East Mesa areas.
- 7.2 Standard industrial uses shall be defined as those industrial uses which generate fabricating, manufacturing, packaging, and processing activities, provided such uses can be operated in a relatively clean, quiet and safe manner with minimal impacts to the surrounding environment. Standard industrial uses and parks shall be established according to the following criteria:
- a. Standard industrial uses shall have direct access to, or shall be located on, collector and arterial streets.
 - b. The City shall pursue multi-modal access standards (auto, bicycle, pedestrian, transit where available) for standard industrial uses and centers.
 - c. Standard industrial development shall address the following urban design criteria: compatibility in terms of architectural design, height/density, and the provision of landscaping for site screening, parking and loading areas. Architectural and landscaping design standards for standard industrial uses shall be established in the Comprehensive Plan Urban Design Element.
 - d. The City shall encourage the development of standard industrial parks to allow for minimal traffic and encroachment-related conflicts to adjacent uses.
 - e. The City shall encourage the development of standard industrial uses and parks in the 17th Street, West Mesa Industrial Park, and East Mesa areas.
- 7.3 Heavy industrial uses shall be defined as those industrial uses which generate high-intensity industrial and manufacturing activities having physical and operational characteristics which are offensive and/or hazardous to the surrounding community.

Heavy industrial uses and parks shall be established according to the following criteria:

- a. Heavy industrial uses shall have direct access to, or shall be located on, arterial streets.
 - b. The City shall pursue multi-modal access standards (auto, bicycle, pedestrian, transit where available) for heavy industrial uses and centers.
 - c. Heavy industrial development shall address the following urban design criteria: lot size and configuration allowing significant front, side, and rear setbacks, and provision of landscaping for site screening, parking and loading areas. Design standards for lot size/configuration and landscaping for heavy industrial uses shall be established in the Comprehensive Plan Urban Design Element.
 - d. The City shall encourage the development of heavy industrial parks to allow for minimal traffic and encroachment-related conflicts to adjacent uses.
 - e. The City shall encourage the development of heavy industrial uses and parks in the 17th Street area.
- 7.4 Access to industrial and manufacturing areas through residential neighborhoods shall be prohibited.
- 7.5 Sufficient on-site parking shall be required for all industrial uses.
- 7.6 All outdoor storage shall be screened from view in all horizontal directions. Organic landscaping shall be among materials used for screening purposes.
- 7.7 The City shall encourage focusing development of light, standard, and heavy industrial uses in areas with existing compatible industrial zoning where these areas comply with industrial land use policies.
- 7.8 The Comprehensive Plan Environmental Element will establish environmental impact standards for light, standard, and heavy industrial uses.

Infill

The ability of the City to enable the process of infill development is very important in the maintenance and enhancement of the overall urban fabric as it lends physical, social and economic stabilization to areas with vacant land. The City shall continue to encourage appropriate infill development within developed areas of Las Cruces which protects the

integrity of existing uses, densities, and urban design standards while optimizing the use of existing utility and transportation systems.

Objective 8: Encourage the development of vacant land within the urban area of the City.

Policies:

- 8.1 The infill area shall be defined as the area buffered by Interstate 25 on the east, University Avenue to the south, Valley Drive from University Avenue to Hoagland Road on the west and Hoagland Road/Three Crosses/N. Main Street as the northern boundary.
- 8.2 Infill development shall be compatible with the existing architecture, landscaping, and character of the surrounding neighborhood. (See Appendix 1 for further information.)
- 8.3 Any infill development that generally requires two (2) or more variances as a result of topography, economic or other constraints, shall be required to go through the Planned Unit Development process. (See Planned Unit Developments for further information).

The Infill Planned Unit Development process shall be established in a streamlined approach to support development within the urbanized core of the City.

- 8.4 The City strongly encourages the developer to seek participation from adjacent landowners and neighbors of the proposed development via a neighborhood meeting where all neighborhood concerns may be addressed.
- 8.5 Incentives to create infill development will be considered for all types of development in the infill area.
- 8.6 Additional infill policies and incentives to create infill development shall be furthered defined through the development of an Infill Policy Plan.

Public/Quasi Public Uses:

Government administration, schools, parks and recreation facilities, arts and culture facilities such as libraries and museums, civic centers, and police and fire stations are generally viewed as public uses. Churches, civic clubs, and recreation and social organizations are generally viewed as quasi public uses.

As public/quasi public uses are special concerns for any city, these uses shall be fully addressed in the land use element. Policy for design and location of public/quasi public uses shall be established to more clearly define a relationship between these uses and other City land uses.

The City will continue to encourage a coordinated planning effort in the location of all school facilities in the Las Cruces area. Policies concerning school facility location shall be established in the Land Use Element.

Objective 9: Establish design and location standards for public/quasi public uses throughout the City.

Policies:

- 9.1 Priority shall be established to locate government administration, arts and cultural facilities in the Central Business District.
- 9.2 Community and regional commercial development areas shall be considered secondary sites for governmental administration, arts and culture facilities and libraries.
- 9.3 Quasi public uses shall locate on streets of collector capacity and above.
- 9.4 Wherever possible, public facilities shall be clustered with other facilities where such clustering allows optimal use of facilities, joint use of drainage facilities, and an increased availability of recreation programs to neighborhoods throughout the City.
- 9.5 When located within or adjacent to a neighborhood, public/quasi public facility design shall be compatible with the neighborhood's character. The following criteria shall be observed in establishing neighborhood compatibility:
 - a. Access to public facilities (with the exception of parks, recreation, and school facilities) shall not be permitted from a local street or through a neighborhood.
 - b. Facility design and siting shall insure proper screening from an adjacent neighborhood. Traffic, noise, vehicle headlights and facility exterior lighting shall not spill over into the neighborhood. Setbacks, open space, rock walls, and organic landscaping are some recommended buffering techniques.
 - c. Residents adjacent to such facilities shall be given options for extending the height of their walls or fences between their properties and the facilities to ensure privacy and safety. Wall or fence extensions must meet all applicable structural standards for safety and demonstrate a level of aesthetic sensitivity to the surrounding area.

- d. The City shall encourage organizations to strive toward excellence in architectural and site design for new facilities.
- 9.6 All public/quasi public facilities shall be designed to ensure accessibility.
- 9.7 School sites shall be planned to permit safe, direct access of students and shall be relatively free from heavy auto traffic, excessive noise, and incompatible land uses such as regional commercial uses, and standard and heavy industrial/manufacturing uses.
- 9.8 School sites shall be located central to the area it is planned to serve. Sites shall have safe approaches for all modes of travel. School location shall be determined based on the following criteria:
- a. Elementary schools should be located within residential areas, on collector streets only. There shall be no commercial, office, or industrial uses adjacent to elementary schools.
 - b. Middle or junior high schools should be located within residential areas, on minor arterials only. There shall be no commercial, office, or industrial uses adjacent to middle or junior high schools.
 - c. High schools should be located on arterial streets where the speed limit on the arterial does not exceed 45 miles per hour. There shall be no commercial, office, or industrial uses adjacent to high schools.
 - d. Schools are encouraged to provide traffic impact studies for a potential school site as part of submittal requirements for new school construction.
 - e. The City strongly encourages that school site design and location proposals be processed and approved by the City.
- 9.9 The City shall work closely with schools, the State of New Mexico, and the Bureau of Land Management to insure that future school sites can be acquired and reserved in the most optimal locations in addition to the cost of infrastructure being appropriately provided.
- 9.10 In order to preserve the physical and social cohesiveness of a neighborhood or community, existing school facilities should be retained wherever possible.
- 9.11 The City encourages public or private adaptive reuse of public/quasi public facilities.

Parks and Recreation

The City's parks and recreation facilities provide a crucial element to the City's overall quality of life. Neighborhood, community, and regional parks, and recreational facilities designed to serve City and County residents, provide important opportunities for persons of all ages to interact among themselves and their urban and natural environment.

Objective 10: Provide a comprehensive, attractive, cost and resource-efficient system of parks and recreation facilities responsive to the needs and desires of the community.

Policies:

10.1 The City shall create land use classifications/zoning which will categorize pocket parks, neighborhood, community, and regional parks.

- a. Pocket parks shall serve those who live in the surrounding area and shall generally serve a population of 500 - 2,500. Pocket parks shall generally be from .05 acres to .99 acres. Amusements, circuses, carnivals, craft fairs, etc., shall be prohibited; only recreational activities and neighborhood affairs, such as, concerts, shall be permitted.
- b. Neighborhood parks shall serve those people who live in the surrounding area and generally serve a population of 1,000 - 7,500. Neighborhood parks shall be up to generally 1 to 9.9 acres in size. Amusements, circuses, carnivals, craft fairs, etc., shall be prohibited; only recreational activities and neighborhood affairs, such as, concerts, shall be permitted.
- c. Community parks shall serve all residents living in Las Cruces. Community parks shall generally range from 10 - 100 acres in size. Recreational activities, concerts, craft fairs, and small amusements shall be permitted.
- d. Regional parks shall serve all of Las Cruces and surrounding communities. Regional parks are generally 100 acres or greater. All types of recreational activities and high intensity uses (carnivals and circuses) amusements, concerts, and craft fairs shall be permitted.

10.2 The City shall control the timing, location and design of all parks.

- 10.3 Developers shall be responsible for developing neighborhood parks within their subdivision. Developers shall either pay the designated parks fee, dedicate land to the City for a park, or develop parks themselves depending on the number of lots in their subdivision.
- a. 100 lots or below: The developer shall pay the designated park fee.
 - b. 101 - 300 lots: The developer shall dedicate the land to the City for the park in lieu of paying park fees.
 - c. 300 - 599 lots: The developer shall develop a minimum of a one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) acre park.
 - d. 600 lots and above: The developer shall develop two (2) one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) acre parks or a single one (1) acre park. For each additional number of lots, the developer shall follow the previously stated guide.
- 10.4 The City shall develop an "adopt a park" program aimed at increasing volunteer maintenance and improvement efforts.
- 10.5 The City shall develop a "neighborhood watch" program aimed at reducing vandalism at its parks and recreation facilities.
- 10.6 The City shall encourage the participation of local schools, university, clubs, and neighborhood groups in the design, implementation, and maintenance of parks and/or park displays.
- 10.7 The City shall encourage the use of a comprehensive recreational trail system to provide linkage among parks and recreation facilities and important urban activity areas.
- 10.8 The City shall increase the number of existing facilities in an existing park where needed as per the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan.
- 10.9 The City shall introduce new facilities in existing parks as found within the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan.
- 10.10 The City will encourage an even distribution of parks and recreational facilities throughout the City.
- 10.11 The City shall encourage a distribution of activities in all parks and recreational facilities throughout the City.

Open Space

The City of Las Cruces is located within a unique and scenic environment. Our City is surrounded by picturesque desert mesas, a green Rio Grande valley, fields of chile, cotton, and pecan groves, all blended into dramatic backdrop views to the Organ, Dona Ana, and Robledo mountains.

There are two crucial relationships which must be maintained and enhanced in a healthy urban fabric: the relationship of the fabric to its people, and to its natural surroundings. Open space, whether in the urban or rural environment, is the binding element to these relationships.

In the urban landscape, providing open space must be anticipated and planned in coordination with the development of the urban physical structure. The need for urban open space must be examined on a City-wide basis, establishing open space systems with arroyos, irrigation channels, parks and recreation facilities, schools, as well as with private development. Land use policies, and the zoning districts which implement them, should be responsive to efforts to establish an urban open space network. Performance standards to insure public and private contributions to such a network should be established on a Planning Area basis.

Open space should be organized in a systematic network manner in rural and natural environments as well. Networks consisting of arroyos, irrigation channels, environmentally sensitive areas, mountain ranges, river valley, and agricultural areas should be organized to the extent possible to establish and preserve scenic views to our unique environment.

Objective 11: Establish urban and rural open space networks in the area.

Policies:

- 11.1 The City shall encourage the preservation and provide a system of open space on the mesas and in the valley in order to provide a desirable environment and quality of life in the urban area as well as perpetuating the unique natural and rural environments of the region.
- 11.2 The City shall work with the Bureau of Land Management and the State of New Mexico to preserve arroyos on the east and west mesas as open space.
- 11.3 The City shall encourage the establishment of a Las Cruces Area Open Space Authority for the purposes of acquiring land and assisting in planning for open space networks.
- 11.4 Parks and recreation facilities and schools shall be focal points around which open space networks shall be organized.

- 11.5 The City shall encourage the dedication of undeveloped open space. Undeveloped open space shall include all types of sensitive areas, such as arroyos.
- 11.6 Developed open space shall include those parcels of land, such as roadway medians, which are improved and landscaped according to City codes and design standards. Developed open space shall not be considered as park space.
- 11.7 The City shall continue to work with the Bureau of Land Management and the State of New Mexico in the establishment of the Rio Grande Corridor Recreation Area.
- 11.8 The City may consider offering density bonuses, or waivers to park fees, for development in exchange for dedications of land for open space where such dedications lend to open space networks.
- 11.9 Arroyos in urban and rural areas shall be protected from development where such arroyos lend positively to an open space network. Preservation of arroyos shall be consistent with the Storm Water Management Policy Plan.
- 11.10 Irrigation channels in urban and rural areas shall be protected from encroachment by surrounding development to preserve their open character and establish their role as pedestrian and bicycle trails linking open spaces in urban and rural settings.
- 11.11 The City shall establish safety standards for bicycle and pedestrian use of irrigation channels.

II. GROWTH MANAGEMENT

This growth management section has many objectives; most importantly, that it is used as a decision-making tool when evaluating new development and redevelopment through initial zoning, zone changes, special use permits, site plans, Master Plans and Planned Unit Developments. City policy on land development shall be founded on a ratio-based, mixed-use development concept. Ratios may be further defined for sectors created through third level comprehensive planning efforts (see Figure 1). These ratios are intended to be flexible in nature and serve as a gauge in the establishment of the mixed-use concept.

The purpose of the mixed-use development concept is to establish and integrate a mix and/or variety of land uses within the City, thus avoiding a suburban character. Because of such policy, uses which are not traditionally considered compatible may be located next to one another depending upon design features and compatibility with the adjacent area. Those uses with lower intensities must be protected from adjacent uses with higher intensities in order to protect a desirable quality of life within the City. Therefore, the integration of uses shall occur with careful thought into the role and potential impact each use may create. Issues such as architectural scale, density, and other development-related issues shall be considered in order to ensure the land use mix cumulatively supports and enhances the overall character of the City.

GOAL 2: Growth management policy shall be designed to coordinate with all policy contained in the Land Use Element.

Objective 1: Establish an integrated and coordinated approach to meet all established and proposed development-related policy.

Policies:

- 1.1 All development shall follow comprehensive planning policy and regulatory requirements adopted by the City.
- 1.2 Development shall not be approved where it significantly decreases the level of service of surrounding infrastructure.
- 1.3 All development shall adhere to quality design that facilitates the coordination and compatibility between citizens, services and infrastructure.
 - a. The City shall take a more active roll in ensuring that the design of proposed development enhances both efficiency in infrastructure and services as well as promoting a higher quality of life for its citizens.

- b. Development design shall be required to facilitate drainage, street, utility, and urban design compatibility within and adjacent to development projects.
- 1.4 The City should pursue the feasibility of an impact fee program to determine impacts to existing development and their associated costs.
- 1.5 A building permit may be issued prior to the completion of a particular parcel in a subdivision only if a guarantee of performance and collateral have been accepted, City or any other water utility system is pre-approved, and a water meter can be installed. The City shall apply whatever sanctions are available to ensure the occupancy of a structure does not occur until the subdivision has water, sewer, gas, and electric utilities available to the subject lot.
- 1.6 The City shall discourage "leap frog" growth. "Leap frog" growth shall be defined as any development proposed beyond the predominantly urbanized area and lacks readily available infrastructure. Such development bypasses areas of vacant or rural land and requires the extension of new roads, utilities, and other facilities in accordance to City specifications.
- 1. All development shall adhere to the policies found within comprehensive planning policy and regulatory requirements adopted by the City. The exception may be infill development as identified in infill policies.
 - 2. As with all development within the City, developers shall be fully responsible for all minimum required on-site improvements and infrastructure.
 - 3. The extension of all infrastructure to a particular subdivision or development shall be the responsibility of the developer. Requirements shall consist of the following:
 - a. Gas, water, and sewer shall be extended, meeting City utility specifications for serving a particular development.

The City may negotiate with the developer on over-sizing utility lines. Should this situation arise, the City shall reimburse the developer for the over-sized portion of the utility lines including the total construction cost differential.
 - b. Roadway and associated drainage infrastructure that is extended shall consist of a minimum 24' double penetration roadway surface if not more than a total of 50 dwelling units are proposed for the subject

development. A minimum 30' double penetration roadway surface shall be required if the proposed development exceeds 50 dwelling units. Associated storm water infrastructure such as culverts and drainage ditches along the roadway may also be required.

Any additional development that increases the number of dwelling units beyond what exists must modify the roadway to provide a 30' roadway.

4. The City will enter into a ten (10) year cost-recovery agreement, unless otherwise negotiated and approved by the City, with a developer who extends utility, roadway, and associated drainage infrastructure to a particular development. In this manner, future development will pay their *pro rata* share when they tie into and utilize the readily available infrastructure and utility lines. Upon the time future developments pay their *pro rata* share, the City will ensure the original developer receives payment for the previously completed utility, roadway and associated infrastructure costs.
5. The City encourages communication and cooperation with adjacent property owners in assisting in the improvement of extended utility, roadway and drainage infrastructure.
6. Developers shall be responsible for one-half the roadway and drainage infrastructure that is directly adjacent to any proposed subdivision or development. Requirements may consist of sidewalk, curb, and gutter and paving in conformance with City specifications and based on the future classification of the roadway not to exceed 24' in paving width.

The City and developer may negotiate on infrastructure requirements based on specific conditions. The City may also allow a subdivider or developer to pay their *pro rata* share of the costs of adjacent improvements in lieu of actual construction.

7. The City shall encourage infill development that supports the utilization of property within the urbanized core of the City.
 - a. Proposed subdivision development within the infill area shall be granted a "streamlined" process for approval consideration.
 - b. Priority should be given to those developments within the urbanized core versus proposed urban sprawl type development as determined by an Infill Policy Plan.

- c. Additional incentives, via an Infill Policy Plan, should be encouraged to promote development within the urbanized core of the City.
- 1.7 The developer shall provide all needed improvements to existing infrastructure (and shall absorb all costs related to needed infrastructure). The developer shall also be responsible for providing all costs related to needed infrastructure in order to support that development.
- 1.8 Development-related requests, such as, site plans, Master Plans, zoning, and Planned Unit Developments shall adhere to the City's mixed use development concept where such adherence lends to the support and enhancement of the character of the sector in which the development takes place.
- 1.9 The Development Review Committee (DRC) and the Chief Civil and Utility Engineers should be granted increased authority to consider engineering-related variances or other technical development-related design specifications to improve the development review process.

Planning-related variances may be heard by the DRC, Board of Adjustment, Planning and Zoning Commission, or City Council for approval.

- 1.10 Criteria such as existing land use distribution and their integration within adjacent areas shall be considered when determining a proposal's significance in providing a mixed use, sustainable and reasonable distribution of land uses. In general, a minimum ratio of 40% single family residential, 10% multi-family, 20% non-residential (office, commercial, and industrial), and 30% miscellaneous (residential, non-residential, public and quasi-public) within the "study area" should be achieved. The "study area" shall include all parcels within a one (1) mile radius of the proposed limits of the site plan proposal. When a "study area" reflects a deficiency with the established land use ratio, the proposal's location with regards to its overall compatibility to the surrounding area shall be taken into consideration to see if application of the land use ratio is feasible.
- 1.11 When new development, redevelopment, and/or special uses place potentially incompatible uses adjacent to one another, spacing between land uses, screening/buffering, site design, architectural controls, and other mitigation controls shall be considered as per Appendix 1 and Matrices 1 and 2. The intent is to encourage flexibility in land use, but reflect and ensure both compatibility and quality design.
- 1.12 All forms of development and redevelopment must comply to their respective site plan, Master Plan, or concept plan before building permits may be issued.

Site Plan

A site plan is required of all forms of development, including that which is created through the special use permit process and that created through the building permit process. A site plan submittal must show setbacks, density, height, use, building elevations, landscaping, and provide information regarding all adjacent uses. By showing such features, a site plan allows an opportunity to evaluate the impact of new development, redevelopment, or a special use request in terms of existing adjacent land use compatibility. Site Plan references within this section do not include subdivision activities through the Planned Unit Development process.

Objective 2: Establish policy for a thorough and coordinated approach to evaluate site plans.

Policies:

- 2.1 All site plans shall observe growth management policy as established in the Land Use Element, other applicable elements, and all companion documents.
- 2.2 Building permits shall not be issued unless all applicable City codes and standards, such as the Zoning Code, Design Standards, etc., are met.
- 2.3 Those sites requesting special use permits which will be completed in phases are required to prepare a conceptual plan of the entire site before Special Use approval may be granted.
- 2.4 Fourth-level plans (see Figure 1) and/or specific overlay zones may be exempt from the City's mixed-use development policy.

Master Plan

A Master Plan is conceptual in nature and is intended to serve as a tool which can assist in identifying the appropriateness of a proposed development in context with its surroundings. Issues related to land use impacts, fiscal impacts, transportation impacts, and environmental impacts are often addressed through the Master Plan review process. The plan once approved, should be used as a guide and should be flexible in its application to subsequent development proposals within the Master Plan study area. Although flexible, a Master Plan should be given due consideration since its significance is in providing a synopsis of how an area is ultimately to be developed.

A Master Plan is required when:

- A development is to be divided into multiple phases, or;
- A development proposes a variety of land uses, or;
- A request for annexation occurs, or;
- Any single development of more than 40 lots is *created/proposed*

Objective 3: Establish development management policy for Master Plans.

Policies:

- 3.1 The Master Plan development process shall observe growth management policy as established in the Land Use Element, other applicable elements, and all companion documents.
- 3.2 Master Plans proposing generally more than two (2) planning-related variances shall be processed through the Planned Unit Development process.
- 3.3 Master Planning shall be considered a planning process where proposals are viewed as a conceptual tool reflecting the ideas and thoughts of future development. The process in which to receive Master Plan approval consists of a streamlined approach with the intent to provide the applicant with immediate feedback without substantial costs in development preparation. Master Plan approval shall adhere to the following process:
 - a. Submittal of a written report/statement. This report shall address at minimum, the purpose and intent of the development, method for providing utilities, phasing data, density information, land use information, description of how proposed land uses will be integrated within the immediate and adjacent study areas, transportation impact information, environmental/geological impacts, and proposed zoning. A proposal may be submitted at any time.
 - b. Submittal of graphical information. This information shall reflect graphically, all applicable information as provided within the written report.
 - c. Review and consideration of the proposed Master Plan by the Subdivision Administrator. Review shall consist of only a determination if submittal requirements have been met and the proposal is "conceptually" compatible with the City's Comprehensive Plan and supporting development regulations. The purpose of the review, however, is not to ensure specific compliance to the Subdivision Code, Design Standards or other technical development regulations.

- d. Review and consideration by the Development Review Committee (DRC). Within less than nine days, the DRC shall review and take action on the proposed Master Plan. Review of the proposed Master Plan shall consist of a determination of the impacts associated with community services and infrastructure as well as area neighborhood considerations. If the proposed Master Plan complies to the City Comprehensive Plan and other City development and growth management policy, does not substantially impact community services and infrastructure, and is designed and land use compatible with adjacent neighborhoods, the DRC will approve the development proposal.
 - e. Decisions by the DRC are binding in that all development must abide to the approved Master Plan. However, approval of the Master Plan does not guarantee the approval of a preliminary, final plat, zone change, or annexation.
 - f. Decisions by the DRC are appealable to the Planning and Zoning Commission followed by the City Council, if needed.
- 3.4 Planning-related variances may be requested at the time a Master Plan is submitted; however, the variance request will be acted upon by the Planning and Zoning Commission during the consideration of the Preliminary Plat.
- 3.5 Those developments which request variances to engineering standards (non-planning related issues) will be considered and acted upon by the applicable Chief Engineer. Decisions may be appealed to the Development Review Committee followed by the Planning and Zoning Commission and then to the City Council should the need arise.
- 3.6 The Master Plan review process shall be the planning mechanism used to determine right-of-way acquisition in compliance with the MPO Transportation Plan and the Transportation Element of the City Comprehensive Plan.
- 3.7 To ensure that an approved Master Plan concept is carried out in subsequent development, the City requires that development within a Master Planned area go through the Preliminary Plat and Final Plat processes. The Preliminary Plat and Final Plat shall reflect and ultimately implement all issues and/or mitigation mechanisms which specifically support the Master Plan concept and the objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. All plats shall comply with the Las Cruces Zoning Code, City of Las Cruces Design Standards, Las Cruces Subdivision Code, Storm Water Management Policy Plan, MPO Transportation Plan and all other development-related regulations and/or plans. In determining compliance criteria, the letter of the law or plan and the spirit in which it was written shall be considered.

Preliminary Plats

A Preliminary Plat is an instrument in which to review site design characteristics of a proposed development. The purpose of such a process is to serve as a tool to establish quality design that promotes development compatibility with the physical and cultural aspects of the community. This process is also used as a method to determine proper site design to mitigate traffic and drainage hazards, appropriate lot configuration and street layout. Design flexibility and imagination should also be considered.

A Preliminary Plat is required for all subdivisions except those processed through the replat, alternate summary or infill subdivision process. A Preliminary Plat may be submitted simultaneously with a Master Plan. Subdivisions that are processed through the PUD process shall not be required to seek Preliminary Plat approval.

Objective 4: Establish development management policy for Preliminary Plats.

Policies:

- 4.1 The Preliminary Plat development process shall observe growth management policy as established in the Land Use Element, other applicable elements, and all companion documents.
- 4.2 Preliminary Plat proposing generally more than two (2) planning-related variances shall be processed through the Planned Unit Development process.
- 4.3 Preliminary Plats are a site planning process to ensure all City policies, rules, and regulations may be achieved. Preliminary Plats are required to follow an appropriate process for the review and subsequent action by applicable City staff and boards/committees. Preliminary Plats shall adhere to the following process:
 - a. Submittal of Preliminary Plat. This plat shall specifically address at a minimum, utility provisions, land use information and existing and/or proposed zoning both within and adjacent to the platted area, rights-of-way, easements, and all applicable mitigation mechanisms necessary to ensure that the proposed development is compatible to lands within and adjacent to the area being platted. Additional information regarding drainage through and around the subject area is also required.
 - b. Submittal of a Master Utility and Drainage Report. This report shall address at minimum, the proposed utility and storm water system and its ability to comply to all City development regulations.

- c. Submittal of any report deemed necessary by the DRC shall also be included.
- d. Review and consideration of the proposed Preliminary Plat by the Subdivision Administrator and appropriate reviewing agencies. Review shall consist of a determination if the site plan complies to the approved Master Plan, if applicable, the City's Comprehensive Plan and reflects appropriate design that will comply with City development standards through the final platting process. The purpose of the review, however, is not to view the proposal as a final plat, but a land planning process in site plan compliance.
- e. Review and recommendation by the DRC. The DRC shall review the proposed Preliminary Plat to determine site plan compliance with City policies and development regulations. The DRC will also address any discrepancies in review comments or differences in opinion between the developer and reviewing staff. If a proposed Preliminary Plat complies with its Master Plan (in those cases where a Master Plan is required), the City Comprehensive Plan, and other City development and growth management policy, the DRC will recommend approval to the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- f. Review and consideration by the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Planning and Zoning Commission shall have final authority over the approval of the Preliminary Plat. Review of the proposal shall consist of site plan compliance to the City's Comprehensive Plan and all development or growth management-related policies. The intent of Planning and Zoning Commission review is to allow for public input in the development process and serve as a land planning process, not specific engineering development review. After review and consideration, the Planning and Zoning Commission will take action on the proposed Preliminary Plat.
- g. Decisions by the Planning and Zoning Commission are binding in that final platting must comply with the Preliminary Plat. However, approval of a Preliminary Plat does guarantee Final Plat approval if in compliance with the approved Master Plan, if applicable, the Preliminary Plat and all City development-related regulations.
- h. Decisions by the Planning and Zoning Commission are appealable to the City Council.

4.4 Those developments which request variances to engineering standards (non-planning-related issues) will be considered and acted upon by the applicable Chief Engineer. Decisions may be appealed to the Development Review Committee followed by the Planning and Zoning Commission and then to the City Council should the need arise.

- 4.5 The mechanism to implement right-of-way acquisition requirements identified in the Master Plan shall be the Preliminary Plat. The City Comprehensive Plan, MPO Transportation Plan, Las Cruces Subdivision Code, Las Cruces Design Standards, and other companion documents shall be used to determine the applicable right-of-way requirements.
- 4.6 When planning-related variances are requested through the Preliminary Plat process, the number requested will be added to any requested during the Master Plan process. Master Plans which request generally more than two planning-related variances will be required to go through the Planned Unit Development process (see Planned Unit Development and Matrix 3 for further information).

Final Plats

The Final Plat, including construction drawings, is the instrument of implementing the Master Plan and/or Preliminary Plat through the engineering process. The purpose of this process is to conduct the engineering necessary to begin the process of developing a subdivision while ensuring the approved Master Plan and/or Preliminary Plat, as well as City development design standards, have been met.

The Final Plat process is required for all land within the corporate boundaries of Las Cruces that are divided into two or more parts by plating or metes and bounds description into tracts for any purpose.

Objective 5: Establish development management policy for Final Platting and construction drawing review.

Policies:

- 5.1 The Final Plat development process shall observe growth management policy as established in the Land Use Element, other applicable elements, and all companion documents.
- 5.2 Final Plat proposing generally more than two (2) planning related variances shall be processed through the Planned Unit Development process.
- 5.3 Final Plats and construction drawings are engineering documents required to follow an appropriate process for review and subsequent action. The City strongly encourages a modification to State Law to allow administrative approval of Final Plats if a Preliminary Plat is approved by either the Planning and Zoning Commission or City Council. Until such time an amendment to the New Mexico State Statutes occurs, all

Final Plats shall be placed on the consent agenda of the Planning and Zoning Commission, if in full compliance with all City development-related standards.

Final Plat and construction drawing review shall adhere to the following process:

- a. Submittal of Final Plat. This plat shall specifically reflect all provisions approved through the Preliminary Plat process.
 - b. Submittal of construction drawings. Construction drawings may be submitted at the time a final plat is submitted to streamline the process in which to achieve City approval. Construction drawings consist of street plan and profile sheets, grading and utility plans, drainage study, paving design and soils report, detail sheet and any other engineering plans related to the development.
 - c. Review and consideration of the proposed final plat and construction drawings by the Subdivision Administrator and appropriate reviewing agencies. Review shall consist of a determination if the Final Plat and construction drawings are in compliance with the approved Master Plan (when a Master Plan is applicable), the Preliminary Plat and all City engineering design specifications. The purpose of the review, however, is not to review street layout, lot configuration or any other site plan characteristics due to the approved Preliminary Plat.
 - d. Approval of the Final Plat and construction drawings. Dependent upon a modification to State Law, either the Planning and Zoning Commission or City administration shall approve the Final Plat and construction drawings when all engineering design regulations, including compliance to the Master Plan (when a Master Plan is applicable) have been met.
- 5.4 Those developments which request variances to engineering standards (non-planning-related issues) will be considered and acted upon by the applicable Chief Engineer. Decisions may be appealed to the Development Review Committee followed by the Planning and Zoning Commission and then to the City Council should the need arise.
- 5.5 Differences of engineering opinion, points of view or methodology between the subdivider/developer and reviewing agencies may be appealed and acted upon by the Chief Engineers. Decisions from the Chief Engineers may be appealed to the DRC followed by arbitration, consisting of one representative for the subdivider/developer, one representative for the City and a third representative chosen by the other two members. Decisions through arbitration are not appealable.

- 5.6 Planning-related variances requested during the Final Plat process will be handled as an amendment to the Preliminary Plat except when platting under the Infill Subdivision and Alternate Summary Procedures. In these instances, generally, no more than two (2) planning related-variances may be requested.
- 5.7 Final Plats shall not be filed prior to approval and acceptance of all applicable construction drawings.
- 5.8 The mechanism to acquire right-of-way for subdivisions which do not go through the Master Plan process shall be as follows:
- a. The City Comprehensive Plan, MPO Transportation Plan, Las Cruces Subdivision Code, Las Cruces Design Standards, and other companion documents shall be used to determine the applicable right-of-way requirements.
 - b. When a subdivision is to be located along an adjacent roadway(s) which according to development plans requires additional right-of-way, the City shall require 50% of the required additional right-of-way. This requirement may be waived if 65% or more of the street length (both sides considered) within a 1,320 foot distance for an urban setting and 2,640 foot distance for a rural setting is developed. In this instance, a right-of-way easement reservation equal to that of the 50% requirement may be applied as an alternative to outright dedication and improvement.

Other similar waivers to right-of-way requirements may be reviewed by the DRC. The DRC will make their determination based upon the amount of average annual daily traffic, the amount of area already developed, and the type of land uses found in that specific roadway segment. Waivers shall be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Should the DRC determine to waive the required amount of right-of-way for a specific segment of roadway, amendments to the Transportation Element and/or the MPO Transportation Plan shall be completed clearly establishing the change in right-of-way policy for that segment.

Zoning

Zoning is a means of land use control whereby parcels of land are divided into districts which impose varying land use controls. These districts, or zones, specify land uses, the intensity and density of such uses, and the bulk in which these uses may occur. Land may be zoned in two ways: 1) An initial zoning takes place when land is annexed into

City limits; and 2) a zone change request is processed and approved. In either case, both are processed through the Planning and Zoning Commission for recommendation purposes, and to the City Council for a final decision. Decisions to approve or deny zoning requests are made with insight as to how such a request may impact an existing area or if it may alter the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Objective 4: Establish development management policy for initial zoning and zone changes.

Policies:

- 4.1 All zoning actions shall observe growth management policy as established in the Land Use Element, other applicable elements, and all companion documents.
- 4.2 Industrial zoning is encouraged in areas specifically deemed appropriate through the Comprehensive Plan. Inasmuch as the potential uses resulting from the industrial zoning may significantly impact adjacent uses, careful application of the mixed use concept when dealing with industrial zoning is strongly encouraged.
- 4.3 All zoning actions shall be consistent with policy within the Comprehensive Plan, and its companion documents.
- 4.4 The establishment of zoning districts within the Zoning Code should specifically reflect the various land uses identified within the Land Use Element.

Planned Unit Development

A Planned Unit Development (PUD) encourages a creative approach to the development of land. While preferring that all developments meet general development requirements, the City realizes that in some instances these rigid guidelines may be impossible or impractical to follow. For example, due to topographic restrictions or cost restrictions, certain types of development may not occur. Allowing a developer the flexibility to be creative permits him/her to provide, for example, a variety of land uses and densities, innovative site design, open space, parking areas, and circulation facilities. Ultimately the PUD process provides the means to preserve open space, natural features, topography, scenic views, and create affordable housing or other amenities conducive to a quality lifestyle.

The purpose of a PUD is not to provide a means to circumvent required zoning and development standards, but to provide for greater flexibility and innovation in site planning. PUDs benefit both the developer as well as the municipality. Reduced costs for streets and public facilities, decreased local municipal maintenance costs, as well as

reducing the number of public facilities needed in an area are all the result of efficient site design. Thus, PUDs permit a developer to maximize the potential of his/her land while still meeting City policy.

PUDs are considered special uses, and, therefore, have slightly different submittal requirements than that of a regular subdivision. PUDs require the approval of both a concept plan and a final site plan by the Planning and Zoning Commission, after which a Final Plat may be approved and recorded by the County Clerk's office.

Objective 5: Establish development management policy for Planned Unit Developments.

Policies:

- 5.1 The Planned Unit Development process shall observe growth management policy as established in the Land Use Element, other applicable elements and all companion documents.
- 5.2 Planned Unit Developments will only be used for those developments which can be created to benefit both the community and the developer.
- 5.3 The PUDs process shall be required for those subdivided, multi-phased developments which generally request more than two (2) planning-related variances.
- 5.4 Those developments which request variances to engineering standards (non-planning-related issues) will be considered and acted upon by the Development Review Committee (DRC).
- 5.5 PUDs are required to follow an appropriate process for the review and subsequent action by applicable City staff and boards/committees. PUDs shall be similar to Master Plans and special use permits in terms of the time-frame as well as the process itself. The PUD process requires the following information:
 - a. Submittal of a concept plan. The concept plan is similar to a Master Plan in that it is intended to serve as a tool which can assist in identifying the appropriateness of a proposed development in context with its surroundings. This plan shall address at minimum, the purpose and intent of the development (including the explanation/justification for submitting a PUD), method for providing utilities, phasing data, density information, land use information, description of how proposed land uses will be integrated within the immediate and adjacent study areas, transportation impact information, treatment of open space and recreational areas, environmental/geologic impacts, schematic site

plan showing land uses, parking areas, walkways and landscaping, and a vicinity map showing the location of the site.

- b. Submittal of a final site plan. This plan shall act as a Preliminary Plat when the applicant must go through the subdivision process. The final site plan shall address the location and dimensions of all buildings, setbacks, parking, walkways, lighting, signs, landscaping, open space, recreational and buffered areas, and other elements of development; all of which must conform to the approved concept plan. All proposed design-related issues, i.e. drainage, utilities, transportation, streets, and lot layout, etc., must be addressed and approved prior to building permit issuance and Final Plat consideration.
- c. Submittal of a Final Plat, per Subdivision Code requirements, to be recorded by the County Clerk.
- d. Those developments which do not need to go through the subdivision process, must comply with the Building Permit and Inspection Code in order to receive a permit.

5.6 The City realizes that there must be an advantage and genuine interest for developers to initiate the PUD process. The City also realizes that it must make some inducements to motivate the developer to use the PUD's flexibility to create a unique, quality development. In return, a developer should provide a meaningful benefit to the community by providing specific types of development. Consequently, standard housing developments (typical R-1, single family zoning) shall not use the PUD process. In order to accomplish this, only particular types of development may utilize PUDs as a means to an end.

- a. The types of developments or areas in which development may occur (or combinations of) which may utilize the PUD process are as follows:
 - High density residential development
 - Low density residential development
 - Affordable housing development
 - Environmentally sensitive area development
 - Redevelopment
 - Infill development
 - Historic District development
 - Clustering development
 - Social (quasi-public) development
 - Commercial/Business development

- Industrial development
- b. Incentives which may be used through the PUD
- Setbacks
 - Building height
 - Density
 - Lot width
 - Lot size
 - Street width
 - Development-related fees
 - Signage
 - Parking
- c. A developer may not be granted a variation in design elements without providing a benefit to the City/community which, in turn, may only be accomplished with quality design principles. Such benefits to the City/community include:
- Distinctiveness and excellence in design and landscaping per the Urban Design Element
 - Placement of structures on most suitable sites with consideration of topography, soils, vegetation, slope, etc.
 - Preservation of major arroyos as per the Storm Water Management Policy Plan
 - Preservation of important cultural resources such as known or potential archaeological sites
 - Provision of affordable housing and/or subsidized housing
 - Provide architectural variety
 - Clustering of buildings
 - Provide alternative transportation facilities
 - Increased park fees
 - Increased landscaping, including higher quality landscaping deeper vegetative buffers; or increased planting along roadways, in open spaces and recreational areas, and along the perimeter of the project
 - Use of greenways or landscaped corridors linking various uses.
 - Screening of or rear placement of parking areas
 - Use of sidewalks/footpaths or pedestrian bicycle circulation networks
 - Segregation of vehicular and pedestrian/bicycle circulation networks
 - Traffic mitigation measures
 - Other public benefits such as provision of a community center or day care center
 - Development of active or passive recreational areas

- Public access to community facilities in PUD
- Supply recreational facilities for owners/residents
- Advancement of City policy or plan

One example of this “give and take” is a proposal for Cluster Development. A development may propose to decrease lot sizes, and lot widths, increase densities, and modify cul-de-sac lengths. The developer may obtain these variations as long as he/she provides a benefit to the City/community. Such as preserving arroyos as per the Storm Water Management Policy Plan, preserving the natural landscaping in and around the arroyos, provides recreational amenities along the arroyos, and creates unique building designs to be compatible with the higher density.

- 5.7 The applicant shall clearly state that any deviations from required zoning and development standards are deserving of such waivers. The City shall not experience a decrease in level-of-service, increase tax burden or maintenance burden beyond typical development. Justification for waivers shall be in the form of traffic analysis, land use assumptions, or any other source which clearly demonstrates that such variations would not adversely impact the health, safety, and welfare of residents. Impacts resulting from code deviations must be thoroughly addressed and mitigation strategies provided before the City may grant any waivers.
- a. The City shall maintain minimum requirements for particular development standards, such as, road widths, lot sizes, and setbacks. All requests to deviate from regular standards must be justified as previously described. Justification for waivers shall be in the form of traffic analysis, land use assumptions, or any other source which clearly demonstrates that such variations would not adversely impact the health, safety, and welfare of residents. Impacts resulting from code deviations must be thoroughly addressed and mitigation strategies provided before the City may grant any waivers.
 - b. PUD development scenarios have been provided in Matrix 3. These scenarios are meant to be used as a guide only; to provide suggestions, and not as a general rule.
- 5.8 A developer will not be granted a waiver to the City’s design standards that may pose a threat to public health, safety, and welfare. Waivers must also be consistent with City policies found in all City documents and plans.

III. PLANNING AREA GOALS AND POLICIES

Planning Areas are large areas within the City which contain groups of sectors (groups of residential and non-residential uses) and have unique aesthetic, economic, and social qualities. The Land Use Element shall lend guidance to the formation of Planning Area policy to identify and address the qualities of our unique areas, as well as the application of City-wide land use policies.

GOAL 3: Create a Planning Area process for the City.

Objective 1: Establish Planning Areas throughout the City to address quality of life concerns in the City's unique areas.

Policies:

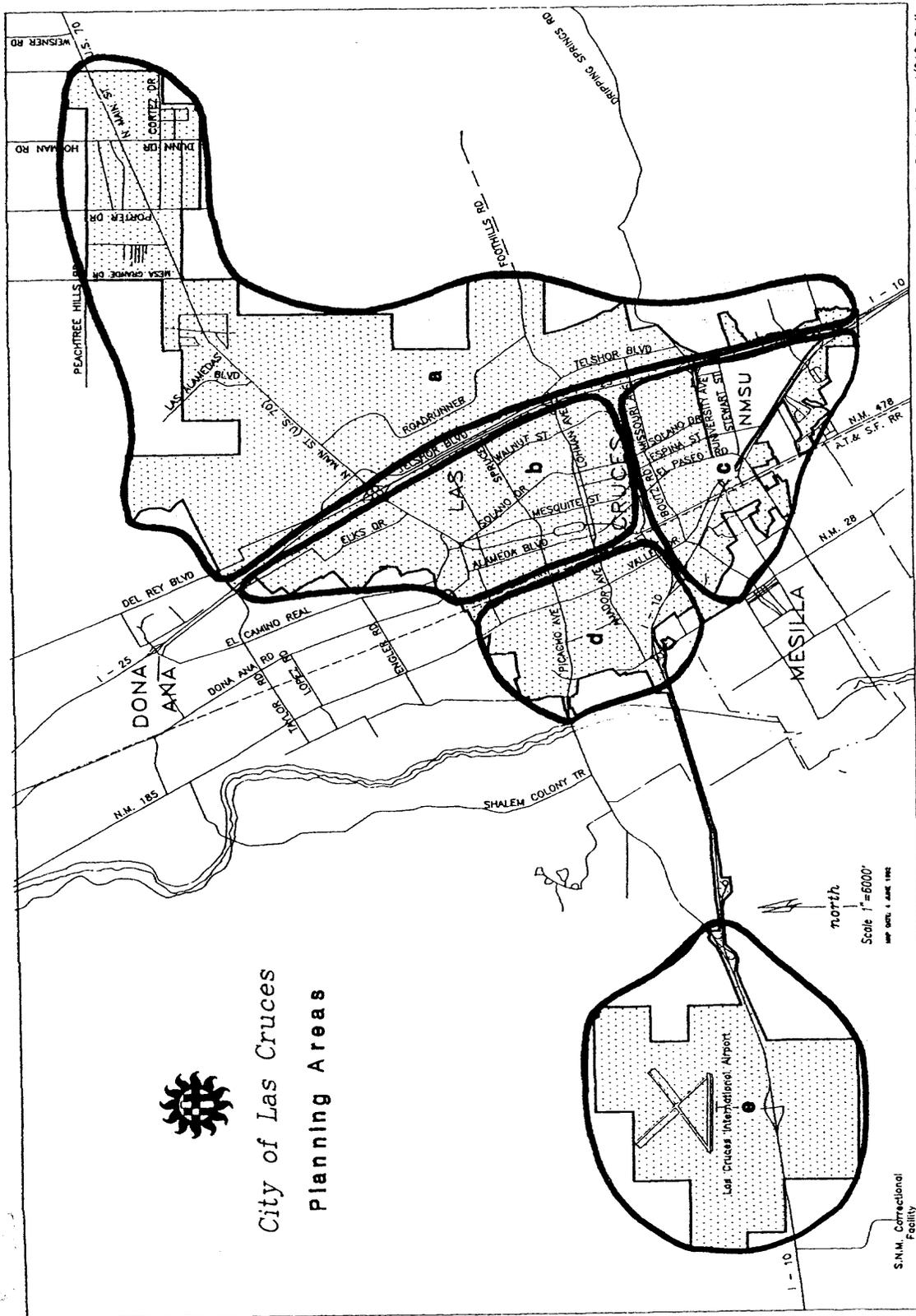
1.1 The following areas shall be established as Planning Areas in the City (FIGURE 7):

- A. East Mesa: contains a mix of commercial, office, and residential uses, and several mixed use/multi-phase developments.
- B. Central: contains Central Business District, Old Town and Alameda-Depot residential historic districts.
- C. Lohman/University: contains commercial corridors and a variety of residential uses. New Mexico State University is also included in this Planning Area: NMSU is currently facilitating campus Master Planning. Borders Interstate 25 and overlaps Interstate 10.
- D. West Side: contains areas conducting a high degree of industrial activity.
- E. Airport: contains the Las Cruces International Airport and the West Mesa Industrial Park.

1.2 Within the designated Planning Areas, the City shall establish Sector, Neighborhood and Corridor Overlay Zones where deemed needed. Overlay zones will provide the means of allowing the flexibility that is needed to create special land use and urban design policies exclusively designed to preserve and enhance the unique characteristics of our historic districts.

1.3 Planning Area policy shall be developed in Third Level or Sector Comprehensive Plans.

Figure 7



Map Generated by Technical Support/C.I.S. Staff

S.N.M.C. Correctional Facility

Activity Centers/Activity Corridors

Third and fourth level comprehensive planning in Planning Areas shall define policy for sectors and neighborhoods, respectively. Sector planning shall define land use relationships within and among sectors, and shall also define activity centers and activity corridors.

An activity center is a group of land uses which functions as a business or commercial community, with more intense uses such as commercial or industrial uses at its core, surrounded by a gradient of office or multi-family residential uses as transition between the core uses and periphery neighborhoods. Activity Centers shall be designed to support and enhance unique land use characteristics found in the Planning Areas in which they are located.

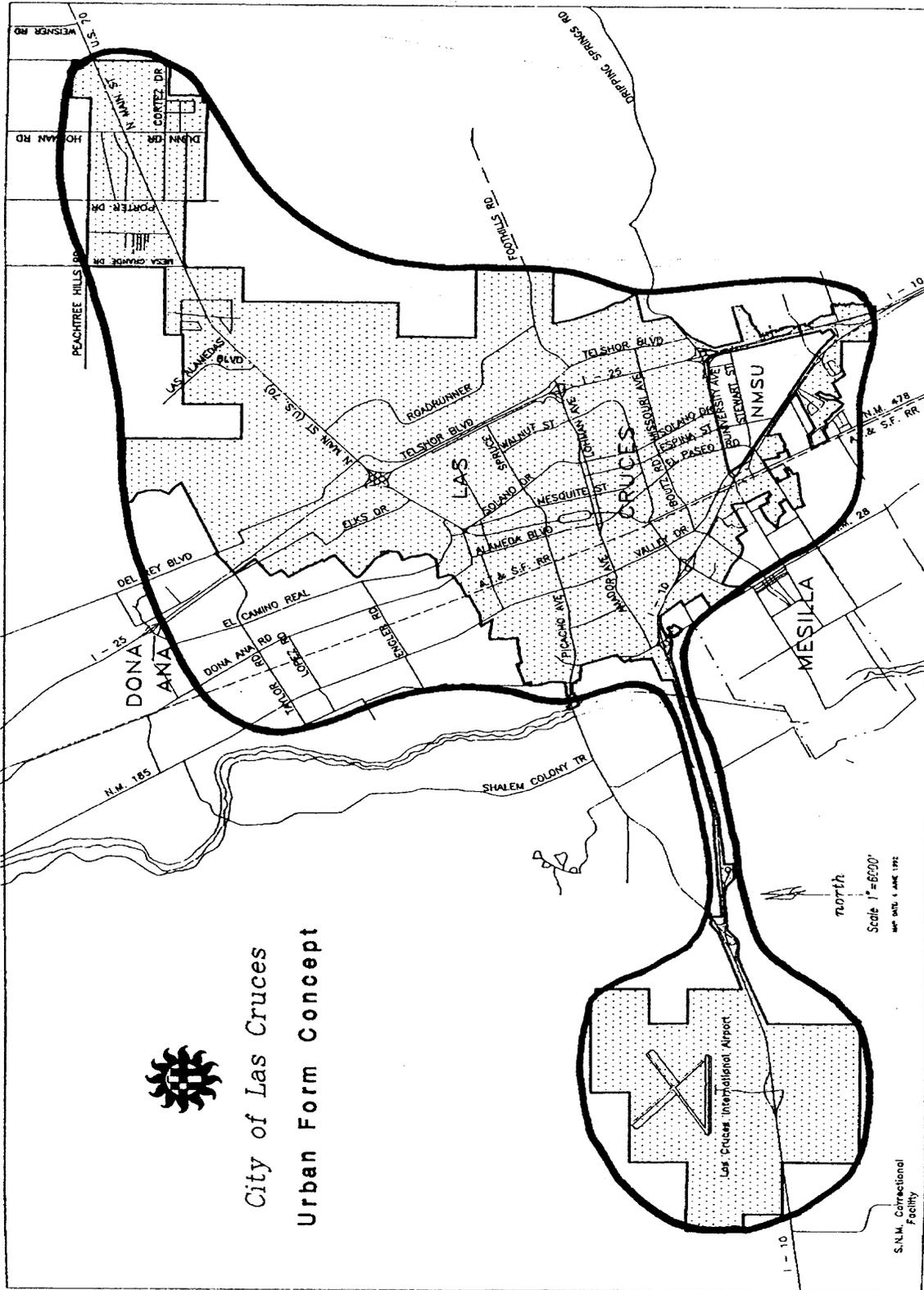
Activity corridors are highly traveled thoroughfares which often serve as gateways to a city and contain a variety of land uses. Planning for activity corridors in the City shall be performed in relation to the Planning Areas in which the corridors are located.

IV. URBAN FORM

The needs of the City's citizens acts as a catalyst for interactive development within the City. This interactive development causes the City to grow and eventually evolve its own distinct urban form. Urban form refers to the physical outline of a city's boundaries, the outlay of land uses and infrastructure, permitted building densities and building heights, and the city's aesthetic design standards. The policies outlined in the Land Use Element thus far have addressed interactive land use development, with policy guidance also provided to coordinate all comprehensive planning-related activities. While the evolution of the City's urban form has been a product of expansion and planned growth in specific areas, the City has yet to achieve a physical outline which reflects planning for overall efficient City growth and circulation (FIGURE 8).

Policies contained in the Land Use Element lend guidance to the formation of an urban form physical outline for the City. These policies encourage the preservation of a rural character in the Mesilla Valley, discourage an urban development link with El Paso, Texas, preserving existing residential neighborhoods in the urban area, locating industrial uses to the East Mesa, 17th Street area, and the West Mesa Industrial Park, and the location of urban residential densities, community and regional commercial uses, and professional office uses to the East Mesa.

Figure 8



Map Generated by Technical Support/G.I.S. Staff

These policies are consistent with growth to the north and south as envisioned in the Wastewater Facilities Master Plan, and are consistent with east and west mesa expansion projections for the City's road network as documented in the Metropolitan Planning Organization Major Thoroughfare Plan. This consistency can be utilized to establish a physical outline aspect of an urban form for Las Cruces.

The urban form of Las Cruces should be planned based on land use and other City growth-related policy to give the City guidance toward planned efficiency in growth and circulation. City growth policies should be directed at achieving the urban form.

GOAL 4: Achieve desirable urban form conducive to achieving a greater quality of life.

Objective 1: Establish a physical outline urban form which reflects coordinated and efficient City growth, circulation, and development practices.

Policies:

1.1 The City's physical outline shall reflect Land Use Element policy, and other planning policy for overall efficient City growth and circulation (FIGURE 9).

1.2 City growth policy shall reflect the City's physical outline concept.

V. URBAN GROWTH

The Urban Form section has established policy for an urban form which gives a geographical interpretation of land use policy and reflects policy for utility and transportation planning on a City-wide level. Specific policy addressing growth by direction is needed to insure successful City urban form policy.

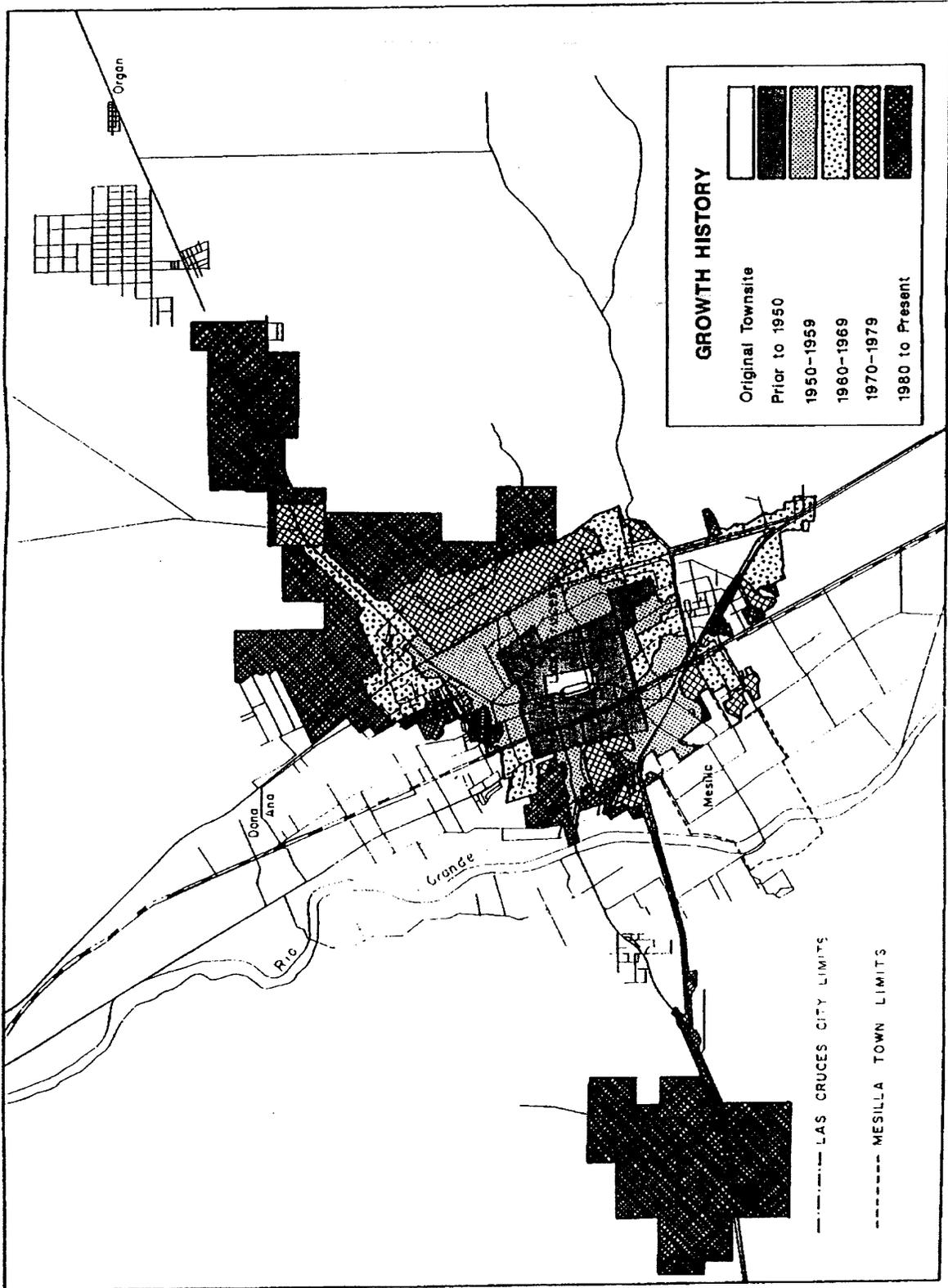
GOAL 5: Direct and manage City growth to reflect the City's planned urban form.

Objective 1: Establish urban growth policy that supports and is consistent with all other land use policy.

Policies:

1.1 The City encourages growth consistent with urban form policy.

Figure 9



- 1.2 The City encourages petitioned annexations in areas identified in urban form policy for future growth.
- 1.3 In annexing territory, priority shall be given to those areas which would close open spaces between irregular City boundaries.
- 1.4 In annexing territory, priority shall be given to areas with existing public facilities which conform to City standards.
- 1.5 New municipal boundaries shall conform wherever practical with natural topographical features such as ridge lines, streams, escarpments, rivers, and man-made features such as drains, canals, laterals, major paved rights-of-way, and property and section lines.
- 1.6 An area proposed for annexation shall conform to planned expansion areas as documented in the City's Wastewater Facilities Master Plan and the Major Thoroughfare Plan.
- 1.7 Third Level Comprehensive Plans for Planning Areas shall reflect urban growth policy as established in the Land Use Element.
- 1.8 The City shall pursue a joint operating agreement with New Mexico State University and the Bureau of Land Management to insure that any BLM (Bureau of Land Management) release of land for urban development is consistent with City growth policies and with NMSU facility-related needs.
- 1.9 The City shall encourage and participate in comprehensive planning for the Las Cruces/Dona Ana County Extra-Territorial Zone (ETZ).

VI. FUTURE CONCEPTS

The evaluation of existing land use patterns, development trends, and population projections, combined with policy expressed in the Land Use Element, has been utilized to create a Future Concept Map. This map illustrates areas of the City where changes in land uses and/or densities are recommended. The map is not site specific but is guided by land use policy and trend analysis. Thus, recommended land use changes will be expressed in terms of identifying projected land use and density demand for a general City area. Recommendations to any such changes in land uses within the City shall be based on quality design and compatibility with the surrounding area. The Future Concept Map will be provided in the Appendix.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. The Land Use Element will be implemented through the adoption of a new Zoning Code. The rewritten Zoning Code will include:
 - Modification of commercial zoning and uses to comply with the Land Use Element update.
 - Modification of office zoning and uses to comply with the Land Use Element update.
 - Modification of industrial zoning and uses to comply with the Land Use Element update.
 - Modification of parks and recreational zoning and uses to comply with the Land Use Element update.
 - Modification of Master Plans and Planned Unit Developments to comply with the Land Use Element update.
 - The incorporation of Site Plans to comply with the Land Use Element update.
 - The addition, when applicable, of district zones to comply with the Land Use Element update.
 - The addition of distance requirements between land uses to comply with the Land Use Element update.
2. Establish Sector Plans for those areas called out in the Land Use Element, such as, the East Mesa Area, Central Area, Lohman/University Area, West Side Area, and for the Airport area.
3. Establish Neighborhood Plans for those areas called out in the Future Concept Map, such as, the Historic District, Avenida de Mesilla, and the High Range. Also establish neighborhood plans for those areas that request such a plan in the future.
4. Establish overlay zones for the Historic District in order to provide flexible standards that will address the unique characteristics of the area.
5. Create and establish an Infill Policy Plan for the purpose of utilizing vacant properties within the City that have immediate access to public utilities.
6. Amend the Subdivision Regulations, Design Standards and all other applicable documents to equip the Design Review Committee with the authority to grant engineering-related variances.
7. Establish the Las Cruces Area Open Space Authority for the purposes of acquiring land and assisting in planning for open space networks.
8. All other elements (Urban Design, Transportation, Housing, Environmental Concerns, Utilities, Community Facilities, and Economic Development) of the Comprehensive Plan are scheduled to be updated.

APPENDIX

Mitigation Techniques

Concept:

Las Cruces currently encourages mixed-land uses in order to decrease the need for extended trips for work and/or shopping. Due to a mixed land use policy, however, some land uses which are not traditionally considered compatible may be located next to one another. Those uses with lower intensities must be protected from adjacent uses with higher intensities in order to protect a desirable quality of life within the City. Protection comes in the form of buffering and screening, site design, architectural controls, transportation networks, concentration of uses, and the ratio of uses. New development, redevelopment, and/or special uses may be required to comply with various techniques as deemed necessary by staff and/or the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Buffering/Screening:

There are two means of buffering and/or screening: natural and man-made. Natural buffering/screening softens the visual effects of mixed uses adjacent or in close proximity to one another. For instance, landscaping covering a view-screening wall or fence, blank-wall, or dumpster will soften the impact of that structure on the surrounding area. Trees and/or a berm along a street frontage will soften the visual effect of a parking lot. Landscaping may be opaque, semi-opaque, and broken screen. (See Las Cruces Design Standards and Matrix 1 for definitions as well as how and when these variations are to be used). Open space, a greenbelt or arroyos, for instance, works as natural barriers between adjacent areas and acts as a physical barrier to break-up and shield differing uses.

Man-made buffering/screening consists of barriers such as wall/fences, roads, and railroad lines which physically separate varying uses from one another. Physical barriers/separations lend a feeling that differing uses are segregated rather than clashing with one another.

Site Design:

How one arranges a site may also ease the differences between varying uses. Structures with a large front yard setback will have limited visibility from the street, thereby blending into the surrounding neighborhood. Parking areas, when positioned away from adjacent structures will also ease the differences between uses. Keeping parking areas away from residential uses, for example, will mitigate problems with noise, fumes, and aesthetics. Confining such accessory uses as dumpsters away from adjacent structures, especially residential uses, will also mitigate any problems with noise, odor, and aesthetics. The orientation of commercial and industrial uses is an important factor in site design. For example, windows should face away from residential uses and blank walls should be covered with landscaping in order to protect views from adjacent residential areas. Lighting and signage for commercial and industrial uses,

should blend into the character of the surrounding neighborhood so as not to be intrusive. Commercial (business) and industrial uses should ensure that there is adequate space for loading areas and access to and from the business to prevent undue stress to the surrounding environment. Landscaping, as discussed above, will help new uses blend with the character of the neighborhood.

Architectural Controls:

Strict regulations governing styles, color, and aesthetics will ensure that neighborhood character is preserved as well as maintaining the visual appearance of the area.

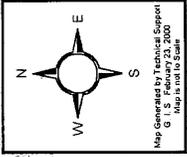
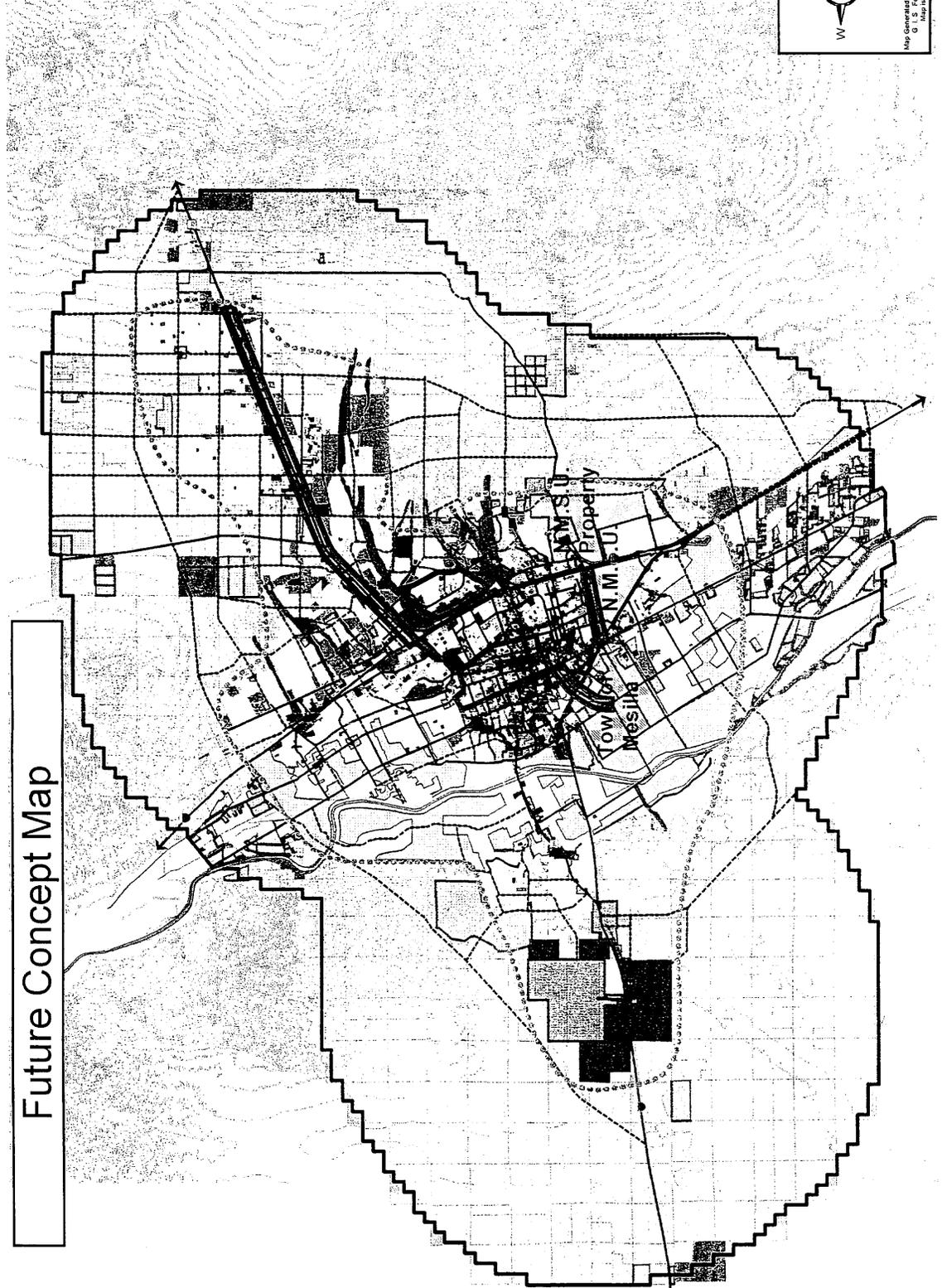
Compatibility:

New development should be compatible with the surrounding area/neighborhood. Compatibility does not mean that new development must replicate existing design characteristics, but that the developer should take design characteristics into consideration when designing the development/structure. Form, scale, structure, lay-out, materials, landscaping, and over-all design are attributes which should respect the character of the existing neighborhood.

Transportation:

Business and industry must locate road networks to accommodate their needs while causing no undue stress to the surrounding environment.

Future Concept Map



Legend

- ◻ Proposed Urban Boundary
- ◻ Existing and Future Overlay Zones
- ◻ Major Thoroughfares
- ◻ Existing
- ◻ Proposed
- ◻ Rio Grande
- ◻ Land Use Categories
- ◻ Agriculture
- ◻ Commercial
- ◻ Area Excluded from Study
- ◻ Industrial
- ◻ Office
- ◻ Open Space
- ◻ Other
- ◻ Public, quasi-public, institutional
- ◻ Multi-Family Residential
- ◻ Single Family Residential
- ◻ Unknown
- ◻ Vacant
- ◻ ETZ Boundary



Matrix 1: Separation and Landscaping Requirements between Land Uses/Zones

Listed here are separation and landscaping requirements that all forms of development are encouraged to follow when a proposed use is locating next to differing adjacent land uses/zones. Such landscaping and buffering requirements are only one tool used to mitigate the impacts to adjacent land uses/zones.

Proposed Use	Adjacent Use											
	RA, UR, EE VLD Res.	R-1M, R-1a,b &c LD Res.	R-2 MD Res.	R-3, R-4 HD Res.	O-1 Neigh. Office	O-1 Pro. Office	C-1 Low Inten. Comm.	C-2 Med. Inten. Comm.	C-2 High Inten. Comm.	C-2 Reg. Comm.	M-1 L. Indust.	M-2 H. Indust.
VLD Res. RA, UR, EE	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
LD Res. R-1M, R-1a,b &c	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
MD Res. R-2	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 5' B	BY 5' B	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
HD Res. R-3, R-4	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Neigh. Office O-1	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Pro. Office O-1	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Low Inten. Comm. C-1	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Med. Inten. Comm. C-2	BY 25' B	BY 25' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
High Inten. Comm. C-2	BY 50' B	BY 50' B	BY 15' B	BY 15' B	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Reg. Comm. C-2	BY 50' B	BY 50' B	BY 15' B	BY 15' B	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
L. Indust. M-1	BY 50' B	BY 50' B	BY 25' B	BY 25' B	BY 20' B	BY 20' B	BY 20' B	BY 20' B	BY 20' B	R	R	R
S. Indust. M-1	BY 150' C	BY 150' C	BY 100' C	BY 100' C	BY 100' C	BY 100' C	BY 100' C	BY 100' C	BY 100' C	R	R	R
H. Indust. M-2	BY 200' C	BY 200' C	BY 200' C	BY 200' C	BY 150' C	BY 150' C	BY 150' C	BY 125' C	BY 125' C	R	R	R

Proposed Use

- Key:**
- The first letter denotes a total setback or buffer that is required for that particular zone/land use.
 SB = Setback
 BY = Bufferyard
 R = Regular setback required for that zoning district
 - The second letter denotes the type of landscaping required for that particular zone/land use.
 A = Opaque screen
 B = Semi-opaque screen
 C = Broken screen
- For example: BY 150' C
- Type of separation: 
 Distance requirement: 
 Type of landscaping: 

- Note:**
- The setback number represents the total setback required and applies to all property lines that abut the defined adjacent land use/zones.
 - The setback denoted in this matrix is required only when the adjacent property to a proposed use is vacant.
 - Bufferyards are required regardless if the adjacent property is vacant or developed.
 - Permitted uses in buffer areas include open space and drainage uses. Structures are prohibited in these areas.
 - Reduction in bufferyards may be considered when opaque screening is used.
 - Zoning designations are subject to change.
 - The Planning Director or his/her designee shall determine use intensity when required.

- 3) Types of land uses:**
- VLD Res. = Very Low Density
 - LD Res. = Low Density
 - MD Res. = Medium Density
 - HD Res. = High Density
 - Neigh. Office = Neighborhood Office
 - Pro. Off. = Professional Office
 - Low Inten. Comm. = Low Intensity Commercial
 - Med. Inten. Comm. = Medium Intensity Commercial
 - High Inten. Comm. = High Intensity Commercial
 - Reg. Comm. = Regional Commercial
 - L. Indust. = Light Industrial
 - S. Indust. = Standard Industrial
 - H. Indust. = Heavy Industrial

Matrix 2: Mitigation Techniques Between Land Uses

Listed here are mitigation techniques one must follow when a business registration, zone change, or new construction creates adjacent land uses which differ from one another. The use which is creating the change must mitigate any possible problems between other land uses using the techniques listed below.

Adjacent Use

	R-A, UR, EE	M, R-1a, b	R-2	R-3, R-4	O-1	O-1	C-1	C-2	C-2	C-2	C-2	M-1	M-1	M-1	M-2	Schools	Agri.	Transp.	Util.	Arroyos	
	VLD Res.	LD Res.	MD Res.	HD Res.	Neigh. Office	Pro Office	Low Inten. Comm.	Med. Inten. Comm.	High Inten. Comm.	Reg. Comm.	Light Indust.	Stand. Indust.	High Indust.								
VLD Res.	None	A	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A
LD Res.	A	None	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A
MD Res.	ABCDE	ABCDE	None	BCD	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A
HD Res.	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCD	None	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A
Neigh. Office	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	None	None	None	C	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A
Pro. Office	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	None	None	None	C	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A
Low Inten. Comm.	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A
Med. Inten. Comm.	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	C	C	CD	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A
High Inten. Comm.	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	CD	CD	CD	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A
Reg. Comm.	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	CD	CD	CD	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A
L. Indust.	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	CD	CD	CD	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A
S. Indust.	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	CD	CD	CD	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A
H. Indust.	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	CD	CD	CD	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A
Schools	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	CD	CD	CD	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A
Agri.	None	None	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A
Transp.	ABCD	ABCD	BCD	BCD	BCD	BCD	CD	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A
Util.	ABCDE	ABCDE	CE	CE	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A
Arroyos	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	A

Key:

- A = Lot size transitions
- B = Parking layout far away from residential use
- C = Orientation of structure (blank walls, windows, etc.)
- D = Amenity/Aesthetics (extra landscaping, architecture, etc.)
- E = Scale, bulk, building height, setback
- Pro. Off. = Professional Office
- Low Inten. Comm. = Low Intensity Commercial
- Med. Inten. Comm. = Medium Intensity Commercial
- High Inten. Comm. = High Intensity Commercial

Proposed Use

Matrix 3: PUD Trade-offs and Incentives

* Please note that this matrix is meant to only be used as a guide to options that both the City and/or applicant may request when considering/developing a PUD.

<u>Type of Development</u>	<u>Trade-offs</u>	<u>Incentives</u>
High density residential development:	Setbacks Building height Density Lot width	Landscaping Parking Setbacks Open space Lot size
Low density residential development:	Landscaping Street widths Lot size Setbacks Building Density Density	Architectural standards Recreational facility
Affordable housing development:	Density Process time Setbacks Lot size Lot width Parking Density	Recreational facility Lot size Lot width Setbacks Density Landscaping Architectural variety
Environmentally sensitive area development:	Process time Lot size Density Building height	Landscaping Open space
Historic District:	Setback Lot size Parking Building height Density Lot width	Landscaping Parking Architectural Standards

Cluster Development:

Setback
Lot size
Lot width
Street width
Density

Landscaping
Parking
Architectural standards

Infill Development:

Lot size
Density
Building height
Lot width

Landscaping
Lot width
Lot size
Density
Building height

**Commercial/Business
Development:**

Signage
Building height
Parking

Access control
Landscaping
Lot width
Lot size
Parking
Alternative modes of
transportation

Redevelopment:

Setbacks
Lot size
Lot width
Parking
Density

Landscaping
Recreational facility
Architectural standards

**Social (Quasi-Public)
Development:**

Development-related
fees

Recreational facility
Architectural standards

Industrial Development:

Signage
Lot size

Access control
Landscaping
Architectural standards

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Community Facilities Element

The Community Facilities Element is intended to establish policy for those services and amenities a community provides to its residents, such as police and fire protection, parks, libraries and schools; those elements typically associated with a community's "quality of life." Because people have more choices as to where they would like to live and work than in the past, today's communities must attract residents, businesses and/or industries for its economic well-being. A decision to locate in a particular community is often based on its perceived image; how the community looks along with the services and amenities it provides to its residents.

As a means of meeting resident's diverse needs and desires, the City of Las Cruces provides a variety of parks, recreational facilities, activities for all age groups, and offers a number of community services. The Community Services and Facilities Division is responsible for and operates the City's recreational, social and senior programs, parks, transportation, various types of human services, as well as the library and museum system. Two City divisions deal with public safety. Fire and Emergency Services is responsible for the fire protection, rescue, prevention services and community safety education. The Police Department is responsible for police patrol, protection, investigation, narcotics, special services, and codes enforcement. Subsequently, it is important to coordinate the policies of these components with current and future trends to ensure a cohesive urban fabric is created. As such, Community Facility policies must blend and otherwise relate to those which address the other policies which deal with the direction and manner in which our community will grow. In so doing, the City may better facilitate the expansion and improvements of these facilities, programs, and as such, to better accommodate our residents and improve our over-all quality of life.

Past comprehensive planning efforts, such as the 1968 Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan, were comprised mainly of inventories of existing parks, schools and public building and projected future needs. The 1985 Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan, however, furthered the planning process by stating objectives, and policies which the City should follow; many of which still apply today. As such, they have been incorporated into this document and have been expanded upon in addition to complementing new objectives and policies.

Current Issues

The City of Las Cruces is growing at an average rate of approximately 2.5 to 3 percent a year and is expected to continue to do so through the year 2010. The addition of new residents will undoubtedly have an impact on those services the City provides. Knowing our

community's growth potential will aid service providers in the preparation of plans and strategies on how best to meet anticipated demands. These plans and strategies should build on the strengths of the present system, evaluate current population needs, project future needs, and prepare to meet those needs over a period of time. In addition, keeping in mind our City's land use policies and development patterns will also allow service providers to best determine facility locations.

While this element addresses services, programs and facilities from different departments throughout the City, they share some commonalities. The Community Facilities Division, Fire and Police Departments continually strive to create new programs and/or services and enhance existing ones for the purpose of bettering our community. In so doing, all of these entities are either in the process of investigating or implementing satellite facilities in order to better and more conveniently serve citizens in all areas of Las Cruces. These departments also have to consider monetary constraints when constructing new facilities and creating or expanding their programs. As a result, the joint-use of facilities is increasing between these departments and out-side agencies. This type of cooperative effort will result in reducing expenditures which, in turn, can be used to further the services and programs they provide.

An accessible, well-designed and well-maintained system of parks, open space, facilities, as well as providing an adequate range and level of community services is the ultimate goal. Achieving this is key to the quality of life in Las Cruces and to the City's ability to achieve desirable, high quality growth and economic development.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

The goals, objectives, and policies of the Community Facilities Element are intended to support the Community Facilities Goal of the Las Cruces City Plan: "Provide high quality parks, recreation, and community services for our community." The Community Facilities Element goals, objectives, and policies are organized into three categories:

- 1) Parks and Recreational Facilities
- 2) Community Services
- 3) Public Safety

The goals, objectives, and policies found within this element are meant to be a guide for decision-making as it pertains to the City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, City Staff, Developers, and the residents of Las Cruces. As Las Cruces continues to grow, the needs of its citizens will also grow. Creating policies designed to engage our environment in our City's growth process demands that such policies grow and change over time; this defines the concept of a city's comprehensive plan as a "living document."

Parks and Recreational Facilities

With an average of 350 sunny days and mild temperatures throughout the year, Las Cruces' setting affords its residents with weather conditions that allow them to be active year-round and to take advantage of outdoor opportunities. As such, the City must work towards providing parks, recreational facilities and activities for those of all ages in our community.

GOAL 1: Provide a comprehensive, attractive, cost and resource-efficient system of parks and recreation facilities responsive to the needs and desires of the community.

Objective 1: Provide a variety of recreational opportunities to meet the various needs of our community.

Policies:

- 1.1 Public input regarding facility, program and activity requests should actively be solicited so that the City may meet the needs and desires of the community. Facilities that accommodate programs which emphasize social, cultural, arts, and educational activities are encouraged.
- 1.2 City facilities should be located in areas most appropriate to their primary function so that said facilities may better service their target population. In addition, City-sponsored activities/events, such as The Whole Enchilada Fiesta and Concert in the Park, should be promoted and located in parks and/or facilities best suited to accommodate the activity/event.
- 1.3 Facilities should be flexible in their design so that the City may fulfill changing programmatic needs and expectations of our growing population.
- 1.4 To the extent possible, create facilities with more than one purpose and/or group facilities together in order to maximize usage. For example, locating a recreational facility within a park may encourage the use of both facilities.
- 1.5 Facility development should be timed to coincide with residential development as needed and resources permit.
- 1.6 The design, creation, use and maintenance of parks, facilities and open space should be the result of cooperative efforts between the City, local schools, New Mexico State University, clubs, neighborhood groups and other similar organizations. The mechanism to establish cooperative efforts between these groups may consist of a task force or an ad hoc committee consisting of members from said groups.

- 1.7 The City should work cooperatively with community-oriented agencies and organizations which provide community programs, services, or activities in order to maximize their availability to residents.
- 1.8 City facilities and City sponsored programs should be served by public transportation when feasible.
- 1.9 Continually maintain and update, as necessary, the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan in order to more accurately identify and respond to the changing needs of our growing community.

Objective 2: Provide attractive open spaces, parks, landscaped areas, trail corridors and other natural areas that promote diversified outdoor activities.

Policies:

- 2.1 Park classification/zoning that categorizes neighborhood, community, and regional parks should closely follow policy as determined in the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan.
- 2.2 Provide an array of park sizes to satisfy the differing recreational needs of our community's residents which can vary from small playgrounds, skateboarding parks, model airplane fields, ballfields, and soccer fields, to areas set aside for garden clubs. These specialty uses may be established as the entire park or may be appropriately located within a designated area in conjunction with other park elements.
- 2.3 The means in which to construct parks in a timely manner should be examined. In addition to park development policies found within the Land Use Element, the following provisions should also be considered.
 - a. The City should determine whether a developer should dedicate land and/or pay park fees at the time of Master Plan approval based on park availability and/or demand within that park district.
 - b. The City may require developers to construct neighborhood parks as part of a new development. These parks may be developed before or at the time of construction of development for use as a marketing tool. Park development guidelines should reflect the policies found within the Land Use Element of this Comprehensive Plan.

- c. An increase in park fees should be considered in accordance with applicable regulatory authority. When it is determined that such action is necessary, measures involving the establishment of fees based on property valuation or similar mechanisms should be investigated as a means of increasing park fee reserves.
 - d. Consider modifying the neighborhood park classification to utilize between one (1) and one and one-half (1 ½) acres. In addition to potentially decreasing the time needed to construct such a park, smaller parks may result in the creation of a greater number of parks in residential neighborhoods thus allowing residents greater ability to access public parks.
- 2.4 Programs, such as adopt-a-park, should be created and supported with the prospect that residents, businesses, and/or organizations may actively assist in improving and maintaining parks, related facilities, and the community in which they live.
- 2.5 Because landscaping materials are needed in parks, trails, and other types of open space, both for recreation and relief from our arid environment, water use should be off-set by:
- The use of drought tolerant and native plantings where feasible,
 - Leaving native vegetation in its natural state, where feasible, and
 - Employing timed drip irrigation systems, mulches, and other such methods/techniques as a means of controlling water usage.
- 2.6 The City should encourage a comprehensive recreational trail system which provides linkage between parks, recreational facilities, and other activity centers. Trails should be multi-purpose thus allowing a myriad of people to use them and should be easily accessible and well maintained.
- a. The City should work with Elephant Butte Irrigation District, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation and other state and federal agencies so that laterals and drainage ways may be considered and developed into trails where feasible.
 - b. Collaborate efforts with local governments to link facilities in order to provide connectivity between facilities for a more regional approach toward recreational planning.

- c. Arroyos should be considered for use as trails.
- d. Pursue the possibility of trail development within existing easements.
- e. Maintenance and safety issues, such as lighting, landscaping and signage should be considered in trail design.

2.7 The City should seek appropriate funding to purchase, create, maintain, and/or expand facilities and programs as needed as per the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.

Objective 3: The City should seek to maximize the number of and/or enhance our parks, programs, and associated facilities to satisfy the recreational, cultural, and educational needs of our residents.

Policies:

- 3.1 Investigate the possibilities of utilizing public and corporate partnerships, grants, and privatization strategies for the creation, expansion and/or improvements to our parks, programs, and facilities when and where needed.
- 3.2 Encourage joint-use programs involving the creation of playgrounds, parks and the use of auditoriums and classrooms with the school district as a means of conserving money, reducing the demand for open space and parks, and supporting outreach efforts regarding community issues.
- 3.3 The City should conduct periodic citizen surveys to determine park, program and associated facility needs and to determine how well existing facilities and programs are being provided.

Community Services

Promoting and providing an adequate range and level of community services is central in the City's efforts to establish provisions for the community's health, safety, general welfare and the provision of an adequate quality of life. Those services discussed in this section include: medical and human services, transportation, schools, libraries, museums, and cultural /civic centers.

GOAL 2: Provide a balance of services meeting the needs of all segments of the City's population.

Objective 1: Continually improve and expand upon our community's services in order to better our quality of life.

Policies:

- 1.1 The City should consider the possibility of establishing cooperative agreements and seeking joint financial assistance from public entities, such as Doña Ana County and the State, as well as private sources to create, improve and expand all types of community services in our community.
- 1.2 Community Services should be located in areas which will best serve their target population.
- 1.3 Resources and services should be redistributed as growth warrants.
- 1.4 Community services should locate near public transportation when feasible.
- 1.5 To the extent possible, community service facilities should be grouped together as a means of maximizing usage.
- 1.6 Promote community involvement in the development of programs and facilities.
- 1.7 The City should continue and expand its support of volunteer efforts in order to augment and optimize program availability and quality.

Objective 2: Provide library facilities and programs to allow public access to informational, educational, and leisure-time material and media resources.

Policies:

- 2.1 Feasibility studies should be periodically conducted to determine space needs for adequate library service to the community.
- 2.2 Based on the results of completed feasibility studies, the City should examine the possibilities of expanding the Branigan Memorial Library and establishing branch locations in order to meet the increasing needs and demands from our growing community.

- 2.3 Provide improved and expanded bookmobile services and programs to reach people throughout our community who may not be able to use conventional library facilities.
- 2.4 The Library administration and Advisory Board should explore options for increased public and private funding to meet the growing demand for library services in our community.
- 2.5 The Library should investigate increased outreach to and cooperative arrangements with various segments of the community, including: the Spanish speaking community, youth, public schools, higher education, senior citizens, and the business community.
- 2.6 The Library should identify its current and potential customer base in order to assess and meet customer needs, thus encouraging greater usage of Library services.
- 2.7 The City should work with Library staff to explore options for providing additional multi-purpose space for meetings, programs, and Friends of the Library book sales.

Objective 3: Support economic development in Las Cruces through the creation of a civic/convention center.

Policies:

- 3.1 The City should examine the need for a civic/convention center in Las Cruces.
- 3.2 Investigate the possibility of entering into a public/private partnership to assist with the funding for a civic/convention center and/or to assist with operational costs. Public funding may involve the issuance of Municipal Bonds or a similar funding mechanism as deemed appropriate.
- 3.3 The City should work towards a cooperative agreement with New Mexico State University and Doña Ana Branch Community College to help those majoring in Hospitality and Tourism and related majors gain practical experience while assisting the City with operational costs and activities.

Objective 4: Promote a City museum system for residents and visitors alike which increase public understanding and appreciation for the arts, sciences, history, and diverse cultures.

Policies:

- 4.1 Support the museum systems efforts to renovate, expand, and/or construct new museum facilities as a means of increasing awareness of our cultural and historical heritage as well as the environment in which we live.
- 4.2 Explore all types of funding opportunities such as grants, the "One-Percent for Art" program, and corporate partnerships, in order to improve, expand, and/or create new museum facilities.
- 4.3 The City should continue to solicit support from community-oriented groups to provide funding and volunteer assistance.
- 4.4 Enhance and expand the museum's outreach programs, such as the Museum School and the Adult and Family Program, as a means of furthering culture, historical, and scientific awareness.

Objective 5: Improve coordination and cooperation between the City, Las Cruces Public Schools, New Mexico State University, and Doña Ana Branch Community College to ensure the educational needs of our growing population are met.

- 5.1 The City strongly encourages that school site design and location proposals be submitted to the City for review and input. To the extent possible, the City should work closely with schools, the State of New Mexico, and the Bureau of Land Management to insure that future school sites can be acquired and reserved in the most optimal locations by providing information relating to future City development.
- 5.2 School sites should be located central to the area it is planned to serve. Placement of schools (elementary, middle, and high school) should closely follow policy as determined in the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan.
- 5.3 The City should support the efforts of New Mexico State University, Doña Ana Branch Community College, and the Las Cruces Public Schools to provide training and education to those in our community.

Objective 6: Promote and maintain a balanced system of community and social services for the health, safety and welfare of all Las Cruces' residents.

Policies:

- 6.1 The City should support state health and human service programs and facilities as a means of maximizing their availability. Public and private partnerships should also be encouraged as a means of meeting the needs of our community.
- 6.2 Work with public and private agencies and volunteers to contribute time, money and/or expertise with health and fitness programs aimed at maintaining the health of Las Cruces.
- 6.3 As new and existing human services of various types evolve and/or expand, which may include child and adult day care, Las Cruces should work with these industries to facilitate and support their needs by lending assistance in areas involving siting, funding, transportation, and possible lease agreements.
- 6.4 The City should assist with siting a location for Group Homes when necessary so as to obtain appropriate distribution throughout the City as per the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan and federal law.
- 6.5 The City should work with social service agencies and other government entities, including Doña Ana County, to ensure that all indigent persons are covered by the indigent care fund.
- 6.6 Programs directed at Las Cruces' youth should be strongly supported as they provide strong, positive influences.
 - a. Social activities, such as those provided by Club Fusion, Midnight Basket ball, and league sports teams should be supported and expanded if/when feasible.
 - b. Educational programs, such as Summer Youth Employment, Computer Camp and other types of career and educational classes should be promoted and encouraged.
 - c. Health programs, such as summer breakfast and lunch programs to benefit the well-being of our school-aged youth should be promoted and expanded if/when feasible.
- 6.7 Provide an increasing number of services for our senior citizen's to help meet the needs that this growing population requires.

- a. Continue to provide and augment the para-transit (demand response/dial a ride programs for those eligible for special transportation assistance) program to assist our seniors with travel arrangements for daily living activities.
- b. Expand the City's lunch program and support Meals-on-Wheels efforts as demand dictates.
- c. Utilize the knowledge of our senior citizen's by fostering senior volunteer programs, such as Retired Services Volunteer Program (RSVP), which may include assistance to other senior citizen's or our City's youth.
- d. Continue and expand the In-Home Program to meet the needs of home-bound seniors.
- e. Expand senior citizen's facilities and activities when feasible.

Public Safety

The City of Las Cruces is responsible for the general welfare and safety of the community, and, as such, provides both police and fire services. Continued growth in Las Cruces brings corresponding increases in demand for safety oriented services. Both the police and fire departments have implemented outreach programs in order to get to know the people and the areas in which they serve and to better educate the community with regards to home safety and law enforcement issues. By creating the means for a safer community, these departments with the assistance of their constituents, are helping to raise our quality of life.

GOAL 3: Provide for the safety and general welfare of our community.

Objective 1: Provide effective and efficient fire and rescue services to the City of Las Cruces.

Policies:

- 1.1 The City should consider its fire service standards, such as response time, when reviewing development proposals and should encourage growth where subscribed standards can be met.
- 1.2 Future fire station locations should be planned where growth is anticipated and in accordance with City land use policies.

- 1.3 As a means of promoting community safety, expand community outreach programs to include a more comprehensive approach to safety. Programs may include, but may not be limited to, swimming pool safety and electrical safety.
- 1.4 Expand and/or enhance fire and rescue services when feasible. Examples may include a Hazardous Materials Response Team, providing enhanced emergency medical assistance and creating a Technical Rescue Team.

Objective 2: Provide high quality police services for Las Cruces.

Policies:

- 2.1 The police department should continually monitor ways in which minimum response times for the entire City can be achieved.
- 2.2 New development should be monitored to determine where satellite facilities should be located, if and when feasible.
- 2.3 Continue and expand the Neighborhood Policing and Neighborhood Watch programs as a means of increasing and strengthening crime prevention strategies.
- 2.4 Create and enhance new policing programs, such as gang intervention when situations warrant.
- 2.5 Public input should be sought to improve upon police outreach programs to ensure continuous community involvement and support so that new strategies may be continually developed. In so doing, existing community education on relevant issues and community relations may be enhanced. Education may include providing information to the public regarding the roles of law and codes enforcement.
- 2.6 Expansion of all associated duties and sections within the Police Department, such as criminal investigations, special response teams, and codes enforcement should be addressed as necessary.
- 2.7 The City should recognize the relationship between physical design and crime and encourage public and private development to utilize Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. This Community Facilities Element shall be completed and shall complement all other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Update the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan as necessary to further the policies stated in this document.
3. Amend the City's Design Standards as necessary to further the policies stated in this element.
4. Amend the Subdivision Code as necessary to further the policies stated in this element.
5. Monitor opportunities to amend impact fee regulation in order to further the policies stated in this element.
6. Establish a liaison with public safety and community service agencies to assist with implementation of stated policies.



URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

Approved by City Council on May 4, 1999
Resolution No. 98-341



INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Urban Design Element:

The Urban Design Element is a guide to the physical development of the City in terms of preservation, growth, and change, as well as aesthetic qualities. Urban design issues are much more difficult to quantify than other physical elements, such as the placement of land uses. Urban design issues, however, are no less important than other elements. In many ways such issues may transcend other physical elements as they influence the perceived image of the City.

The 1968 Comprehensive Plan did not address urban design issues. The 1985 Comprehensive Plan, however, did include an Urban Design Element. The Urban Design Element in the 1985 Comprehensive Plan focused on a myriad of topics, such as open space, view protection, architecture, and landscaping. While a landscaping requirement for commercial business, which was discussed in the Urban Design Element, was incorporated into the City's Design Standards, little else was accomplished due to the lack of clear goals and policies.

With each new generation of City growth, new generations of planning issues are created. Because people are more mobile in today's society, they have more opportunities to select where they live, work, shop and spend leisure time. The physical appearance of a community and its convenience weigh heavily on this decision. As a result, good urban design plays an important part in the economic well-being of a community. Thus, planning issues of great concern thirty years ago have branched out to include urban design issues today.

Current Issues

The City is concerned with preserving its natural environment. Las Cruces is located in a setting of striking environmental contrasts and scenic features. To the west is the Rio Grande and the lush agriculture of the Mesilla Valley. The limits of irrigation in the valley form stark lines of demarcation between a moist green landscape and the arid Chihuahua desert of the mesas. The Organ Mountains to the east, as well as distant mountains and peaks in nearly all directions, provide excellent views for City residents. This unique landscape should be emphasized and protected.

Urban Design extends into all elements of planning, such as, land use, transportation, housing, economic development, utilities, and the environment. Addressing urban design issues is especially critical to Las Cruces due to its mixed land use policies. The City's mixed use policy endeavors to establish and integrate a mix and/or variety of land uses within the City. This policy will help avoid a completely suburban character as well as provide convenience throughout the community. In doing so, however, uses which are not traditionally considered compatible may be located next to one another. Those uses with lower land use intensities

must be protected from negative impacts generated by adjacent uses with higher land use intensities. Therefore, the integration of differing land uses shall occur with careful thought given to the potential impact each use may create. Issues such as architectural scale, density, and other development related issues shall be considered to ensure the land use mix cumulatively supports and enhances the overall character of the City as well as at the neighborhood level.

As discussed earlier, people have more choices as to where they would like to live, work and shop than in the past. Today, a community must attract residents, businesses and/or industries for its economic well-being. A decision to locate in a particular community is often based on the community's perceived image. Such an image is generally based on the community's visual appearance and convenience. In order to be an attractive location, Las Cruces must improve and promote its visual and functional qualities.

In turn, then, Las Cruces must also establish a better relationship between people and places. This means that all aspects of city design must be connected; for instance, a building's architecture may be beautiful and reflect the heritage of the Southwest, but it also should be functional and complement the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

This document endeavors to foster a positive and distinct image for the City of Las Cruces. A distinct image, however, cannot be created overnight; rather it is developed over time. This Urban Design Element will recognize those traits which are important to both our community as a whole while enhancing and promoting the unique character and/or themes prevalent in the many districts and neighborhoods found within the City. Over time, Las Cruces will be able to boast a distinguishable character which will set it apart from other communities.

GOAL, POLICIES, AND OBJECTIVES

The Goals, Objectives and Policies of the Urban Design Element shall support the Urban Design Goal of the Las Cruces City Plan: "Preserve and enhance our natural, visual, and historical/cultural resources." This goal shall be furthered by including physical design in this Element. The Urban Design Element Goals and Policies are organized into three categories:

- 1) Image
- 2) Conservation/Preservation
- 3) Design

Urban Design Goals and Policies are not rigid rules designed to be enforced in all situations, but are designed to provide the City with guidance in a majority of circumstances. As Las Cruces continues to grow, the needs of its citizens will also grow. Creating policies designed to engage our environment in our City's growth process demands that such policies grow and

change over time; this defines the concept of a city's comprehensive plan as a "living document".

Image

There are several qualities a community may or may not possess which can leave a lasting impression on a first time visitor. These qualities include, but are not necessarily limited to, cleanliness, an orderly appearance, diversity, aesthetics, and the community's overall setting. This section of the Urban Design Element is meant to support a positive image of our City as a whole; not only for the visitor or newcomer, but long-time residents as well.

GOAL 1: Foster a unique and attractive character for Las Cruces to support an image which is distinct from surrounding communities.

Objective 1: Establish policies which will support an orderly and efficient community.

Policies:

1.1 Major and minor entrances (gateways) to the City should be emphasized to relay a sense of arrival to those traveling to and through Las Cruces.

- a. Gateways should include:
 - Avenida de Mesilla
 - Interstate 10
 - Interstate 25
 - Lohman/Amador
 - Picacho Avenue (west of City Limits)
 - South Main to I-10
 - University Avenue
 - U.S. 70/North Main

- b. Major corridors should include:
 - El Paseo Road
 - Missouri Avenue
 - Picacho Avenue (City Limits to Main St.)
 - Solano Drive
 - Telshor
 - Valley Drive

- c. Emphasis should be placed on a theme for each gateway area. Elements of the streetscape in gateways and corridors should include, but not be limited to:

1. Architectural styles that should respect the gateway's designated theme, existing character, and/or highlight our Southwestern character where applicable.
 2. Monument signs introducing Las Cruces surrounded by landscaping.
 3. Textured paving at major intersections asserting a "sense of arrival and place".
 4. Emphasising the use of landscaping materials according to the area's neighborhood/district theme especially when used in medians.
 5. Non-glaring, uniform lighting.
- 1.2 Street signs and other directional signs on arterials and major transportation routes should be large and easy to read allowing the traveler to distinguish these major routes from all others.
 - 1.3 Identifiable bus stops and transfer stations should be adopted throughout Las Cruces.
 - 1.4 Visual clutter may be mitigated through the management of the number, size, height, and appearance of signs.
 - a. On-premise signs should be encouraged to be oriented to the street level environment, for example, ground or monument signs.
 - b. Investigate specific signage requirements for multi-tenant centers to encourage architectural harmony and unity within each center.
 - c. Density limits should be sought for off-premise signs along major corridors and gateways.
 - 1.5 Encourage the use of underground utilities to avoid visual clutter.
 - 1.6 Parks and multi-use activity/recreational fields (functional open space) should be encouraged to develop in conveniently located areas.
 - 1.7 Encourage a balance of land uses as a means of providing convenience and functionality to those who may live and/or work in one area of the community.

Objective 2: Establish high maintenance standards for public and private properties as the City's appearance relates directly to its image.

Policies:

- 2.1 An improvement of the City's visual quality should be attempted by reducing wind-blown trash/debris, dust, and vandalism.**
 - a. A schedule should be developed to clean up those vacant properties which are owned by the City. Non-City owned public properties in the need of being cleaned-up should be brought to the attention of the appropriate City officials for immediate action.**
 - b. Enhance existing programs and investigate other opportunities to deal with the clean-up and/or repair to properties affected by vandalism.**
 - c. Appropriate City Codes should be amended to significantly reduce the permitted time between initial site preparation (clearance and/or grading) and commencement of construction in order to avoid problems with wind-blown dust and debris.**
 - d. Encourage the surfacing of existing, unpaved roadways as a means of preventing dust-related problems.**

- 2.2 Encourage the improvement and maintenance of existing commercial buildings as well as existing residential homes.**
 - a. Workshops and design studios that would address new construction, renovation, and any other exterior modification should be offered in order to assist local merchants to create compatible and unique commercial projects. Additional programs, such as the possibility of beautification awards for commercial businesses as a way to promote community pride, should also be investigated.**
 - b. Assistance for residences may be accomplished via awards, loans, grants, and/or a tool loan program.**
 - c. The City should establish streamlined procedures for the demolition of structures which cannot be repaired/rehabilitated thus eliminating unsightly properties which pose safety concerns.**

Objective 3: Encourage the development of a character/theme for all distinctive Las Cruces neighborhoods and districts and support those already defined.

Policies:

- 3.1 Encourage districts and/or neighborhoods (commercial or residential) throughout the community to establish themes for their respective neighborhood or district. Themes and styles should be called out in a neighborhood/district plan, in accordance with the Land Use Element.
- 3.2 New development constructed in an existing neighborhood/district should respect and preserve the applicable character found therein.

Objective 4 : Create a pleasant and attractive atmosphere in and around the City of Las Cruces.

Policies:

- 4.1 Standards to create aesthetic streetscape designs should be developed. This should include, but not be limited to: street hardware and furniture, signage, lighting, fencing and walls, larger parkways, pedestrian circulation, minimum landscape and long term maintenance standards.
 - a. Encourage the use of matching street furniture, traffic signals, street lights and directional signs to provide a coordinated approach to design thus helping to avoid visual clutter.
 - b. A City-wide lighting ordinance should be developed which may require:
 1. Minimization of any increase of local nighttime atmospheric light from public and private sources.
 2. Light standards which are chosen to be integral with overall project design in size, form, and color in terms of the characteristics and use of the street with the district's character.
 - c. In addition to landscape buffering requirements necessitated by Matrix 1, parking lots should be visually screened/buffered from the right-of-way to soften their over-all impact. This may be accomplished through the use of required landscaping and/or various landscaping elements (berms, low walls, etc).

- d. Promote unified street tree planting along street frontages to provide shade and visual relief, such as placing street trees along arterials and major collectors as a means of providing shade and enhancing Las Cruces' streetscape. Such trees should be of a drought tolerant variety and of a variety that does not create damage to sidewalk and curbing.
 - e. Projects which are surrounded with walls should be required to provide for an attractive streetscape.
 - 1. Walls should vary in plane and texture.
 - 2. Landscaping techniques, trees and climbing vines for example, should be employed along the periphery of the walled area for visual relief.
 - 3. Encourage public art in new development and as an addition to existing developments.
 - f. Encourage the decoration of water towers and other similar utility structures based on historical and cultural aspects of Las Cruces.
- 4.2 Encourage shared driving aisles and shared parking areas to lessen visual clutter and promote greater traffic circulation efficiency.
- 4.3 Emphasize low maintenance landscaping and tree plantings for median development, along sidewalks, bicycle routes, and other types of rights-of-way.
- 4.4 Trees should be planted within all parking areas for visual relief as well as to provide shade relief in large-scale commercial parking areas.
- 4.5 Encourage existing businesses within the City of Las Cruces to comply with the City's landscaping requirement to beautify individual parcels of land and to promote attractive streetscapes. Incentives may include waivers to the required number of parking stalls.
- 4.6 Site designs that respect adjacent land uses as well as designated gateways and corridors using mitigation techniques found in Matrices 1 and 2 should be employed.
- 4.7 The City should establish minimum building construction standards as a means of promoting an aesthetically pleasing environment which supports the design characteristics established for adjacent neighborhoods and which will assist in maintaining an area's appeal.

- 4.8 "Franchise" or "corporate identity" architecture should be designed to be compatible with surrounding conditions/characteristics and our community's Desert Southwest character.
- 4.9 The City encourages innovative design techniques to shield unsightly landmarks, for example, scarred embankments and flood control dams.

Conservation/Preservation

Our natural surroundings are picturesque and serene. The City of Las Cruces intends to protect and preserve the characteristics that make our city and community unique and memorable. In this document, conservation addresses nonrenewable natural resources such as: open space, arroyos, river valley, natural landscaping, as well as historical and cultural resources.

GOAL 2: Preserve and enhance Las Cruces' natural, visual, and historical/cultural resources while reinforcing an overall urban form and character that communicates sensitivity to its physical setting.

Objective 5: Protect those natural resources and features unique to our region.

Policies:

- 5.1 Advocate an appropriate balance between physical development and open space that will provide a desirable environment and quality of life in the urban area as well as perpetuating the unique natural and rural environments of the region.
- 5.2 Encourage new development to provide networks of open space. Open space should be linked with parks and recreational trails so that any open space areas may be considered "usable" space. Development waivers, such as density bonuses, shall be used as incentives to developers to create and/or maintain open space.
- 5.3 Encourage the protection of arroyos and other sensitive lands from development so that they remain in their natural state especially where such areas lend to an open space network.
- 5.4 Encourage the preservation of agricultural pockets in the developed area of the City as one means of retaining a rural character. Agricultural pockets will be considered as open space which will add to our unique urban/rural views. The preservation of these areas will also provide as a reminder of our agricultural history.

- 5.5 Work with the Bureau of Land Management to continue to preserve the designated buffer around the Organ Mountains. The development of park space as a natural buffer between the urban area and the Organ Mountains should be encouraged.
- 5.6 Hillside development along Picacho Peak, Tortugas Mountain, and the other desert mountains which surround our community should be discouraged.
- 5.7 Easements along or ownership of major arroyos for drainage, open space networks and alternate transportation modes should be acquired.
 - a. Develop arroyos, rights-of-way and City-owned land as multi-use open spaces, stressing the development of recreational trails and other connections between parks and other public and private open spaces, maintenance of natural landscape and aesthetic drainage improvements.
 - b. The City should work with the Bureau of Land Management, the State of New Mexico, and private developers to preserve arroyos on the east and west mesas as open space.
- 5.8 Views and vistas should be protected for the community as a whole through reasonable limitations to building heights.
 - a. Preserve the unobstructed views of the desert mountains so that they may be seen from many directions in and around Las Cruces.
 - b. Preserve the unobstructed views of the River Valley from various points along the Mesas.
 - c. Preserve the vistas which overlook our community.

Objective 6: Encourage the preservation and/or renovation of historical buildings and places in Las Cruces.

Policies:

- 6.1 Seek a local historic district designation to enhance national and state historic districts and create an Historic Preservation Board who will deal with those issues pertaining to designated historic districts.
- 6.2 Neighborhood/district overlay zones should be created for those areas that come under an historic district designation to establish specific guidelines concerning new

development and redevelopment. Each overlay zone should be written in the form of a neighborhood/district plan and shall address such issues as permitted land uses and architectural requirements.

- 6.3 Development or redevelopment should be required to be compatible with the character of that historic district.
- 6.4 The City should provide incentives to those interested in restoring historic buildings. Incentives should include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Property Tax Relief
 - Property Tax Abatement
 - Property Tax Credit
 - Property Tax Freeze
 - b. Revolving Loan Fund
 - c. Low Interest Loans

Objective 7: Foster public appreciation for Las Cruces' cultural heritage as a means of reinforcing a "sense of place" and history.

Policies:

- 7.1 Support should be sought to promote Las Cruces' culture and cultural heritage through educational programs via museums, libraries, and cultural centers.
- 7.2 Those cultural events and activities unique to our area, such as the Whole Enchilada Fiesta, County Fair, Chile and Wine Festival, etc., should be promoted.
- 7.3 Advocate the construction/expansion of new museums, libraries, a visitor/convention center, and those events and activities which promote our community.

Objective 8: Coordinate all development with respect to our designated urban form as found in the Future Concept Map in the Land Use Element.

Policies:

- 8.1 Discourage leap-frog development by requiring developers to follow the development policies found in the Growth Management Section of the Land Use Element.

- 8.2 Utilities and all other types of infrastructure should comply with City's Growth Management Policies found in the Land Use Element, Capital Improvement Programs and/or as outlined within approved Master Plans.

Design

Design includes those aesthetic and environmental issues which the City of Las Cruces would like to address. Emphasis is placed on compatibility, visual harmony as well as function in and between existing and new development, especially at the neighborhood and district level.

GOAL 3: Maintain sensitivity to the City's image through the careful application of aesthetic and environmental guidelines of its neighborhoods and districts.

Objective 9: Enhance our community's natural environment, physical environment, and character through quality design.

Policies:

- 9.1 Residential and Commercial development should preserve a regional Desert Southwestern image rooted in a variety of architectural styles and design elements and strengthened by creative contemporary expression.
- 9.2 Encourage the use of landscape materials best suited to our location in the Chihuahuan Desert. Developments located in mesa areas, such as the East Mesa, High Range, and Las Alturas, are encouraged to use desert landscape materials. Developments located toward the Rio Grande Valley should be encouraged to use those plant materials best suited for the Valley environment. Developments located in the urban area are encouraged to use drought tolerant landscape materials that are compatible with the landscaping styles of the surrounding area.
- a. Through educational efforts, promote the City's Water Conservation Ordinance and the concept of xeriscaping.
 - b. The City should investigate the possibility of designating geographic landscaping areas (pursuant to this policy) throughout Las Cruces as a means of furthering support for efficient, water-saving landscaping techniques and themes.

- 9.3 New development or redevelopment should be required to utilize local and/or regional architectural styles and design elements in the downtown area, historic districts, gateways and designated corridors which are compatible with existing structures.
- 9.4 Encourage creative site planning for all new development and redevelopment.
- a. The topography and slope of a site should be maintained in its natural state.
 - b. Encourage a balance between open space and development.
 - c. Encourage variation in setbacks and structure spacing as a means of avoiding monotony and unity.
- 9.5 Encourage the development of neighborhood/district plans and/or overlay zones.
- a. Specific areas targeted for overlay zones include, but are not limited to:
 - Lohman Extension
 - Central Business District
 - High Range development
 - Historic District(s)
 - Country Club development
 - Highway 70
 - North Telshor area
 - Picacho St.
 - b. Neighborhood/District Plans and/or Overlay Zones should address such issues as, land use, zoning, transportation, and aesthetics (ie: architecture, landscaping, and utilities).
- 9.6 Support residential developments that contribute to a positive image for the City of Las Cruces by the creation, enhancement, and/or preservation of an identifiable neighborhood image.
- a. Encourage neighborhoods to develop an identifiable theme, for example, one with a Southwestern focus.
 - b. Design elements should be added to each residential development which increases variety to each neighborhood as well as create a sense of neighborhood and include, but are not limited to:

1. Landscaped development signs or focus points at the entry of each development.
2. Textured paving at the entry to or at crossroads throughout the neighborhood.
3. Unified architecture (especially where a theme has been adopted) that provides a myriad of styles, massing, roofs, facades, setbacks, and materials.
4. Unified landscaping along right-of-ways.
5. Non-glaring, unified/decorative lighting.

Objective 10: Instill compatibility, function and practicality in and between new and existing development by establishing development guidelines to ensure quality site design.

Policies:

- 10.1 Infill development, both new development and redevelopment, should be required to respect the architectural styles, bulk, setbacks, color, scale, character and site design relationships of the existing neighborhood.
- 10.2 Support those residential developments which possess an identifiable neighborhood image while still providing a variety of housing styles in order to avoid a monotonous, "cookie-cutter" appearance.
 - a. Developers should provide a variation of residential facades to provide visual interest.
 - b. Encourage a variety in setbacks and structure spacing as a means of avoiding monotony and uniformity.
- 10.3 Encourage site built, mobile homes (parks, subdivisions, or otherwise), manufactured, modular, and paneled homes to be architecturally consistent with adjacent residential uses.
- 10.4 Encourage developers of commercial and industrial areas to respect the architectural styles found in adjacent areas.

10.5 Support a policy of mixed land uses as discussed in the Land Use Element. Land uses which are not traditionally considered compatible may be located next to one another depending upon design features and compatibility with the adjacent area as a result of a mixed land use policy. Those uses with lower intensities must be protected from any negative impacts from adjacent uses with higher intensities in order to protect a desirable quality of life within the City.

- a. Land uses which differ from adjacent land uses, found in Matrix 1, should be required to follow the distance and landscaping requirement also found in Matrix 1. The prescribed distance between uses is a non-buildable area and must be landscaped accordingly.
- b. Mitigation techniques (as found in Matrix 2) should be employed to avoid any possible problems between differing land uses located adjacent to or near one another. Possible mitigation techniques shall include but not be limited to those examples found in Matrix 1 and 2.
 1. New development should be compatible with the architectural style in the surrounding area.
 2. New development should respect building height, scale, bulk and setbacks found in the surrounding area.
 3. Any high intensity use locating adjacent to a lower intensity use should be oriented and designed in a sensitive manner. Development which is/are located adjacent to public streets should also be oriented and designed in a sensitive manner.
 - (a) Place parking areas away from adjacent residential uses when appropriate. All parking areas should use landscaping and distance techniques to buffer differing uses and when viewed from public streets.
 - (b) Screen delivery areas, loading zones, waste receptacle and pick-up areas, and any outside evidence of plumbing, electrical, and/or mechanical equipment from view by buffers, landscaping, architectural techniques, and other design measures.
 - (c) Landscape blank walls and fences which face streets or adjoining properties to soften their harsh, stark effects or provide

pedestrian scale facades on all sides of the building (windows, doors, landscaping, and fine grain detail in materials).

- (d) Screen stacking lanes/drive-up aisles from view with landscaping or placing such lanes where they are not readily seen from streets and sidewalks.
- c. Mitigation techniques and landscaping and distance requirements should be followed when a business registration, zone change, or new construction creates adjacent land uses which differ from one another. The use which is creating the change should mitigate any possible problems between other land uses using the techniques listed below.
- d. Specific landscaping regulations will be found in lower level planning documents.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Urban Design Element will be implemented through the adoption and/or establishment of the following:

1. Modify the Zoning Code, Design Standards, and Landscape Ordinance to reflect all aesthetic and design-related issues found in this Urban Design Element.
2. Establish gateway plans as identified in the Urban Design Element to instill a positive image of Las Cruces.
3. Establish overlay zones in the Historic Districts in order to provide flexible standards that will address the unique characteristics of the area.
4. Establish neighborhood plans for those areas that request such a plan in the future.
5. Create and establish a view protection ordinance as a means of protecting our community's views and vistas.
6. Complete the implementation of the Storm Water Management Policy Plan by adopting a Major Arroyo Plan. This Plan will identify each major arroyo that impacts the City and specifies its, drainage, open space, recreational, and land use requirements.
7. All other elements of the Comprehensive Plan shall be completed and shall complement this Urban Design Element. The remaining elements to be completed include: Community Facilities, Economic Development, Environment, and Utilities.

APPENDIX

Mitigation Techniques

Concept:

Las Cruces currently encourages mixed-land uses in order to decrease the need for extended trips for work and/or shopping. Due to a mixed land use policy, however, some land uses which are not traditionally considered compatible may be located next to one another.

Those uses with lower intensities must be protected from adjacent uses with higher intensities in order to protect a desirable quality of life within the City. Protection comes in the form of buffering and screening, site design, architectural controls, transportation networks, concentration of uses, and the ratio of uses. New development, redevelopment, and/or special uses may be required to comply with various techniques as deemed necessary by staff and/or the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Buffering/Screening:

There are two means of buffering and/or screening: natural and man-made. Natural buffering/screening softens the visual effects of mixed uses adjacent or in close proximity to one another. For instance, landscaping covering a view-screening wall or fence, blank-wall, or dumpster will soften the impact of that structure on the surrounding area. Trees and/or a berm along a street frontage will soften the visual effect of a parking lot. Landscaping may be opaque, semi-opaque, and broken screen. (See Las Cruces Design Standards and Matrix 1 for definitions as well as how and when these variations are to be used). Open space, a greenbelt or arroyos, for instance, works as natural barriers between adjacent areas and acts as a physical barrier to break-up and shield differing uses.

Man-made buffering/screening consists of barriers such as wall/fences, roads, and railroad lines which physically separate varying uses from one another. Physical barriers/separations lend a feeling that differing uses are segregated rather than clashing with one another.

Site Design:

How one arranges a site may also ease the differences between varying uses. Structures with a large front yard setback will have limited visibility from the street, thereby blending into the surrounding neighborhood. Parking areas, when positioned away from adjacent structures will also ease the differences between uses. Keeping parking areas away from residential uses, for example, will mitigate problems with noise, fumes, and aesthetics. Confining such accessory uses as dumpsters away from adjacent structures, especially residential uses, will also mitigate any problems with noise, odor, and aesthetics. The orientation of commercial and industrial uses is an important factor in site design. For example, windows should face away from residential uses and blank walls should be covered with landscaping in order to protect views from adjacent residential areas. Lighting and signage for commercial and industrial uses,

should blend into the character of the surrounding neighborhood so as not to be intrusive. Commercial (business) and industrial uses should ensure that there is adequate space for loading areas and access to and from the business to prevent undue stress to the surrounding environment. Landscaping, as discussed above, will help new uses blend with the character of the neighborhood.

Architectural Controls:

Guidelines governing styles, color, and aesthetics will ensure that neighborhood character is preserved as well as maintaining the visual appearance of the area. Departures from guidelines will require approval by the cognizant committees, boards and/or commissions.

Compatibility:

New development should be compatible with the surrounding area/neighborhood. Compatibility does not mean that new development must replicate existing design characteristics, but that the developer should take design characteristics into consideration when designing the development/structure. Form, scale, structure, lay-out, materials, landscaping, and over-all design are attributes which should respect the character of the existing neighborhood.

Transportation:

Business and industry must locate road networks to accommodate their needs while causing no undue stress to the surrounding environment.

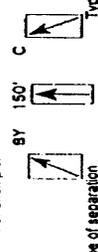
Matrix 1: Separation and Landscaping Requirements between Land Use Zones
 Listed here are separation and landscaping requirements that all forms of development are encouraged to follow when a proposed use is located next to differing adjacent land use zones. Such landscaping and buffering requirements are only one tool used to mitigate the impacts to adjacent land use zones.

Proposed Use	Adjacent Use											
	RA, UR, EE VLD Res.	R-1M, R-1a, b & c LD Res.	R-2 MD Res.	R-3, R-4 HD Res.	O-1 Neigh. Office	O-1 Pro. Office	C-1 Low Inten. Comm.	C-2 Med. Inten. Comm.	C-2 High Inten. Comm.	C-2 Reg. Comm.	M-1 L. Indust.	M-2 H. Indust.
VLD Res. RA, UR, EE	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
LD Res. R-1M, R-1a, b & c	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
MD Res. R-2	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 5' B	R	R	R	R	R	SB 75'	SB 175'	SB 225'
HD Res. R-3, R-4	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	R	R	R	R	R	SB 50'	SB 150'	SB 215'
Neigh. Office O-1	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	R	R	R	R	R	SB 45'	SB 115'	SB 215'
Pro. Office O-1	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	R	R	R	R	R	SB 30' B	SB 40' B	SB 215' C
Low Inten. Comm. C-1	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Med. Inten. Comm. C-2	BY 25' B	BY 25' B	BY 10' B	BY 10' B	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
High Inten. Comm. C-2	BY 50' B	BY 50' B	BY 15' B	BY 15' B	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Reg. Comm. C-2	BY 50' B	BY 50' B	BY 15' B	BY 15' B	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
L. Indust. M-1	BY 50' B	BY 50' B	BY 25' B	BY 25' B	BY 20' B	BY 20' B	BY 20' B	R	R	R	R	R
S. Indust. M-1	BY 150' C	BY 150' C	BY 100' C	BY 100' C	BY 100' C	BY 100' C	BY 60' C	R	R	R	R	R
H. Indust. M-2	BY 200' C	BY 200' C	BY 200' C	BY 200' C	BY 150' C	BY 150' C	BY 125' C	R	R	R	R	R

KEY:

1) The first letter denotes a total setback or buffer that is required for that particular zone/land use.
 SB = Setback
 BY = Bufferyard
 R = Regular setback required for that zoning district

2) The second letter denotes the type of landscaping required for that particular zone/land use.
 A = Opaque screen
 B = Semi-opaque screen
 C = Broken screen

For example:

 Type of separation: BY 150' C
 Distance requirement: 150'

3) Types of land uses:
 VLD Res. = Very Low Density
 LD Res. = Low Density
 MD Res. = Medium Density
 HD Res. = High Density
 Neigh. Office = Neighborhood Office
 Pro. Off. = Professional Office
 Low Inten. Comm. = Low Intensity Commercial
 Med. Inten. Comm. = Medium Intensity Commercial
 High Inten. Comm. = High Intensity Commercial
 Reg. Comm. = Regional Commercial
 L. Indust. = Light Industrial
 S. Indust. = Standard Industrial
 H. Indust. = Heavy Industrial

Note:

- The setback number represents the total setback required and applies to all property lines that abut the defined adjacent land use zones.
- The setback denoted in this matrix is required only when the adjacent property to a proposed use is vacant.
- Bufferyards are required regardless if the adjacent property is vacant or developed.
- Permitted uses in buffer areas include open space and drainage uses. Structures are prohibited in these areas.
- Reduction in bufferyards may be considered when opaque screening is used.
- Zoning designations are subject to change.
- The Planning Director or higher designee shall determine use intensity when required.

Matrix 2: Mitigation Techniques Between Land Uses

Listed here are mitigation techniques one must follow when a business registration, zone change, or new construction creates adjacent land uses which differ from one another. The use which is creating the change must mitigate any possible problems between other land uses using the techniques listed below.

Adjacent Use

Proposed Use	Adjacent Use																								
	R-A, UR, EE	M, R-14.b	R-2	R-2, R-4	O-1	O-1	Pro	Low Inten. Comm.	C-1	Med. Inten. Comm.	C-2	High Inten. Comm.	C-2	Reg. Comm.	M-1	Light Stand. Indust.	M-1	High Indust.	M-2	Schools	Agri.	Transp.	Util.	Arroyos	
VLD Res.	None	A	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	None	None	None	None	None	A
LD Res.	A	None	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	ABCDE	None	None	None	None	None	A
MD Res.	ABCDE	ABCDE	None	BCD	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	None	B	BCD	CE	A	
HD Res.	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCD	None	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	BCDE	None	B	BCD	CE	A	
Neigh. Office	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	None	None	None	None	None	C	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CDE	B	BCD	CE	A	
Pro. Office	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	None	None	None	None	None	C	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CDE	B	BCD	CE	A	
Low Inten. Comm.	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	B	ACD	None	A	
Med. Inten. Comm.	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	C	C	CD	CD	CD	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	CDE	B	ACD	None	A	
High Inten. Comm.	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	D	B	None	None	A	
Reg. Comm.	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	D	B	None	None	A	
L. Indust.	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	B	None	None	A	
S. Indust.	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	B	None	None	A	
H. Indust.	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	B	None	None	A	
Schools	ABCDE	ABCDE	BCDE	BCDE	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	None	B	CD	None	A	
Agri.	None	None	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	None	B	None	D	None	
Transp.	ABCD	ABCD	BCD	BCD	BCD	BCD	BCD	BCD	BCD	CD	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	CD	D	None	None	A	
Util.	ABCDE	ABCDE	CE	CE	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	D	
Arroyos	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	D	

Key:
 A = Lot size transitions
 B = Parking layout (or, away from residential use)
 C = Orientation of structure (blank walls, windows, etc.)
 D = Amenities/Aesthetics (extra landscaping, architecture, etc.)
 E = Scale, bulk, building height, setback
 Pro. Off. = Professional Office
 Low Inten. Comm. = Low Intensity Commercial
 Med. Inten. Comm. = Medium Intensity Commercial
 High Inten. Comm. = High Intensity Commercial

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Utilities Element:

The decision of where and when to build capital facilities can profoundly influence a community's future land use patterns. Developers generally seek sites that have good road access and are close in proximity to water and sewer lines (three of the most costly development components for a developer to provide). As such, it is widely held that growth is influenced and occurs where utility and road networks are established. It is essential, therefore, that the policies of these components, which include utilities and transportation, are consistent with the land use policies of a community's comprehensive plan. When all three elements correlate, a community can better determine where and when utility and transportation expansion should occur.

The Utilities Division is responsible for and operates the City's water, wastewater, natural gas, and solid waste service. The utility system is maintained through a high standard of service that is important to the health, safety, welfare, and quality of life to the residents of this community. This Utility Element furthers this standard by providing a common set of goals, objectives and policies with the Transportation Element and Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

A Utilities Element has always been a part of Las Cruces' previous comprehensive plans. The 1955 and 1968 Comprehensive Plans mainly took an inventory of the City's utility systems operating at that time. The 1985 Comprehensive Plan mainly discussed the formalization of fiscal analysis procedures to ensure the best placement of future utility services. The 1985 Plan also included policy to ensure adequate, safe, and economical utility services and encouraged the use of alternate energy-methods.

Current Issues

Las Cruces is estimated to grow at an average of 2.5 to 3 percent a year through the year 2010 (see Table 1; Population Estimates for the City of Las Cruces). At these rates, growth can be expected to increase steadily during the coming decades. The addition of new residents, visitors, business and industry will undoubtedly create an impact on the City's existing utility systems. By coordinating capital facility and land use policies, the City may expand its capital facility services in the areas where they are needed before any negative effects due to an increase in population occurs. Such interaction may lead to a better means of financing the facilities needed to serve new growth (particularly for those with development interests and the tax/rate payer) due to the logical placement and continuity of utility and roadway networks. This, in turn, will result in more efficient development patterns as planning and capital improvement decisions are consistent with City growth policies.

Table 1; Population Estimates for the City of Las Cruces:

Year	Low	Projected Population	Medium	Projected Population	High	Projected Population
2000	1.5%	71,445	2.5%	77,658	3.5%	83,870
2010	1.7%	83,591	2.7%	98,626	3.7%	114,901

*Note: Projected population as per growth rate scenarios were calculated as a ten year compounded rate.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES:

The Goals, Objectives and Polices of the Utility Element shall support the Utility Goal of the Las Cruces City Plan: "Achieve optimum efficiency in the planning and operation of our City's utility systems." The Utility Element Goals, Objectives, and Policies are organized into five categories:

- 1) Water
- 2) Wastewater/Sewage
- 3) Energy
- 4) Solid waste
- 5) Growth management

Utility Element goals, objectives, and policies are meant to be a guide for decision-making for City Council, Planning and Zoning Commissioners, City Staff, Developers, and for the residents of Las Cruces. As our community continues to grow, the needs of its citizens will also grow. Creating policies designed to engage our environment in our City's growth process demands that such policies grow and change over time; this defines the concept of a city's comprehensive plan as a "living document."

Water

Las Cruces receives its water from underground aquifers and currently utilizes 33 active well-sites. The City is allotted approximately 22,000 acre feet of water each year. The use of water conservation procedures will help to decrease overall demand by eliminating waste. While we do not yet utilize our entire allotment, with our steady growth rate, it is likely we shall do so within the next 15 years. As such, the City applied to the New Mexico State Engineering Office for the use of an additional 22,000 acre feet of water a year in 1981; the application is still under review.

Because Las Cruces' water is taken from underground sources, chlorination is used as a treatment in all of the City's wells; some wells also require the use of sequestering agents. Fortunately Las Cruces' water sources are found in deep wells: 300 - 400 feet deep. These wells are well below stratified layers of clay which act as a buffer and help deter ground water contamination. The City also developed the Well-Head Protection Program which is predominately responsible for siting replacement wells and new wells in the Valley area to avoid potential water pollution problems. The program also attempts to educate the public regarding ground water contamination.

Should the courts determine that Las Cruces should not receive additional water rights or enough to provide for residents, the future may include a new regional water treatment plant for the Las Cruces area, Sunland Park, and the El Paso area. Should this scenario occur, surface water would be taken from the Rio Grande, appropriately treated (surface water must be purified; a costly procedure), then distributed to those under the regional contract.

GOAL 1: To provide an adequate and reliable supply of safe, clean drinking water at an affordable cost to the residents of Las Cruces.

Objective 1: Ensure that the City has acquired sufficient water rights to supply the needs of the resident's of Las Cruces while supporting measures which advocate water conservation.

Policies:

- 1.1 The City should continue to pursue additional water rights with the State of New Mexico.
- 1.2 The City should develop additional well fields and continue to utilize the Valley Wellhead protection project as a means to meet consumer demand.
- 1.3 Sufficient operational, fire, and emergency storage should be provided to ensure of our community's health, safety, and welfare.
- 1.4 Water lines should be extended to those growth areas in the City as shown on the Future Concept Map (see appendix) as development extends to these designated areas. Emphasis should be given on promoting infill development in order to utilize existing water lines.

- 1.5 Water wells and pumping stations should be screened from view when located in residential or gateway areas. Screening may consist of murals, landscape materials, walls, or a combination of said examples.
- 1.6 The City should investigate and support measures to encourage the City's residents and businesses to utilize water conservation techniques.
 - a. A landscape ordinance dealing with multi-family, commercial, and industrial development should be enacted that promotes water conservation.
 - b. Increase water rates, when applicable, as a means of encouraging low water uses.
 - c. The City should encourage the use of drought tolerant plants (xeriscaping) and timed and drip irrigation systems.
 - d. The City should encourage the use of water-saving devices, such as flow regulators, faucet aerators, low-flow toilets and shower-heads.
 - e. Continually educate residents and businesses about water conserving techniques and tips through public service announcements, flyers, advertisements and other such programs.

Objective 2: Provide Las Cruces with safe, clean drinking water.

Policies:

- 2.1 Las Cruces should systematically monitor its potable water for possible contaminants and ensure all State and Federal drinking water requirements are met.
- 2.2 The City should monitor changes to or trends in State or Federal legislation regarding drinking water requirements. Any regulation changes which result from legislation shall be implemented in a timely fashion.
- 2.3 Encourage Doña Ana County to develop a wellhead protection program.

Wastewater/Sewage

The City currently has one plant, the Jacob A. Hands Wastewater Treatment Facility, which treats all wastewater collected in its service area. The plant is currently near capacity, 8.9 million gallons per day (mgd), and is scheduled to be expanded to handle 13.5 mgd. The increased capacity is estimated to carry the City for an additional 15 years. The plant's treated effluent is returned to the Rio Grande. The remaining solid waste, also known as "sludge", is hauled to a dedicated land disposal site located on the West Mesa. During construction, the treatment facility will be updated so that the facility will meet all new federal regulatory measures required to be enacted by October 1998.

The City has recently bought land in the southwestern part of the Valley for the construction of an additional wastewater treatment plant. It is scheduled to be on-line by 2010 and will provide additional capacity for our future population.

GOAL 2: Provide Las Cruces and the outlying region with dependable wastewater service in order to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the community at large.

Objective 3: Provide wastewater services to meet the needs of our growing region.

Policies

- 3.1 The City should systematically monitor and correct, as necessary, any deficiencies in its wastewater system so that it can better serve its existing customers.
- 3.2 The Utilities Division should prepare for stringent state and federal regulations in the future. This may be accomplished by researching all new technologies to improve the City's wastewater systems and by keeping abreast of proposed legislation.
- 3.3 Wastewater service should keep up with the projected growth taking place in the City and the surrounding region by increasing available capacity.
 - a. The City's current facility, the Jacob A. Hands Wastewater Treatment Facility, shall expand its existing capacity to accommodate anticipated growth and new federal and state health and safety standards as needed.
 - b. An additional wastewater facility will be required due to growth pressures in the City and surrounding region. The new facility should be located in the South Valley area and be able to serve the needs of its customers beyond the year

2015. The new facility shall also meet all national and state wastewater standards.

- 3.4 The City should complement existing technology with new technologies to deal with any odor problems due to any of its wastewater facilities.
- 3.5 Residents within the City limits are encouraged to utilize City wastewater facilities as soon as such facilities are available to them.
- 3.6 The City should require stubouts from septic tanks in the direction of the nearest future connection to sewage collection systems.
- 3.7 The City should continuously research feasible techniques to recycle wastewater.

Energy

City residents utilize natural gas services from a dual distribution system; the City provides this service as does Rio Grande Natural Gas. The City's service is a pressurized system which can easily follow development. The City is predominantly concerned with efficient distribution, appropriate conservation, adequate revenue to offset costs and compliance with federal emergency regulations. While natural gas is considered a relatively inexpensive source of fuel, the City is also interested in promoting and investigating the feasibility of alternative and renewable forms of energy.

The City is also interested in providing electric energy to the residents of Las Cruces at affordable rates. Currently the City is in the process of obtaining the right to provide electric services to its residents through judicial and legislative efforts. Should the City win the right to provide service to its residents, a contract with an electric company shall be drawn up with the City as the liaison/billing agent.

Alternative and renewable sources of energy (also called nontraditional sources) are slowly becoming more commonplace in the United States. This may be because consumers are becoming more interested in energy-saving conservation methods and are becoming more ecology conscious. Renewable energies can include: solar (passive, active, photovoltaic, and thermal), wind power, geothermal, biomass (trees and plants), rivers, and even garbage. As these technologies become more efficient, easier to use, and less expensive, Las Cruces and other communities can expect to see and increase in the use of these nontraditional energy sources

GOAL 3: Provide residents with efficient energy resources, which include natural gas and electric services, and strongly encourage the use of energy conservation techniques

Objective 4: Provide, at minimum, affordable, basic energy services.

Policies

- 4.1 Pursue the likelihood of providing electric service to Las Cruces residents.
- 4.2 The City should perform detailed studies to address the City's and Rio Grande Natural Gas Association's competing interests regarding boundaries and the operation of the dual natural gas system.
- 4.3 The Utilities Division should devise a long-term, on-going program to maintain close contact with customers. The program shall be devised to learn about particular user needs and problems. This information shall then be used as a means to continually improve upon customer service.

Objective 5: Employ energy conservation techniques to reduce energy consumption and its associated cost which will, in turn, reduce inefficient energy consumption.

Policies

- 5.1 The use of ideas, programs and plans for the development of Las Cruces as energy-efficient City should be encouraged.
- 5.2 The Utilities Division should educate those who reside in Las Cruces and those who operate businesses in our community on a variety of methods they may use to conserve their energy consumption. Consequently, conservation measures will also assist those in our community to reduce the cost of their monthly energy expenditures.
- 5.3 Energy-saving site design and devices should be used for all publicly owned facilities and such techniques in privately owned buildings should be encouraged.
- 5.4 Fuel efficient vehicles should be either bought or leased by the City. Existing municipal vehicles should be retrofit with energy-saving devices.

Objective 6: Advocate the use of alternative/non-traditional sources of energy and energy saving techniques as a means of reducing the use on non-renewable forms of energy.

Policies

- 6.1 Incentives, such as local tax credit/relief, should be investigated to encourage the use of energy saving techniques.
- 6.2 Cost and energy efficient site and building designs should be encouraged. Examples of alternative energy saving techniques may include passive solar site planning/design and active solar site planning/design. These techniques may implement the use of wall massing, window glazing, solar panels, building orientation, location of particular vegetation, etc.
- 6.3 Non-traditional, energy-saving building methods, once approved by the appropriate agencies, should be encouraged throughout the City. Examples of these building methods may include, reward-wall systems and rammed-earth technique.
- 6.4 The use of alternative sources of energy shall be encouraged. Such uses may include biomass energies, geothermal resources and wind technologies. Incentives, such as local tax credit/relief, should be investigated to encourage such techniques.
- 6.5 The City should utilize nontraditional energy saving techniques and sources for its various projects and facilities.
- 6.6 The City should encourage those bidding on City projects to utilize nontraditional energy saving techniques and sources.
- 6.7 New Mexico State University's research efforts regarding nontraditional energy saving techniques and sources should be supported.
- 6.8 The City should support funding at State and Federal levels for the research and development of alternative energy sources.

Solid Waste

The City of Las Cruces entered into a regional solid waste agreement January 9, 1990 with Doña Ana County forming the South Central Solid Waste Authority (SCSWA). The SCSWA owns the Corralitos Regional Landfill located to the west of Las Cruces and the Transfer and Recycling Facility located on Amador Dr., both of which opened June 15, 1996. The landfill contains 640 acres, of which 200 acres are permitted for landfilling. The acreage can be easily used for future permitting and is estimated to be in service for a minimum of 60 years. (See Appendix -- for further information regarding the SCSWA.)

The City currently utilizes curbside pick-up to dispose of household and business solid waste. These wastes are then taken to the Authority's transfer station where garbage is compressed and then loaded onto long haul truck-trailer rigs to be taken to Corralitos Landfill. Residents also have the option of disposing solid waste materials at the transfer station themselves. Only SCSWA vehicles are authorized to use the landfill which assures public health and safety, reduces haul distance for residents, and maintains a more efficient landfill operation.

While the City does not have direct authority regarding many of the issues and/or concerns with regards to solid waste issues, the City does have an interest in supporting and encouraging sound policy that will affect its residents and even potential future residents.

GOAL 4: Provide Las Cruces with a reliable and economical solid waste collection and disposal service meeting all federal and state standards as well as safeguarding the area's environmental quality.

Objective 7: Ensure reliable and affordable waste collection service and support the efforts of the SCSWA to maintain adequate disposal capacity at Corralitos Landfill.

Policies

- 7.1 The City should support the SCSWA's efforts to meet all Federal and State requirements governing landfill operations.
- 7.2 New technologies should continually be investigated. Viable technologies should be implemented to minimize the cost of waste collection services.
- 7.3 Waste disposal techniques should preserve the environmental quality of the area in and around the regional landfill site. As such, the City encourages, but does not limit techniques to the following:
 - Prosecuting those caught illegally dumping waste materials.
 - An eventual gas recovery system to dispose of methane gas, created as a result of the collection of solid waste materials, in order to forestall possible air quality violations.
 - Tires should, at minimum, be baled and then landfilled to reduce storage space and prevent problems with vermin and harmful insects. The City, together with the SCSWA, should support efforts to examine the feasibility of recycling tires.

- Household, commercial, industrial, and hospital hazardous wastes are disposed in an environmentally sound manner.
- To the extent possible, utilize materials which may be recycled in order to produce asphalt for City projects. Such projects may include street furniture, trash receptacles, and roadways. Examples of recycled materials used for roadways may include tires and/or previously used asphalt or cement roads.

7.4 The City encourages the use of a transfer-haul program whereby collection vehicles will be used for local curbside pick-up service and long distance truck and trailer rigs will be used to collect solid waste materials at the transfer station and deposit their cargos at the landfill. The City supports this method due to the many benefits incurred by a program such as this. Benefits include:

- Reduced maintenance of collection vehicles by eliminating off-road and high-speed highway conditions which will lower both operational and capital costs.
- Flexibility for future and/or alternative disposal sites by modifying only the route of the long distance haulers.
- Ability to inspect the waste stream for the exclusion of hazardous wastes.
- Provides opportunity for recovery of recyclable materials.

Objective 8: Promote recycling as a means of reducing solid waste collection and disposal which will increase the lifespan of the regional landfill.

Policies

8.1 The City should educate the general public about how and what materials may be recycled. Recycling information and achievements should be reviewed and updated on a periodic basis.

8.2 Recyclable materials may include:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Newspaper | • Aluminum |
| • High-grade office paper | • Landscape materials |
| • Container glass | • Plastics |
| • Non-ferrous metals | • Waste oil |
| • Ferrous metals | • Sheetrock |
| • Tires | • Lumber |

- Corrugated paper

8.3 The City should work towards meeting the New Mexico Solid Waste Act of 1990 and the EPA's targeted goal of achieving a 50% recycling and source reduction by July 1, 2000.

- a. The City should investigate the possibility of providing recycling for curbside service. Until this option is feasible, recycling centers/bins should be furnished at convenient locations throughout the City.
- b. Attempt to seek potential buyers of recycled materials as well as seeking those business who consume materials as an alternative to disposal.
- c. The City should encourage SCSWA to consider the possibility of setting aside 40 to 50 acres at the regional landfill for composting. Compost materials could include: yard and food wastes, municipal solid wastes, sludge, and agricultural wastes (pecan tree prunings and dairy manure).
 1. Consider the feasibility of separate yard waste collection.
 2. Study the possibilities of marketing compost to residents, businesses, and government entities for landscaping purposes.

8.4 Thorough research of all available funds, amounts and qualifying requirements for any applicable state and federal funding should be undertaken.

8.5 The City should seek recycling partnerships with other regions and communities in the southwest in an attempt to attract recycling markets and/or business which use recycled products closer to the SCSWA.

8.6 Recycling legislation at the State and Federal level should be supported.

Growth Management

As discussed earlier in this element, the installation of utilities, especially the placement of water and wastewater lines, can profoundly influence future land-use patterns of a community. Typical City controls, zoning and subdivision regulations, for example, are not enough to provide a useful basis for capital facilities planning. Zoning is often reactive and can be subject to change. Subdivision regulations only affect those who must divide their land. Also, neither zoning nor subdivision regulation address the issues of timing and/or the location of future

growth. As such, it is vital to have a Comprehensive Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, and Utilities Master Plans that correspond with all development policies and future plans in order to have cohesive and planned community growth.

GOAL 5: Design growth management policy to coordinate with all policy contained in the Comprehensive Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, and applicable utility's master plans.

Objective 9: Establish an integrated and coordinated approach to meet all established and proposed utility and development-related policy.

Policies

- 9.1 All development should follow comprehensive planning policy and regulatory requirements adopted by the City.
- 9.2 All Utility Master Plans should be updated in a timely fashion.
- 9.3 Developers and homebuilders should follow City policy concerning Master Plans, Subdivisions, and Site Plans for utility extension and placement as found in the Land Use Element of this Comprehensive Plan.
- 9.4 The City should set development fees and/or subsequent companion legislative acts as a means of fiscally managing growth and so that development pays its fair share. The City has been given the authority to impose impact fees via the Development Fee Act passed by the State of New Mexico.
- 9.5 Water and wastewater lines should follow the designated service boundaries as shown in Maps 1 and 2 located in the Appendix. Emphasis should be given to infill development as a means of optimizing existing utility infrastructure.
- 9.6 The City may discourage leapfrog growth by requiring that developers be responsible for the extension of all infrastructure to a particular subdivision. (Specific requirements may be found in the Growth Management Section of the Land Use Element.)
- 9.7 The Design Review Committee (DRC) should consist of, at minimum, the Development Services Director, Utility Division Director and the department directors of planning, engineering, and utilities. The make-up of this committee will ensure land use, transportation, and utility infrastructure development will develop in a consistent and compatible manner.

- 9.8 The Utilities Division should continuously investigate new technologies to update and improve service to their customers.
- 9.9 Utility systems should be monitored and systematically maintained to increase infrastructure efficiency and reduce repair time and associated costs.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Modify the Design Standards to reflect all aesthetic, economical and design-related issues found in this Utility Element.
2. All other elements of the Comprehensive Plan shall be completed and shall complement this Utility Element. The remaining elements to be completed include: Community Facilities and Economic Development.

APPENDIX

SOUTH CENTRAL SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY CORRALITOS LANDFILL AND TRANSFER & RECYCLING FACILITY

The South Central Solid Waste Authority (SCSWA) is a joint City/County financial venture which owns two facilities; the Corralitos Regional Landfill and the Transfer & Recycling Facility. The SCSWA was funded by a 10.5 million dollar bond issued in October 1995. The repayment of the bond amounts to approximately \$927,000 per year and is made with revenue generated by the receipts at the gatehouse of the facilities. Currently the rate at the gate house is \$24.25 per ton of refuse. The annual budget of the SCSWA is approximately \$3,000,000.

The Authority is operated as an enterprise fund and no tax dollars were used for the construction of the facilities. *The Authority is not a City of Las Cruces facility.* The city acts as the fiscal agent for billing and accounts payable and receivables. The city also has a contract with the SCSWA to operate the landfill and the scale house. Doña Ana County has a similar contract with the SCSWA to operate the Transfer Station. Both facilities have a twenty year permit from the NMED for operation. In the event the revenues generated are not sufficient to cover the bond payment and the O&M, the City and County have pledged their environmental gross receipts tax (EGRT) to cover any shortages.

The SCSWA is governed by a board of six elected officials; three City Councilors and three County Commissioners, with the City and County managers acting as ex-officio members. The Board meets once a month to address an agenda prepared by the Director. The SCSWA employs two employees, the Director (Ellen Smyth) and an administrative assistant (Diane Gamboa).

The Corralitos Landfill is operated under contract by the City Solid Waste Department (six employees) at a rate of \$7.75/ton. The Transfer & Recycling Facility is operated under contract by the County (nine employees) at a rate of \$6.40/ton. The gatehouse is operated by the City Finance Department at a fixed sum of \$116,000 (four employees). The City also charges the SCSWA 3% of revenue or (\$0.7275/ton) for duties performed as fiscal agent. The Recycling Department at the City leases 8,000 square feet of warehouse space at \$5.00 per square foot from the SCSWA to operate a conveyor and baler. Another eight or so employees are on site for this operation and report to the City Solid Waste Department.

The Landfill boundaries encompass about 640 acres, of which 200 acres are currently permitted for landfill use. The total permitted area is more than sufficient to meet the disposal needs of all Doña Ana county for the next 20 years. The additional property can be permitted in the future for additional disposal space.

No hazardous, toxic or liquid wastes are accepted at the facilities. Permitted wastes include residential and commercial waste. Currently the volume of refuse received averages approximately 300 tons per day which is received from approximately 45 large commercial vehicles, and 165 private or small commercial vehicles for a total count of approximately 210 vehicles per day.

The transfer station is open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday and from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the weekends. The landfill is not open to the public. All waste must be taken to the transfer station.

All disposal facilities are regulated by both the New Mexico Environment Department and the U.S. Environmental Protection agency and as such are subject to frequent unannounced inspections. The Corralitos Regional Landfill began operations in June 1996. The facility was designed by Mevetek Engineering, a local engineering firm, to meet all State and Federal Regulations. The landfill is constructed with a composite liner using both natural and synthetic materials, including high density polyethylene, to prevent leachate from migrating into the substrata. The leachate collection system gathers moisture, if any, from trash so that the opportunity for migration is eliminated. Two geocomposite layers were installed in cell 1: a 60-mil high-density polyethylene liner and a bentonite liner.

Visitors to the Transfer Station are surprised at how clean the facility is. In fact, the facility looks like a nondescript warehouse. Being fully enclosed eliminates wind blown debris and other unsightly problems typically associated with garbage "dumps".

Map 1

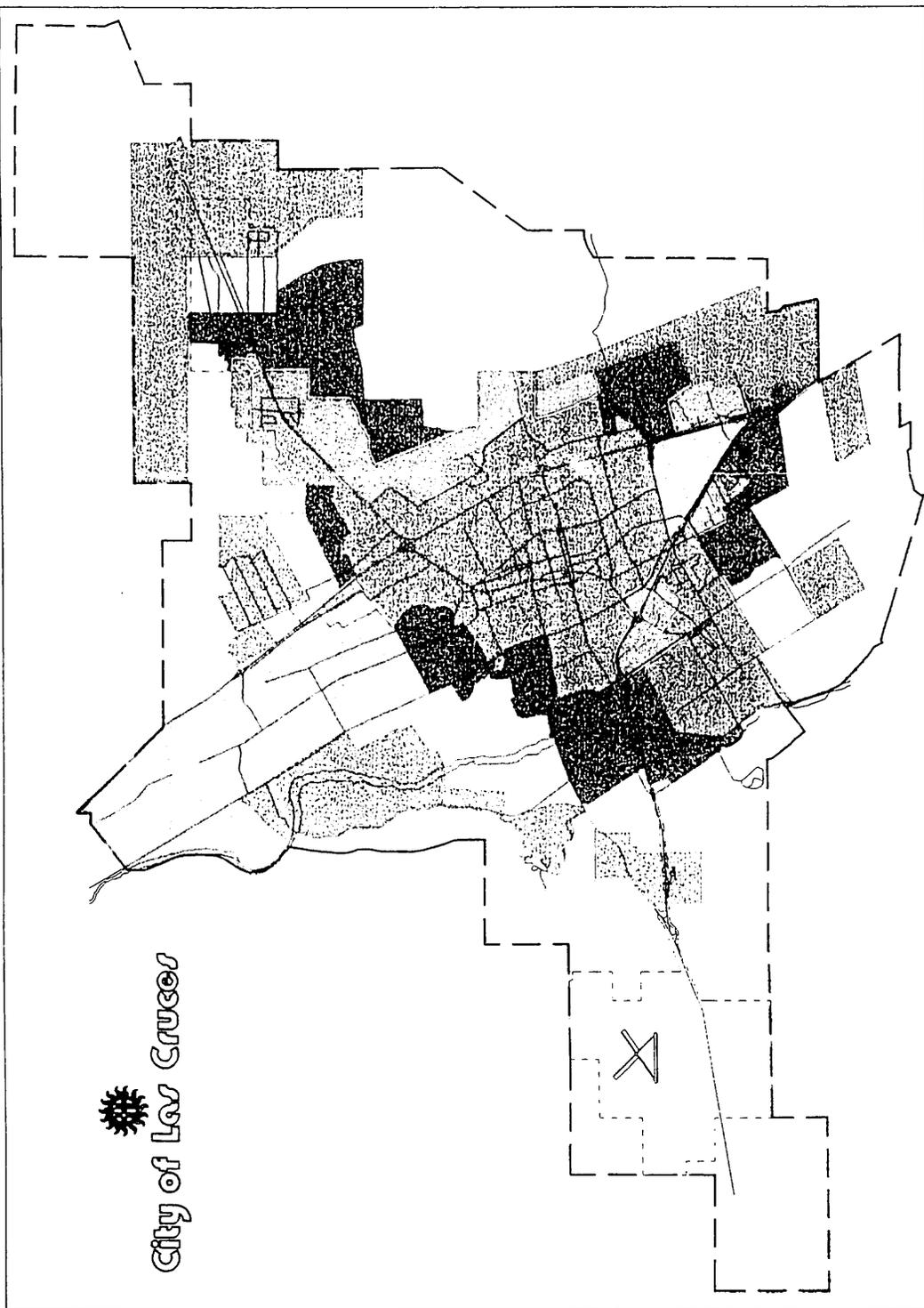
LEGEND

- UTILITY SERVICE AREA BOUNDARY
- - - CITY LIMITS
- [Stippled Box] UNIVERSITY WATER
- [White Box] DONA ANA WATER
- [Cross-hatched Box] MESILLA WATER
- [Dotted Box] CITY OF LAS CRUCES WATER EXISTING SERVICE AREA
- [Light Gray Box] YEAR 2000 SERVICE AREA BOUNDARY
- [Dark Gray Box] YEAR 2005 SERVICE AREA BOUNDARY
- [White Box] YEAR 2010 SERVICE AREA BOUNDARY
- [Medium Gray Box] YEAR 2015 SERVICE AREA BOUNDARY



SCALE IN FEET

WATER SERVICE AREAS



 City of Las Cruces

Map 2

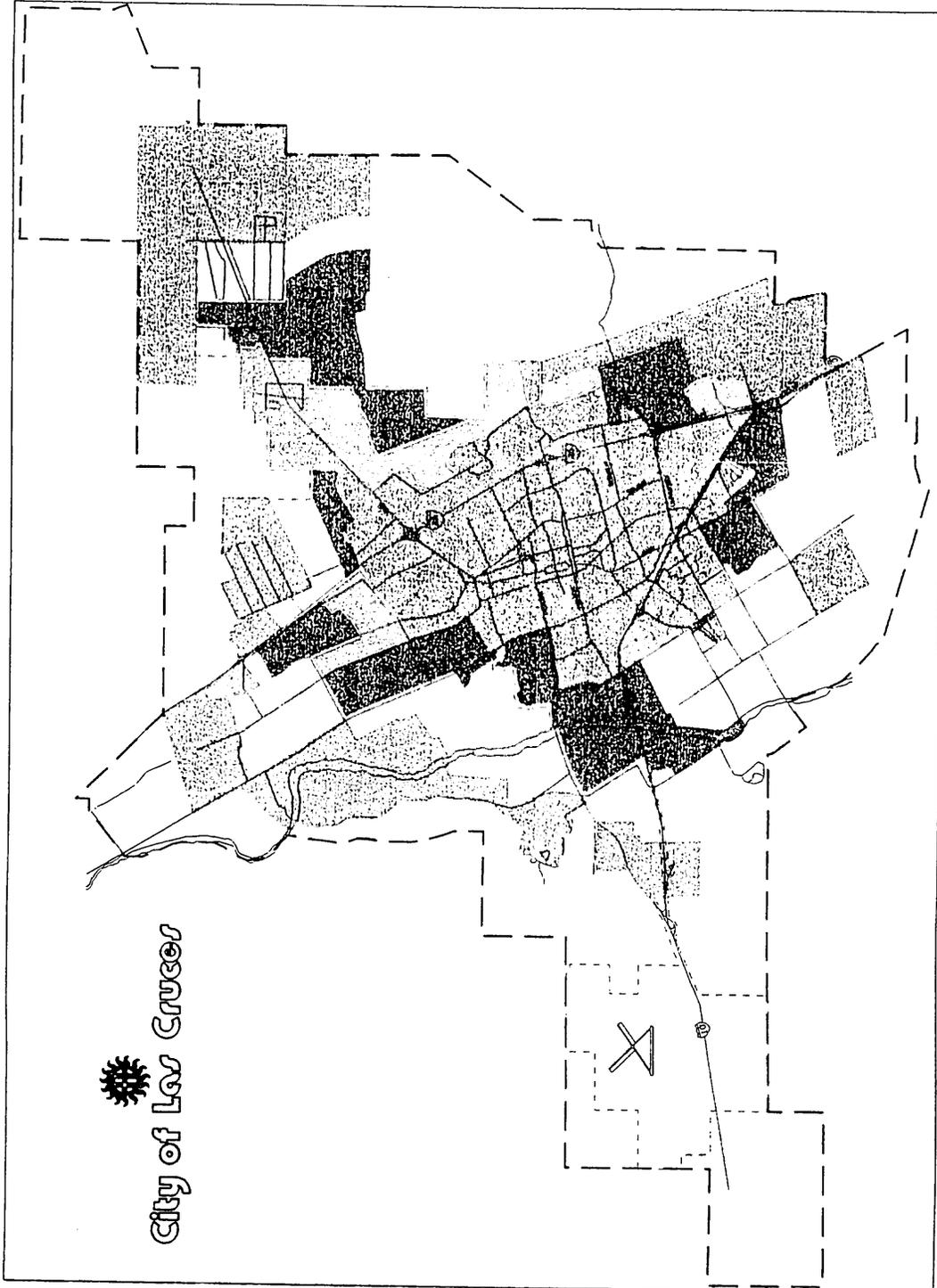
LEGEND

- UTILITY SERVICE AREA BOUNDARY
- - - CITY LIMITS
- [Stippled Box] EXISTING WASTEWATER SERVICE AREA
- [Light Stippled Box] YEAR 2000 SERVICE AREA BOUNDARY
- [Dark Stippled Box] YEAR 2005 SERVICE AREA BOUNDARY
- [White Box] YEAR 2010 SERVICE AREA BOUNDARY
- [Medium Stippled Box] YEAR 2015 SERVICE AREA BOUNDARY



SCALE IN FEET

WASTEWATER SERVICE AREAS




City of Las Cruces



INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Economic Development Element:

The Economic Development Element is a guide to the economic growth and development of the City, which in turn will make the City a more pleasant place to live and work. The City's main priority for implementing this Element is to provide varying types of quality jobs for all the City's residents, lower unemployment, and providing opportunities that retain and expand existing businesses, create new businesses and industries, and continually strive to establish the City as a tourist destination. This Element will also try to identify and address issues that will diversify the local economy to "hedge" against any economic downturn. The Economic Development Goal of the Las Cruces City Plan, and the purpose of the City Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Element, is to "establish and maintain a stable, diversified economy". A strong economy will lead to an overall improvement in the quality of life in the City by providing quality jobs and by maintaining a strong income and property tax base.

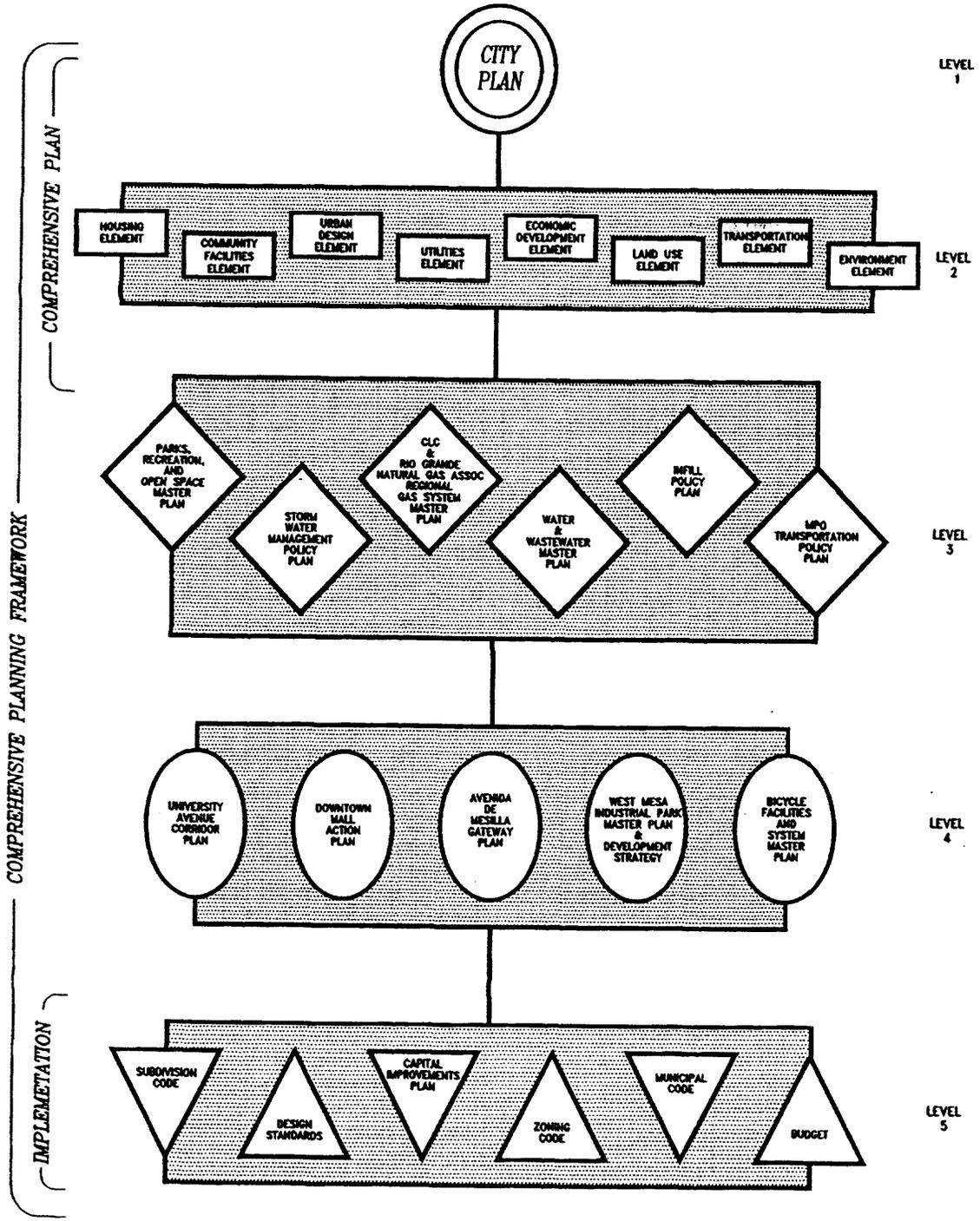
Economic development issues are more difficult to quantify than other elements, such as the placement and compatibility of land uses. In many ways, such issues may combine or support other elements or require the development of specific sector, neighborhood, or corridor plans.

Planning Process:

This document is a revision of economic development policies to the 1985 City Comprehensive Plan's Goals and Objectives. A review of the 1985 policies revealed the need for revision to make the Economic Development Element more responsive to the needs of a growing City. As outlined within the City Plan, each element, as it becomes updated or revised, will be approved and adopted by the City Council. Once all of the elements of the 1985 Plan are revised, the City Plan will be formalized and all elements combined and will be adopted by the City Council. This will in turn create the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Las Cruces. This revision of the Economic Development Element will also serve as a guiding policy for the revision and application of existing City ordinances and as an update to the City's 1981 Zoning Code.

Comprehensive Planning Framework:

Figure 1 illustrates the City's Comprehensive Planning framework. The Economic Development Element is one of eight planning elements of the City Comprehensive Plan. The City Comprehensive Plan consists of the Las Cruces City Plan (Level 1) and the eight comprehensive planning elements (Level 2). Each of the planning elements receives conceptual guidance from the City Plan. With the Economic Development Element in place, conceptual and policy direction has been developed for more detailed economic-related plans.



Level 3 plans are Sector or Area plans which focus on a specific issue concerning the City, such as the Bicycle Facilities and System Master Plan, the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, or the Storm Water Management Policy Plan. Level 4 plans are Neighborhood and Corridor plans which focus on a small area or roadway corridor within the City, such as the University Avenue Corridor Plan or the Avenida de Mesilla Gateway Plan. Level 5 plans are the implementation documents or actions designed to complete certain policy aspects of the City Comprehensive Plan, such as the Zoning Code, Municipal Code, Capital Improvement Plan, and the Economic Development Ordinance. Also crucial to the implementation of the City Comprehensive Plan is financial and legal support. Implementation programs of the Plan shall be coordinated with the City's performance-based budget, capital improvement plan, and the Municipal Code, where needed.

THE CITY OF LAS CRUCES

Planning Background:

The 1955 Development Plan for Las Cruces did not have a specific Economic Development Element. However, the Plan did include a great deal of information on agricultural activities, mining opportunities, and wholesale and retail sales. The Plan identified the Mesilla Valley and Dona Ana County as one of the largest cotton producers in New Mexico at the time. When discussing the City and County's strong cotton production, the Plan stated, " In light of industrial development for Las Cruces, it would seem to us that this City, or at least the southern part of Dona Ana County, might become a center of textile manufacturing, using cotton as raw material". The Plan went further to address other ag-related products, such as cotton by-products, pecans, commercial vegetables, dairy and beef cattle, and sheep production.

Under the manufacturing and industry section of the 1955 Plan, the need to utilize the existing agriculture products were furthered by the mention of creating cotton and textile mills or pecan processing and packaging plants within the City. However, the Plan did recognize that due to the City's proximity to El Paso and El Paso's over abundant rail system, the City may not be as industrially competitive with the neighbor to the south. The same was said about retail trade activity being drawn away from Las Cruces, especially for the smaller communities of southern Dona Ana County. The 1955 Development Plan's writers stated, while the Las Cruces area was rich in both historic and scenic resources, the City had not made a strong enough effort to promote tourist business.

The 1968 Comprehensive Plan for the City did not specifically address economic development issues; however, it did provide an evaluation of past and present economic activity as part of the overall planning process for the City. The 1968 Plan did outline that the City's 1960 labor force was 9,300 or 31.6% of the city's total population. This represented a 140% increase from the 1950 labor statistics. The Plan concluded that economic growth for the City would continue to remain strong. The growth would be slower that what had been

experienced over the previous 15 year period, however it could be dependant upon the growth of the area's governmental facilities, primarily the White Sands Proving Grounds.

The 1968 Comprehensive Plan was the first Plan for the City that identified issues that indirectly related to economic development, such as Urban Renewal for the Downtown Area, commercial and industrial development, and infrastructure improvement such as utility extension and the paving of streets.

The 1985 Comprehensive Plan included an Economic Development Element which focused on three subsections; business, industry, and agriculture. Some areas of each subsection were implemented while others were never addressed. The Business subsection focused on achieving prominence as destination for all forms of tourism, achieving a balanced array of commercial retail and service areas, creating and supporting partnerships with business, industry, and New Mexico State University, and revitalizing the Downtown Mall area. The Industry subsection aimed to provide an attractive environment for recruiting new industries, to strengthen and diversify the local economy through local education and training programs, and to support existing important economic sectors such as agriculture and higher education. The third subsection, Agriculture, had a single goal: to encourage the continuation of a commercially viable agricultural industry in the Mesilla Valley.

CURRENT ISSUES

Historical Economic Overview:

The City of Las Cruces and Dona Ana County have a long standing history of being an agricultural area. Though the amount of land used for agricultural purposes has decreased within the city limits since the 1950's, the County still retains a strong lead in ag-related production. Las Cruces still has several large ag-producing tracts within its boundaries that have sustained the pressures of encroaching urban development. Las Cruces has now become a transportation and industrial center for the county's crop and dairy production that mainly occurs on the perimeter of or outside the city limits. Examples of Las Cruces' ag-related industries include the SWIG and Griffin and Brand cotton and vegetable distribution centers west the railroad tracks and the recent addition of the F & A Dairy cheese factory within the City's West Mesa Industrial Park.

Like most other communities, Las Cruces utilized Urban Renewal funds from the 1960's and early 1970's. Urban Renewal was first mentioned in the 1968 Comprehensive Plan for the City to create a pedestrian mall within the Central Business District (CBD) of the City. This pedestrian mall, known as the Downtown Mall, is a linear concrete walkway with canopies that connects the businesses along the former Main Street that ran through the CBD. The current physical environment of the Downtown Mall is directly attributed to Urban Renewal. The City, in 1997, adopted a plan for the Downtown Mall and has begun to implement physical changes to the Mall. These changes include removing the existing canopies and providing

requirements for the modification or redevelopment of existing buildings that front the Downtown Mall.

Las Cruces has a long standing history of being dependant upon a few large employers and a strong commercial service and retail activity. In a region that has two large federal government installation, NASA's Johnson Test Facility and White Sands Missile Range, Las Cruces has been subjected to large amounts of economic fluctuation depending on the spending and activities at the two facilities. Also, Las Cruces has New Mexico State University as a large employer which is also subject to changes in funding due to changes in enrollment and state funding reductions. Other large employers include the Las Cruces Public Schools, the City of Las Cruces, Dona Ana County, and various departments of the State of New Mexico. All of which provide primarily service jobs and are dependant upon taxes and outside funding to support and maintain employment and programs.

Las Cruces, in the past has not had the strongest manufacturing and basic industrial base. This has changed due to the creation and early implementation of the City's West Mesa Industrial Park. Also, properties zoned for industrial uses that were in place since the late 1980's, specifically along North Telshor Boulevard, have been converted from vacant uses to industrial warehouses, manufacturing, and processing businesses. There is the concern that industrial zones within the City are allowed to have commercial retail and service businesses. This presents concern due to the fact that industrially zoned properties are being underutilized or taken for non-industrial uses.

The manufacturers and basic industries that are present have had a strong showing. These businesses include: Metro Scale, a manufacturer of bathroom scales; CalCompack, a food/chile processor; Tuscarora, a plastics manufacturer; and F & A Dairy, a cheese manufacturer in the City's West Mesa Industrial Park. With ever increasing promotion and recruitment the City's manufacturing base will increase. The City has two manufacturers poised to move into the West Mesa Industrial Park by early 1998, Rea Magnet Wire and Parkview Metals.

Two other areas that provide large number of jobs are the commercial retail and service businesses throughout the city and the construction industry. Las Cruces has several restaurants and business establishments that tend to provide lower paying jobs. Also, because of the amount of population growth that the city has experienced over the past 15 years, construction activities have long been a large employer in the area. This industry is also dependant upon changes in population and market demands for new construction. Diversification away from government employment and single industry employment can only help to continue the relatively strong economy that the City has experienced.

Las Cruces' predominate land uses and zoning districts are residential and commercial. The city does not have an excess amount of industrially zoned property available for development and current zoning provisions allow for commercial retail and service establishments to be located in such zones rather than limiting industrial zones to industrial uses, businesses, and processes.

Tourism:

Tourism has played a vital role on Las Cruces' economy for quite sometime. The primary tourist attraction within the Las Cruces area is the shopping and historic sites located in the Town of Mesilla that flanks Las Cruces to the southwest. Mesilla's tourism activity is supported by the city's abundance of hotels and restaurants that provide for the many tourists that visit year round. The City also holds yearly and special events that help to promote Las Cruces throughout New Mexico and the Southwest, if not nationally, that include the Whole Enchilada Fiesta and the Renaissance Craft Fair.

New Mexico State University:

In 1888, Las Cruces College was founded by Indiana educator Hiram Hadley. Under the Morrill Act, the Territorial Legislature created a land-grant college in 1889, renaming Las Cruces College to the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts. In 1960, New Mexico A & M was renamed New Mexico State University (NMSU). NMSU has long been a vital and growing part of the Las Cruces area and economy. The university, though not part of the Las Cruces, has its triangle shaped campus surrounded on all three sides by the City. The university contributes to the local economic base in many ways. The university provides employment for over 2,600 residents of the Las Cruces area. The campus also houses approximately 17,000 students that live, work, and buy within Las Cruces. Local businesses also benefit from the university in the fact that NMSU provides services and products to them and the businesses do the same for NMSU in return.

NMSU also has a separate facility known as the Physical Science Laboratory (PSL) that provides research facilities and personnel for all levels of government and the private sector. PSL has experienced a long-standing relationship between the Department of Defense and National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Since the 1980's, however, PSL has began to do more and more research for the private sector. Some of this research has lead to separate private sector ventures in the area of large scale production companies of products created at PSL.

The branch community college of NMSU, that is also located in Las Cruces, but is separate from the main university, provides several opportunities for technical and vocational education. This branch campus, known as the Dona Ana Branch Community College, has increased its programs that provide either specific technical and vocational education or that has a training program that can train employees for specific businesses and industries.

Border Location:

Las Cruces has yet to fully achieve its potential of being 42 miles from the U.S./Mexico border. The City's transportation connections of Interstate Highways 10 and 25 and U.S. Highway 70 provide it with the capability of providing easy freight connection to other parts of the country. With the adoption of the North American Free Trade Agreement, economic activity along the border should increase, including support industries such as freight transportation and specialty manufacturers of products for other manufacturers in the area.

Infrastructure Development:

The City of Las Cruces currently provides water, wastewater, and natural gas service to properties within the city limits. Most of this infrastructure is installed at the time of development, accepted and maintained by the City. As of late, due to large increases in population and business activities, pressure on the existing utility systems' capacity has increased. Areas of the city are at capacity for water or the City is in the process of adding new water wells to improve service to specific areas. Also, the city has sewer service and other utilities that have oversized infrastructure for future industrial uses, yet is underutilized because non-industrial users are allowed to locate in industrially zoned property. The West Mesa Industrial Park, being developed by the City, is in the process of providing a wastewater treatment facility and increased water and natural gas service lines for the park.

ELEMENT & SPECIFIC DATA INFORMATION

Historical Population Data and Projections:

In 1993, the City of Las Cruces Planning Department prepared the "Population Report: A Summary of Population Data and Projections for Las Cruces and Dona Ana County" from which the following information was derived. More detailed information about the population data and projections can be found within the previously mentioned report.

Since 1910, the City of Las Cruces has had considerable growth in actual population. The largest single percent increase in Las Cruces' population from the previous decade occurred in 1960 with an increase of 138%, representing a change in population of 12,325 people to 29,367 people in ten years. The lowest single percent increase from the previous decade occurred in 1920 when the City's population only increased 3%, from 3,386 people to 3,969 people.

The most recent decades' population for Las Cruces are as follows with their respective increases from the previous decade:

Year	Population	Percent Increase
1970	37,857	29%
1980	45,086	19%
1990	62,126	38%

Overall, the City experienced an average percent population increase of 47.25% while all of Dona Ana County only experienced an average percent population increase of 34.33% for the same time frame. The City's population between 1910 and 1990 has averaged 36.22% of the total county population.

As part of the Population Report, the City developed three growth rate or projection scenarios in forecasting the City's long-term population for the years 2000 and 2010. For each year, the growth rate was projected at a low, medium, and high rate and respective population projections. The growth rate scenarios within the report are as follows:

Year	Low Growth Rate	Projected Population	Medium Growth Rate	Projected Population	High Growth Rate	Projected Population
2000	1.5%	71,445	2.5%	77,658	3.5%	83,870
2010	1.7%	83,591	2.7%	98,626	3.7%	114,901

*Note: Projected populations as per growth rate scenarios were calculated as a ten year compounded rate.

City Staff and the U.S. Census Bureau has provided estimates on the City's population using the 1990 Census. Based on these estimates, the City has predicted an annual growth rate in the six year period (1990 - 1996) around 2.5% increase. The Census Bureau has estimated that the local annual growth rate is closer to 3.0% increase.

Land Uses:

In 1986/87 the City of Las Cruces completed a land use inventory of the entire city. The City's land uses were completely re-inventoried again in 1991. The results of the each year's inventory are reflected in the following table.

LAND USES	'86/87 ACRES (%)	'91 ACRES (%)
Agricultural	1458.53 (9.00)	1929.73 (8.00)
Commercial	1227.56 (7.00)	3952.23 (16.00)
Industrial	373.71 (2.00)	632.27 (2.58)
Miscellaneous	770.30 (5.00)	86.88 (0.35)
Parks	180.84 (1.00)	209.87 (0.86)
Institutional	916.70 (5.00)	1360.15 (5.56)
Residential	4582.05 (27.00)	6756.65 (27.61)
Vacant	7382.56 (43.00)	8494.35 (34.72)
Water-ways	35.90 (1.00)	1046.24 (4.30)
TOTALS	16928.15 (100.00)	24468.37 (100.00)

Source: 1986/87 and 1991 Las Cruces Land Use Inventory Surveys.

Notes: Number of parcels per category not available for 1986/87 survey. Additionally, slight variation in terms of land use classification may exist when compared with 1991 results.

No attempt has been made to isolate 1986/87 geographic area within 1991 results for comparison purposes. Annexations as of the inventory date are included in the totals.

When comparing the two land use inventories outlined within the table, one must consider that the City's corporate boundaries, in terms of acreage, increased by approximately 7,500 acres as a result of annexation activity during the late 1980's. As a result of this increase and the land use trends that were established, the most prominent change in land use occurred within the commercial category. Commercial land uses from 1986/87 to 1991 more than tripled in acreage. Industrial land uses did increase in acreage from 1986/87 to 1991. However, the overall percentage of industrial land uses only increased by a little more than one half of one percent.

Building Activity History:

Over the previous 10-year period (1986-1995), the City of Las Cruces has experienced substantial growth in population which in turn has led to growing building activities. On average, the City has seen approximately 46 new commercial and manufacturing building permits on a yearly basis between 1986 and 1995. Residential development has averaged 571 new building permits a year for the same time frame.

New commercial and manufacturing building permits were the highest in 1986 with 64 permits total and were their lowest with 20 in 1993. New residential building permits were their highest in 1987 with 695 total and the lowest occurred in 1990 with 392 residential permits. Between 1986 and 1995, almost every year that experienced an increase in new residential building permits over the previous year experienced a decrease in new commercial and manufacturing permits. The same holds true when commercial and manufacturing permits increased, residential permits decreased. The only exceptions are 1994 and 1995 in which both commercial/manufacturing and residential building activities experienced a positive growth over the previous year.

This tends to follow the trend in most growing cities where substantial increases in residential development lead to increases in commercial and manufacturing development a few years later. This is a result of communities needing to provide more goods and services to the new population.

Unemployment:

Unemployment statistics for the City of Las Cruces are not available. Unemployment statistics are gathered for the Las Cruces Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) which consists of all of Dona Ana County. The following table outlines the unemployment rates for the Las Cruces MSA and the State of New Mexico for the calendar years 1986 to 1995.

Yr.	LCMSA Un-employment	NM Un-employment	Yr.	LCMSA Un-employment	NM Un-employment
1986	7.3%	9.2%	1991	8.2%	7.1%
1987	7.5%	8.9	1992	7.8	7.0
1988	7.3	7.8	1993	8.6	7.7
1989	6.6	6.7	1994	8.6	6.3
1990	7.8	6.5	1995	8.6	6.3
			AVG.	7.83	7.35

Source: New Mexico Department of Labor, Economic Research and Analysis Bureau

The average for the ten year period between 1986 and 1995 indicates the Las Cruces MSA had an unemployment rate of 7.83% of its total civilian work force while the State's average was only 7.35% for the same time frame. Las Cruces and Dona Ana County's unemployment rate was lower than the State's rate between 1986 and 1989 and has remained higher than the State's since 1990.

Gross Receipts History:

The amount of gross receipts tax collected by the City over the past five years indicates Las Cruces' strong dependance on retail trade. Between 1991 and 1995 the City of Las Cruces collected over \$64,000,000 in gross receipts taxes for retail trade alone. This provides an average of over \$12,000,000 per year. These calculations are based on the calendar year total. The next two highest categories in gross receipts are service and construction industries. Service and construction have provided an average of over \$6,000,000 and \$2,000,000 per year respectively. Retail trade, services, and construction combined provide for approximately 87.41% of all gross receipts taxes collected within the city limits.

The next two highest areas for gross receipts collection are transportation and utilities and finance, insurance, and real estate. These two categories provide for an additional 8.82% of the total taxes collected. Wholesale trade, manufacturing, and agriculture rank 6th, 7th, and 8th respectively out of the 11 categories used for reporting gross receipts taxes. These three categories only provide 3.41% of all the City's gross receipts.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

The Goals and Policies of the Economic Development Element shall support the Economic Development Goal of the Las Cruces City Plan: "Establish and maintain a stable, diversified economy". Economic Development Goals and Policies are not rigid rules designed to be enforced in all situations, but are designed to provide the City with guidance in a majority of circumstances. As Las Cruces continues to grow, the needs of its citizens will also grow. Creating policies designed to engage our environment, quality of life, and economic well-being in our City's growth process demands that such policies grow and change over time: this defines the concept of a city's comprehensive plan as a "living document".

Business, Industry, and Agriculture

GOAL 1: To provide strong development policies that allow for the retention, expansion, and attraction of existing and new businesses and industries in and to Las Cruces.

Objective 1: Establish the Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance (MVEDA) as the primary agency for coordinating all types of business and industrial development.

Policies:

- 1.1 The Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance (MVEDA) should coordinate the development of existing and new businesses and industries to Las Cruces on behalf of the City of Las Cruces.
- 1.2 The City of Las Cruces should continue to provide financial and staff support for and expansion of activities coordinated through MVEDA.
- 1.3 MVEDA should provide focus to the long-term economic development of the City by providing support for all types of business, large and small, marketing the business registration and development processes required within the City, increasing private sector involvement in economic development, and facilitating the involvement and coordination between existing organizations that are performing existing or needed tasks.
- 1.4 MVEDA should provide coordination for the development of various types of commercial and industrial businesses by:
 - a. Developing operating policies for the active recruitment of new industries to Las Cruces.
 - b. Investigating the establishment of a Small Incubator Business Center(s) in Las Cruces.
 - c. Providing a center for assistance for small businesses and/or entrepreneurs to serve the City and its residents.
 - d. Working to expand and retain existing industry and basic sector jobs.
 - e. Coordinating the dissemination of information about the Small Business Administration (SBA) and City processes related to building and development requirements and business registrations.
- 1.5 Any incubator center, if determined feasible, should:
 - a. Support the expansion of home-based businesses or occupations to expand into larger-scale ventures.
 - b. Provide for coordinated office services and expenses including secretarial staff, marketing and financing efforts, and shared utility costs.

- c. Provide for expansion of locally-owned or operated businesses and may include those that assist minorities and persons with disabilities.
 - d. Locate in an area such as the West Mesa Industrial Park for industrial businesses, the Downtown Mall/Central Business District for mixed-uses, and the North Telshor area and East Mesa for commercial, office, and industrial uses.
- 1.6 Any small business assistance and/or entrepreneurial center, if determined feasible, should:
- a. Coordinate efforts in order to utilize or be staffed by professionals from New Mexico State University, Doña Ana Branch Community College, Dona Ana County, the City of Las Cruces, and the Las Cruces Public Schools to disseminate information about starting a new business or expansion of an existing business.
 - b. Focus on providing guidance to find capital financing, marketing, and distribution.
 - c. Receive City assistance in areas involving planning and building requirements within the City's limits as well as business registration and tax information.
 - d. Locate in an area that is financially depressed or is in transition in order to serve as an anchor to the area or neighborhood.
- 1.7 MVEDA should continue to support activities that promote small business assistance and entrepreneurial enterprises, which include using NMSU's Advanced Manufacturing and Genesis Centers. These activities should be supported by coordinating efforts through New Mexico State University, Dona Ana Branch Community College, Dona Ana County, the City of Las Cruces, the Las Cruces Public Schools, and the local Chambers of Commerce. These activities should include but not limited to:
- a. Disseminating information about starting a new business or the expansion of an existing business.
 - b. Providing guidance to locating capital financing, marketing, and distribution.
 - c. Receive City assistance in areas involving planning and building requirements within the City's limits as well as business registration and tax information.
 - d. Concentrating on manufacturing training programs.

Objective 2: The City of Las Cruces should create incentives, opportunities, and policies that will allow for MVEDA to recruit and establish new and varied types of industries throughout the City.

Policies:

- 2.1 Support and implement the mixed-use policies, the flexibility of placing new uses, and the new office, commercial, and industrial zoning districts as outlined within the Land Use Element, including:
 - a. Business cooperatives or multiple tenants/uses within single buildings or parcels, including those uses which provide for work at home provisions.
 - b. Overlay zones and planned unit developments, including those in which the City receives a direct or foreseen benefit in exchange for creative and unique designs that differ from mandatory development requirements.
- 2.2 Complete a separate Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) in accordance with the Local Economic Development Act of 1994 within the New Mexico State Statutes, which outlines the following:
 - a. Public money expenditures and the value of credits pledged shall not exceed five percent of the City's annual general fund expenditures.
 - b. Economic Development Strategic Plan shall be adopted by Ordinance.
 - c. Economic Development aid shall be limited to any industry whose primary function is the manufacturing, processing, or assembly of any agricultural or manufactured products, including commercial enterprises for storing, warehousing, distributing, or selling products or agriculture, mining, and industry.
 - d. Businesses primarily engaged in the retail sale of goods or commodities are prohibited from receiving economic development aid from the City.
 - e. Types of aid provided, project qualification requirements (i.e. minimum local employees hired), and recuperation provisions shall be prescribed within the Plan.
- 2.3 Create incentives for the recruitment of new businesses and industries, that might be part of the Economic Development Strategic Plan, though not required, that may

include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. Providing tax abatements for specified time periods.
- b. Reducing utility connection costs, impact fees, and rates for new industries for specified time periods.
- c. Building necessary infrastructure improvements in order for the new business to locate.
- d. Providing access and assistance to acquire various funding sources, such as CDBG funds, Industrial Revenue and General Obligation Bonds, and Tax Increment Financing.
- e. Utilizing, to its full capabilities, existing City Ordinances and policies to form and implement special assessment districts when the City needs new infrastructure in place specifically to foster economic development.
- f. Providing support for publicly-owned land to be used for industrial/manufacturing and economic development projects.
- g. Creating enterprise zones for incentives and incentives projects.

2.4 Eliminate administrative barriers that impede the creation of new or the expansion of existing office, commercial and industrial developments.

- a. Mandate timely review of all City development codes and ordinances and reflect necessary operating and capital budgets to aid in completing such reviews.
- b. Continually strive to streamline review periods for business and industrial building permits and business registrations within the City.
- c. Establish building permit and business registrations review periods for City staff to follow based on the building occupancy or Standardized Industrial Codes for proposed businesses and industries.
- d. Provide for single permitting processes for both buildings and signs as part of one permit.

- e. Continue to provide for a single department that can adequately coordinate all development related activities, including building permits, business registrations, zoning and subdivision requests, and utility services.
- 2.5 Gather necessary data and information that can provide insight to increased improvement in business and industrial recruitment and expansion.
- a. Business registration historical information on spatial orientation (i.e. location or address specific) to provide better historical overview of changes in land use and business growth within the City.
 - b. Mandate data collection that correlates to changes or increases to gross receipts taxes, employment, salaries, building square footage, business and building ownership by Standardized Industrial Codes as part of the business registration activity.
- 2.6 Implement the goals, objectives, and policies of the other Elements to the Comprehensive Plan that will specifically aid in economic development, including such things as:
- a. Facilitating the creation of new transportation systems and corridors that support businesses and industries in relation to NAFTA.
 - b. Continuing the use and expansion of the Las Cruces International Airport for both commercial and general aviation services.
 - c. Developing, updating and implementing the Infill Policy Plan, the Avenida de Mesilla Gateway Plan, the University Avenue Corridor Plan, and the Stormwater Management Policy Plan.
 - d. Creating Corridor/Sector Plans for specific areas that might need to address specific economic development issues in such areas as the West Amador/Hadley/17 St. area.
 - e. Pursuing the implementation of alternative energy sources, i.e. electric, solar, and wind energy.
 - f. Pursuing the use of "gray" water for large industrial users, where feasible, and possibly encourage the users of gray water to locate near large gray water producers.

- g. Developing and implementing water conservation policies for residential and commercial/ industrial users, especially for landscaping.
 - h. Continuing efforts to obtain new water sources and mitigating any future limitations.
- 2.7 Establish enterprise zones within qualifying areas of the City in order to help maintain and revitalize economically depressed neighborhoods.
- 2.8 Promote regulatory changes at all government levels that aid in economic revitalization and stability in Las Cruces, including, but not limited to modifications to the State's "anti-donation" clause for all types of governmental activities as a tool for commercial and industrial recruitment.
- 2.9 Acquire viable vacant buildings and land within growing areas for future uses and recruitment for potential businesses and industries. This could include retaining ownership of the buildings and land and providing reasonable rent in exchange for mandatory occupancy periods and local employment hiring.

Objective 3: Maintain the visibility of existing industries within Las Cruces and the Mesilla Valley.

Policies:

- 3.1 The City should support efforts that maintain the visibility and funding of existing public sector jobs and facilities, such as White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) and NASA, including the creation of industrial lands and parks on the East Mesa that provide support/locations for contractors that serve WSMR and NASA.
- 3.2 The City should support the growth and expansion of existing higher educational institutions like NMSU, the Dona Ana Branch, and other satellite branches of NMSU throughout the county.
- 3.3 The City should support the creation and recognition of local manufacturing sectors, such as agricultural processing, aerospace, and other production manufacturers.

Objective 4: Maintain the viability of agricultural production within Las Cruces and the Mesilla Valley.

Policies:

- 4.1 Agricultural producing properties should be maintained in large parcels or tracts to keep production at a premium but also recognizing that small agricultural parcels within the urbanized area of the City provide open space, buffers differing uses and should be encouraged to remain.
- 4.2 Encroachment of small lot development into large, unbroken agricultural areas located near or along the City limits between urbanized and rural areas should be discouraged.
- 4.3 Allow the transfer of development rights or provide bonuses in densities to other areas of the community in order to preserve agricultural properties and potentially environmentally sensitive area.
- 4.4 Packaging and shipping of locally produced agriculture products on properties zoned for agricultural or agricultural-related uses should be allowed.
 - a. Production and shipping costs are reduced and the encroachment of industrial development (i.e. large scale packaging plants) into agricultural areas are discouraged.
 - b. Cooking and/or processing of agricultural products on the property would not be allowed.

Objective 5: Continue efforts to develop industrial areas and uses within the City.

Policies:

- 5.1 Implement provisions within the West Mesa Industrial Park (WMIP) Master Plan and Development Strategy and continue recruitment activities.
 - a. Preserve Foreign Trade Zones within the WMIP for those industries that can fully utilize the benefits provided by the Foreign Trade Zone and pursue the expansion and possible relocation of said zones should the need arise.
 - b. Create, if feasible, a small business incubator industrial center or provide for a spec. building within the WMIP.
 - c. Build streets and provide utilities to individual sites to avoid delays in recruiting and constructing individual buildings within the industrial park.

- 5.2 Pursue creating cooperative agreements between owners of large industrially zoned property, including a possible joint venture between the City's West Mesa Industrial Park and NMSU's Arrowhead Research Park that will support research and development activities at Arrowhead and the creation of full scale production industries at the WMIP related to said research.
- 5.3 Encourage the placement of industrially zoned and uses within the East Mesa of the City, including the development of a industrial/office park.

Work Force Development

GOAL 2: To provide for a highly trained and motivated work force for Las Cruces' businesses and industries.

Objective 6: Encourage the creation of quality education and training programs at all governmental levels for all citizens of Las Cruces.

Policies:

- 6.1 MVEDA should coordinate the process of maintaining existing and encourage the creation of new technical and vocational educational programs at the Las Cruces Public Schools, New Mexico State University (NMSU), and Dona Ana Branch Community College (DABCC), including joint programs, including the local School-to-work coalition.
- 6.2 Encourage the public schools, NMSU, and DABCC to create entrepreneurship courses that assist residents to learn about starting and/or operating a business.
- 6.3 Provide technical and financial assistance to those local programs that provide training to citizens, including minorities and people with disabilities, such as ARC and Tresco.
- 6.4 The City should work with NMSU's Advanced Manufacturing Center and Dona Ana Branch Community College to create new manufacturing apprenticeship training programs.
- 6.5 Pursue a joint-agreement between NMSU's Cooperative Education Program and the City to coordinate the placement of university students within "real life" work experiences within the City of Las Cruces and local businesses.

Objective 7: Create public-private and multi-level public partnerships that further work force development, including financial and facility support.

Policies:

- 7.1 Utilize existing public facilities for work force training for all age groups in Las Cruces. This would include modification or addition to existing buildings such as, the Teen Center and Court Youth Center.
- 7.2 Continue to foster cooperation between, encourage the shared utilization of facilities, and provide training and professional development needs at WSMR, NASA, the proposed Spaceport, NMSU, DABCC, and Las Cruces Public Schools.

Tourism

GOAL 3: Promote and enhance Las Cruces and the Mesilla Valley as a tourist destination.

Objective 8: Continue to promote existing and create new tourist activities and events in Las Cruces.

Policies

- 8.1 Provide local and financial support to yearly seasonal and special events such as the Whole Enchilada Fiesta, the Southern New Mexico State Fair, area Wine Festivals, and Special Sporting Events (i.e. state sports tournaments).
- 8.2 Determine the feasibility of providing support for the expansion of existing and the creation of new public facilities that support the tourism industry such as a visitor's center, local museums and cultural centers, the Alameda Historic Depot, and large-scale sports facilities and a convention center.
- 8.3 Implement the goals, objectives, and policies within the Urban Design Element that will improve the City's physical environment and make the City an attractive destination, such as unique street designs and furniture and landscaped corridors and entrances to the city.
- 8.4 Continue to encourage property owners to revamp their properties within the Downtown Mall in accordance with the Downtown Mall Action Plan.
- 8.5 Assist in continued improvement and possible expansion of the activities of the Farmer's & Crafts Market.
- 8.6 Promote local businesses as part of tourism promotion efforts that will include advertise local businesses in tourism magazines and support group marketing efforts of local businesses throughout the country.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. The Economic Development Element will be implemented through the adoption of a new Zoning Code and Subdivision Code and amendments to the Municipal Code.
2. Develop and adopt the Economic Development Strategic Plan and Ordinance in accordance with the Local Economic Development Act of the New Mexico State Statutes.
3. Conduct Feasibility Studies for the Small Business Incubator and Small Business Assistance Centers.
4. Determine the feasibility of constructing a spec building in the West Mesa Industrial Park or acquiring vacant buildings in the Downtown Mall for future business use.
5. Create agreements between the City and NMSU for industrial recruitment to their respective industrial parks.
6. Provide economic development provisions, where appropriate, within new and existing overlay zones or specific overlays zones for the 17th Street area and the east Mesa.
7. All other elements of the Comprehensive Plan are scheduled to be updated and should be implemented.
8. Begin to consider designating or allocating, through zone changes, industrial land for new development on the East Mesa of the City.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Housing Element:

The Housing Element is intended to establish coordinated and comprehensive policy which will help guide decisions on housing issues within and around the City. Provisions for suitable housing opportunities meeting all socioeconomic levels is a primary consideration which plays an integral role in enhancing the quality of life found in Las Cruces.

In the past, comprehensive plans have addressed housing needs within Las Cruces. The 1955 City Plan discussed in brief terms, housing conditions within Las Cruces and the need to develop more suitable and sanitary housing. The 1968 Comprehensive Plan expounded on the issue in terms of supporting land uses for neighborhood preservation, identity, and accessibility. The 1985 Comprehensive Plan focused on several more topics such as fair housing, public/private partnerships for increased housing supply and availability, energy efficiency, and neighborhood character/identity through housing design.

Other plans have also addressed housing primarily from a Federal grant perspective. These plans have focused on housing availability and affordability. The most recent effort involves the development of the 1995 Consolidated Plan, as amended, prepared by the City's Community Development Department. In terms of housing, this document addresses private housing needs, homeless needs, public housing needs, and reviews housing stock conditions and hazards pursuant to Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines.

To date, the City has adopted various programs and ordinances thereby, implementing numerous housing policy issues. Specific examples include, but are not limited to: 1) Adoption of a Fair Housing Ordinance to help ensure that equal housing opportunities exist for all citizens; 2) Adoption of various building industry codes to help ensure that housing stock is safe, sanitary and energy efficient; and 3) Enhancement of Federal housing assisted programs to provide low and moderate income and special need individuals and groups with suitable housing.

As the City grows, greater diversity in the composition and socioeconomic characteristics of families will exist, placing a greater demand for a variety of suitable housing. Therefore, addressing housing from various perspectives such as availability, choice, quality, and neighborhood preservation will be necessary in order to meet the housing needs of all Las Cruces citizens now and in the future.

Current Issues

Some Housing trends and needs within Las Cruces have been well documented while others have not. Through the use of a variety of sources such as building permit information, census data, and related trade information, issues impacting housing can be examined. Unless otherwise stated, statistics for several of the issues which follow, are provided in Table 2.

Based on census data, the City's housing stock has steadily increased from 1980 to present. Much of the increase is a direct result of the population change during that same period and the corresponding housing demand this population placed on the market. Statistically, there was a forty-five percent (45%) increase in stock from 1980 to 1990. From 1990 through 1996, housing stock increased by 4,030 units or sixteen percent (16%). For additional housing information, please refer to Table 1.

Table 1

Year/Number of Building Permits Issued											
	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96
Mobile Homes	2	17	40	37	26	14	25	31	41	91	205
Single Family Detached	390	374	371	339	231	231	311	447	450	348	342
Townhouse	38	55	2	16	18	21	50	56	11	34	36
Duplexes	1 (2)	2 (4)	0	3 (6)	1 (2)	2 (4)	3 (6)	2 (4)	5 (10)	1 (2)	4 (8)
Triplexes	2 (6)	1 (3)	0	0	1 (3)	1 (3)	1 (3)	1 (3)	0	1 (3)	2 (6)
Fourplexes	3 (12)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2 (8)	5 (20)	0	5 (20)
Condominiums	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Multi-family (> fourplex)	2 (102)	5 (242)	6 (127)	2 (171)	8 (112)	5 (159)	10 (118)	4 (125)	6 (178)	1 (106)	4 (96)
Total Housing Units	552	695	540	620	392	432	513	674	710	584	725

Note: Mobile Home counts include those placed on private property and those placed in mobile home parks which require Mobile Home Installation Permits.

Numbers identified in parenthesis represent the total number of units for the project(s) identified.

Source: City of Las Cruces Building Permit Records

In terms of housing type, a clear majority of housing stock created during the stated time periods are single family detached units. During the past decade (1986-1996), single family detached units represented on average, approximately 72% of all housing constructed within the City. The remainder, consists of duplex, triplex, fourplex, and multi-family construction types. Based on past trends, the availability of land, and the desirability of single family detached housing construction, trends similar to what has occurred are likely to continue. Based on discussions held in April, 1997 with the Las Cruces Rental Association, Las Cruces' rental market has an excess of units in all sizes and rent ranges. The Association believes that over recent years, the industry has over built, causing weakness in the rental market. The market is considered strong when occupancy of all available units is at 95% or better. The information received placed current occupancy between 90%-92%. Although the situation is not favorable today, the Association states that market strength is likely to increase since this type of market situation often occurs on a 2 to 3 year cycle. Until this increase takes place, rental housing opportunities remain high.

Of the housing which exists within the City, a clear majority of dwelling units were owner occupied. As reflected in both the 1980 and 1990 decennial census reports, owner/renter occupancy percentage distributions have averaged 58% and 42% respectively. Closer examination reveals that ownership percentages from 1980 to 1990 slipped 4% in favor of renter occupancy. Because the change occurred over a relatively short period of time, it is difficult to discern possible reasons why the shift has occurred. Perhaps issues related to home ownership affordability are responsible to a degree. Based on a recent article printed in the January 24, 1997 Las Cruces Sun News¹, Las Cruces face higher housing costs (new single family detached house meeting selected criteria) than people in cities similar in size and geographic location, yet on average, households in Las Cruces earn less money. This information was based on the recently completed affordability index study conducted by the American Chamber of Commerce Researchers Association in April of 1996. A few final notes on the study however, find that in 1992, the same baseline measure for the dwelling unit in question, identified the cost of the home to be 13% less expensive. Additionally, apartment rents were lower in comparison to the other cities used in the study particularly many of those within the State.

Based on census information, median owner occupied housing values have significantly increased from 1980 to 1990 by 55%. This increase, is believed by many to be at least one factor which continues to restrict the number of families who can afford site-built homes thereby, requiring these families to seek alternative housing options. Median contract rents for all types of housing units have also increased considerably. From 1980 to 1990, subject rents have increased by 75%.

¹ Julyne Derrick, "House prices keep Las Cruces from being more affordable," Las Cruces Sun News, January 24, 1997, p.1.

The census also reports that Las Cruces families earned 73% more money in 1990 than they earned in 1980. Unfortunately during that same time period, there was an increase in the percentage of families below poverty level. Specifically, the 1980 census reported 15.3% of families below poverty level. This compares to 16.6% in 1990. Although family income has increased, the rate of increase has not offset the poverty level for families in general. Perhaps in-migration of retirees and low income families have contributed to this occurrence. Additionally, cost of living increases may have raised overall family income, however, said increases may not have been suitable to keep up with inflation. Thus, in terms of net income gain for families, the increase(s) did very little at raising income above established poverty levels for the area. In Las Cruces as well as other areas in the nation, family income plays an important part in determining the level of housing affordability.

Table 2

	1980	1990	% Change
Median Family Income	\$16,844	\$29,153	73%
Family Poverty Level (%)	15.3%	16.6%	8%
Median Owner Occupied Housing Value	\$43,800	\$67,900	55%
Median Contract Rents	\$172	\$301	75%

Source: 1980 and 1990 Census of Population and Housing.

Family and/or household size is another important aspect in housing related issues. Often, the average or typical size of a household helps shape the housing market because residential developers often target areas of greatest need and/or demand in terms of housing choice. Larger families for instance, will require larger housing units as opposed to smaller families. Overcrowded housing is also impacted by family/household size. The census reported that in 1990, both the number of persons per household and persons per family dropped from 1980. On average, the 1990 census found .58 persons per room within Las Cruces dwelling units. This figure seems to indicate that in terms of overcrowded housing, the housing industry has done well in ensuring adequate sized housing for residents. Based on Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) standards, housing is considered crowded when the average exceeds one (1) person per room². This should not be construed as saying that the City does not have overcrowded housing units. According to the 1995 City of Las Cruces

² "Consolidated Submission For Community Planning and Development Programs," Housing and Development Reporter, HDR RF-582, April 29, 1996, Section 91.5.

Consolidated Plan, approximately 6% of the households in the City were overcrowded. The Plan cites an increase of 50% of overcrowded units from 1980 to 1990.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES:

The Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the Housing Element should support the Housing Goal of the Las Cruces City Plan: "Promote a balance of housing types for our City." Organization of these items are as follows:

- 1) Housing Availability and Affordability
- 2) Housing and Neighborhood Preservation
- 3) Neighborhood Enhancement/Creation

Housing Goals, Objectives, and Policies are not rigid rules designed to be enforced in all situations, but are designed to provide the City with guidance in a majority of circumstances. As Las Cruces continues to grow, the needs of its citizens will also grow. Therefore, creating policies which can accommodate both current and future housing needs allows the document to "live" and adapt to diverse change.

Housing Availability and Affordability

The ability of the region to provide various housing opportunities for citizens in and around Las Cruces is perhaps the single most important issue related to housing. Many issues, particularly those related to housing choice, economic development, and neighborhood/community image and pride can be directly impacted when housing opportunities are limited. Creating policy language which champions housing availability and affordability across all income levels, serves to foster these concepts. Successful policy creation and implementation increases housing opportunities for all citizens, allowing families and/or individuals to fulfill one of three basic human needs, shelter, and encouraging many others to reach the "American dream"; home ownership. This section of the Element seeks to establish basic policy principles related to housing availability and affordability.

GOAL 1: Provide a variety of housing opportunities that will satisfy the needs of existing and future households at all socioeconomic levels.

Objective 1: Provide and maintain an adequate supply of housing types which provide housing opportunities for the diverse types of households, families, and individuals; including those with special needs, e.g., the elderly, found throughout Las Cruces.

Policies:

- 1.1 To facilitate providing an adequate housing supply, the residential development ratio as identified within the Growth Management Section of the Land Use Element should generally be followed when applicable developments are planned for and established. In meeting these ratios, average family characteristics and the housing demand these families may pose on the housing market, should be considered.
- 1.2 Encourage the use of alternative housing types, styles, and living arrangements (i.e. Conventional Single Family Homes, Apartments, Mobile Homes, Modular Homes, Group Homes, Housing for Older Persons, Accessory Units, Transitional Housing etc.) as a means of making available additional housing opportunities for those who may not otherwise obtain suitable housing through conventional means.
 - a. To facilitate the placement of these alternative housing types, styles, and living arrangements, Master Plans, Concept Plans, and other similar development documents should clearly identify their proposed location in context with surrounding land uses in a manner consistent with the Growth Management Section of the Land Use Element.

Developers are encouraged to take additional efforts such as disseminating the subject land use information in marketing brochures and other similar sources of information to ensure area residents are aware of proposed phasing/build-out.
 - b. Mitigation techniques as outlined in the Land Use Element and/or other appropriate design strategies should be utilized in the development of alternative housing sites to ensure and/or increase overall compatibility with surrounding properties.
 - c. Subject housing should be dispersed throughout the City unless it would otherwise be advantageous in a centralized location. For example, locating group homes or other housing facilities whose clientele require special health care assistance, in areas where such assistance is readily accessible, would be a reasonable exception to this policy.
 - d. The City should periodically make consider amendments to existing codes and regulations as necessary, in order to facilitate the incorporation of alternative housing types styles and arrangements as accepted land uses.
- 1.3 Work with applicable agencies such as the Las Cruces Home Builder's Association and local housing corporations/organizations to collaboratively monitor housing trends and market demands to ensure that the housing stock remains at levels suitable to support population increases and overall housing demand. Throughout this process, emphasis should be placed on ensuring that greater cooperation exists amongst all parties interested in providing housing opportunities within Las Cruces.

Objective 2: Encourage the creation of residential developments which provide housing opportunities for individuals and families of all socioeconomic levels.

Policies:

- 2.1 Investigate, implement, or promote where feasible, measures which contribute to the containment of increasing initial and operating housing costs. Generally speaking, HUD and several lending institutions typically establish housing debt to gross family income ratios between 30% and 32%. This provides a measure of a families ability to afford housing and its direct costs. Measures may include, but are not limited to:**
- a. Promoting and encouraging the use of innovative and contemporary building construction practices which increase overall housing efficiency while reducing overall construction and/or housing costs.**
 - b. Monitoring and implementing as necessary, alternative development/design standards which accomplish the intended purpose and reduce costs.**
 - c. Monitoring and modifying as necessary, development and/or impact fees, to ensure that said fees cover the actual costs associated with the delivery of the relative service.**
 - d. Streamlining development reviews whenever possible.**
 - e. Designing subdivision and building designs to the extent possible, to take advantage of available solar access.**
 - f. Incorporating appropriate landscaping designs for the home to assist in increasing greater energy efficiency.**
 - g. Encouraging the use of contemporary energy efficient building system equipment such as HVAC components.**
- 2.2 The supply of housing available to low and moderate income families should be provided within all areas of the City. To accomplish this, the City supports a partnership approach, between public and private sectors, to ensure affordable housing needs are met. As a goal, 10% of land availability within any area of the City should be devoted to affordable housing, as defined by the Land Use Element's development ratios. Affordability criteria for these income groups should follow the most current Department of Housing and Urban Development definitions/guidelines which are provided in the Appendix. Accomplishment of this policy may be achieved through a variety of means, but not limited to the following policies.**

- a. When land for affordable housing is set aside, the developer may either directly or indirectly develop the property for affordable units or may negotiate the sale of this property to housing organizations for future development. Negotiated selling price of the land should be compatible with the organizations reasonable affordability parameters in order to assure cost containment necessary to create affordable units. When applicable, set aside provisions may be met by providing similar affordable housing opportunities on other property the developer may own elsewhere within the City, as opposed to the subject "study area" (as defined within the Land Use Element) under consideration.
- b. Investigate the use of density bonuses or similar incentives as a means to facilitate the implementation of this provision.
- c. To facilitate the placement of affordable housing, Master Plans, Concept Plans, and other similar development documents should clearly identify the proposed location in context with surrounding land uses in a manner consistent with the Growth Management Section of the Land Use Element.

Additional efforts such as disseminating the subject land use information in marketing brochures and other similar sources of information to ensure area residents are aware of proposed phasing/build-out are encouraged.

- d. The City should encourage a collaborative work effort with all applicable agencies such as housing organizations, lending institutions, local governments, etc., to investigate opportunities through which provisions for affordable housing and the accomplishment of the 10% set aside within the study area can be achieved.
 - e. Develop an Affordable Housing Strategic Plan that contemplates a comprehensive review of all aspects of affordable housing from construction costs to rules and regulations, while establishing specific goals for the future.
- 2.3 Consider establishing PUD and Infill development regulations which specifically address development requirements for the creation of housing meeting the needs of low, moderate, and middle income groups. These regulations should address:
- a. Provisions for design standard flexibility as this often offers suitable opportunities for successful affordable housing creation.
 - b. Incentives such as density bonuses, streamlined development reviews, and reduction of applicable development impact fees which support and enhance development opportunities, especially those which primarily propose affordable housing for the

target groups.

- c. Methods of mitigating potential impacts to adjacent properties through application of design strategies aimed at increasing overall neighborhood compatibility.
- d. The identification of specific land uses in context with those which surround them when Master Plans, Concept Plans, Site Plans, and other similar development documents are required in a manner consistent with the Growth Management Section of the Land Use Element and other companion development policies.

Developers are encouraged to take additional efforts such as disseminating the subject land use information in marketing brochures and other similar sources of information to ensure area residents are aware of proposed phasing/build-out.

- 2.4 The City should continue to seek out new and strengthen its existing Federal housing programs which provide housing opportunities for low and moderate income families.
 - a. The City should investigate opportunities toward establishing a public/private partnership with lending institutions for the purpose of leveraging additional funds for low and moderate income housing development.
 - b. New programs such as the "First Time Home Buyers Program" (HUD) should be implemented to enhance and/or expand companion housing programs already in existence.
 - c. The City should strongly encourage qualified housing development corporations and organizations (profit/non-profit) to participate in applicable Federal housing programs.
 - d. The City should support a wide range of home rehabilitation programs especially those meeting needs which are not satisfied through established efforts. For example, a program which rehabilitates housing stock beyond weatherization activities and below the City's Home Rehabilitation Program may be implemented to reduce the strain on funding resources that more extensive rehabilitation programs may create.
 - e. The City should consider supporting Federal and State "Welfare to Work" legislation programs that may ultimately help individuals and families improve their opportunities for home ownership.
- 2.5 Maintain fair housing opportunities for all residents regardless of race, religion, sex, marital status, ancestry, national origin, color, age, or physical or mental handicap.

- a. Las Cruces will ensure that Federal, State, and Local law is enforced in the case of a discriminatory practice in the sale or rental of any unit.
- b. Las Cruces will provide assistance and/or referral services to appropriate agencies for those households unable to obtain housing because of unlawful discriminatory practices.

Housing and Neighborhood Preservation

Housing and neighborhood preservation are important aspects of housing which are related and often addressed together. Through the successful maintenance and preservation of housing stock whether old or new, a positive image is projected within the neighborhood. The image often expresses the residents' pride and community values as they relate toward trying to maintain a pleasing, functional, and safe environment where their families can live, work, and play.

GOAL 2: Foster and support housing and neighborhood preservation throughout the City to help maintain and/or increase the liveability of the community as a whole.

Objective 3: Increase opportunities for the housing stock to be maintained in a safe and sanitary living condition.

Policies:

- 3.1 Promote the importance for property owners to maintain their properties in accordance with regulations as they relate to debris, noxious weeds, and other problematic conditions which promote unsafe and unsanitary conditions, as a means to promote neighborhood and community pride. Where applicable, increase enforcement of existing regulations which pertain to the maintenance of properties and investigate options for regulation enhancement.
- 3.2 Stress the importance of acquiring applicable permits for the repair, remodel, alteration, or construction of housing and related facilities for the purpose of ensuring that all work conducted meets or exceeds approved construction industry code regulations.
- 3.3 For purposes of promoting housing and neighborhood preservation, the City should strive to implement regulatory mechanisms which allow greater flexibility in the development of existing lots/parcels. Consideration may be directed toward allowing the use of select zoning code criteria such as setback requirements, which were in effect at the time of lot/parcel creation, for proposed construction activities.

Objective 4: To the extent possible, preserve and protect the City's various neighborhoods, by minimizing internal and external impacts which may detract from a neighborhood's ability to offer a safe and aesthetically pleasing environment.

Policies:

- 4.1 The City supports the input and participation process which affords residents an opportunity to voice opinions on issues which may impact the neighborhood in which they live. The City may consider:
 - a. Establishing a process wherein, if a neighborhood desires to create a formal neighborhood group/association, the City make available opportunities for this group to register and identify its officers with the City Clerk. Doing so, affords the City and other interested parties easy access to information concerning these groups/associations so that relevant information can be disseminated as necessary.
 - b. Establishing a newsletter, outreach program, or similar information vehicle by which neighborhood residents may receive relevant information on applicable issues.
- 4.2 The City will work with existing neighborhoods to identify neighborhood priorities and needs as they relate to infrastructure improvement (i.e. street and utilities), provision of parks and open space, and other related concerns. To the extent possible, the City should program available funds and carry out needed improvements in a timely manner.
- 4.3 The City will investigate and implement if feasible, a one-for-one housing replacement program when housing stock is eliminated by means of a public works or related project. This program should serve to facilitate the replacement of housing in neighborhood areas and stabilize housing opportunities found therein.
- 4.4 Follow established policies within the Transportation Element as they relate to proposed placement, functionality, and general design of roadways within and adjacent to neighborhoods, in a manner which minimizes potential adverse impacts to these areas.
- 4.5 The City should continue to support and enhance where necessary, programs such as the Community Pride Program in that such programs lend themselves to promoting community and neighborhood awareness and an overall positive image for the City as a whole.

- 4.6 The City should pursue as quickly as possible, the demolition of substantially dilapidated structures beyond rehabilitation or repair or reuse of viable properties which due to their vacancy, contribute to safety concerns and a general poor image of the neighborhood in which they are located.
- 4.7 The City should continue to support and enhance as necessary, programs such as Community Policing in order to strengthen bonds, increase levels of cooperation, accessibility, and safety between residents and City officials alike.

Neighborhood Enhancement/Creation

This issue champions efforts toward the enhancement of various existing neighborhoods which by their history and/or unique characteristics, may offer a distinct, socially engaging environment for its residents. In addition, similar support is provided for the creation of new neighborhoods which through their design, land use distribution, and treatment of related development issues, offer similar opportunities.

GOAL 3: Create distinct neighborhoods which through their design, functionality and aesthetic appeal, contribute to the quality of life residents desire.

Objective 5: Support Planning Area Process policies of the Land Use Element as they relate to those Planning Areas directly affecting residential neighborhoods.

Policies:

- 5.1 Establish where appropriate, neighborhood, gateway, corridor, or sector plans to help achieve desirable, aesthetically pleasing, and functional areas throughout the City. Implementation of these plans should be carried out using overlay districts/zones, floating zones or other similar mechanisms. Efforts should focus on those areas which may directly impact or benefit residential development.
- 5.2 The City should establish an overlay district/zone or similar mechanism for the purpose of creating guidelines for the enhancement, development, or redevelopment of properties within existing historic districts. Items which should be considered include, but may not be limited to:
 - a. Determination of local district boundaries for the respective districts and the mechanism for property selection allowing boundary expansion if appropriate.
 - b. Consistency with Federal and State laws regarding historic district designation criteria.

- c. Establishment of various incentives for the preservation/maintenance of historically significant properties.
- d. Establishment of various incentives for the development or redevelopment of properties in a manner which closely relates to the historical significance of the district to which they pertain.
- e. Creation of regulations which offer flexibility in meeting applicable development standards, yet allow consistency and compatibility with historic district design criteria.
- f. Identification of financial resources which may be used to assist in the renovation and upkeep of qualifying properties.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Housing Element may be implemented through the adoption and/or establishment of the following:

1. Modify the Zoning Code, Design Standards, Subdivision Code, Landscape Ordinance, and companion codes to implement the policies found within the Housing Element.
2. Establish gateway, corridor, neighborhood, and sector plans as referenced within the Housing Element and other companion elements as a means of improving neighborhood image, preserving neighborhoods, and maintaining/creating viable urban environments in which to live work and play.
3. Establish historic district overlay zones specifically addressing issues which take into consideration the importance of preservation and enhancement of these unique areas.
4. Complete the update of the Comprehensive Plan's remaining elements ensuring compatibility and support for the Housing Element.
5. Monitor the availability of Federal and State funding sources/programs which further promote and strengthen existing housing program efforts conducted in Las Cruces. When such resources become available, submit applications seeking participation in related programs.
6. Encourage and actively solicit participation from various private, non-profit, and public agencies which may assist in carrying out existing housing related programs.

APPENDIX

1997 HUD HOME and Community Development Block Group (CDBG) Income Limits

Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA): Las Cruces, NM
 Adjusted Median Family Income: \$32,500

Adjusted Family Income Limits								
Poverty Level	One Person	Two Persons	Three Persons	Four Persons	Five Persons	Six Persons	Seven Persons	Eight Persons
Very Low Income (50% of MFI)	\$11,400	\$13,000	\$14,600	\$16,250	\$17,550	\$18,850	\$20,150	\$21,450
Low Income (80% of MFI)	\$18,200	\$20,800	\$23,400	\$26,000	\$28,100	\$30,150	\$32,250	\$34,300

- Notes: 1) Median family income has been adjusted for the Las Cruces MSA pursuant to HUD criteria.
 2) Table information is subject to change.



TODAY'S
HIGH: 66
LOW: 29



Antonette Harwood, 8, and her brother Jonathan, 5, take turns playing her guitar outside their house Monday afternoon.

House prices keep Las Cruces from being more affordable

By Jalyne Derrick

It may cost more to buy a new house in Las Cruces than in Albuquerque or Phoenix, despite lower average household incomes here, according to the American Chamber of Commerce Researchers Association.

But Las Cruces is below the national average when it comes to other living costs including transportation, health care, utilities and groceries. It is also cheaper to rent apartments in Las Cruces than in many other cities in the state.

In more than 300 cities across the country, including Las Cruces, people collect data four times a year on everything from the price of a half-gallon of milk to the price of a medium cheese Pizza Hut pizza. The prices are written on special forms, mailed to the researchers association and pub-

lished as the group's Cost of Living Index.

They are found in libraries and Chambers of Commerce all across the country.

A group of Las Cruces volunteers just finished the most recent data collection and the results must be mailed in to the association by today.

For comparison purposes, individual cities are measured against the national average, which is expressed as 100 percent.

April's composite cost of living index in Las Cruces was 98.2 percent of the national average.

Of the cities participating — a few opt not to — Little Rock, Ark., was the least expensive for total cost of living with 83 percent and New York City was the most expensive with 226 percent.

Santa Fe, dubbed in the past one of the most expensive cities in the country, was 110 percent of

the national average, ranking below Los Alamos, which was 115 percent.

"If people want to move here, they can (look at the Cost of Living Index) and see the price differences," said city staffer Tencha Chavira, who, with retired professor John Early, voluntarily direct the data collecting in Las Cruces.

Not considered in the cost of living index are local and property taxes and state income taxes. The report also does not list average household income.

The most recent report is based on data taken April 4 through 6 last year. According to the report — which is based on actual home sales that month — a new 1,800 square-foot house on a 6,000 square-foot lot costs an average \$135,350 in Las Cruces. Houses with the same specifications cost an

Here are how selected cities rank in a comparison of 318 largest cities in the country. 100 is the United States average.

City	Groceries	Housing	Utilities	Transportation	Health care	Misc. goods	Composite
Percentage used to compile index	16%	28%	8%	10%	5%	33%	100%
Little Rock, Ark.	\$4.5%	71.1%	104.8%	95%	72.9%	81.4%	83.2%
Lubbock	91.2	84.9	77.4	101	92.5	90.1	90.2
San Antonio, TX	92.4	83.6	88.8	96.1	97.1	96.8	91.2
El Paso	97.5	87.9	82.8	108.1	91.3	101.9	95.2
Las Cruces	99	100	93.2	94.4	94.8	99	98.2
Farmington	101	94.6	91.5	103	106.8	100.8	98.3
Albuquerque	99.2	103.4	99.8	99.6	104.3	100.8	101.2
Phoenix	104.3	99.3	109.8	113.3	115.2	98.8	103
Santa Fe	101.3	125.3	113.8	102.4	113.2	101.3	109.8
San Francisco	124.8	275.9	101.7	127.9	173.3	112.3	164.3
New York City	144.8	434.8	171.9	121.4	205.9	133.8	226

*Miscellaneous goods refers to fast foods, haircuts, lottery items, clothing, movies and alcohol

Source: American Chamber of Commerce Research Association Cost of Living Index

Cost

Continued from Page A-1

average \$132,000 in Albuquerque and \$126,500 in Phoenix.

And while new homes cost more in Las Cruces, people earn less.

Residents of Albuquerque have an average household income of \$44,400, and those in Phoenix earn an average \$47,500 per household, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's 1997 statistics.

Las Cruces earn an average \$32,500.

"We have a lot of people moving in who are retirees and who don't depend on their jobs for housing," said Ruth Florez, owner of a Century 21 real estate franchise in Las Cruces. "I know the salaries are really, really low here and there are a lot of people who can't afford to buy houses here. It is a problem for the wage earners here, but supply and demand is what does this."

Early said in his eight years directing the research association collection and watching Las Cruces's standing closely, "we've been running just within a couple of points of 100 for ages. Now the one thing that has gone up is the cost of housing."

In 1992, the association reported the same type of house in Las Cruces sold for \$114,250.

The group points out that the index is used to "provide a useful and reasonably accurate measure of living cost differences among urban areas."

Because the data are collected by unpaid volunteers throughout the country, or by employees of local Chambers of Commerce, the association does not promise

there will be no inaccuracies.

Gerald Riley, economic analyst with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, said the government uses a private contractor to collect similar data, rather than association volunteers.

"You have to worry a little bit about how consistent people are collecting the data," Riley said. "Probably most of the data is fine, but it seems likely there's some questionable data in there."

Skip Kasdorf, who directs Houston's AOCRA collection, said the data are used primarily for business recruitment.

"Headhunters use it to determine if it will allow their person

to find a job," Kasdorf said.

Early said White Sands Missile Range used the Cost of Living Index to figure out salaries for contractors about three years ago. The contractors were moving from a city where the cost of living was 85 percent of the national average to Las Cruces, which for years has stood just below 100 percent.

Early said the contractors were given a 15-percent salary increase to make up for the additional cost of living here.

To determine housing costs, the association uses monthly rent on a three-bedroom apartment, the cost of a house, mortgage rates and monthly mortgage payments. The average

apartment in Las Cruces was \$484 per month. Albuquerque's apartments were \$645 and Santa Fe's were \$699.

Early said he calls a local real estate agent to find out what houses are sold for that week and what mortgages are quoted. He uses a group of about 20 volunteers — usually retirees — to help him find out other prices.

Las Cruces was about on national average for grocery costs.

Branigan Memorial Library and New Mexico State University's Branson Library have the index.

People who want to help with price collecting can reach Early at 326-0000.



INTRODUCTION

Purpose of The Transportation Element

The purpose of this Transportation Element is to revise the 1985 Comprehensive Plan to address changes in the city environment that impact the transportation system. This system includes thoroughfares for motorized vehicles, rail, air, bicycle, and pedestrian systems allowing both commercial, public, and personal travel within and through the City of Las Cruces.

The goal of the Las Cruces City Plan is to provide a multi-modal transportation system which efficiently and effectively supports the transportation needs of the community. To achieve this, the Transportation Element seeks to coordinate policies that provide direction for the varied needs, operating characteristics, and implementation strategies of the transportation system.

This revision will facilitate an integration of the transportation system as called for by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and as practiced by the Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). This revision is largely based on the work already completed by the MPO.

As a result of ISTEA, the MPO adopted the Transportation Plan for the Las Cruces Urbanized Area on August 10, 1994. The MPO's Transportation Plan covers multi-modal transportation planning for the City of Las Cruces, the Town of Mesilla, and Doña Ana County. The MPO's plan is prescribed under the ISTEA which mandates that all MPO's prepare, adopt, and periodically update a comprehensive long-range transportation plan. Because the MPO's Transportation Plan is targeted to both the city and surrounding areas, this revision of the 1985 Comprehensive Plan, further defines the City's transportation policies with respect to established MPO policy. This planning process will allow for a revision of the plan approximately every five years or as the need arises.

Planning Process

The planning process began when the MPO revised its transportation policies reflecting the new federal guidelines. This document represents both the MPO revisions and a revision of transportation policies in the 1985 City Comprehensive Plan Goals and Objectives. An analysis of the 1985 policies revealed the need to make transportation policies more responsive to the needs of our growing City, consistent with MPO policies and to establish the Transportation Element as the guiding policy document for the revision and application to the 1981 Zoning Code.

The Transportation Element revision process consisted of the following:

1. Initial review of the 1985 Comprehensive Plan to determine the extent to which current transportation policy addresses existing transportation in the City.
2. Review of current City-wide transportation patterns to determine the extent to which current transportation policy has effectively guided logical, efficient, and environmentally sensitive transportation planning.
3. An extensive review of similar documents from other communities. In September 1993, the "Planning Process" began with the review of transportation plans from other jurisdictions throughout the region and country:
 - City of Albuquerque, NM;
 - City of El Paso, TX;
 - City of Flagstaff, AZ;
 - City of Las Cruces, NM;
 - City of Santa Fe, NM;
 - Town of Mesilla, NM;
 - Doña Ana County, NM;
 - Las Cruces Area Transit System;
 - New Mexico State University;
 - Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments;
 - Ohio Department of Transportation;
 - New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department; and
 - Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Staff also used data and information gathered from various technical studies:

- Interstate Highway Access Study;
- Lohman-Amador Corridor Study;
- US 70 Reliever Route Study;
- Bicycle Facilities and System Master Plan Survey;
- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan;
- US Census' "Means of Transportation to Work" information;
- Vehicle registration information from the New Mexico DMV;
- Land use data from the City of Las Cruces;
- Traffic and vehicle information of the Las Cruces MPO;
- Ridership information from Las Cruces Area Transit; and
- I-25 Corridor Study.

4. Staff reviewed the scope and rough draft of the MPO's Transportation Plan in late December 1993/early January 1994.
5. Staff contacted members of other government departments and jurisdictions, and the public to receive their valued input and insight into the transportation needs of the area and overall transportation services.
6. An initial review of the MPO's Transportation Plan was displayed at a joint open-house for the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department's (NMSHTD) State-wide Transportation Plan on May 4, 1994 at Branigan Library in Las Cruces.
7. Throughout the months of May, June, and July 1994, the Transportation Element's initial policies were presented during MPO public hearings.
8. The MPO's Transportation Plan was approved on August 10, 1994 laying the foundation for revisions to be completed to the City's Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Element.
9. The MPO's plan was reviewed by Planning Department staff and revised to meet the City of Las Cruces' local requirements.
10. Draft revisions were submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission for their review. Recommendations were made on the content of the report and staff was directed to make revisions.
11. Upon completion of a draft, notification of the existence of the draft and two public hearings to discuss the draft were sent to various boards and associations and public entities, such as the Las Cruces Homebuilders Association and the Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce. Public notification was given both in City buildings as well as at the Las Cruces Sun News. Notification included where one could find a copy of the draft (City Clerk's Office, Public Information Office, Branigan Memorial Library, and the Planning Office) as well as the time and location of the public hearings.
12. The Planning and Zoning Commission approved the Transportation Element through a series of Work Sessions and a final review of the document on August 27, 1996.
13. The final draft of the revised Transportation Element was submitted to City Council for review November 13, 1996.
14. A resolution to approve the revised Transportation Element passed and was adopted as the City Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element at a Public Hearing on January 21, 1997.

STUDY AREA INFORMATION

Location

The City of Las Cruces is located in south central New Mexico approximately 50 miles north of El Paso, Texas. It encircles some 50 square miles and is the second largest city in the State of New Mexico in terms of size and population. The City's boundaries lie at the Las Cruces International Airport on the west and at Hanger Lake Road on the east, a range of approximately 19 miles. The north and south borders have a range of approximately 10 miles and extend from the I-10/I-25 Interchange north to the foothills of the Doña Ana Mountains (FIGURE 1 to FIGURE 2).

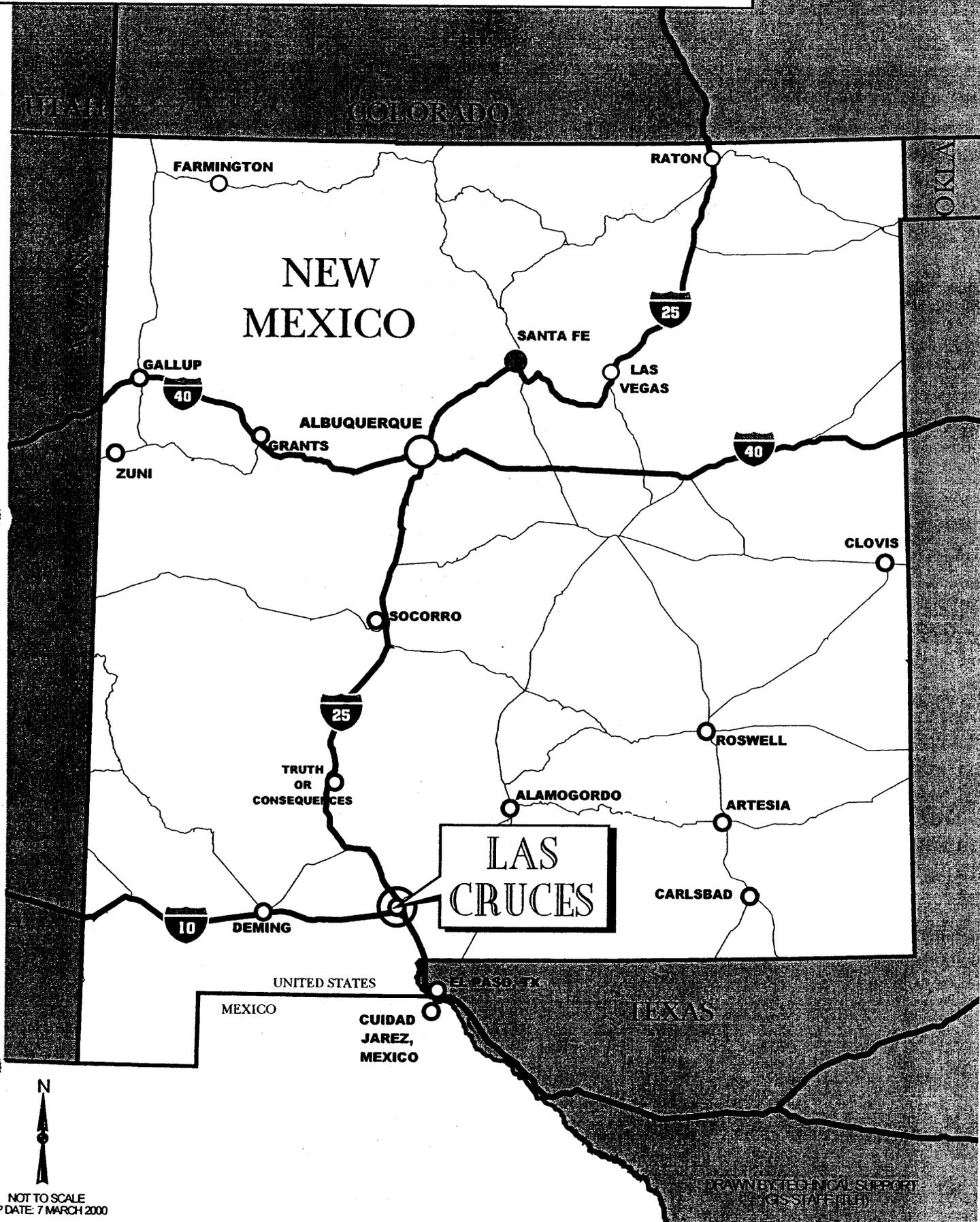
The physical diversity within the City is as wide ranging as its borders. The Rio Grande runs along the City's western edge with the exception of the Airport's extension onto the west desert mesa. The north-south green belt dominates a river valley of agricultural and residential land uses. The river valley is flanked on the east by the majority of Las Cruces, a number of arroyos, small desert hills, stopping just west of the Organ Mountains.

Historical Growth

Surface water from the Rio Grande River made life possible in the desert of southern New Mexico. It was very natural that transportation was primarily limited to north south routes paralleling the Rio Grande. As more and more settlers came, overcrowding lead to the creation of the Village of Las Cruces (circa 1849). The Village of Las Cruces was located in the center of present-day Las Cruces, in what is now known as the Las Cruces Original Townsite [Mesquite] Historic District (see FIGURE 3).

In 1850, the Village of Mesilla was officially incorporated southwest of the Village of Las Cruces with the Rio Grande separating the two. Residents used a trail in the vicinity of Barker Road to commute between the two villages. It is believed that the creation of the Village of Mesilla was the result of local residents wishing to remain a part of Mexico. In the mid to late 1850's, the Village of Mesilla began to prosper over Las Cruces despite being founded at approximately the same time. Mesilla was becoming the major exchange center of goods and a stop for east/west stagecoach lines. However, both villages prospered at the end of the Civil War due to the amount of agricultural land available for purchase. Ranching and mining activities also increased expanding out of the valley toward the Organ Mountains.

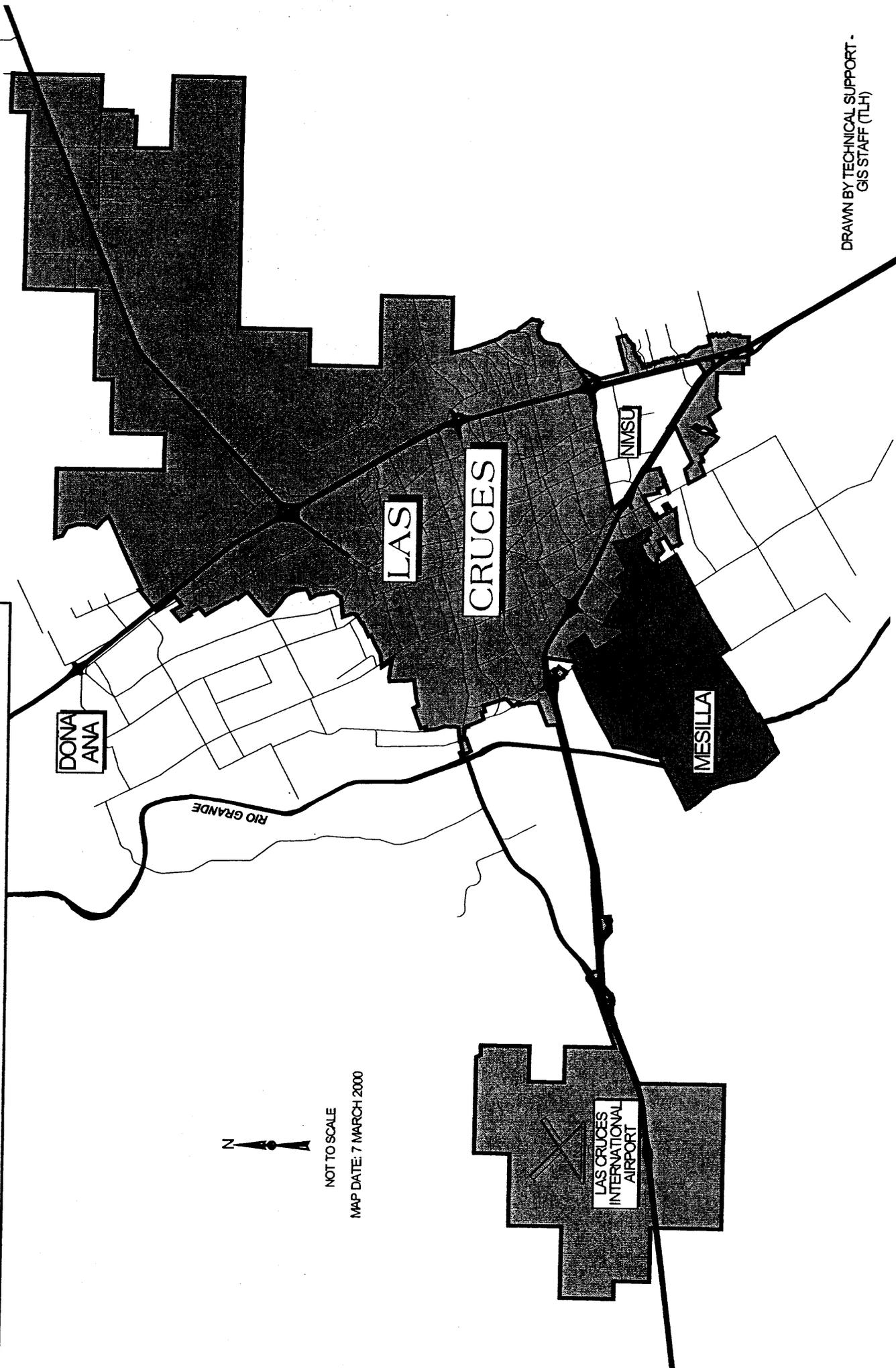
**FIGURE 1: LAS CRUCES, NEW MEXICO
GENERAL VICINITY**



NOT TO SCALE
MAP DATE: 7 MARCH 2000

DRAWN BY: TECHNICAL SUPPORT
(GS-STAFF-1111)

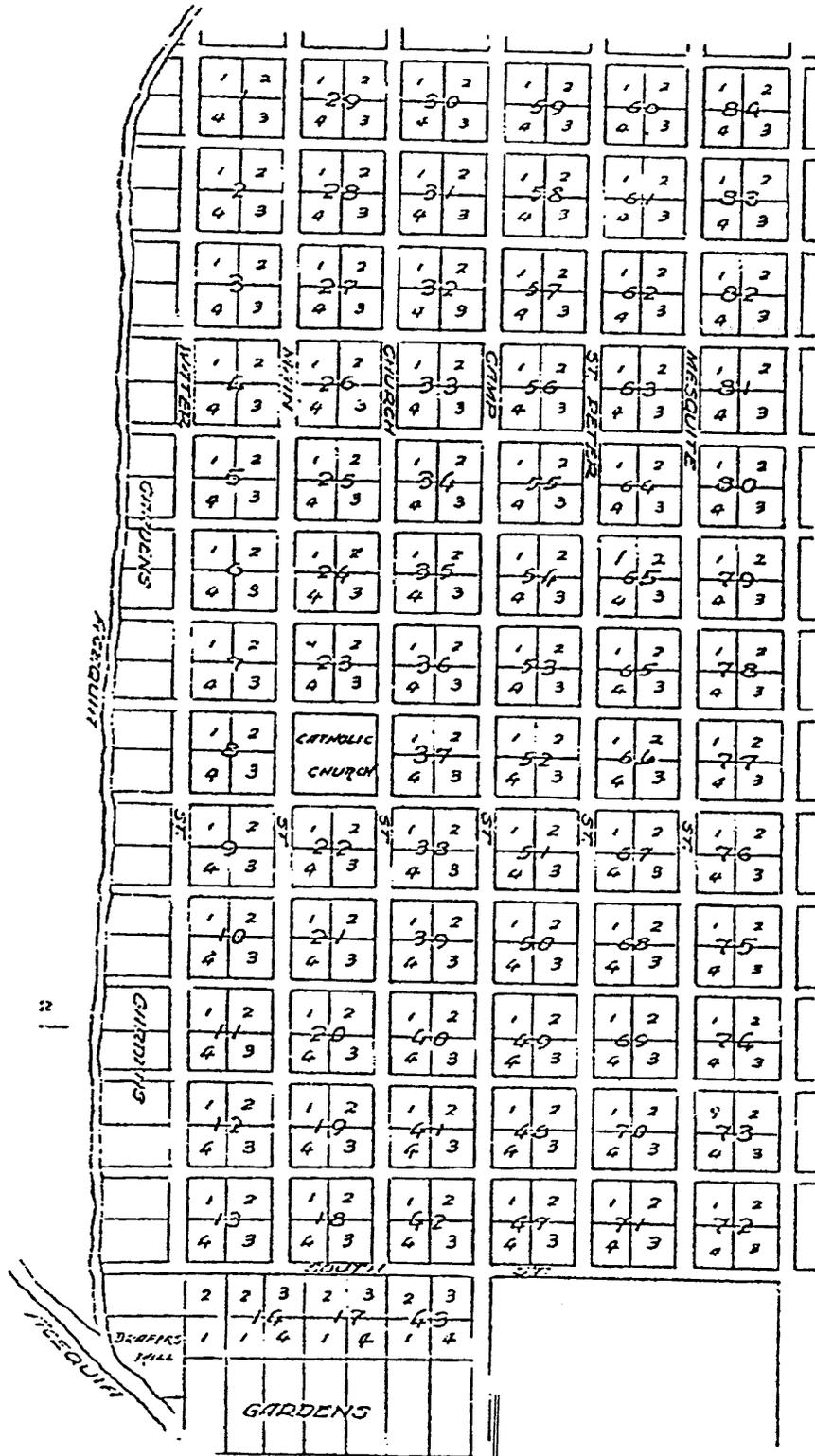
FIGURE 2: LAS CRUCES, NEW MEXICO
AREA MAP



NOT TO SCALE

MAP DATE: 7 MARCH 2000

Figure 3



TOWN
OF
LAS CRUCES

SCALE 1 in = 500'
Filed in year 1853
in Deed Book B.

In the early 1860's, the Mesilla Valley experienced a flood that would permanently change the geography of the region and the relationship between Mesilla and Las Cruces. The flood shifted the Rio Grande River to its current location, cutting a new channel on the west side of Mesilla. This change allowed more access between the two and did not prevent the two villages from experiencing steady growth until the early 1880's.

In 1881, a group of Las Cruces entrepreneurs formed the New Mexico Town Company with the goal of attracting the Santa Fe Railroad to Las Cruces. The Town Company bought many of the farms west of Las Cruces and gave right-of-way for tracks and a depot. The remaining property not used by the railroad was divided into residential lots for the creation of the New Mexico Town Addition Subdivision. This subdivision was to become the Alameda-Depot Historic District that is due west of the original townsite. With new transportation bypassing Mesilla, Las Cruces had an edge in terms of commercial growth.

The commercial growth and continued agricultural activity in Las Cruces attracted an institute of higher education founded by Hiram Hadley in 1888 known as the Las Cruces College. Las Cruces College was located approximately three miles south of the center of Las Cruces and due east of Mesilla. Espina Street and El Paseo Road were extended to provide access to the college. Later, the area known as Mesilla Park (east and west of Main Street south of University Avenue) separated the college and Mesilla. In 1889, the college was renamed by the New Mexico Territorial Legislature to the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. This university was the land grant institution for New Mexico under the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862.

The region prospered through the 1880's but, throughout most of the 1890's it began to experience severe droughts. This led to a decline in the productivity of agricultural and ranching activities that the area had so long enjoyed. In addition, the Rio Grande began to flood on an annual basis causing significant losses to both crop and livestock. To help combat the severe droughts and the annual river flooding, plans were made to construct the Elephant Butte Dam on the Rio Grande near the town of Hot Springs (renamed to Truth or Consequences in the 1950's). Its construction was completed in 1916. The dam and its system of channels and laterals permanently changed the geography of the region and stabilized water control and irrigation for farmers and ranchers. New roads were built paralleling the irrigation systems. This action helped establish the Mesilla Valley as a leader in agricultural production in the United States. In the mean-time, the Village of Las Cruces was incorporated as a town in 1907.

During the 1920's and 1930's, Las Cruces had grown around its original townsite in an organized fashion. This included a formal street network with well-established residential areas and commercial subdivisions. Most of this growth continued through the 1940's, attributed to a strong farming industry, warm climate, and a growing land grant university. In 1945, the

establishment of the White Sands Proving Grounds attracted large numbers of people to Las Cruces employed by government and high-tech industry. This action made US Highway 70 the only roadway to connect the town to the proving grounds. It remains so today. As a result of the proving ground's installation, the town's population increased and became a city in 1946.

By 1955, the City of Las Cruces had established the Central Business District (CBD) between the original townsite and the current Alameda-Depot Historic District. The Central Business District prospered along Main Street, between Church and Water, as the major commercial center for the community. The far north and west areas of the community were still areas of the agriculture activity, yet more roads and people were coming to these areas. The two main east-west roadways were Picacho Avenue (US 70) and Amador Avenue (NM 342). Picacho Avenue was lined with residential and hotel developments with the roadway terminating at Main Street north of the CBD. Amador Avenue, to the west, was the major industrial area of the community and served as the southern boundary for the Central Business District. The City also saw the construction of Interstate Highway 25 in the 1950's (reminiscent of "El Camino Real" that connected Santa Fe with Mexico City), eventually connecting with El Paso, TX and Albuquerque, NM. I-25 would become the major north-south corridor on the east side of Las Cruces and would impact the community's eastward expansion. Other major roadways in Las Cruces were: Mesquite Street, which bisected the original townsite; Lohman (in conjunction with Amador), the main east-west route; El Paseo, a commercial strip connecting the CBD to the university; and Solano, a route with mixed strip-commercial land uses.

In the late 1960's, after the City's continued southern growth toward the university and eastward to the Proving Grounds (White Sands Missile Range), Urban Renewal would begin to change the character of the Central Business District. Main Street, that had once divided the CBD, was made into a pedestrian walkway/mall and two one-way loops, Church and Water Streets, would surround the CBD as a result of the Federal program. All the while, growth continued along US 70 and I-25 bringing Las Cruces and White Sands Missile Range ever closer together. Developments in this era also created numerous local streets allowing access to new single family, medium and high density residential developments.

By 1970, the Census Bureau estimated Las Cruces' population at 37,857 people. From 1970 to 1980, the second interstate highway was constructed, Interstate Highway 10. I-10 is located just inside the southwestern border of the City, replaced US 70 as the main route heading west out of Las Cruces. Another historical impact to Las Cruces' transportation system was the construction of the Las Cruces Flood Control Dam by the Army Corps of Engineers. The dam, along I-25 between Lohman Avenue and US 70, was built to hold a 500 year flood and solve erosion/flooding problems plaguing the city. It would also serve as a formidable barrier to east/west transportation corridors.

New transportation corridors were built as a result of a vibrant local economy (i.e. Roadrunner Parkway and North Telshor Boulevard). Since the late 1970's and early 1980's, the City has experienced continual growth, in particular east of I-25 and along US 70. The Telshor/Lohman area is an excellent example of sustained growth through the 1980's and first half of the 1990's.

References:

The Las Cruces Historic Buildings Survey, Doña Ana County Historical Society
New Mexico State University Master Plan, NMSU, 1990.
Las Cruces, New Mexico, Chamber of Commerce, 1984.

Transportation Planning Background

Thoroughfares:

Las Cruces Area Transportation Study

The first well documented thoroughfare plan developed for the Las Cruces urban area was not conducted in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan dated in the same year. However, the 1969 Las Cruces Area Transportation Study was conducted by the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department and remains a nationally recognized transportation study still used as a reference for similar studies today. Its purpose was to assist in the twenty year prioritization of roadway projects in the Las Cruces area.

The 1969 Study of the Las Cruces Urbanized Area recognized the relationship between land use and transportation and utilized FHWA methods to do so. This involved dividing the area into traffic analysis zones (TAZ's) in order to analyze traffic and land uses as they relate to each other. The study addressed traffic patterns for the average day, week, year, type, and frequency of travel, and volumes at major intersections. Vehicular traffic patterns of Las Cruces in 1969 indicated 44% of all internal traffic movement being work related, followed by social and recreational trips (18%), personal business (15%), shopping (10%), with school, medical, and "other" trips being the next three categories (combined for 13%). This study analyzed travel patterns both within and surrounding Las Cruces; however, it did not cover the area encompassed by the City today.

Twelve recommendations were made as a result of the 1969 Study. A two lane "North Loop Road" was suggested that would have extended from Elks Drive at North Main Street through Dalrymple Road, eventually connecting with a proposed extension of Motel Boulevard and Solano Drive extended to connect with this "North Loop Road". Also, frontage roads for I-25 were proposed to be extended between Lohman Avenue and Main Street (US 70), and Triviz Drive would be extended from Missouri Avenue to University Avenue as part of I-25's

frontage road system. Walnut Street would be improved between Lohman Avenue and Picacho (now "Spruce") Avenue. University Boulevard was recommended to be made into a six-lane road while parts of NM 28, Amador, and Lohman Avenues were proposed to be four-lane roads. Picacho Avenue was proposed to extend to I-25 from its current terminus at the northern end of the Central Business District. The final recommendation was to make Solano Drive a one-way street, with Santa Fe and Española Streets being its counterpart in the opposite direction. The only improvements not made to the road network since 1969 is the "North Loop Road" and the conversion of Solano and Santa Fe/Española Streets into one-way couplets.

After the Las Cruces Area Transportation Study was completed in 1969, a federal program called "TOPICS" (Traffic Operations Program to Increase Capacity and Safety) was the conducted in Las Cruces. TOPICS analyzed existing conditions in conjunction with the results from the 1969 Las Cruces Area Transportation Study for the purpose of improving the traffic signal system and capacity along Las Cruces' roadways.

No major thoroughfare studies were completed until 1987, when funding was sought for the study of a reliever route for US Highway 70. From 1987 until present, the results of an intense effort to relieve thoroughfare congestion on US Highway 70 has resulted in plans to construct a frontage road and local arterial network east and north of Las Cruces. Two studies spurred by US Highway 70's analysis were the Interstate Highway Access Study (IHAS) and the Lohman -Amador Corridor Study. Both recommended staged improvements to the interstates and Lohman-Amador and have been incorporated into the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program.

Public Transportation:

Las Cruces Mass Transit Feasibility Study

In January 1977, with a grant from the Urban Mass Transit Administration (Federal Transit Administration), the City of Las Cruces, through the Southern Rio Grande Council of Governments, developed the Las Cruces Mass Transit Feasibility Study. The feasibility study outlined past and present mass transportation services that the community had to offer and developed proposals for future public transportation services. The primary service at the time was a city bus service that had been contracted out to Whitfield Bus Lines and secondary service provided in the form of taxi cabs. At one time, the bus service had been very large consisting of six bus routes and several suburban routes. Over time, bus ridership decreased and the services were cut to two routes. Whitfield Bus Lines discontinued their last two city bus routes in the summer of 1976. After that, the City of Las Cruces did not take any action on the development of a public transportation system until Las Cruces Area Transit was

established in April 1986.

As part of the Feasibility Study, proposals were developed to determine future public transportation services. Each of the proposals addressed routing, percentage of population to be served, capital outlay, and operational expenses for a five-year time period. One of the proposals actually resembles part of the City's current operation.

Short Range Public Transportation Improvement Program

In January 1985, the City of Las Cruces Planning Department and Bucher, Willis, & Ratliff developed the Short Range Public Transportation Improvement Program for the City of Las Cruces. The program was to analyze the need for and the feasibility of an expanded public transportation system within the Las Cruces Urbanized Area. It also recommend policies and programs to meet the existing and short-term future public transportation requirements for the urbanized area. At the time the program was conducted, most of the public transportation services were limited to transporting persons over the age of 50 to and from the City's senior citizen center. Other forms of public transportation were available with most directed at serving the elderly, the disabled, school-age children, and White Sands Missile Range employees.

This work lead to the creation of the Las Cruces Area Transit (LCAT) System. The study established goals and objectives for public transportation that ranged from improving air quality in the Mesilla Valley, encouraging energy conservation, reducing energy consumption, decreasing congestion, reducing funds spent for street expansion, and providing a public service to the underprivileged and an alternative transportation mode.

Short Range Transit Plan

In June 1988, the City hired Barton-Aschman Associates and NuStats to develop the Short-Range Transit Plan to address the increased ridership demand on the LCAT System since its inception in 1986. The Plan's goals were to make improvements insuring that the City had an efficient and cost-effective public transit system.

The Plan included three alternatives that were intended to provide choices in making improvements to the existing system. They ranged from maintaining the status quo to adding two additional routes. The final recommendation was to add one additional route after minor changes to the existing system. Based on the information provided, LCAT added two routes in August 1988, an increase to the original four. LCAT again added two more routes in September 1991. Both expansions were a result of increased demand for public transportation in areas that were lacking service. Paratransit, or demand response service,

continued to operate as a result of the plan by serving a 3/4 mile area beyond the fixed-route system.

South Valley Transit Feasibility Study - Doña Ana County

The New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department (NMSHTD), the South Central Council of Governments (SCCOG), Doña Ana County Planning Department, and LCAT developed the South Valley Transit Feasibility Study through the Center for Business Transportation Research at NMSU in early 1993. The Study was aimed at determining the potential need and usage of a public transportation system for the southern end of Doña Ana County, otherwise known as the South Valley. This Study looked at population, work, shopping, school, and recreation trips for the communities of Mesquite, Anthony, Chaparral, Santa Teresa, and Sunland Park. The analysis provided alternatives that looked at providing service to all communities while connecting to the existing LCAT System in Las Cruces. In doing so, the study analyzed both fixed-route transit and demand response paratransit services to accomplish the goal. Also, the analysis looked at connecting the South Valley to the metropolitan areas of El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

The Feasibility Study concluded with a suggestion that the best possible way to provide public transportation would be an expansion of the LCAT System. This would eliminate the duplication of administrative and capital expenses associated with creating a new system. This would also provide better coordination with public transportation activities in the Las Cruces urbanized area.

University Avenue Corridor Plan

The City of Las Cruces Planning Department, in conjunction with New Mexico State University and the surrounding neighborhood groups, developed the University Avenue Corridor Plan (UACP) in 1992. The intent of the corridor plan is to avoid the strip commercialization of University Avenue by guiding future decisions on land use, urban design, transportation, landscaping, and enforcement issues.

In the area of transportation, the corridor plan identified issues relating to public transportation, bicycle movement, and pedestrian activities. The plan identified the placement of public transportation pull-off areas along University Avenue that allow for transit buses to be outside the normal flow of motor vehicle traffic at key boarding locations. The pull-off areas will also provide shelters, landscaping, and pedestrian walkways. The plan also identifies the location of new bikeways or bicycle facilities, along the north-south roadways that lead from Las Cruces and terminate at the campus' boundary. In conjunction with the transit and

bicycle facilities, the plan hopes to improve the sidewalk and street lighting within the corridor area.

Bicycles:

Guidelines for Bridle Paths and Bicycle Lanes

The City of Las Cruces developed a document entitled "Guidelines for Bridle Paths and Bicycle Lanes" in the early 1970's (approximately December 1973). This document outlined specific issues for both equestrian and bicycle facilities; including justification for such facilities, design and construction criteria, signage requirements, and cost estimates for implementation. The title of the document indicates the use of bicycle lanes; however, the plan defined and listed requirements for bicycle paths, lanes, and routes.

This plan included exhibits of proposed facilities, mileage, and a five-year implementation plan. Currently, only four of the proposed thirty facilities within the "Guidelines for Bridle Paths and Bicycle Lanes" have been partially installed. These existing facilities include the Amador Avenue, Locust Street, and South Main Street bike lanes; and the University Avenue bike path. Also, parts of the Valley Drive, Triviz Drive, and Union Avenue bicycle facilities were listed within the "Guidelines for Bridle Paths and Bicycle Lanes".

Storm Water Management Policy Plan

In November 1992, the City of Las Cruces approved the Storm Water Management Policy Plan. It established policies for storm water management throughout the City to promote sound drainage practices. The Plan also set goals to promote recreational activities and opportunities within the arroyo system within the city limits and stressed the coordination of such policies and activities with other governments. Within its identified major arroyos, the Plan established requirements encouraging multiple uses for storm water basins and arroyos; including bike paths, pedestrian trails, and buffer areas between land uses.

Other public entities, including the City of Las Cruces and the Elephant Butte Irrigation District, are working on the development of the Regional Water Plan. This plan will be focused on the control, use, and need of water and water development within regional area. However, the Regional Water Plan will not be completed by the time that the MPO's Transportation Plan will be adopted.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan

In July 1994, the City of Las Cruces adopted the Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Master Plan completed by The Planning Center of Tucson, AZ. The master plan evaluated the entire park and recreation system for the City, the first of its kind for Las Cruces. The plan evaluated the existing system in relation to the current population and determined current deficiencies. The plan also provided a list of future park and recreational facilities.

As part of the Master Plan, the consultant performed a survey of citizen's current recreational trends and needs for part of the analysis. This provided some insight into needed bicycling facilities. Of the 39 sports and recreational activities that were questioned within the Parks & Recreation Resident's and Youth's Surveys, 10.8% of all households had at least one member that engaged in some form of bicycling activity. As a comparison, a 1990 recreational survey revealed that the State of New Mexico had an average of 4.8% of all citizen's involved in some form of bicycling. As for bicycling policies within the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, the consultant proposed that the City develop a pedestrian and bike trails network along the Elephant Butte Irrigation District's lateral and drainage ways. However, the developed policies were directed at the use of bicycles as a form of recreation and did not address specific issues such as placement and safety.

Aviation:

Feasibility Study of Air Service for the Las Cruces Airport

In 1972, the City of Las Cruces, through NMSU's Center for Business Services, conducted the Feasibility Study of Air Service for the Las Cruces Airport. It looked at the establishment of scheduled air passenger-freight service to the airport based on current and future needs of the community.

NMSU determined that the airport and the community could support scheduled air passenger-freight service. Most of the financial support for the airline would come from passenger service with the concurrent freight service providing less revenue. A recommendation on the best type of service that was needed was not mentioned because the consultants felt that any service would prosper in the community. No action was taken to develop the recommendations from this study.

Airport Master Plan Study

The Federal Aviation Administration requires a master plan be produced or revised every ten years. From August 1974 to April 1975, a 20-year forecasted study was developed by Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Company for the City of Las Cruces. Six factors were determined that related to the Las Cruces area and air transportation up through 1995. The factors included an economic and air trade analysis of the Las Cruces area, an inventory of existing airport facilities, the evaluation of airport requirements, the need for environmental studies, the preparation of a recommended aviation master plan and land use plan out to 1995, and a financial plan.

The major recommendation that resulted from the study was that the City should pursue the acquisition of land for the airport's future expansion by the 1995 design year. Various improvements and requirements supporting a viable air trade industry at the airport were also recommended. No action resulted from this Plan.

Las Cruces International Airport Master Plan

In 1985, the City of Las Cruces hired CH2M Hill to conduct another master plan for the airport and to determine any possible improvements that could increase service to the City. The master plan found that the area could produce an increase in scheduled passenger service to 83,100 persons and 218,490 aircraft take-off/landings by the year 2005. As an answer to these increases, the plan recommended that the southwest runway be extended, additional taxiways constructed, and the addition of automated navigational aids and weather reporting devices. The only action taken from this plan was the implementation of an ILS (Instrument Landing System) along Runway 8/20.

1995 Las Cruces International Airport Master Plan

In 1995, the City of Las Cruces retained Coffman Associates to update the 1985 plan. Their update consists of two phases. The recently completed Phase 1 report consists of an inventory of all airport facilities. The City awaits the completion of the Phase 2 report where recommendations will be made regarding future airport developments.

Rail:

Rail Access Feasibility Study for West Mesa Air Industrial Park

The Rail Access Feasibility Study for West Mesa Air Industrial Park for the City of Las Cruces was conducted in May 1986 by R.L. Banks and Associates, Inc. The study looked at the physical feasibility of providing a connection from the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe (AT&SF) Railway and/or the Southern Pacific (SP) Railroad to the City's industrial park on the west mesa adjacent to the Las Cruces International Airport. The study also looked at the potential financing and marketing of such a rail spur.

The scope of the feasibility study looked at having either the spur extend from AT&SF's tracks from the southern end of Las Cruces or from SP's rail line south of the airport heading west toward Deming, New Mexico. The study concluded the least costly option would be to connect the spur from the SP line to the industrial park south of the airport. This option provided the least amount of impedance from geographic features and would save \$900,000 over the other option. A spur from the AT&SF rail line would have cost \$9.3 million in 1986, while the Southern Pacific route would cost \$8.4 million. Also, the spur from the SO line would be shorter in length and would follow level terrain. No action has been taken by the City of Las Cruces after the recommendations were made in the feasibility study.

Amtrak Feasibility Study

In 1993, a study was undertaken as a joint effort between many municipalities and several states to determine if a north/south passenger line operated by Amtrak was feasible. One terminus of the line would be in El Paso, Texas while the other end would be at least to Denver, Colorado, possibly even to the Canadian Border. The result of the study was that it would take an annual subsidy of over \$200,000 from each participating state to allow the line to break even. No further action was taken toward the development of the passenger line.

History of the Las Cruces MPO:

In 1982, the City of Las Cruces and surrounding communities within the urbanized area had a population greater than 50,000 people, requiring the establishment of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO's membership is comprised of three local entities; Doña Ana County, the Town of Mesilla, and the City of Las Cruces. The establishment of the MPO provided the forum for a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive region-wide transportation planning effort.

The MPO, as required by FHWA, has taken the lead on planning for the area's future roadway and transportation needs. In 1986, as a part of its transportation planning activities, the MPO developed an official Major Thoroughfare Plan outlining future transportation corridors and the functional classification of roadways. Since that time, all planning documents, produced by the MPO, have been updated as needed; most recently, to comply with the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). These documents, which lead to construction of transportation-related projects, are a coordinated effort among local governments to achieve long term goals.

Through the use of technical studies, the MPO has addressed several important regional issues that impact highly on the City of Las Cruces, such as the US Highway 70 Reliever Route Study, the Lohman/Amador Corridor Study, and the Interstate Highway Access Study. In 1987, the New Mexico State Legislature appropriated \$1,500,000 for the study of a US Highway 70 by-pass (reliever route). Its outcome and subsequent approval determined only a frontage road and urban arterial system would be justified in the 20-year forecast.

The Lohman/Amador Corridor Study was a continuation of the state legislature's original allocation for the US 70 Reliever Route Study. This study determined needed improvements to intersections within the Lohman/Amador Corridor and the potential for Lohman Avenue's extension east of Telshor Boulevard and Roadrunner Parkway. In 1990, the MPO and the New Mexico State Highway & Transportation Department allocated funding for the Interstate Highway Access Study (IHAS) whereby recommendations were made to improve Interstates 10 and 25. Recommendations from IHAS identified new interchanges and grade separations on the interstates facilitating local and through-moving traffic based on traffic projections for the region.

City Comprehensive Planning:

The 1955 City Plan for Las Cruces in its summary and conclusions gave detailed existing traffic conditions and city streets suggested for improvement. At the time US Highway 70 was the most heavily traveled in the state at 7,730 cars per day (Today, it is 26,131 at the same location). Most arterials and collectors were recommended for widening while new roads were identified for construction such as a continuous east/west road north of town and an extension of Alameda north into the county. Specific right-of-way (ROW) widths and guidelines for controlling access were given for different types of roads. Highways required 150-200 feet. "Major Traffic Streets" required no less than 80 feet and were often listed as needing 100 feet. Most collectors identified in the plan were suggested at 80 feet. Examples of projects/policies proposed and accomplished from this plan were the widening of US Highway 70 to four lanes from the City to White Sands Missile Range, a river park at US Highway 70 and the Rio Grande, and the widening and extension of Picacho Avenue to the east

(Picacho/Spruce connection). Some projects not accomplished were a bridge over the railroad tracks on Amador and the construction of a "...connection between North Main Street and US 85 (Valley Drive), north."

Overall, the tone of this plan addressed automobile transportation for the area and did not concern itself with other modes of travel and jurisdictional boundaries, per se. Some mention was made of sidewalks in commercial areas and extension of roads into the county and throughout the state. A large effort was made for the City's opportunity to gain from the suggested "Super Highway Program", later renamed Interstate Highways. The 1985 Plan concerned itself with the fact that the City would be located at a major cross-roads for the nation. Emphasis was placed on the development of White Sands Proving Grounds along with the aforementioned Super Highway Program.

The next major Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1969. The 1969 Plan outlined the completion of the "Super Highway Program." Like the 1955 Plan, it detailed City streets for improvement and listed them as major and minor arterials or collectors. However, unlike its predecessor, the 1969 Plan focused less on outside transportation corridors and mostly on internal streets. Little was given in the way of developing transportation outside the jurisdictional boundaries of the City. However, a few streets stretching into the county were identified such as Lohman Avenue, Telshor Boulevard, and an east/west connection north of the City. The 1969 Plan included other modes of transportation by identifying available bus, rail, and air services. Projects identified and accomplished from 1969 were the eastward extension of Picacho Avenue; the extension of El Paseo south to Union Avenue; Triviz Drive from Main Street to Lohman Avenue; and a policy for residential streets to have at least 34 feet of paving width. Projects not accomplished include a frontage road system along US Highway 70 and an east/west connection from Main Street to NM 292.

The City of Las Cruces' most recent Comprehensive Plan, adopted in November 1985, is by far the most thorough of all the comprehensive plans for each major transportation mode. The Plan's primary emphasis was on an urban form and transportation system that supported each mode of travel, served all segments of the population, and would optimize energy efficiency and environmental quality. It's secondary emphasis was to provide a street system in which traffic movement and property access would be cost-effective, convenient, and environmentally sound.

The 1985 Comprehensive Plan outlined objectives and policies for each mode. The City would develop bikeways/routes and pedestrian facilities as part of its transportation plan and multi-modal transportation system. It's intent was to provide for an effective Transit System and a street network of arterials, collectors, and locals that maintained a Level of Service of "C" or better. Air services were supported with a separate Airport master planning process. Rail services were encouraged at the West Mesa Air Industrial Park.

Additional policies were recommended for the first time such as the City's involvement with the Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization. Through the 1985 Plan, attention turned to a regional outlook on transportation. Policies and programs designed to mitigate traffic demand were incorporated into the plan such as carpooling, staggered work hours and identifying how land use decisions impact transportation.

Current Issues

Due to decreasing resources and increasing demand for services, the formulation of the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan requires consideration of multiple issues:

Resources:

The service required from the transportation network is greater than the amount of resources necessary for its maintenance and expansion. Funding that translates into transportation improvement is limited. In order to keep pace with the demand for service, creative means of financing are being sought to make up the difference. Additionally, only the highest priority and most efficient projects will be considered for funding in the future. Priority is based on factors such as present and future Average Daily Traffic (ADT), Level of Service (LOS), and congestion as derived from Traffic Impact Studies using a twenty year forecast horizon.

Population Growth:

A projected population increase will impact the volume of traffic on the existing transportation system through land use intensity. The rates and locations of growth require land use decisions that either curtail or facilitate transportation in an area.

The general growth of the region should not be overlooked. Dona Ana County and southern New Mexico are both in a state of growth. People from across the region travel to and through Las Cruces. These trips may account for a significant portion of traffic on specific arterials.

Land Use and Increased Road Mileage:

Land uses diversify and increase as roadways are extended and/or expanded. The diversity and distribution of land uses in the City affect the distance and purpose of travel. Local travel patterns change directly with changes in land use density. For example, roads are built in a

developing area and fills with commercial or residential activity. People come to shop and live in the area. As more people travel to the area, it becomes more attractive for development. More development takes place causing an increased attractiveness to the public. More people desire to travel there than the system was originally designed to handle. Congestion occurs, so roads are widened to accommodate the influx of people. The increased access is attractive once again for development. This pattern continues and is cyclical by nature.

Land Use Policy:

The transportation and land use policies of the City of Las Cruces are directly related to each other and equally contribute to the development of the transportation system. The City of Las Cruces actively manages land use and is guided by the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive plan. Land use decisions help determine the size and location of the transportation system.

The City's Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan is currently being revised. At present the draft Land Use Element seeks to support a mixed use concept. If approved this concept would allow a diversified mix of commercial, residential, office, and institutional uses within close proximity. Its implication for transportation is to reduce the need for long trips in that goods and services would be closer to residential developments.

The City and County are jointly participating in the Extra-Territorial Zone (ETZ), a five-mile area adjacent and outside the City. The ETZ Authority and Commission are responsible for zoning, subdivision and the development of infrastructure while managing transition from rural to urban land uses. The ETZ's policies require roadways to be developed to either ETZ development standards or City development standards, depending upon the type and size of the development. The ETZ is also considering a view protection policy that would preserve scenic views within major transportation corridors.

The regional transportation effects of the ETZ effort are the concern of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO's policies are designed to respect the intent of each entity's policies while providing coordination for an efficient urbanized area transportation system. The MPO has policies such as a major thoroughfare plan, roadway design requirements, a policy of a one-mile separation between major arterials, and a commitment to involve the public in decision making.

ISTEA Requirements:

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) requires a plan to be financially constrained, environmentally sensitive, and cover all modes. Plans must accommodate all traffic for a limited horizon. Under ISTEA, requirements for a plan's life span may be indirectly defined through the financing identified for various policies, programs, and projects.

ISTEA also outlines "15 Planning Factors" to guide transportation decisions and planning. The national planning guidelines as a result of ISTEA are listed below.

1. Preservation of existing transportation facilities and, where practical, ways to meet transportation needs by using existing transportation facilities more efficiently.
2. The consistency of transportation planning with applicable federal, state, and local energy conservation programs, goals, and objectives.
3. The need to relieve congestion and prevent congestion from occurring where it does not yet occur.
4. The likely effect of transportation policy decisions on land use and development and the consistency of transportation plans and programs with the provisions of all applicable short and long-term land use and development plans.
5. The programming of expenditures on transportation enhancement activities as required.
6. The effects of all transportation projects to be undertaken within the metropolitan area without regard to whether such projects are publicly funded.
7. International border crossings and access to ports, airports, intermodal transportation facilities, major freight distribution routes, national parks, recreation areas, monuments and historic sites, and military installations. (Note: The airport is recognized as a legal port of entry.)
8. The need for connectivity of roads within the metropolitan area with roads outside the metropolitan area.
9. The transportation needs identified through use of the management systems as required for:
 - a. Highway pavement of federal-aid highways.
 - b. Bridges on and off federal-aid highways.
 - c. Highway Safety.

- d. Traffic Congestion.
 - e. Public transportation facilities and equipment.
 - f. Intermodal transportation facilities and systems.
10. Preservation of rights-of-way for construction of future transportation corridors and identification of those corridors for which action is most needed to prevent destruction or loss.
 11. Methods to enhance the efficient movement of freight.
 12. The use of life-cycle costs in the design and engineering of bridges, tunnels, or pavement.
 13. The overall social, economic, energy, and environmental effects of transportation decisions.
 14. Methods to expand and enhance transit services, and to increase the use of such services.
 15. Capital investments that would result in increased security in transit systems.

MPO Planning:

The Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization is responsible to plan for transportation throughout Las Cruces and the five mile area surrounding the city. The MPO primarily concerns itself with state and federal transportation projects of regional significance. However, its decisions affect the City by the traffic volume information it provides its members and the future roadway classifications it plans for city, county and Town of Mesilla roadways. Without the MPO's concurrence on transportation construction and planning projects there could be no federal dollars spent for Las Cruces' transportation network.

Data And Specific Plan Information

Demographics:

Documented growth rates from the Bureau of the Census for the City of Las Cruces have been substantial from an historical perspective. The data for Doña Ana County is given as a reference. TABLE 1 reflects the highest population growth period occurring in Las Cruces from 12,325 to 29,367 during the 1950's, a growth rate of 138% (Note: During this

count, the Census Bureau changed their procedures to include college students). The 1980's saw a population increase of 38% from 45,086 to 62,126 while the County had a slightly higher rate at 40%.

TABLE 1
HISTORICAL CENSUS INFORMATION OF LAS CRUCES AND DOÑA ANA COUNTY

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CITY POPULATION</u>	<u>COUNTY POPULATION</u>
1910	3,386	12,893
1920	3,969	16,548
1930	5,811	27,455
1940	8,385	30,411
1950	12,325	39,557
1960	29,367	59,948
1970	37,857	69,773
1980	45,086	96,340
1990	62,126	135,510

(Population Report, 1/12/93; Las Cruces Planning Dept.)

Existing and future population estimates for the City and adjacent land were developed as part of the Interstate Highway Access Study. The findings of the study were based on a medium growth scenario and are presented here for analysis. The results (TABLE 2) indicate a moderate but steady rate of growth in these categories for the 20-year period. The current population of the City and 5-mile area is estimated at 101,830 and is expected to reach 159,656 by the year 2020.

TABLE 2
IHAS STUDY; TECHNICAL DEMOGRAPHICS REPORT:
DEMOGRAPHIC TOTALS OF LAS CRUCES STUDY AREA (MPO)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>POPULATION</u>	<u>HOUSING UNITS</u>	<u>EMPLOYMENT</u>
1970	48,321	13,993	N/A
1980	67,787	24,626	N/A
1987*	88,770	31,456	29,981
1990	98,806	38,312	32,606
2000	117,090	45,401	38,640
2010	135,566	52,565	44,737
2020	159,656	61,882	53,638

*Special Census

The IHAS Study depicted growth (population, housing, and employment) for the City and adjacent areas. These are graphically presented in FIGURE 4. The central city has the highest potential to absorb increases in population because of existing infrastructure. Land immediately north of the City (east and west of I-25) and south of NMSU has the second highest potential for growth. Recent land subdivisions and the potential extension of utilities make this possible. Three areas that share third place concerning the "likelihood of growth" are the far north valley including an area west of the river north of US Highway 70, the airport, and the far east mesa.

Land Uses:

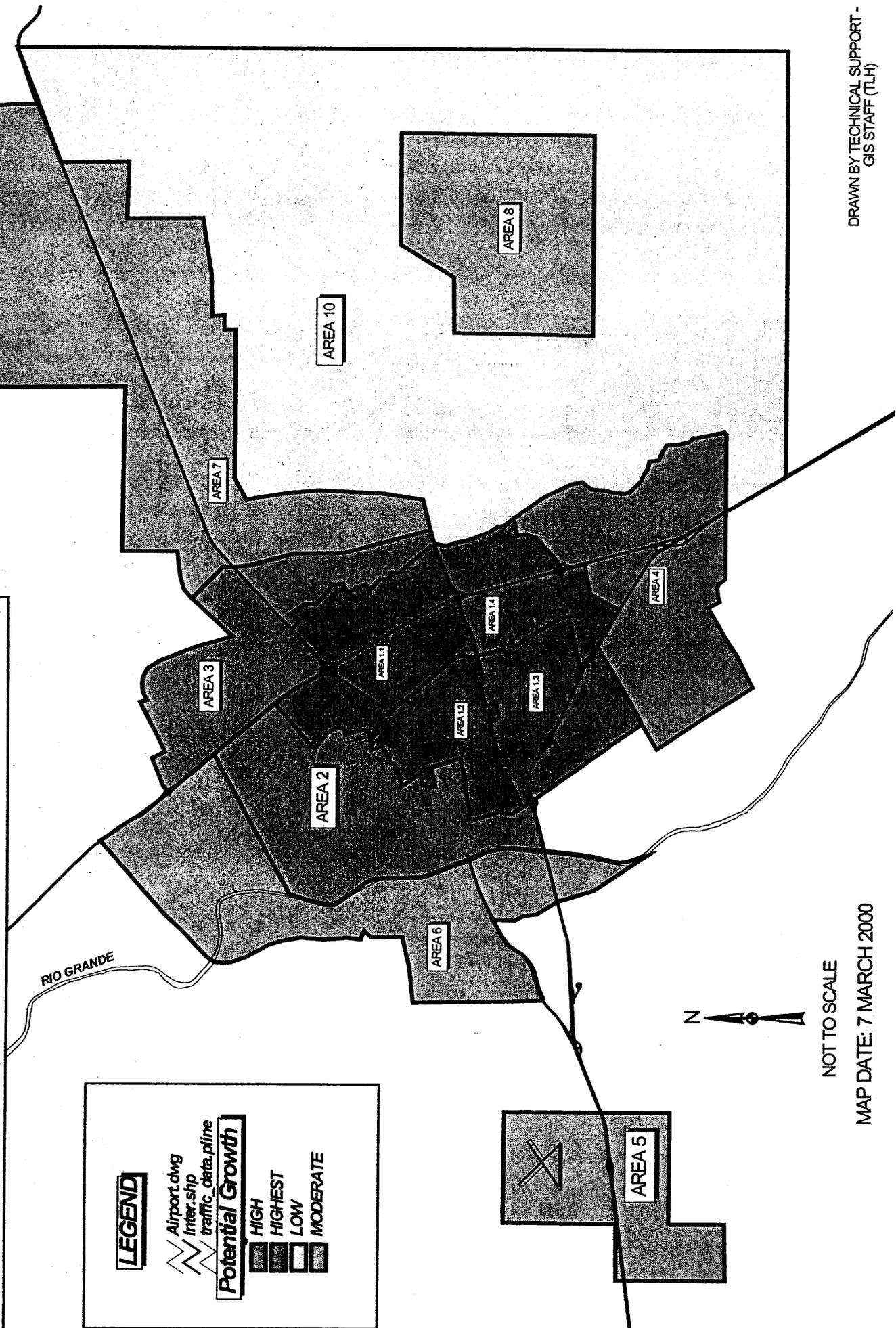
Similar to population, the area's transportation system is greatly affected by land use. Currently, the City exists as a myriad of urban land uses within its 50 square mile corporate limits. The majority of land uses are residential, accounting for 77% of the total number of parcels. This accounts for 27.61% of total land area. Vacant parcels of land comprise 10.69% of total parcels and account for 34.72% of total land area. TABLE 3 displays land use information for the City. As a policy, vacant or undeveloped land within the City may access all city utilities; therefore, it has the most potential for growth within the MPO (see FIGURE 4).

**TABLE 3
PERCENTAGE OF LAND USE IN LAS CRUCES**

	# OF PARCELS	% OF PARCELS	% OF LAND AREA
AGRICULTURAL	153	0.67%	8.00%
COMMERCIAL	1673	7.37%	16.00%
INDUSTRIAL	259	1.14%	2.58%
MISCELLANEOUS	202	.89%	0.35%
PARKS	44	0.19%	0.86%
INSTITUTIONAL	373	1.64%	5.56%
RESIDENTIAL	17525	77.19%	27.61%
VACANT	2428	10.69%	34.72%
WATER WAYS	46	0.20%	4.30%
	22703	10.00%	100.00%

*Source: City of Las Cruces - Land Use Inventory, 1990 through 1994

FIGURE 4: LAS CRUCES, NEW MEXICO
POTENTIAL GROWTH WITHIN THE URBANIZED AREA



A particularly large vacant area is the Las Cruces Dam located east of Interstate 25 between US Highway 70 and Lohman Avenue. This land use is significant because of the transportation barrier it imposes for east-west traffic in this area. It currently forces traffic to Lohman Avenue and US Highway 70 as the only means of getting from existing residential uses on one side to the established commercial uses on the other.

Other significant land use issues are the large tracts of land owned by single entities. Much of the land proposed for development is owned by either the US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or the State of New Mexico Land Office. These lands are held in the public trust and are used primarily for livestock grazing and recreational activities. However, the land has been identified for disposal by the two agencies. Another major land use is the main campus of New Mexico State University, which has 1.6 square miles of institutional and residential uses plus, land surrounding "A" Mountain being identified for future expansion.

Trip Type and Mode Split:

The trip type and mode split in the City, not unlike other areas, relies mostly on Single Occupant Vehicles (SOV's) for transportation. Travel includes trips from home to shopping; from shopping to shopping; from home to work and back again. The travel between home and work is what has the greatest affect on the transportation system. Therefore, it is this amount of traffic considered and accommodated during planning and construction. This information is readily available from the Census Bureau. The data for trips between home and work and how those trips are made is from the 1990 Census Means of Transportation to Work information and presented in TABLES 4 and 5.

TABLE 4
LAS CRUCES MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK
INFORMATION/Mode Split

	<u>volume</u>	<u>percent</u>
Car, truck, or van:		
Drove alone	19,686	74.00%
Carpooled	4,746	17.81%
Motorcycle	131	0.50%
Bicycle	285	1.10%
Walked	610	2.30%
Other means	140	0.53%
Public transportation: Bus	230	0.86%
Worked at home	<u>772</u>	<u>2.90%</u>
	26,600	100.00%

**TABLE 5
LAS CRUCES MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK
INFORMATION/Carpool or Rideshare**

Car, truck, or van:		
2-person carpool	3,080	11.6%
3-person carpool	773	2.9%
4-person carpool	582	2.2%
5-person carpool	86	0.3%
6-person carpool	35	0.1%
7-or-more person carpool	<u>190</u>	<u>0.7%</u>
	4,746	17.8%

By far, the majority of persons traveling to and from work and school drive themselves. The second highest category is that of carpooling/ridesharing (see TABLE 4).

National Standards:

The American Planning Association, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the Urban Land Institute and others are recognized as having established standards and guidelines for transportation issues. The recommendations presented in this plan have been based upon the culmination of the standards and guidelines presented through these organizations.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION AND INTERACTION

The City of Las Cruces being part of a larger urban area necessitated coordinating transportation decisions between neighboring governments and entities. Throughout the development of this revision to the 1985 Comprehensive Plan, the staff will oversee the revision's development to prevent and resolve conflicts in transportation policy.

Because of the City's membership in the Las Cruces MPO, it provides an excellent forum for the exchange of ideas and information with regards to the City's Transportation Element. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) may provide the most adequate avenue for the dissemination of the plan's policy and progress. The TAC's role in the planning process is to provide technical information to the MPO's on transportation issues with respect to member agencies. In this manner, conflicts may be avoided through each meeting's open forum

discussion of specific transportation issues. City staff also participates in all meetings in addition to maintaining close working relationship with Doña Ana County, Town of Mesilla, and Regional Planning Organization staff.

Coordination with state government occurs through NMSHTD staff's regular attendance at MPO's Policy Committee meetings and open lines of communication via mail and telephone. Contact with the federal government is often both direct through mail, telephone, quarterly meetings and indirect through NMSHTD staff. Many of the Transportation Element's requirements have been conveyed directly through the MPO to the New Mexico division of FHWA.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

The Goals and Policies of the Transportation Element shall support the Transportation Goal of the Las Cruces City Plan to "provide a multi-modal transportation system which efficiently supports the needs of our citizens". To accomplish this there is a need to establish detailed and coordinated policies governing the movement of people and goods with respect to the means of travel, the unique characteristics of facility design, construction and co-existence with adjacent land uses.

The Transportation Element Goals and Policies are organized as follows:

- I. Thoroughfares
Cars and trucks using various types of roadways;
- II. Pedestrian
Walking as a form of transportation;
- III. Public Transportation
Buses, carpooling, and transportation for those with special needs;
- IV. Bicycle
Cycling for transportation and recreation;
- V. Aviation
Air transport for economic development and commuter choice;
- VI. Rail
Rail access for economic development and potential traveler choice;

VII. Growth Management

A decision tool for how and where the transportation network expands;

Transportation goals and policies are not rigid rules designed to be enforced in all situations, but are designed to provide the City with transportation planning guidance in a majority of circumstances. As Las Cruces continues to grow, the needs of our citizens will also grow. Creating policies designed to employ the transportation system in our City's growth process demands that such policies grow and change over time. There may be instances where the challenges of a particular area present transportation design issues that dictate how that area will be developed. It may be necessary to overcome those challenges with innovation and/or alternate designs not yet identified. This may be done through a cooperative consensus of public and private interests to produce a safe and efficient "multi-modal transportation system". This defines the concept of a city's comprehensive plan as a "living document".

Priorities:

Once constructed, the following proposed projects will help achieve the goals, policies, and objectives contained in this plan. No single project can provide the transportation options necessary for a complete system. Therefore, it is worth noting that the system is established one project at a time from many different and exclusive funding sources. Smaller projects may be constructed ahead of others viewed by the community as a higher priority. This results from the many types of funding available to local governments. Some fund sources are available annually and then only for specific purposes while, others must be programmed years in advance. In its efforts to maximize resources, the City schedules and constructs each project as the money becomes available. The priorities are as follows:

- US Highway 70: I-25 to NASA Road - Frontage Roads;
- US Highway 70: North Main and West Picacho - intersection improvements;
- Lohman Avenue: Walnut to Las Alamedas - widening and extension;
- Valley Drive: Picacho for two miles north - four lane road construction;
- South Main Street: Union Avenue for two miles south - four lane road construction;
- Spruce Avenue: Triviz to Telshor - underpass of I-25;
- NMSU Campus: Triviz to Las Alturas - underpass of I-25;
- Las Alamedas Boulevard: extension to Lohman Avenue;
- Roadrunner Parkway/Missouri Avenue Connection;
- Del Rey Boulevard improvements;
- West Hadley Avenue improvements;

Relocation of the Roadrunner Transit System central transfer site;
Extension of Runway 12-30 to 10,600 feet at the airport;
Installation of traffic signals as needed.

Plus, continuing the following programs:

Expansion of the Public Transportation System to a regional system;
Expansion of the Bicycle System and Facilities;
I-10 & I-25: various locations - landscaping;
Downtown area: various locations - landscaping;
Las Cruces Railroad Depot - renovations.

GOAL 1: Thoroughfare: To attain maximum vehicular movement and minimum congestion in a cost effective, timely, and environmentally sound manner.

Objective 1: Establish policies that conform to the Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Plan.

Policies:

1.1 Establish a hierarchy of street classifications and their locations based on the Las Cruces MPO's Functional Classification Map or Major Thoroughfare Plan (See Figure 5). Where a roadway is not listed, classification and location should be based on how the road is used, the land-use it serves, and to a lesser degree how it is designed. The following principles may be used to determine a facility's classification (See Table 6 for reference):

- a. Classification should primarily be concerned with the type of travel on a street and not solely the volume of traffic it carries or its design.
- b. Classification should be based on "prevailing use", since streets often possess characteristics of more than one classification.
- c. The street system should maintain a reasonable degree of spacing such that higher classified streets are interspersed (one mile) with lower classified streets placed between them.
- d. New or recently reconstructed streets should be classified on the basis of "future intended function," not current or historic function.

- e. The classification of streets should be made from a community-wide perspective and should take into account whom the street is designed to serve.
- f. A one-way road should be considered together with its one-way counterpart in the opposite direction in any assessment of the functional classification characteristics.
- g. Street characteristics and function change over time, necessitating the need for reclassification;

**TABLE 6
GENERAL FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION CHARACTERISTICS FOR LAS CRUCES**

Classification	Function/Description	Owner	Length	Speed	Access Control	Average Daily Traffic	Lanes	Right-of-way
<u>Freeways and Interstate Highways</u>	intercity and limited access; through trips and truck traffic.	Fed. or State	Intercity & interstate	> 45 mph	as per the Major Thoroughfare Plan	varies	≥ 4 lanes with divided median; may include separate bicycle facilities	≥ 200'
<u>Major arterial</u>	intercity and cross-town traffic; reduced access; connects satellite communities; and provides access across man-made and natural barriers.	Fed., State, or Local	> 4 miles	35-45 mph	regulated median and curb cuts; shared access required	> 15,000	≥ 4 lanes with divided median; may include separate bicycle facilities	≥ 130'
<u>Minor arterial</u>	neighborhood and limited cross-town traffic; Provides access to the major arterial system, to major regional facilities which are not part of an activity center (commercial, business, or industrial) such as minor routes to isolated shopping centers, regional parks, recreation areas, or athletic facilities; Connect two major arterials over a short distance.	State or Local	> 2 miles	30-40 mph	regulated median and curb cuts; possible direct driveway access for high density residential, commercial or industrial uses	> 10,000	≥ 3 lanes; may include bicycle facilities	≥ 100'
<u>Collectors</u>	connect local neighborhood traffic to arterials; In commercial and industrial areas, routes are characterized by high and diversified traffic volumes, numerous turning movements, and local delivery vehicles. Has either the origin or destination of a trip in an area through which the route passes;	State or Local	.5-2 miles	varies	no driveway access for single dwelling units; internal circulation and direct access is moderately regulated	> 5,000	≥ 2 lanes; may include bicycle facilities	≥ 80'
<u>Major Local</u>	commercial, business, or industrial access routes; heavy truck and diversified traffic volumes and turning movements; provides connectivity to the major and minor arterial system; or internal circulation within commercial or industrial districts. Any street within a developed commercial or industrial center not otherwise classified.	Local	< 1 mile	low speeds	varies	varies	≥ 2 lanes; may include bicycle facilities	varies
<u>Local</u>	connects site specific traffic to collectors; provides internal circulation for neighborhoods; may connect adjacent subdivisions. Trips may begin or end in a residential area and may stay within a single subdivision. Any street within a residential area not otherwise classified, excluding alleys.	Local	< .5 mile	lowest speeds	Provides direct property access.	< 5,000	2 lanes; may include bicycle facilities	≤ 50'
Private Street	not publicly maintained; connects site specific traffic to locals and/or collectors; provides internal circulation for neighborhoods or large commercial developments; may connect adjacent subdivisions. Trips may begin or end in a residential area or may stay within a single subdivision.	Private	< .5 mile	varies	Provides direct property access.	varies	≥ 2 lanes; may include bicycle facilities	varies

h. Street name suffixes should reflect their existing or proposed classification.

1.2 Seven street types shall be used within the City: Interstates and Freeways; Major Arterials; Minor Arterials; Collectors; Major Locals; Locals; and Private Streets.

Objective 2: Establish standard designs for all streets where cars, trucks, and other vehicles operate.

Policies:

2.1 Standard designs should be based on roadway classification as follows:

a. Freeways and Interstates:

- Designed in accordance with applicable Federal Highway Administration, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and/or New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department standards;
- Access shall be limited to interchanges and grade separations identified within the MPO's Transportation Plan;

b. Major Arterials:

- Four or more lanes, divided, or one-way pair; plus, separate facilities for alternative modes called for through a planning process.
- Access shall be limited and shared according to the amount of property frontage maximizing and protecting through traffic flow; The frequency and size of access points should also be determined by adjacent land use and zoning. Adjoining property owners may be responsible for coordinating shared access agreements with their neighbor. Corner properties having less than the required frontage for access, may only be granted access from the lower classified and/or lower volume street.
- Medians, raised curbs, and other channelizing techniques may be used to protect through traffic flow, where appropriate.
- No on-street parking permitted, unless part of an officially adopted plan and by specific City Council action.

- No access shall be granted to single family residential uses.

c. **Minor Arterials:**

- Three or more lanes, or one-way pair; plus, separate facilities for alternative modes called for through a planning process.
- Access shall be limited and shared according to the amount of property frontage providing conservative individual commercial, industrial, and office property access and median cuts; The frequency and size of access points should also be determined by adjacent land use and zoning. Adjoining property owners may be responsible for coordinating shared access agreements with their neighbor. Corner properties having less than the required frontage, may only be granted from the lower classified and/or lower volume street. No access shall be granted to single family residential uses.
- Medians, raised curbs, and other channelizing techniques may be used to protect through traffic flow, where appropriate.
- No on-street parking permitted, unless part of an officially adopted plan and by specific City Council action.

d. **Collectors:**

- Two or three lanes with double center stripe or one-way pair; plus, facilities for alternative modes called for through a planning process.
- Access shall be limited and shared according to the amount of property frontage for moderate individual commercial, industrial, office, and/or high density residential property only; The frequency and size of access points should also be determined by adjacent land use and zoning. Adjoining property owners may be responsible for coordinating shared access agreements with their neighbor. Corner properties having less than the required frontage may only be granted access from the lower classified and/or lower volume street. No access shall be granted to single family residential uses unless part of an officially adopted plan or by specific City Council action.
- Striping, raised curbs, and other channelizing techniques may be used to protect through traffic flow, where appropriate.

- No on-street parking permitted, unless part of an officially adopted plan or by specific City Council action.

e. Major Locals:

- Number of lanes to be determined by the forecasted full build-out of adjacent commercial, industrial or office uses' traffic volume for both cars and heavy vehicles. Two lane facility or one-way pair; plus, facilities for alternative modes called for through a planning process.
- Access shall be limited and shared according to the amount of commercial, industrial or office property frontage. The frequency and size of access points should be determined by adjacent land use and zoning. Adjoining property owners may be responsible for coordinating shared access agreements with their neighbor. Corner properties having less than the required frontage may only be granted access from the lower classified and/or lower volume street. No access shall be granted to single family residential uses unless part of an officially adopted plan or by specific City Council action.
- Medians, striping, raised curbs, and other channelizing techniques may be used to protect through traffic flow, where appropriate.
- Cul-de-sacs may be developed for commercial areas. When peak hour trips are greater than 100, the design shall be according to the results of a traffic impact study (See Objective 8, Policy 2 of this element).

f. Locals:

- Varied sizes and designs of two lane facilities or one-way pairs serving only residential land uses; plus, facilities for alternative modes called for through a planning process.
- Access shall be permitted for each individual property in accordance with an access and median cut ordinance.
- Intersections should maintain a minimum spacing of 125 feet and meet at no less than a seventy degree angle.
- The allowance of on-street parking shall be subject to and determined

through the development/redevelopment process as identified on final plats.

- Local streets may be used for alternate and emergency access to residential subdivisions.
- Cul-de-sacs in residential areas may not exceed more than 1500 feet in length and provide access to more than 50 dwelling units.

g. Private Streets:

- Not publicly maintained.
- Access shall be permitted for each individual property, provided traffic safety is maintained.
- Intersections should maintain a minimum spacing of 125 feet and meet at no less than a seventy degree angle.
- The allowance of on-street parking shall be subject to and determined through the subdivision process as identified on final plats.
- Private streets may be used for alternate and emergency access to residential subdivisions.
- Cul-de-sacs in residential areas may not exceed more than 1500 feet in length and provide access to more than 50 dwelling units.

Objective 3: Provide a guide for consistent construction and right-of-way specifications and practices on all roadways regardless of classification.

Policies:

- 3.1 All streets should have an asphaltic concrete pavement designed according to 20 year forecasted traffic volume of both cars and heavy vehicles. However, where high turning volumes are expected, portland cement concrete may be used in those areas.
- 3.2 All new streets should be constructed from the outside travel lanes toward the inside median so that sidewalks, curbs, and lighting may be put in place at time of initial construction.

- 3.3 Curb and gutter should be used to channelize traffic and storm water run-off. Roll-over type curbing may be used in low density residential areas.
- 3.4 A concrete header curb should be installed at locations susceptible to erosion and/or asphalt degradation if an area is to remain undeveloped for a period of two years.
- 3.5 Upon approval by the Development Review Committee, temporary asphalt curbs may be used where planned and programmed street expansion would necessitate the curb's relocation within a specified time frame.
- 3.6 A 10-year storm event may be accommodated at the curb not extending into the street beyond the outer lane of travel. If a bike lane is present, alternate means of storm water conveyance or street design free of storm water conveyance may be necessary to accommodate bicyclists. A 100-year storm event may be accommodated in the outside travel lane.
- 3.7 Every effort shall be made to strategically locate manholes and drainage grates to minimize inconveniences to motorists and bicyclists. Utilities will be placed within the right-of-way but not necessarily under the travel lanes.
- 3.8 Sidewalks should be placed on each side of a street built to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standard with wheelchair ramps at each intersection.
- 3.9 Street lighting should consist of high pressure sodium vapor street lighting with shielded, fully enclosed, non-polluting light fixtures. Light standards may be of those approved by a specific plan adopted by the City.
- 3.10 Standardized signalization shall be used by the City or of a design specifically approved by the City Traffic Engineer for a specific area.
- 3.11 All signage and traffic control devices must conform to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and/or City standards.
- 3.12 Traffic control boxes, meters, drainage grates, light standards, pedestrian shelters, etc. should be placed to avoid conflict with sidewalks, bike facilities, and clear sight triangles.
- 3.13 Fences and/or walls should be placed to avoid conflict with sidewalks and bike facilities and screened with vegetation, paint, etc., as called for in the Urban Design Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

- 3.14 At intersections of differently classified streets, the design standards of the higher classified street shall supersede those of the lower for the intersection's design.
- 3.15 All street layouts must be appropriately designed for topography, design speed, classification, projected traffic volume, traffic composition and surrounding land uses.
- 3.16 Developers/subdividers are responsible for construction on-site and adjacent improvements as required by these policies. Builders are responsible for constructing sidewalks, and if not yet installed, curbs and gutters at the time of building construction.
- 3.17 Developers/subdividers are responsible for their pro-rata share of off-site improvements as determined by a traffic impact study for such improvements necessitated by the development of their property. Such off-site improvements shall include structures or facilities required along existing roadways or other transportation facilities. If such roadways or other facilities are planned but not built, a payment in lieu of physical improvements may be given and applied toward its future construction.

Objective 4: Build attractive and functional roadways;

Policies:

4.1 Landscaping should:

- maximize the visibility within a clear site triangle
- be compatible with and not damage other facilities (i.e.; root damage on sidewalks)
- maintain a consistent theme within a sector of the city to be determined by the Urban Design Element of the Comprehensive Plan
- be allowed within drainage facilities
- be provided if parking lot driving aisle reductions and parking spaces are designated for compact vehicles provided the changes do not create additional congestion at the site's access point(s) to adjacent streets
- encourage the use of "drought tolerant" vegetation to support the City's water conservation ordinance
- be watered through automatic irrigation unless native (low intensity water use) plants are used as approved by the City Landscape Architect

- 4.2 "Adoption" of medians is encouraged for civic groups, clubs, religious organizations, and businesses. This may include taking over maintenance of existing medians or their initial preparation and planting.

- 4.3 Street furniture, transit stops, fire hydrants, drainage facilities, and other public utilities will be placed at appropriate locations to provide pedestrian refuges and situated to avoid intrusions into sidewalks or bike facilities.
- 4.4 Street signage should have larger letters for major and minor arterials and collectors than for other classes of streets. Signs shall be placed at conspicuous and uniform locations within intersecting rights-of-way and shall be visible at all times; address ranges shall be incorporated into all new or replaced street signs.
- 4.5 Decorative lighting, sidewalk design or traffic control standards (poles) approved by the City may be used if they are part of a plan adopted by City Council.

Objective 5: Unite all methods of personal travel and the transport of goods and services under the concept of intermodalism.

Policies:

- 5.1 Any facility or development that accommodates more than one mode of transportation shall be considered intermodal.
- 5.2 Vehicular, truck, bus, pedestrian, and bicycle travel should be accommodated within the same right-of-way given the function of the street or as called for through plans adopted by City Council.
- 5.3 All high density residential, commercial, and industrial developments should make reasonable accommodations for alternative mode's to access the site provided the adjacent right-of-way can or is planned to accommodate that given mode.

GOAL 2: Pedestrian: Develop safe and convenient pedestrian access throughout the city.

Objective 1: Provide a guide for consistent design practices on all pedestrian facilities.

Policies:

- 1.1 All pedestrian facilities should be a minimum of four feet wide, free of obstacles, and shall conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991 (ADA), as amended.
- 1.2 Reasonable efforts shall be made to bring all existing pedestrian facilities into conformance with ADA and may coincide with major street reconstruction, redevelopment, etc.

- 1.3 Sidewalks shall be built at the time a home or main structure is built.
- 1.4 Pedestrian facilities as part of a roadway cross section must be constructed from concrete.
- 1.5 Pedestrian paths outside of roadway cross sections may be constructed from a variety of materials (concrete, wood, asphalt, recycled plastic, etc.) provided the finished product produces a hard surface suitable for its intended purpose and is approved by the Development Review Committee.
- 1.6 All pedestrian facilities should be designed to maximize personal security. This may include but not be limited to lighted walkways and emergency access phones.
- 1.7 Landscaping should be implemented according to a consistent theme along the facility or correspond to the specific area of the city as determined by the Urban Design Element of the Comprehensive Plan.
- 1.8 Benches and other forms of street furniture should be incorporated into pedestrian facilities and provided at appropriate locations but, not so as to obstruct pedestrian movement.
- 1.9 Pedestrian facilities should connect a new school with the neighborhood it serves and should be constructed prior the school's opening.

Objective 2: Unite all methods of personal travel and the transport of goods and services under the concept of intermodalism.

Policies:

- 2.1 Pedestrian facilities shall be constructed on all roadways except interstate highways and developments with residential lot sizes greater than .75 acre.
- 2.2 Large parking lots are intermodal sites and in turn shall incorporate a striped pedestrian walkway from the sidewalk and parking area to the site's main use (excluding temporary parking areas for special events).
- 2.3 A multi-purpose, "run, walk, jog" concept should be employed for facilities separated from vehicular travel.

Objective 3: Allow pedestrian facilities to be used for economic development;

Policies:

- 3.1 Development shall be encouraged using the mixed use concept of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Compatible non-residential uses would be developed within walking distance of existing residential areas; thereby, increasing pedestrian activity for work, school, shopping, and recreation.
- 3.2 Pedestrian pathways should be enhanced in areas frequented by citizens and tourists through special or standardized designs, landscaping, signage, signals, lighting, and paint.
- 3.3 The downtown area shall encourage pedestrian travel by appropriate design and uses.

GOAL 3: Public Transportation: Maximize transportation availability to the general public while maintaining existing ridership and expanding service to more users under the oversight of a Transit Advisory Board.

Objective 1: Provide a guide for Public Transportation's operation.

Policies:

- 1.1 A Transit Advisory Board shall act as in an advisory capacity to the Transit Department. It should consist of members from NMSU (2), Dona Ana County (1), a senior citizen, a disabled citizen, citizens at large (2) and potentially a member from the Convention and Visitor's Bureau and/or the Chamber of Commerce. The Transit Advisory Board may review standard design criteria for transit plazas, intermodal sites, and bus stops.
- 1.2 The Transit Department shall serve as the primary staff support for all public transportation activities including fixed route, demand service, and rideshare activities. (Rideshare coordination activities and park-and-ride lot construction shall be supported and administered through the Transit Department.
- 1.3 The Transit Department shall have active participation and coordination with the Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Transit Department shall adhere to Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Plan.
- 1.4 The fixed route priority should be a consistent "on time" schedule with the objective of providing service to an ever expanding coverage area.

- 1.5 Fixed route buses should employ the necessary technology to effectively operate on congested streets as reconstruction projects make the installation of such technology feasible.
- 1.6 Use appropriate technology and methods to ensure the personal safety of all public transportation users.
- 1.7 Where possible, public transit shall use smaller buses to conserve resources.
- 1.8 Additional and innovative revenue sources shall be explored where opportunities exist for the provision of providing transit buses for charter services to area school districts, government, civic, private groups, and special events.
- 1.9 While recognizing that in Las Cruces, public transit accounts for less than one percent of all trips, aggressive advertising through all communication media should be used to promote public transportation in order to reduce traffic congestion.

Objective 2: Provide a guide for public transportation's coverage area.

Policies:

- 2.1 The Transit Department should prepare a master plan identifying among other things, existing and proposed service to areas of more intense land use and higher zoning where population and/or the number of projected trips are supportive of public transportation.
- 2.2 Coverage area should be determined by financial and liability constraints, roadway design, user demand (including policies contained in Objective 4 of this section), opinion surveys, and scheduling requirements.
- 2.3 When expanding the coverage area, Las Cruces RoadRUNNER Transit should:
 - strive for a thirty minute headway on fixed route service
 - not duplicate the service of other existing providers
 - determine the feasibility of taking over another provider's service when that provider discontinues their service and the availability of funds allows for the expansion
 - strive toward expansion into all parts of the City

- work with Dona Ana County and Town of Mesilla staff to provide service and acquire revenue from outside the City
- determine the viability and implement a multitude of revenue generating uses for idle paratransit vehicles
- consider the policies under Objective 4 of this section

Objective 3: Unite all methods of personal travel and the transport of goods and services under the concept of Intermodalism.

Policies:

- 3.1 Any facility or development that accommodates more than one mode of transportation shall be considered intermodal.
- 3.2 The Transit Department, in coordination with the Planning Department and the Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization should establish defined intermodal sites providing service to automobiles, buses, bicycles, and pedestrians. These sites may incorporate but are not defined by the presence of benches, shelters, pull-off areas, bike parking facilities, etc.
- 3.3 All fixed route buses should accommodate bikes and be fully accessible vehicles.
- 3.4 All existing high density residential, commercial, and industrial developments should make reasonable accommodations for public transit access to the site, provided the adjacent right-of-way can accommodate or is planned to have a transit route.

Objective 4: Use public transportation for economic development.

Policies:

- 4.1 To provide a link with the local and statewide tourist industry, emphasize tourist routes through advertising.
- 4.2 Consider adding a Convention and Visitors Bureau and/or Chamber of Commerce member to the Transit Advisory Board.
- 4.3 Provide service to hotels/motels in Las Cruces and Mesilla.

4.4 Establish "feeder bus/vans" bringing regional residents to Las Cruces' commercial, manufacturing, and/or industrial districts.

GOAL 4: Bicycle: Advance the use of bicycles as a viable mode of transportation within the City of Las Cruces and MPO area.

Objective 1: Establish a method whereby coordinated bicycle planning and route alignment may include but is not limited to the following: identifying funding sources, producing user friendly maps, recognizing various types of users and trip purposes, and establishing design standards.

Policies:

- 1.1 The City will follow the procedures and standards contained with the Bicycle Systems and Facilities Master Plan.
- 1.2 New or redeveloped transportation infrastructure shall incorporate bicycle facilities within their design as identified within the master plan.
- 1.3 All designs shall be based on approved and consistent development standards with the utmost regard for public safety.
- 1.4 Consideration shall be given to the use of AASHTO standards.
- 1.5 Other indirectly related design issues are currently a part of existing design standards and shall be considered to enhance bicycle facilities such as, stripping, lighting, pedestrian access, drainage covers, pavement, signage, and landscaping.

GOAL 5: Aviation: Maximize General Aviation activity and convenient Commercial Aviation meeting the needs of the local service area, and to support aviation-related industrial and transportation development at the Las Cruces International Airport.

Objective 1: Support development of aviation activities.

Policies:

- 1.1 An Airport Advisory Board shall provide policy advice to the City Council.
- 1.2 The City should conduct a master plan study of the airport at least once every ten years or as required by NMSHTD or the Federal Aviation Administration. The study limits may

also include the adjacent industrial park.

- 1.3 The City shall adhere to Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Plan, the Airport Master Plan, and the West Mesa Industrial Park Master Plan and Development Strategy.
- 1.4 An increase in air transportation infrastructure, e.g., expanded hangars, taxi-ways, runways, and passenger terminal, shall be encouraged to promote growth in adjacent industrial park.
- 1.5 The City should work with the private sector, MPO, state and federal agencies to secure funding for aviation infrastructure.
- 1.6 The City shall have the option to condition zone change and special use permit requests to meet the provisions of this section.

Objective 2: Unite all methods of personal travel and the transport of goods and services under the concept of intermodalism.

Policies:

- 2.1 Any facility or development that accommodates more than one mode of transportation shall be considered intermodal.
- 2.2 Any new passenger facilities should incorporate specific design and planning to enhance the transfer of people from private autos or shuttle busses to the airport. This may include but not be limited to coordination or "partnering" with local shuttles and/or the Transit Department for passenger pickup and drop off at the airport.
- 2.3 Consideration shall be given in the master planning process for the exchange of products between air transport providers and businesses in the local planning area.

Objective 3: Use aviation for economic development.

Policies:

- 3.1 Support private sector development of airport facilities and the adjacent industrial park through the City's coordination of development activities. A vibrant local airport will enhance the Las Cruces urbanized area's marketability and competitiveness.

GOAL 6: Rail: Enhance rail transportation as a viable alternative mode for goods and a potential mode for people.

Objective 1: Establish rail planning and development guidelines for areas adjacent to rail facilities.

Policies:

- 1.1 Support heavy industry near rail facilities if appropriately screened from the Las Cruces Railroad Depot and residential areas.
- 1.2 Work through the MPO to identify funding sources, public and private.
- 1.3 Protect truck to rail centers from encroachment by residential uses.
- 1.4 Encourage buffering between existing rail and future development of residential uses.
- 1.5 Encourage development exclusive of residential uses in an area west of the railroad tracks, north of Brown Avenue, east of Valley Drive; and south of Hadley Avenue, unless off-site improvements take precedent.
- 1.6 Install and maintain signal crossing guards at all intersections.
- 1.7 Apply conditions, if necessary, to zone change and special use permit requests to meet the provisions of this section.
- 1.8 Solicit cooperation with rail companies and rail-oriented activities to reduce noise and rail speeds through urbanized areas.

Objective 2: Unite all methods of personal travel and the transport of goods and services under the concept of intermodalism.

Policies:

- 2.1 Any facility or development that accommodates more than one mode of transportation shall be considered intermodal.
- 2.2 Truck access should be considered on all decisions regarding rail uses. Provisions should be made to allow truck-rail freight service to industrial parks.

Objective 3: Use rail access for economic development.

Policies:

- 3.1 The Las Cruces Railroad Depot may be developed for tourist uses.
- 3.2 The City shall work with NMSHTD on their efforts for a north/south passenger line.
- 3.3 The City shall support the concept considering a potential rail spur to the West Mesa Industrial Park.

GOAL 7: Growth Management: Enhance the development of Las Cruces using the Transportation System as a guiding factor.

Objective 1: Coordinate concepts contained in the Transportation Element so that they may be used by the City as tools to manage growth.

Policies:

- 1.1 All transportation system development shall follow all comprehensive planning policy and regulatory requirements adopted by the City.
- 1.2 The City shall adhere to Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Plan.
- 1.3 New streets shall be designed to operate at a Level of Service (LOS) of C (see the definition section) upon completion of construction.
- 1.4 Reconstructed streets strive for LOS of C, but a LOS of D may be suitable where development costs are prohibitive and/or the street is scheduled for improvements within the Las Cruces MPO's Transportation Improvement Program or the City's Capital Improvement Program and as approved by the Development Review Committee (DRC).
- 1.5 A traffic impact study will be required from the developer/subdivider where 100 or more new inbound and/or outbound trips are generated by their development during an adjacent street's peak hour or at the discretion of the DRC and with input from the Traffic Engineer. Smaller developments may warrant a study if there are issues over traffic safety or the development is located in an already congested (LOS D) area. For the purposes of this plan, the development of 160 Single Family Dwelling Units; 220 Multi-Family Dwelling Units; 10,000 Sq.Ft. (gross) Retail; 60,000 Sq.Ft. (gross) Office; or 135,000 Sq.Ft. (gross) manufacturing or a combination thereof to equal or surpass 100 peak hour trips

will require a study. Traffic Impact Studies will be overseen by the City Traffic Engineer, City Engineer, and have consultation with the Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization. The studies will consist of the following:

- a. Methodologies shall be based upon the Highway Capacity Manual and the latest edition of the ITE Trip Generation Manual or more recent trip generation study(s) recognized by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE).
- b. Existing traffic volume for both site and non-site traffic shall be used in the analysis. Traffic conditions surrounding the development shall be first analyzed for existing AM, Noon, and PM peaks, then existing peak conditions with site traffic.
- c. Future traffic volume shall be based on a twenty year forecast horizon. Forecasts shall be based upon locally adopted zoning, land use and transportation plans and demographic forecasts. It will consider background growth as well as build out of adjacent sites and/or the general vicinity possibly up to a mile away. Future traffic conditions surrounding the development shall be analyzed for AM, Noon, and PM peaks without the site, then peak conditions with site traffic.
- d. Critical turning movements shall be analyzed at both on-site and off-site intersections at access points affected by the development.
- e. Level Of Service (LOS) shall be calculated both with and without the site traffic and with any proposed improvements for the existing and the forecast year.
- f. Improvements justified through the study shall be identified to bring the adjacent and/or nearby transportation facilities up to a LOS of C for that portion of traffic added to the transportation network as a result of the development. Other traffic demand reduction measure may also be considered.
- g. Financing methods and financial responsibility for any proposed improvement shall also be identified in the report, such as development fees or special assessment districts requiring site or off-site improvements. Additional right-of-way (ROW) may be dedicated for public use in lieu of improvements if agreed to by the City. Otherwise all improvements to the transportation network, whether on or off-site, as a result of the proposed

development are the financial responsibility of the person, company, or agency responsible for the development. The City may participate in a pro-rata share to accommodate twenty year city-wide growth.

- 1.6 Turn lanes shall be provided where practical or as called for in traffic impact studies through the use of center, acceleration, and/or deceleration lanes at intersecting streets and/or access points.
- 1.7 Major arterials should act as "gateways" or entrances to the urbanized area through the implementation of special and standardized designs, landscaping, signage, signals, lighting, and paint. Minor arterials and collectors may serve as entrances to specific areas of the City.
- 1.8 Non-conforming streets should be brought into conformance at the time of major reconstruction, exclusive of routine maintenance or repaving.
- 1.9 Rights-of-way shall be reserved and/or acquired through the redesign process of existing streets and/or through the subdivision process for new streets or streets near the urban fringe; thereby, bringing them into compliance for ROW as specified in the MPO Transportation Plan. Reconstruction plans/proposals of existing areas, will be reviewed by the Development Review Committee and various agencies as necessary, to build a consensus of the scope, design, and phasing of ROW acquisition and reconstruction activities.
- 1.10 Traffic Calming and Traffic Demand Measures shall be considered before the installation of new traffic signals and/or stop signs. Examples include, but are not limited to reduced pavement width, additional turn lanes, or metered parking.
- 1.11 Subdivisions and/or master planned areas shall have at least two automobile access points and should strive to accommodate additional alternate mode access points unless developed along a cul-de-sac no greater than one thousand five hundred feet in length terminating in a cul-de-sac or temporary turn-around.
- 1.12 In the downtown area and other unique commercial areas specifically identified in an adopted plan, design aspects shall consider pedestrian issues as a higher priority over vehicular traffic.
- 1.13 Adequate on-site parking shall be provided and parking lots designed so as to prevent the stacking of vehicles onto the street. However, the DRC may consider shared or reduced parking options as a function of a parking lot's capacity necessary to meet parking demand on a case by case basis. If shared parking is requested written legal documentation shall be

provided to the City that demonstrates the right to use nearby off-site private parking. No required parking may be in a public ROW.

- 1.14 Where appropriate and at the discretion of the DRC, if a site is located along an existing or planned transit route, a 10 percent reduction in the number of spaces may be granted to encourage the use of alternative modes provided a minimum of two spaces (one regular and one handicap space) remain after the reduction as well as at least enough bicycle parking to allow two bicycles to park securely.
- 1.15 Parking requirements must be considered for each change in a site's land use.
- 1.16 Telecommuting is considered a viable method for traffic demand reduction. A one for one employee parking space reduction may be considered for the number of "Full Time Equivalent" employees certified through the business registration process to work on a telecommuting basis. Since employees would not travel to the worksite on a given day, the employees would not require an on-site parking space. However, the number of telecommuting employees at a specific site will not affect any additional development or business activity requirement other than the number of employee parking spaces.
- 1.17 The City shall collect and maintain data as may be necessary for the design and study of transportation, including but not limited to road inventories, traffic volumes, including bicycles and pedestrians, the installation of permanent automatic traffic classifiers, ridership surveys, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), etc., and may be maintained on the Geographic Information System (GIS).
- 1.18 The City shall have the option to condition zone change and special use permit requests to meet the provisions of this section. This may include but not be limited to requirements for coordination with bike, public transportation, or pedestrian facilities, additional right-of-way, and coordination with other developers.
- 1.19 Any deviations from the specifications above shall be considered and determined by the Development Review Committee.



INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Environment Element:

The Environment Element is a guide to protect and enhance the natural environment and the impact on such environment through man's daily activities within the City, which in turn will make the City a more pleasant place to live and work. The City's main priority for implementing this Element is to provide for continued protection of the natural environment and reducing or limiting the impacts made by human activity. The Goal of the Environment Element within the Las Cruces City Plan, and the purpose of the City Comprehensive Plan Environment Element, is to "protect our surrounding natural environment". A protected and maintained natural environment will lead to an overall improvement in the quality of life in the City by preserving our natural resources for current and future generations to view, to live in, and to enjoy.

Environmental issues are regulated through legislation at all levels of government and have technical aspects that may be hard to describe in laymen's terms. These environmental aspects are just as important as the placement of land uses and transportation corridors and effect and are affected by the placement of said uses and corridors. Environmental issues combine and support other elements to this Comprehensive Plan and may be included in the development of future specific sector, neighborhood, or corridor plans.

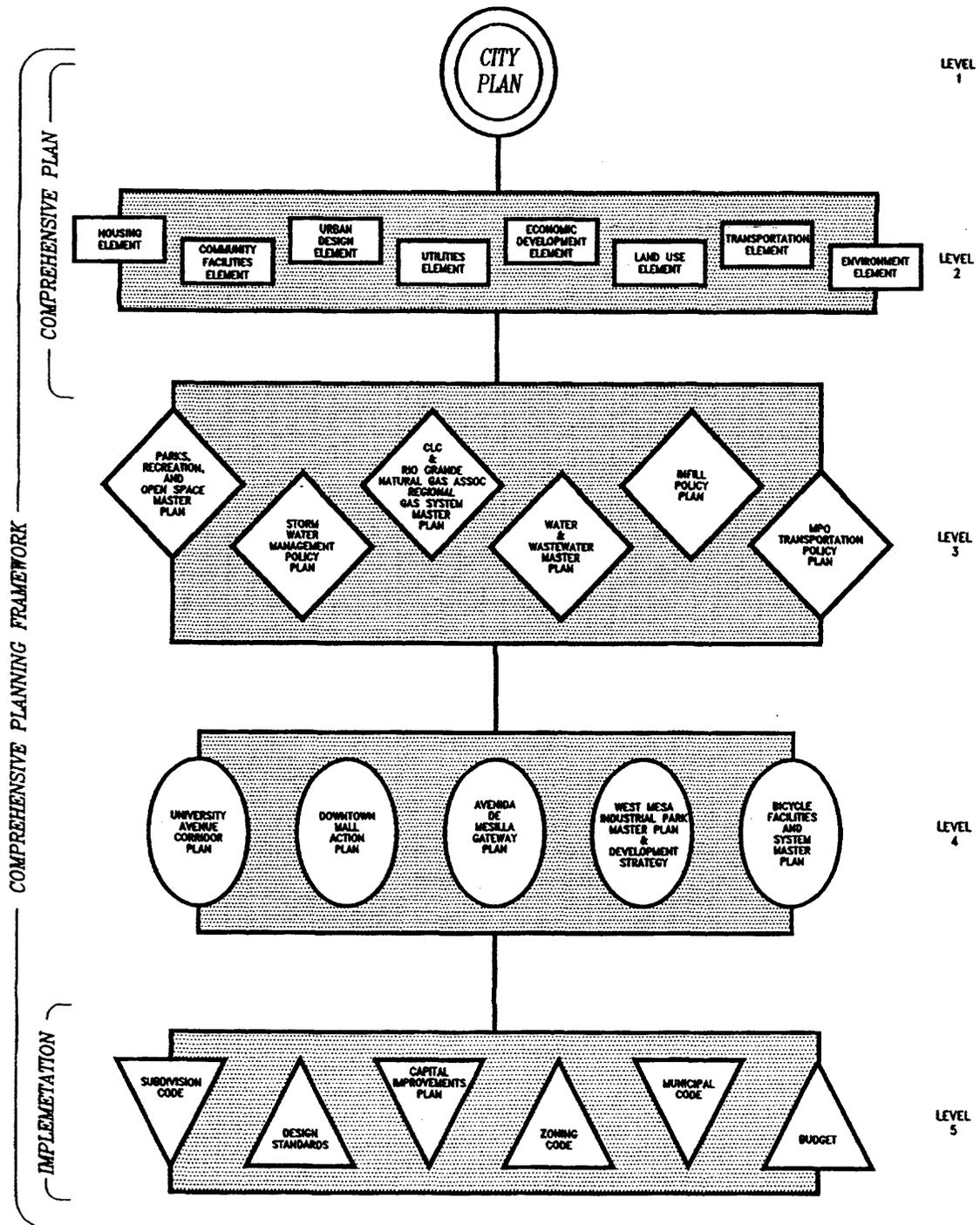
Planning Process:

This document is a revision of environmental concerns policies to the 1985 City Comprehensive Plan's Goals and Objectives. A review of the 1985 policies revealed the need for revision to make the Environmental Concerns Element, from henceforth renamed the Environment Element, more responsive to the needs of a growing City. As outlined within the City Plan, each element, as it becomes updated or revised, will be approved and adopted by the City Council. Once all of the elements of the 1985 Plan are revised, the City Plan will be formalized and all elements combined and will be adopted by the City Council. This will in turn create the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Las Cruces. This revision of the Environment Element will also serve as a guiding policy for the revision and application of existing City ordinances and as an update to the City's 1981 Zoning Code.

Comprehensive Planning Framework:

Figure 1 illustrates the City's Comprehensive Planning framework. The City Comprehensive Plan consists of the Las Cruces City Plan (Level 1) and the eight comprehensive planning elements (Level 2). Each of the planning elements receives conceptual guidance from the City Plan.

Figure 1



Level 3 plans are Sector or Area plans which focus on a specific issue concerning the City, such as the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan or the Storm Water Management Policy Plan. Level 4 plans are Neighborhood and Corridor plans which focus on a small area or roadway corridor within the City, such as the University Avenue Corridor Plan or the Avenida de Mesilla Gateway Plan. Level 5 plans are the implementation documents or actions designed to complete certain policy aspects of the City Comprehensive Plan, such as the Zoning Code, Municipal Code, and Capital Improvement Plan. Also crucial to the implementation of the City Comprehensive Plan is financial and legal support. Implementation programs of the Plan shall be coordinated with the City's performance-based budget and the Municipal Code, where needed.

PLANNING BACKGROUND

1955 Development Plan

The 1955 Development Plan, what some would call the City's first comprehensive plan, was not divided into specific elements but identified a comprehensive list of issues that need to be addressed by the City. This list included trade resources, mineral resources, climate and topography, parks and recreation areas, and a street plan. Environmental issues that were identified included health and sanitation that covered the City's water supply, sewage disposal, garbage and refuse disposal, housing conditions, public health, and mortality figures. The Development Plan also identified the need for insect control, hospitals, sanitation and flood protection.

In 1955, the City's water supply had limited capacity but did provide for a high quality water supply. The City's sewer treatment plant was relatively new, yet the City was experiencing problems with having residences connect to the system and to remove the existing outside privies.

Flood protection for the Rio Grande had been addressed through the completion of the Elephant Butte and Caballo dams. Las Cruces did, however, experience heavy flooding from storm run-off from the Organ Mountains. This plan identified the need for a flood control dam in the general location of the current Las Cruces Flood Control Dam along what is now North Telshor Boulevard. As part of the Plan of Action, the first item listed was for the City to acquire land for flood control projects.

1968 Comprehensive Plan

The 1968 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Las Cruces, like the 1955 Development Plan, did not have a specific element dedicated to identifying and addressing environmental issues. Most of the environmental issues related to and focused on the City's Public Utilities. The

opening paragraph identified that in the recent years, cities have benefitted from expanded knowledge of the role of air and water pollution in the spread of disease. Air pollution was mentioned in this paragraph, yet, in 1968, there were no specific air pollution issues identified nor addressed for the City.

Water pollution was not specifically addressed within the Plan. The Plan identified that the City's water supply was obtained from deep wells and that there may be problems from the source, primarily related to quantity and not quality. Storm drainage was also identified within the Plan, in that the City needed to slow down the amount of flow that enters the City from the Organ Mountains. This Plan was the first to mention that the Las Cruces Flood Control Dam was in the initial steps of planning and construction with the assistance of the Army Corps of Engineers.

The 1968 Comprehensive Plan mentioned the Sewer Treatment Plant was built in 1954 and expanded in 1966. At the time, the plant was operating at 55% of its maximum, which could serve 70,000 persons. The problems experienced with the treatment plant was not an environmental issue. The City was experiencing a problem with sewer lines that were too small in size to bring the waste to the treatment plant.

1985 Comprehensive Plan

The 1985 Comprehensive Plan was the first comprehensive plan that included an Environmental Concerns Element. The Element focused on four specific areas; overall environmental quality, water, air, and seismic hazards. Some areas of each subsection were implemented while others were never addressed. The overall environmental quality issues related to providing environmental review process and a checklist of environmental issues that needed to be developed. The water section focused on optimizing water resource conservation by adopting conservation standards, finding economically viable reuse of treated effluent, maintaining acceptable water quality standards, and improving possible surface and ground water quality.

The Air Quality section outlined that in the early 1970's, Dona Ana County and four other New Mexico counties were designated as air quality maintenance areas. In 1975, Las Cruces exceeded both state and national standards for carbon monoxide, suspended particles, and photochemical oxidants (or ozone precursors). Since 1975, the City had come into conformance for carbon monoxide and ozone precursors. From 1977 to 1980, Las Cruces still exceeded the particulate matter standards for both the state and federal levels. The two main objectives for air quality improvement related to maintaining and improving the air quality in Las Cruces and Dona Ana County and quantifying air pollution impacts from transportation demands within the City.

Seismic activity was also addressed within the 1985 Comprehensive Plan by considering increased seismic zoning regulations and to study the potential for seismic hazards within the county.

CURRENT ISSUES

AIR QUALITY:

Ambient Air

One of the greatest environmental concerns for Las Cruces, Dona Ana County, and the region relates to the air we breath and in which we conduct our daily activities. Air quality standards and monitoring were first established as part of the Federal Clean Air Act of 1967 (CAA). The CAA has been amended through the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1970, 1977, and 1990 (CAAA). Air quality for Las Cruces and Dona Ana County is monitored by the New Mexico Environmental Department's Air Quality Bureau. There are two types of air quality standards in New Mexico, the federal standards and the state standards. The federal standards, which include both a primary and secondary standard, are established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) as authorized by the federal Clean Air Act and its amendments. The state's ambient air quality standards are established through the Air Quality Control Regulations authorized under the State Statutes.

The federal ambient air quality standards are defined as follows:

National primary ambient air quality standards define levels of air quality which the EPA Administrator judges necessary, with an adequate margin of safety, to protect the public health.

National secondary standards define levels of air quality which the administrator (EPA) judges necessary to protect the public welfare from any known or anticipated adverse effects of a pollutant.¹

The primary air quality standards are intended to address and protect human health and welfare. The secondary standards were created and implemented to protect the health of animals and vegetation, to reduce corrosion of buildings and materials, to maintain and improve visibility, to retain viable crop production, and to generally improve the overall quality of life.

The primary impact of decreased air quality (or air pollution) on human health is through the body's respiratory tract and system. The human population most vulnerable to the effects of

¹ Code of Federal Regulations, (40 CFR 50.2b) Office of the Federal Register, July 1, 1976, p.4

air pollution are the elderly, the very young, and those with respiratory ailments and diseases.²

The EPA through the NAAQS has established six criteria pollutants that are monitored by the states, though not all six pollutants are monitored within the entire area of each state. The six pollutants are:

- 1) Inhalable Particulate Matter (PM₁₀ & PM_{2.5}),
- 2) Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂),
- 3) Carbon Monoxide (CO),
- 4) Ozone (O₃),
- 5) Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), and
- 6) Lead (Pb).

Though particulate matters, carbon monoxide, and ozone are the three criteria pollutants most likely to affect Las Cruces, particulate matters and ozone present the greatest and most recent concern.

The City of Las Cruces is meeting, or in attainment of, the NAAQS for all criteria pollutants (see Element & Specific Data Information section) based on the current determination by the EPA. However, the NAAQS have recently been amended by the EPA for both particulate matter and ozone with new monitoring requirements for particulate matter. The City may, depending upon the new standards, become nonattainment for these two air pollutants. Nonattainment for any air pollutant generally means increased regulations to reduce vehicle traffic and emissions and constraints placed on growth and transportation projects.

Natural Events Policy and Action Plan

In 1996, the EPA enacted a new Natural Events Policy to address particulate matter problems that primarily effects the western United States. The Natural Events Policy (NEP) is intended to serve those areas that have high exceedances of particulate matter standards, within either designated attainment or non-attainment areas, whose exceedances are attributable to known or identified natural events. The known natural events are specifically limited to volcanic and seismic activity, wildland fires, and high wind events³. The NEP recognizes there are areas in which the surrounding range land during high wind seasons and episodes, in conjunction with crop production, crop tillage, or drought conditions, may be lead to violations in the particulate matter standards.

² The 1991-1993 Air Quality Annual Report, (NMED/AQB-94/1) State of New Mexico Environment Department Air Quality Bureau, 1994, p.4

³ Memorandum from Mary Nichols, Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation, USEPA, May 1996, ppg. 1-10.

The NEP calls for the states, through the local governing agencies, to develop a Natural Events Action Plan (NEAP) to identify and reduce health and man-made issues associated with particulate matter violations. By adopting and implementing a NEAP, areas, like Las Cruces and Dona Ana County, can avoid being later classified as non-attainment for particulate matter standards. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires that each NEAP should be adopted within 18 months of the first air quality violation or the date of establishment of the NEP Policy (May 30, 1996), whichever comes first. Las Cruces' first violation of PM_{10} standard occurred in the summer of 1996 and is therefore required to complete any NEAP by November 1997. The State of New Mexico Environment Department created the NEAP for Las Cruces and Dona Ana County and submitted the NEAP to the EPA by the November 1997 deadline. The State is now in the process of advising and coordinating with the local governments to implement policies and regulations to address the particulate matter pollution problem during high wind events. The Planning Department for the City of Las Cruces is reviewing the NEAP for possible future amendments and corrections. The Planning Department is also reviewing current practices necessary to implement the NEAP.

All NEAP's are required to address public health issues through education and awareness. This generally involves a warning system and education of what susceptible persons should do in high particulate matter discharge situations. All NEAP's are also mandated to identify anthropogenic (man-made or human induced) activities that may compound the particulate matter problems during periods of high wind. This section requires the local communities to take action to reduce the dust that originated from anthropogenic sources by using Best Available Control Measures (BACM). BACM's must be implemented for those contributing sources within three years after the first air quality violation attributed to high wind events or from the date of the Natural Events Policy issued by the EPA (May 30, 1996).

BACM for PM_{10} are techniques that achieve the maximum degree of emissions reduction from a source as determined on a case-by-case basis considering technological and economic feasibility. Examples of PM_{10} BACM techniques include dust suppression chemicals or pavement installation for unpaved roads, fill permits that include dust suppression treatments, windbreaks along roads and undeveloped areas, and applying dust suppression chemicals to vacant and undeveloped areas.

The NEAP is intended to be developed and implemented by those persons that have the most at stake due to poor air quality from blowing dust, primarily the local citizens through their local governing bodies. This requires the participation from all local governments because the problem does not recognize jurisdictional boundaries, with the New Mexico Air Quality Bureau serving in an advisory role to the local governments. However, all NEAP's, once developed, must be approved by the New Mexico Air Quality Bureau and then submitted to the EPA for final approval.

Point Source

All new industrial developments (or point sources) that release any type of chemical pollutant into the air are required to receive air quality permits from the State of New Mexico. This would include any expansion or changes to existing point sources. The State will in turn determine if any deterioration of air quality will occur for the area once the development is operational. The determination by the State includes a public review and comment period prior to approval of the air quality permit. The State may also include provisions to include technological improvements to reduce air pollutant emissions or may deny the permit in its entirety. This process is authorized by the Clear Air Act and Amendments.

The City may, depending upon the type of development, may wish to allow only certain types of industries within the community that will not contribute point source pollutants. The City may also limit industries not because of point source pollutants, but because of activities that may deteriorate or contribute to deterioration of the overall air quality.

The City of Las Cruces Environmental Quality Advisory Committee may also review those environmental issues that are important to the City and provide a report to the City Council. This board's function can include the review and comment on point source air quality permits.

WATER RELATED ISSUES:

Water Quality & Conservation

The quality of water all Las Cruces use every day for drinking and watering our lawns is no less an important environmental issue than the quality of the air we breath. The sources of water need to be protected and the amount of water used needs to be conserved and used wisely. The quantity of water that the City receives every year is controlled by the New Mexico State Engineer's Office. Currently, the City of Las Cruces acquires all of its water through wells from subsurface aquifers, unlike some of our neighboring communities to the south. This water suppling aquifer has a limited lifetime and is not being replenished at a rate equal to its current use. Also, because the amount of water that the City receives is determined by the State, the City needs to provide proof that it is not wasting the current water supply in order to receive more water as the City continues to grow. As such, continued conservation efforts are needed.

The City of Las Cruces did pass a water conservation ordinance in 1995 to address lawn watering activities from late spring to early autumn. The ordinance limits lawn watering activities to specific days of the week based on each properties' physical address and to limited time frames within each watering day from April 1 to October 1 of each year. This ordinance is primarily intended to distribute the amount of watering that is conducted on any given day, thus providing for less of a peak demand on the water supply system.

All of the City's water is monitored by the State and the City and meets federal Safe Drinking Water standards. The City has recognized the need to protect its current water supply system from contamination by enacting or developing the following programs:

- 1) A backflow prevention program to prevent commercial and industrial buildings and lawn sprinkler systems water supply to return and possibly contaminate the City water system,
- 2) A household hazardous waste disposal program that allows disposal of these wastes at the City's solid waste transfer station rather than disposal in the wastewater collection or solid waste system, and
- 3) A well head protection program to determine uses that are potentially hazardous around the City's new and existing wells.

The well head protection program is intended to provide notification, through on-street signage, of City wells within the area and to discourage the illegal dumping or possible spills around the well sites. As the City's well water source becomes reduced and new water supplies are found, either from the Rio Grande or surface runoff, the need for monitoring, treatment, and protection of water sources will increase.

Wastewater

The City's wastewater is treated at the Jacob Hands Wastewater Treatment Facility on the City's west side, just east of the Rio Grande. The treated effluent, monitored by the City and State and permitted by the EPA, is returned to the Rio Grande. The remaining sludge is disposed of on an injection field on the escarpment along the west mesa, just south of Interstate Highway 10 (I-10) and east of the West Mesa Industrial Park. The City, as part of its permit from the EPA, is pursuing a program to develop a beneficial reuse of the treated sludge.

An industrial pretreatment program is also in place that monitors of wastewater coming out of industrial plants. This pretreatment program is intended to reduce and/or eliminate some of the metal and other toxic wastes from reaching the wastewater system and treatment plant. This, in conjunction with the backflow prevention program, are intended to prevent some wastes from infiltrating the water supply system and to reduce the potential for contamination.

Landscaping

All new construction for commercial and multi-family buildings require that a certain amount of land be used for landscaping. This landscaping generally involves 15% of the total land area of the site, not including the building pad area. The developers or builders must install the landscaping at or near the time of completion of the project and all landscaping must have an approved sprinkler system installed. The landscaping material varies from project to project, but all projects, based on size, must provide a certain percentage of trees, shrubs, and ground cover.

Some builders and developers use landscaping material that require large amounts of water in order for the plant material to survive. Water rates increase on a per gallon basis when more water is consumed in a given month. For example, if an individual owner or business uses less than 25,000 gallons of water in a given month, each 1000 gallons costs a certain amount. However, if you use more than 25,000 gallons of water, the rate changes to a higher amount for each 1000 gallons over 25,000. By requiring landscaping and a required sprinkler system to maintain the landscaping, this generally contributes to more water consumption by businesses.

Because various plant materials require differing amounts of water for the material to survive, and because Las Cruces experiences extreme temperatures in the spring and summer months, the City may need to consider policies that prohibit high-water consuming plant material or require usage of low-water use plants. The City may also look to differ plant material being used for differing land uses, such as residential properties, commercial and industrial properties, and public spaces and parks.

The City has a Development Impact Fee ordinance to address the impacts associated with new development. The fee is required for water and wastewater consumption and the fee is based on the size of water meter needed. Generally, most businesses only get one water meter for the entire property, including any landscaping sprinkler system. Multiple meters are allowed on individual properties, usually one for the building and another one for the sprinkler system. However, because of the development impact fees ordinance, the business or property owner is responsible for paying two development impact fees, one for each meter. This allows for the cost of water consumption to reflect how the water is used, one meter for the building and one for the landscaping. This allows the developer/owner to pay a higher impact fee for two water meters at the time of construction and lower water rates throughout the lifetime of the building and landscaping.

Landscaping should not be considered just as a water user. Landscaping provides an environmental benefit to the public by:

- 1) producing oxygen generation and reducing carbon dioxide levels;

- 2) decreasing ambient heat through shade in large areas such as parking lots;
- 3) providing a visual benefit along streets, sidewalks, and yards;
- 4) eliminating or reducing soil erosion; and
- 5) help to control re-suspension of dust and other particulate matters.

Balance must be found between providing the benefits listed above and the wise use of water. Reduced water usage can be accomplished by using desert or low-water use plants, whether they be native or imported. Plant materials that require large water consumption could be prohibited or restricted in the number allowed for any project/development.

SOLID WASTE:

Waste Disposal

The City of Las Cruces disposed of solid waste at the Corralitos Landfill located on the south side of I-10, west of the Southern New Mexico Fairgrounds. The Corralitos Landfill is owned by the South Central Solid Waste Authority which is a quasi-governmental entity composed of the City and Dona Ana County. The landfill is permitted to operate on 200 of its total 600 acres and those 200 acres has a permitted operation time of 20 years. The City provides residential curb side and commercial trash collection and drop-off at the transfer station west of the sewer treatment plant. The County provides for transport from the transfer station to the Corralitos Landfill, which the City staffs for the Solid Waste Authority. The Solid Waste Authority is responsible for all necessary monitoring of the cells at the landfill for possible contaminates or pollutants in the ground or in the air. This monitoring is conducted during the operation of each landfill cell until it is closed. Once closed, the cell is continually monitored for a specific period of time.

The City of Las Cruces has closed its old landfill at the east end of Foothills Road to the public and is only accepting clean solid waste at this site, i.e. construction material, old asphalt, old concrete, and dirt. The property for the landfill is leased by the City from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The final closure date of this landfill is pending approval of a closure plan by the New Mexico Environment Department, which includes a decision on ground water monitoring waivers. The final closure costs are not known at this time. Plans for the landfill, after closure and the required monitoring period, is anticipated to be a preserved open space.

Another public landfill at the northeast corner of Foothills Road and Roadrunner Parkway was designated as a CERCLA/SARA (Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act/Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act) site, by the EPA, but has been "grand fathered" and does not require clean-up by the City. Normally, being declared a

CERCLA/SARA site would require the City to remove any hazardous waster and/or materials contamination from the landfill as part of the final closure. This landfill has been closed for more than 40 years. Any activities on this site that would disturb the soil would require the City to clean up this site in accordance with state and federal requirements. The City currently plans to leave the site as undisturbed open space.

Recycling

The City does provide recycling activities in various forms. Most recyclable material can be dropped off at the solid waste transfer site near the City's wastewater treatment plant. Examples of material that can be recycled include large items and appliances, cardboard and paper products, plastics, and aluminum and metal cans. The City also has recycling drop-off centers at a most major retail stores throughout the City, so that residents don't have to drive to the transfer station. Expansion of activities include the possibility of reaching agreements with retail stores for the pick-up, by the City, of their recyclable cardboard and paper on a regular basis.

Illegal Dumping

The City of Las Cruces, like most cities, is not immune from the activities of illegal dumpers. Most of the illegal dumping activity occurs in the rural or undeveloped fringe portion of the City, yet some does continue to occur within arroyos and undeveloped areas of the interior portion of the City. To combat this activity, the City relies on reports from neighbors or residents to report this incident to the Codes Enforcement Department. The Codes Enforcement Department will issue citations to any person caught dumping trash in unauthorized areas. The Solid Waste and Traffic Operations Departments are responsible for cleaning up or removing any illegally dumped material. This is usually done in cooperation with other departments and at the request of the Codes Enforcement Department.

Hazardous Waste Disposal

The City, through the South Central Solid Waste Authority, allows for household hazardous waste disposal at the waste transfer site on West Amador Avenue. The household waste can be disposed at any time, at no charge, while the transfer site is open. Most household hazardous wastes consist of paints, fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemicals that are not safe for disposal in either the landfill or the wastewater system. The City maintains an active program to advertise the importance of disposing this waste separately for regular trash and not from being disposed of in sink drains.

As for individual businesses, the companies are expected to dispose of their hazardous waste by contracting with a company that specializes with this type of disposal or can pursue various

alternatives to the final disposal of the waste. There currently is no ordinance in effect in the City that clearly defines this expectation.

Hazardous Material Clean-up

The City of Las Cruces has a Hazardous Material Response Team (HazMat) within the City's Fire and Emergency Services Department. Development for this special program was started in October 1994 and the team became response ready in February 1996. The HazMat Response Team is stationed within Fire Station #4 at 2802 E. Missouri Avenue, where HazMat Team members are specially trained to a minimum of OSHA Level III. The specialized training and equipment allows the team to mitigate a large variety of incidents dealing with the release of hazardous materials in fixed sites, as well as transportation emergencies. All other firefighting personnel within the Fire and Emergency Services Department are trained to the OSHA Level II operations level which allows them to operate in a defensive mode during haz-mat incidents. The HazMat Team's responsibilities include the identification of facilities within the City that contain hazardous materials, as well as the mitigation of emergency incidents where hazardous material(s) are released. The team will also authorize and supervise the clean up, removal, and disposal of hazardous materials with the company involved in the release. In the event a spill does occur, the HazMat Team's priorities are for the preservation of life, environment, and property, in that specific order.

Several other activities that are coordinated through the HazMat Team involve pre-planning with businesses within the City that regularly store, use, or create hazardous materials. Local businesses are required to provide a list of known hazardous materials during their application for registration with the Business Registration section of the Planning Department. As part of the application review process, an inspection of the facility is conducted by the Fire and Emergency Services Department and a Tier Two report of hazardous materials is completed. Existing businesses are asked to provide an updated Tier Two report every one, two, or three years, or immediately if the amount or type of material stored or used is changed.

NOISE & LIGHT POLLUTION:

Noise

Noise pollution can come from many sources and tend to increase as populations grow. Noise sources include manufacturing and processing plants, vehicular traffic on the roads, car alarms, and stereos and radios in vehicles set at high volumes. These sources of noise pollution, whether during the daytime or at night, can interfere and encroach upon the rights and enjoyment of other persons and property.

Currently, the City's Municipal Code does have provisions for addressing noise pollution that constitutes a nuisance.

Light

Lighting is intended to provide for the safe movement of people and also to provide for security of homes and businesses. However, when lighting fixtures become so bright that they blind on-lookers, interfere with the operations of the airport, or encroach onto or beyond property lines, then they become intolerable and require some form of control. The City needs an ordinance which would control the uses of light such that adequate light is available for safe movement of people and vehicles, but light trespass is controlled while not hampering safety and law enforcement by glaring outdoor lights. Las Cruces, and New Mexico as well, provides for many nighttime activities, such as astronomy, for both personal enjoyment and scientific research. With increased lighting and increased light pollution, these personal and professional activities are interfered with and diminished.

STORM WATER RUN-OFF & SOIL EROSION:

As has been mentioned previously within this Element, the City of Las Cruces has, both historically and currently, experienced periodic flooding from storm water run-off. There are two issues that are of particular importance involving storm water run-off. The first is the removal of the water in a timely manner so as to prevent flooding of individual properties. The second is the disposal of the water and removal of possible pollutants within the water prior to disposal.

The City does have various detention and retention ponds placed strategically to handle this run-off. The City is taking actions to remove additional storm water more efficiently and to add more detention ponds to remove several areas of the City from the various flood zones. All of these projects are long-term and are very costly to the City. Most of the water within the City, especially the urbanized, central core, is handled through drainage being conveyed along the streets. Parts of the City has underground storm drains that are separate from the City's wastewater system. Current activities undertaken by the City include the addition of new detention ponds and an increase in capacity at existing ponds. By adding these detention ponds and by increasing the detention time of the water, prior to release into the Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) drain system for release into the Rio Grande, allows for the pollutants to settle in the pond and the water to clear.

Unlike the central core of the City and its limited underground storm drain system, the east and west mesas of the City convey most of the storm water through natural or channelized arroyos. The City's Storm Water Management Policy Plan identifies the major arroyos,

encourages the use of open space and recreational activities within the arroyos, and provides general guidelines for the design and placement of large and small-scale detention and retention facilities. Current City policy and Design Standards Ordinance does not identify specific arroyos or arroyo systems that are to be channelized or to be left in their natural state. As parts of these various arroyos become channelized, conflicts and changes in sediment load have resulted in property owners downstream being inundated with large amount of sediment, and both ends of these channels experience erosion. This generally results when part of the arroyo is channeled and another part is left natural.

On November 25, 1997, the EPA is expected to issue a proposed rule to regulate stormwater runoff in communities with a population below 100,000. The EPA currently has strict rules in place for communities with populations of more than 100,000 and more stringent rules for cities with more than 250,000. The proposed rule will be open for public review and comment starting in November and last through March 1999. The proposed rule has six parts, all of which will effect Las Cruces in one way or another. The proposed six rules, generally, are as follows:

- 1) Public education and outreach on stormwater impacts,
- 2) Public involvement/participation,
- 3) Illicit discharge detection and elimination,
- 4) Construction site stormwater runoff control,
- 5) Post-construction stormwater management in new development and redevelopment, and
- 6) Pollution prevention/goo housekeeping of municipal operations.

Parts of these six rules, depending upon the final language, have been implemented by the City of Las Cruces. The other rules will need to be implemented in accordance with the allotted time frame. Proposed rules 4 and 5 should, when implemented, help in addressing air quality issues associated with particulate matter during construction processes.

Soil Erosion

Soil erosion is a particularly important issue that is related to storm run-off, attributable, in part, to development activities. Soil erosion can occur at times when the natural drainage within an area is changed due to development or in preparation for development. Also, by changing the natural topography, either through cut and fill or just fill to elevate property and buildings above the floodplain, contributes to blowing dust and particulate matter in an area. This is occurring throughout the City at a time it is experiencing a decrease in air quality. Also, like air quality, soil erosion does not respect jurisdictional boundaries. As changes or development occurs outside the city limits, soil erosion can occur in or be deposited within areas of the City.

Wildlife & Habitat Protection:

As the City continues to experience development growth, especially in areas outside the established urban core, the encroachment into previously untouched natural landscapes increase. This encroachment, though necessary for development, may be eliminating known endangered and threatened species or destroying or modifying the habitats of these species. These habitats where endangered plant and animal species live, are protected at the state and federal levels of government, and private development is not immune from providing the protection of said species and habitats.

The list of plants and animals that are either endangered and threatened species is maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the U.S. Forest Service, as mandated by the Endangered Species Act. The State of New Mexico's Department of Game and Fish and the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources's Forestry Division have listings of endangered and threatened species for the State. The State of New Mexico authorized endangered species protection under its Wildlife Conservation Act.

Recent amendments to policy by the FWS have eliminated the Category 2 species listing at the federal level, and as such will not be considered a part of this element. The Category 2 species were candidate species for which the FWS needed additional information to support a proposal to list as threatened or endangered.

Hillside & Escarpment Development:

The City of Las Cruces is located in and around the lower Rio Grande valley. The City has an escarpment on the west side, just east of the Las Cruces International Airport and the West Mesa Industrial Park. The City is flanked of the Organ Mountains to it east. As the City, and more specifically its Extra-Territorial Zone (ETZ), continue to experience growth toward this escarpment and the mountains, increased focus will need to be provided to protect the views, the surface integrity, and other issues related to constructing along hillsides and escarpments.

Hillside and escarpment developments present several issues that are more complicated than developing on relatively flat land. The issues include topography and geometry, slope stability, fire hazards, storm water runoff, erosion, wildlife protection and interaction, aesthetics and visual quality, open space, infrastructure improvements, emergency and non-emergency access, and density and economic effects.

Topography and geometry relates to placing human structures that are flat or level on sloped surfaces, which results in disturbing the ground surface. Slope stability relates to the fact that hillsides, mountain terrain, and escarpments are generally unstable and can become more

unstable within man's structures and activities, e.g. houses and irrigated landscaping. Fire hazards, though not highly considered in this part of the state, are evident in other hillside areas and communities, especially in Colorado and California.

Storm water runoff, erosion, and wildlife issues are all impacted as man encroaches into hillside areas. Storm water generally starts in the hillside areas and follows existing arroyos that are its natural path. Development within hillsides creates impervious surfaces and modifies storm flows which can lead to increased erosion. With development, wildlife habitats are encroached which can force human interaction with wildlife or the elimination of their ranges and areas.

Aesthetics, visual quality, and open space all represent the most visible issue to neighbors of hillside and escarpment areas, including neighbors both near and far. A determination must be made between balancing the type and quality of development, if any, against the value associated with preserving the pristine views and open spaces associated with hillside. Infrastructure and access issues abound if hillside and escarpment development is allowed to occur. Infrastructure such as utility lines and roads are more expensive to install and maintain.

Access becomes more difficult to provide because hillside roads are generally narrower, do not always provide secondary connection due to physical constraints, and can be easily blocked or narrowed due to on-street parking.

Border XXI:

The Border XXI (21) Program is a comprehensive program designed to achieve a clean environment, protect public health and natural resources, and encourage sustainable development.³ Border XXI is a binational effort between the United States and Mexican federal entities to work cooperatively to improve the border environment. This effort was created in 1983 by the La Paz Agreement (the Agreement for the Protection and Improvement of the Environment in the Border Area). The border region being defined within the La Paz Agreement as the area lying 100 kilometers (approximately 62 miles) of the north-south border between U.S. and Mexico. Las Cruces is approximately 45 miles from the U.S. -Mexico border. The La Paz Agreement was furthered by the Integrated Environmental Plan for the Mexican-U.S. Border Area (IBEP) in 1992 and the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement of 1993 (NAFTA).

Border XXI has a guiding framework that is divided into 5-year objectives for the border environment and descriptions of mechanisms for meeting these objectives. The Border XXI program attempts to link the federal budget process to the management of specific results through environmental measures. These measures are implemented through annual implementation plans from nine workgroups that identify federal funding levels for a given year and the description of specific projects based on available funds. Each of the nine work

3 US-MEXICO Border 21 Program, Executive Summary, U.S. EPA, October 1996.

groups are to encourage active state participation in their activities and ways of incorporating community participation and integrated regional planning. The nine work groups are (1) air, (2) water, (3) hazardous and solid waste, (4) pollution prevention, (5) contingency planning and emergency response, (6) cooperative enforcement and compliance, (7) environmental information resources, (8) natural resources, and (9) environmental health.

ELEMENT & SPECIFIC DATA INFORMATION:

AIR QUALITY - Particulate Matter

Inhalable particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) are small airborne particulate that are far more likely than larger particulate to be inhaled deeply into the lungs. PM_{10} is any particulate matter that is less than or equal to 10 microns in diameter, and $PM_{2.5}$ is any particulate matter less than or equal to 2.5 microns in diameter. For comparison, the diameter of a human hair is approximately 70 microns. PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ particulate are both respiratory irritants that can aggravate asthma and other lung diseases and both act as a transport of heavy metals into the body which are absorbed through oxidation. These small particulate, when suspended, can refract light which in turn reduces visibility.

The federal standard for measuring $PM_{2.5}$ was created and adopted by EPA in July 1997. The EPA is looking to the U.S. Congress to provide funding for implementation of the $PM_{2.5}$ monitoring program. Currently, the $PM_{2.5}$ monitoring program is non-existent throughout New Mexico and most of the United States. The New Mexico Environmental Department is looking to implement only three $PM_{2.5}$ monitoring sites in the state, with the closest site to be located near Sunland Park, in the southern end of Dona Ana County. No projections or readings are available for $PM_{2.5}$ for Dona Ana County since the monitoring stations have not been implemented by the State.

The federal primary PM_{10} standard was modified from its previous measurement requirement in July 1997 along with the creation of the $PM_{2.5}$ standards. The PM_{10} standard was retained to protect human health against short-term exposure to coarse fraction particles. The PM_{10} secondary standard was adjusted to be identical to the primary standard, in conjunction with a program to reduce regional haze.

Based on both the primary and secondary standards, Las Cruces exceeded the PM_{10} requirement in 1996 at two locations, one on North Roadrunner Parkway and the other on Holman Road on the City's East Mesa. Table 1 reflects the air quality data collected for PM_{10} for Las Cruces between 1993 and 1996 based on the 1996 PM_{10} standards. It is anticipated that Las Cruces and Dona Ana County will exceed the 1997 federal PM_{10} standards once fully implemented.

Table 1: PM_{10} Measurements for Las Cruces - 1993 to 1996 (data based on $150 \mu g/m^3$ standard of 1996)

24-Hour Averages	Highest Readings per Year				2nd Highest Reading per Year			
	'93	'94	'95	'96	'93	'94	'95	'96
Las Cruces	56	53	71	93	40	50	51	50
Roadrunner Parkway	#	#	79	*1065	#	#	60	*399
Holman Road	#	#	40	*806	#	#	40	*382
	# of Samples (# of exceedances)				Annual Arithmetic Mean			
	'93	'94	'95	'96	'93	'94	'95	'96
Las Cruces	61 (0)	61(0)	61 (0)	61 (0)	21	22	24	24
Roadrunner Parkway	#	#	40 (0)	357 (6)	#	#	21	*34
Holman Road	#	#	32 (0)	365 (8)	#	#	21	*36

Site Location and Status Information:

Las Cruces Site - Office -1001 N. Solano

Roadrunner Site - CLC Well #45, 1.1 miles south of US 70 on Roadrunner;

Holman Site - CLC Well #41, 2 miles north of US 70, 0.5 miles east

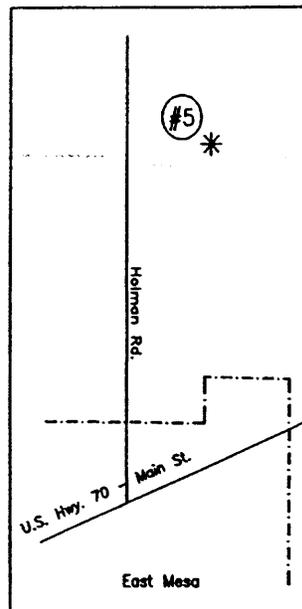
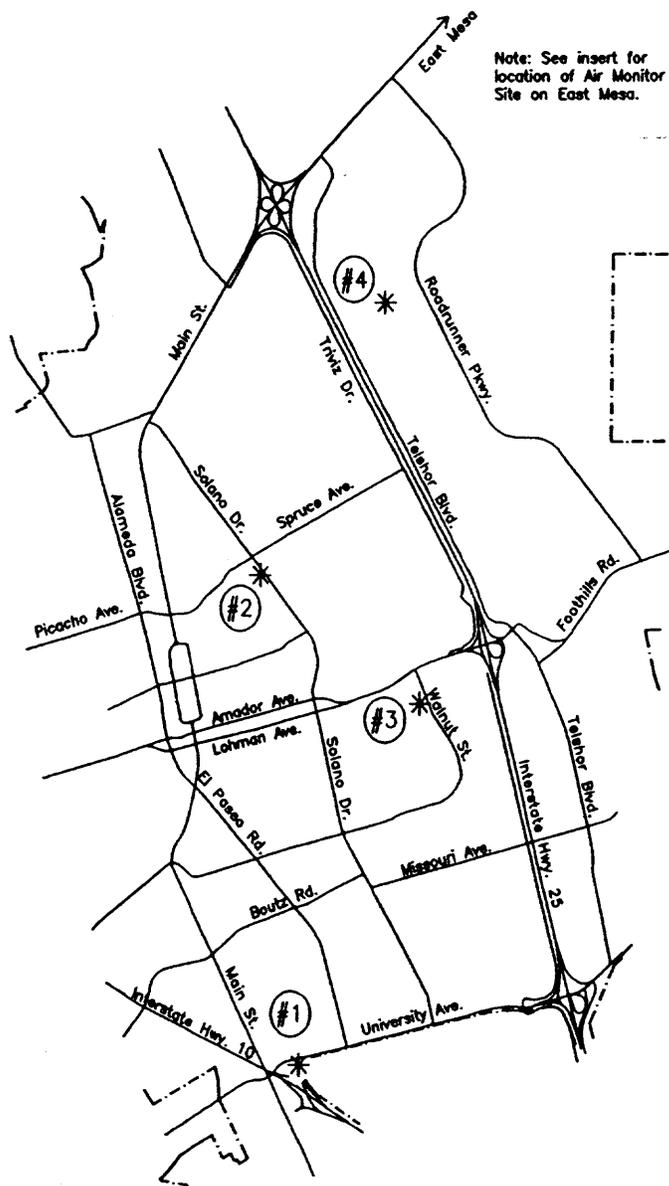
- Sites started in November and October of 1995

* - Indicates extremely high wind conditions.



City of Las Cruces

Air Quality Monitor Sites



Air Quality Monitor Sites

Symbol	Site Name	Number
#1	Las Cruces-University	6ZF
#2	Las Cruces-Envir. Dept.	6R
#3	Old Las Cruces Army \La Casa Shelter	6ZE
#4	Roadrunner-CLC Well #45	6ZJ
#5	Holman-CLC Well #41	6ZL

Notes: * Indicates Location of Air Quality Monitor Site

--- City Limits

AIR QUALITY - Ozone

Ozone is an unstable, colorless gas which exists naturally in the upper levels of the earth's atmosphere and protects the earth from the sun's ultraviolet rays. However, ozone is not measured at the atmospheric level but at ground level where it is not beneficial. While a small amount of ground level ozone is produced through natural sources, most ground level ozone is produced by a chemical reaction requiring sunlight involving volatile organic compounds (VOC) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) and possibly carbon monoxide (CO). VOCs and NOx's are known ozone precursors and are associated with automobiles and other combustion sources. Ozone is generated not through a particular source that emits ozone directly, but through the presence of ozone precursors and sunlight.

Ozone is a strong oxidizer or contributor to oxidation, which is the process whereby oxygen chemically combines with another substance. Oxidation is responsible for the rusting of iron, the decay of wood, and makes rubber and plastics brittle. Oxidizing agents can also act as a respiratory irritant which can aggravate respiratory ailments and impair lung function⁵.

Ozone is also very unstable which can make it a very dynamic or unique air pollutant. Wind speed and direction and solar gain with ozone's dynamic nature greatly impact the location of ozone and allows for its formation to occur miles from the precursor's source.

Table 2: Ozone Measurements for Las Cruces - 1993 to 1996
(information report based on 0.12 ppm standard of 1996)

	Highest Reading by year				2nd Highest Reading by year			
	'93	'94	'95	'96	'93	'94	'95	'96
University	0.084	0.079	0.080	0.087	0.078	0.077	0.077	0.087
Holman	#	#	0.072	0.084	#	#	0.070	0.080
	Number of Samples				Number of Exceedances			
	'93	'94	'95	'96	'93	'94	'95	'96
University	8682	8707	8641	8617	0	0	0	0
Holman	#	#	1272	8671	#	#	0	0

Site Location and Status Information:

University Site - south side of University Avenue, across from the Holiday Inn de Las Cruces

Holman Site - City of Las Cruces Well #41, 2 miles north of US 70, 0.5 miles east

- Sites started in November of 1995

The new federal ozone standard, as approved in July 1997, is now 0.08 part per million (ppm) over an eight hour average. The previous ozone standard, established in 1979, was

⁵ The 1991-1993 Air Quality Annual Report, (NMED/AQB-94/1), State of New Mexico Environment Department - Air Quality Bureau, 1994, p. 5

0.12 ppm for 1 hour and was expressed as a "1-expected exceedance". This 1-expected exceedance allowed for areas to exceed the standard once a year and any additional exceedances in a hour indicated non-attainment. This form of measurement allows for areas to be "in and out" of attainment based on relatively minor ozone exceedances due to changes in weather conditions. The new standard of 0.08 ppm will be based on the three-year average of the annual 4th-highest daily maximum 8-hour concentrations. If this three year average is less than 0.08 ppm the area will be in attainment for ozone. The best way to understand this is to look at the following example:

Readings	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Highest	0.095	0.10	0.09
2nd highest	0.091	0.095	0.085
3rd highest	0.084	0.085	0.079
4th highest	0.076	0.079	0.076

In this example, the three year average of 4th highest 8-hour reading equals 0.077 ppm and therefore the area would be in attainment for ozone.

Readings for the Las Cruces area between 1993 and 1996 were below the established 0.12 ppm in 1 hour standard for ozone. Based on the new 0.08 ppm standard for the three year average of the fourth highest eight hour average, Las Cruces maybe close to becoming non-attainment for ozone (see Table 2).

AIR QUALITY - Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless and tasteless gas, that is harmful to human health by occupying areas on the red blood cells that are normally reserved for oxygen. Carbon monoxide is produced from incomplete combustion of fuels, and in New Mexico this is generally attributed to automobiles.

Las Cruces and Dona Ana County have generally had CO readings less than the federal and state standards. However, with increased automobile traffic that can be easily associated with growing communities and areas, the need for continued monitoring and possible action may be necessary.

AIR QUALITY - Other Pollutants

The remaining pollutants that are monitored by the State of New Mexico, though not in Dona Ana County are sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and lead. Las Cruces and Dona Ana county do not have procedures or equipment in place for monitoring any air pollutants and is dependant upon the State of New Mexico Environment Department to conduct such monitoring. The State only monitors carbon monoxide, ozone, and particulate matter. This does not mean that either currently or in the future, other pollutants are or will be contributing to air quality reduction.

AIR QUALITY - Nitrogen Dioxide, Lead, and Sulfur Dioxide

Nitrogen dioxide are gas by-products of the combustion process and are found in the emissions of automobiles, power plants, and other combustion sources. Nitrogen dioxide general is the most visible part of smog, while also being a respritory irritant which in turn aggravates lung and heart diseases.

Lead is a toxic metal that is the primary emission from smelting, combustion of leaded gasoline, and coal burning processes. Respritory tract exposure to lead is usually through the inhalation of particulate matter in the air and is the primary source of lead absorption in the human body.

Sulfur Dioxide is a colorless, non-flammable, odoriferous, and corrosive gas. New Mexico's sources of sulfur dioxide are from copper and other ore smelters, industries that burn coal and oil, usually power plants, and facilities that process natural gas.

Nitrogen dioxide is not monitored at all in Dona Ana County. Lead and Sulfur Dioxides are monitored by the state in the Sunland Park area and the La Union and Sunland Park areas respectively. No violations have been recorded for lead or sulfur dioxide for monitoring periods starting in 1990.

WATER CONSUMPTION-

Water consumption for the City is totaled every month by the City's Water Resources Department. This information is reported to the New Mexico State Engineer's Office, that is responsible for determining and approving any new water allotment to the City. The City's water consumption from 1990 through June 1997 is reported in Table 3 below. The City's water conservation ordinance was adopted on October 7, 1996, just after the City experienced a serious drought in the summer of 1996.

Table 3: Water Consumption - City of Las Cruces - 1990 to June 1997

Years	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996*	1997
Jan-Jun Usage (B)	2.90	2.62	2.47	2.83	2.93	2.88	3.09	2.69
Jul - Dec Usage (B)	2.61	2.50	2.95	2.86	3.19	3.33	2.97	3.14
Total Usage (B)	5.51	5.12	5.42	5.69	6.12	6.21	6.06	5.83
Thousand Acre-Feet	16.91	15.71	16.62	17.46	18.79	19.07	18.60	17.89
Avg. Daily Use(MGD)	15.09	14.03	14.84	15.59	16.78	17.02	16.60	15.97

B = Billion Gallons MGD = Million Gallons per Day * = Severe Drought/Water Cons. Ordinance adopted

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED WILDLIFE SPECIES - Dona Ana County, NM:

The following lists are of known threatened and endangered wildlife and plant species within Dona Ana County in 1997. This list is inclusive of both those species that are endangered or threatened for the State of New Mexico and the United States. Species maybe on both the state and federal listings either exclusively or combined. Their status on the list of the state and federal governments may or may not coincide.

SPECIES COMMON NAME	ANIMAL TYPE	SCIENTIFIC NAME	US		NM	
			E	T	E	T
Bunting, Varied	Bird	<i>Passerina versicolor</i>				X
Cormorant, Neotropic	Bird	<i>Phalacrocorax brasilanus</i>				X
Crane, Whooping	Bird	<i>Grus americana</i>	X		X	
Dove, Common Ground	Bird	<i>Columbina passerina</i>			X	
Eagle, Bald	Bird	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>		X		X
Falcon, Northern Aplomado	Bird	<i>Falco femoralis septentrionalis</i>	X		X	
Falcon, American Peregrine	Bird	<i>Falco perpgrinus anatum</i>	X			X
Falcon, Arctic Peregrine	Bird	<i>Falco peregrinus tundris</i>		X		
Flycatcher, SWN Willow	Bird	<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	X		X	
Hawk, Common Black	Bird	<i>Buteogallus anthracinus</i>				X
Hummingbird, Broad-billed	Bird	<i>Cynanthus latirostris</i>				X
Hummingbird, Costa's	Bird	<i>Calypte costae</i>				X
Nightjar, Buff-collared	Bird	<i>Caprimulgus ridgwayi</i>			X	
Owl, Boreal	Bird	<i>Aegolius funereus</i>				X
Owl, Mexican Spotted	Bird	<i>Strix occidentalis lucida</i>		X		
Sparrow, Baird's	Bird	<i>Ammodramus bairdii</i>				X
Tern, Interior Least	Bird	<i>Sterna antillarum</i>	X		X	
Vireo, Bell's	Bird	<i>Vireo bellii arizonae</i>				X
Vireo, Gray	Bird	<i>Vireo vicinior</i>				X
Bat, Spotted	Mammal	<i>Euderma maculatum</i>				X
Chipmunk, Organ Mtns. CO	Mammal	<i>Tamias quadrivittatus australis</i>				X

Ferret, Black-footed	Mammal	<i>Mustela nigripes</i>	X			
Gopher, Southern Pocket	Mammal	<i>Thomomys umbrinus</i>				X
Sheep, Desert Bighorn	Mammal	<i>Ovis canadensis mexicana (End. Pops.)</i>			X	
Talusnail, Dona Ana	Invertebrate	<i>Sonorella todseni</i>				X

The list of animals for Dona Ana County totals twenty-three (23), with eighteen (18) birds, four (4) mammals, and one (1) invertebrate on the list. Of these 23 animals, there are five (5) on the federal endangered list, two (2) on the federal threatened list, seven (7) on the state endangered list, and fourteen (14) on the state threatened list. Six (6) of the animal species are listed on both the state and federal list together, in various combinations of endangered or threatened.

ENDANGERED, THREATENED, AND RARE PLANT SPECIES - Dona Ana County, NM:

The following list of plants is of endangered, threatened, or rare plants for Dona Ana County. The lists totals twenty-three (23), with only one (1) plant on the federal endangered list. The remaining twenty-two (22) are either rare and protected by the state four (4) and the remaining eighteen (18) are rare but not protected by the state.

SPECIES COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	STATUS*
Mosquito plant	<i>Agastache cana</i>	R2
Whorled giant hyssop	<i>Agastache pringlei</i> var. <i>verticillata</i>	R2
Castetter's milkvetch	<i>Astragalus castetteri</i>	R2/3C
Scheer's Pincushion Cactus	<i>Coryphanta scheeri</i> var. <i>uncinata</i>	R1
Standley's whitlowgrass	<i>Draba standleyi</i>	R2
Organ Mt. Pincushion Cactus	<i>Escobaria organensis</i>	R2
Sandberg's Pincushion Cactus	<i>Escobaria sandbergii</i>	R2
Sneed's Pincushion Cactus	<i>Escobaria sneedii</i> var. <i>sneedii</i>	E
Catchfly gentian	<i>Eustoma exaltatum</i>	R2
Prairie gentian	<i>Eustoma russellianum</i>	R2
Five scale bitterweed	<i>Hymenoxys quinquesquamata</i>	R2
Vasey's bitterweed	<i>Hymenoxys vaseyi</i>	R2
Organ Mt. evening primrose	<i>Oenothera organensis</i>	R2

Sand Prickly Pear	<i>Opuntia arenaria</i>	R1
Night-Blooming cereus	<i>Peniocereus greggii</i>	R1
Alamo penstemon	<i>Penstemon alamosensis</i>	R2/FSS
Branching penstemon	<i>Penstemon ramosus</i>	R2
Nodding cliff daisy	<i>Perityle cernua</i>	R2
Mescalero milkwort	<i>Polygala rimulicola</i> var. <i>mescalorum</i>	R1
Smooth figwort	<i>Scrophalaria laevis</i>	R2
Smooth cucumber	<i>Sicyos glaber</i>	R2
Plank's catchfly	<i>Silene plankii</i>	R2/3C
Long-stemmed flame flower	<i>Talinum longipes</i>	R2

* Status:

E Listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the Endangered Species Act.

R1 The taxon is so rare across its range within the state and of such limited distribution and population size that unregulated collection could jeopardize its survival in New Mexico. The state law protects the species from illegal take.

R2 This listing are of taxa that are considered to be rare because of restricted distribution or low numerical density. These taxa are monitored by the State of New Mexico to determine if they should be elevated to an endangered species status, but are not protected by state statute or policy.

3C Taxa which have proven to be more abundant or widespread than previously believed and/or which have no identifiable threats.

FSS Forest Service Sensitive. Rare plant species which the U.S. Forest Service consider sensitive to land use practices within National Forests.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

The Goals and Policies of the Environment Element shall support the Environment Goal of the Las Cruces City Plan: "Protect our surrounding natural environment". Environmental Goals and Policies are not rigid rules designed to be enforced in all situations, but are designed to provide the City with guidance in a majority of circumstances. As Las Cruces continues to grow, the needs of its citizens will also grow. Creating policies designed to engage our environment, quality of life, and economic well-being in our City's growth process demands that such policies grow and change over time: thus defining the concept a comprehensive plan as a "living document".

GOAL 1: Protect and maintain the existing natural environment and to minimize impacts on the natural environment created by development and human activities.

Objective 1: Maintain and improve air quality for particulate matter.

Policies:

- 1.1 Participate in the development and future amendments of a Natural Events Action Plan to address particulate matter pollution to avoid the possible designation of "non-attainment" for air quality standards by the EPA.
- 1.2 The Natural Events Action Plan should include the minimal requirements for implementation as required by the Federal Clean Air Act and Amendments, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Establishing public notification and education programs that include information regarding:
 - Short and long-term harmful effects of particulate matter,
 - Types of natural events that occur in the area that contribute to air quality problems,
 - A warning system for high wind and other natural events that may lead to air quality problems from increased particulate matter, and
 - Actions necessary to avoid exposure to particulate matter and minimize the health risks from such natural events.
 - b. Implementing programs to minimize public exposure to high concentrations of particulate matter from future natural events such as high winds :
 - Identifying at-risk populations, such as the very young, the elderly, and persons with respiratory disorders and ailments,

- Notifying at-risk populations that a natural events is imminent or in progress,
 - Suggesting actions to be taken by the public to minimize exposure to high concentrations of particulate matter, and
 - Suggesting precautions to take if exposure cannot be minimized or avoided.
- c. Reducing or eliminating known or suspected sources of particulate matter pollution, including, but not limited to:
- “No burn” ordinances that prohibit fireplace and grass fires on days and nights during and leading upto high wind or natural events,
 - Active or increased street cleaning programs prior to high wind events, and
 - Best Available Control Measures (BACM) for disturbed soils from man’s activities.
- d. Identify, study, and implement practical mitigation measures for new particulate matter reduction techniques, including pilot or test programs.

1.3 As part of the Natural Events Action Plan, the City, the County and other jurisdictions should form cooperative agreements to establish uniform BACM’s for the urbanized area, including but not limited to:

- a. Application of chemical dust suppressants to unpaved roads, parking lots, and open areas,
- b. Dust suppression ordinances for construction sites or limited grading of new development sites (i.e. road and building pad sites only),
- c. Mandatory road construction standards for new developments within the City and ETZ, that cannot be waived or reduced to a lower standard that would allow for increases in windblown dust or sand,
- d. Active implementation of vacant parcel development, such as the City’s Infill Policy Plan, or mandatory ground cover plantings and maintenance on vacant parcels not ready for development,
- e. Encourage the use of conservation farming practices on agricultural lands and adopting ordinances limiting farming activities before and during high wind events,

- f. Natural or man-made wind breaks in and around areas which are known to create windblown dust problems during high wind events,
 - g. Prohibition or restriction of off-road vehicle activities,
 - h. Reconsideration or modification of the current weed control ordinance to recognize and identify the benefits that weeds/grasses provide to reduce wind blown particulates,
 - i. Minimal changes to the natural topography as part of all new subdivisions or developments which also addresses allowing for natural drainage to occur and to prevent increase wind blown particulates, and
 - j. Restrict the use of plants with harmful pollens, such as mulberry trees.
- 1.4 The City of Las Cruces should establish a listing of roads, primarily in the East Mesa, that are currently unpaved and prioritize said listing for pavement over a specified time frame. This should include the possibility of paving the roads to reduced standards and/or reduced widths to reduce particulate matter. Priority should be given to paving roads in the upwind direction first in order to reduce the impact to the City.
- 1.5 The City and the County should review and determine uniform road development standards and implementation procedures that are consistent and compatible within the City, the ETZ, and the remainder of the County.
- 1.6 The City may review its development requirements for single- and two-family dwelling units to require paved or concrete driveways rather than the currently allowed unpaved driveways.
- 1.7 Road construction activities, that may contribute to PM₁₀ pollution, by the local and state levels of government, should be limited on days of predicted high wind events.
- 1.8 Current time delays for construction of parking lots for small businesses, should be mandated to develop and implement a dust suppression program, until the time delay expires and the required pavement is installed.

Objective 2: Provide policy to maintain and improve air quality for ozone, ozone precursors, and carbon monoxide.

Policies:

- 2.1 The City and the County should determine the need and feasibility of implementing a mandatory vehicle testing for reducing emissions for both ozone precursors and carbon monoxide. This need and feasibility should include a cost-benefit analysis.
- 2.2 The City and other jurisdictions within the County should implement alternative or modified fuels to reduce ozone precursor and carbon monoxide emissions, including:
 - a. Converting City-owned vehicles or acquisition of new vehicles that use natural gas or propane, including transit and senior center vehicles,
 - b. Mandating the sale of oxygenated fuels within the summer seasons,
 - c. Encouraging the State to implement emission reducing vapor caps on vehicles and gasoline nozzles,
 - d. Promoting the installation of alternative fueling sites and encourage the conversion or acquisition of alternative fuels vehicles by companies with large vehicle fleets, including private utility companies and other government agencies,
 - e. Facilitating ozone action days to encourage employees to reduce vehicle usage and ride share, and
 - f. Implementing emission reducing vapor caps on vehicle and gasoling nozzles.

This should include a cost-benefit analysis be conducted before implementing any of the items listed within this Policy.
- 2.3 The City should provide for or encourage increased usage of public transportation vehicles and ride-share programs, especially to large employment sectors, such as NASA, White Sands Missile Range, El Paso, Texas, and eventually the West Mesa Industrial Park.
- 2.4 The City should encourage the facilitation of alternative modes of transportation on all future transportation projects, including bicycle and public transportation lanes, in addition to pedestrian walkways.
- 2.5 On days, in which meterological events are anticipated to increase ozone readings, public transportation should be utilized through provided incentives, such as reduced

or eliminated fees.

- 2.6 The City should investigate the issues related to ozone generators that are available for private use and their effects on ozone pollution or the contribution to ozone pollution.
- 2.7 The City should discourage the use of industrial processes within industrial and manufacturing businesses that will emit known ozone precursors or carbon monoxide emissions.

Objective 3: Maintain and improve overall air quality.

Policies:

- 3.1 The City of Las Cruces, should encourage the establishment of a county-wide or regional Air Quality Control Board to oversee the monitoring and implementation of air quality regulations within Dona Ana County.
 - The Board and subsequent staff should be established representing all jurisdictions within the County.
 - The Board should be established and operate similar to the Air Quality Board for Albuquerque/Bernalillo County and should be created with the agreement with the New Mexico Air Quality Bureau.
- 3.2 The City of Las Cruces should encourage the New Mexico Air Quality Bureau to implement more air quality monitoring sites throughout the City and County that would facilitate accurate representation of air quality conditions and allows for adequate transportation and air modelling of the current situation.
- 3.3 The City should designate a staff person within the City as a clearinghouse of air quality information to gather and review new information, data, practices, and updates on air quality issues for Las Cruces and the surrounding areas. Updates and proposed regulations should be processed through the Environmental Quality Advisory Committee and forwarded to the City Council and other City Boards.
- 3.4 The City should reach cooperative operating agreements with the New Mexico Air Quality Bureau to share air quality and related demographic data on a regular basis.
- 3.5 The City should develop procedures for review of proposed industrial/commercial operations that require review of air quality permits and make recommendations or identify issues with the New Mexico Air Quality Bureau. Building permits should not

be issued unless the reviews insure that all other environmental impacts and issues are addressed before or as part of the plan review.

- 3.6 The City should make efforts to attract industries that recognize the need to meet or exceed air quality regulations and to support the attraction of those industries that will make an effort to assist in complying with air quality regulations through continued self-monitoring and reporting of air quality violations.
- 3.7 Increase usage of public transportation and other modes of transportation that decrease the use of single-occupancy vehicles, including increased transit service to unserved neighborhoods and the placement of transit pull-off lanes in new developments.

Objective 4: Maintain and improve water quality for residents and increased conservation of water by all households and businesses.

Policies:

- 4.1 The City should continue to test and treat all waters provided by the municipal water system to meet and exceed both State of New Mexico and federal safe drinking water standards.
- 4.2 The City may implement new and enhance existing water conservation programs, including:
 - a. Extending educational outreach to public schools,
 - b. Increasing public announcements and advertisements,
 - c. Adopting new building and plumbing codes that mandate low-water use appliances and fixtures,
 - d. Mandating specific requirements for certain percentages of low-water use landscape material and irrigation systems as part of required landscaping, and
 - e. Providing limited or one-time bonuses for residences and businesses that replace high-water use landscaping with low-water use material, provided viable funding sources can be identified.
- 4.3 The City may pursue allowing the use of multiple meters for required landscaping as part of redevelopment or new construction within the city limits, which could include providing for adjustable rate fees and/or modified development impact fees. Any

changes such as this should include consideration of the City's revenue stability for this issue.

- 4.4 The City should continue activities that aid in finding viable and safe sources of new water, including, but not limited to increased mandatory water conservation programs and participation in the Texas-New Mexico Stream Commission. This could include using treated water from the Rio Grande and other surface water sources, including the availability of funding for use of such water sources.
- 4.5 The City should prepare for reissuance of the wastewater system's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit by insuring that those activities mandated within the current NPDES permit are implemented in a timely fashion. The City should be undertaking those activities that will be necessary to secure the next permit.
- 4.6 The City should further implement the existing programs that prevent toxic or hazardous material from reaching the water and wastewater systems, including the Industrial Pretreatment, Backflow Prevention and Well Head Protection programs.
 - a. Continue to maintain monitoring and inspection standards that meet or exceed all requirements associated with the Industrial Pretreatment and Backflow Prevention programs.
 - b. The Well Head Protection program should be fully implemented and the Zoning Code modified to prohibit certain uses within specified distances of each City-owned water well.
- 4.7 The City may pursue the adoption of ordinances that protect privately owned water wells from contamination from outside sources.
- 4.8 The City should encourage changes in state statutes, regulations and policies that would allow the City to find industries that can use gray water from other gray water producing industries.
- 4.9 The City should pursue finding a viable and economical reuse of treated sludge produced at the wastewater treatment plant and should ask NMSU to help find, develop, and market such a use.
- 4.10 The City should make efforts to attract industries that recognize the need to meet or exceed water quality regulations and to support the attraction of those industries that will make an effort to assist in complying with water quality regulations through

continued self-monitoring and reporting of water quality violations.

Objective 5: Increase the efficient and safe removal of solid waste while encouraging the reduction in the amount of solid waste generated by both residents and businesses.

Policies:

- 5.1 The City should provide equipment and operational procedures that increase the efficiency of the existing curbside solid waste program for residential uses and investigate the need for increased pick-up needs for commercial, industrial, and multi-family sites.
- 5.2 The City should provide opportunities for both public and private recycling programs to reduce the amount of solid waste generated in the City, including
 - a. Possible curbside recycling programs for specific neighborhoods,
 - b. Community recycling bins within or adjacent to city and county buildings, and parks,
 - c. Increased effort to gather large quantities of recycleable material from individual businesses and business complexes,
 - d. Improved public awareness about the importance of recycling through public awareness campaigns and school outreach programs, and
 - e. Implementing programs within specific neighborhoods or through existing clubs and organizations.
- 5.3 The City should implement a community-wide composting facility at the solid waste transfer site for yard waste and other material suitable for composting. The City should also establish a program for the use of composted material for City parks or make the compost available for sale to the general public.
- 5.4 The City should continue to test and monitor all landfill cell sites to meet all state and federal standards and develop plans for the long-term monitoring and use once cell sites are closed.
- 5.5 The City may include provisions within the Zoning Code to address the placement and development requirements for commercial and/or for-profit solid waste disposal and

composting operations within the City limits.

- 5.6 The City should provide the necessary funding to close the City's existing landfill along Foothills Road and provide for a viable long-term plan for its future use, such as dedicated park land or open space.
- 5.7 The City should streamline and publicize processes related to the reporting, removal and prosecution of illegal dumping activities that occur within the city limits on both public and private property. This may include establishing a telephone hotline within the solid waste or codes enforcement departments.
- 5.8 The City should look into promoting the existing household hazardous waste disposal program and conducting a feasibility assessment to determine the need for a similar program for business and industrial hazardous waste disposal.
- 5.9 The City may improve the current hazardous material program within the Fire & Emergency Services Department by looking to provide improved and updated equipment, continued training for personnel, and mandatory reporting and inspection of hazardous material used or stored at businesses and industries as part of yearly business registration activities. Business registration activity may include the creation of a GIS database for each business/parcel specific information for use by the Fire & Emergency Services Department.
- 5.10 The City should establish a pollution prevention program to assist the commercial sector in identifying pollution and waste sources and recommending reduction strategies. The Waste-Management Education & Research Consortium from NMSU could assist in implementing such a program.

Objective 6: Address storm water management and run-off and reduce the amount of soil erosion that is associated with storm water run-off and other environmental aspects (e.g. hillside/escarpement development and air quality).

Policies:

- 6.1 Continue to update and implement the City's Storm Water Management Policy Plan (SWMPP) to reflect current and changing practices associated with on-lot ponding.
- 6.2 Create the Major Arroyo Plan, as prescribed within the SWMPP, to reflect overall desired activities for all major arroyos within the City. This may include creating an arroyo atlas, similar to the Transportation Element's Thoroughfare Atlas, that indicates the desired construction for each arroyo, either through concrete channelization or left

in a natural and open state. This atlas could serve as a guide document for City staff and the development community.

- 6.3 Identify, through the City's business registration process, possible businesses that could contribute pollutants or contaminants into storm water run-off. This would be in preparation for the City's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.
- 6.4 At a minimum, the next update to the SWMPP should include limited policies and direction to address those storm water issues that can be affected by or can effect hillside and escarpment development and wildlife and plant habitat protection.
- 6.5 The City shall increase enforcement activities that preserve and protect on-lot ponding, specifically in residential properties, including:
 - a. Allowing the movement of said ponds but not the elimination of on-lot ponding, and
 - b. Specific notification to the landscaping and building communities of the importance and impacts from the alteration of on-lot ponds.
- 6.6 Review issues related to eliminating on-lot ponding and require on-site ponding within subdivisions.

Objective 7: Decrease noise pollution and any existing and future light pollution associated with all types of land uses.

Policies:

- 7.1 The City may consider the adoption of a new noise control ordinance or the modification to existing ordinances that address the public safety and health issues related to noise. This may include defining noise levels that are considered dangerous to public health.
- 7.2 The City should provide the police and codes enforcement departments with decibel testing devices.
- 7.3 The City should consider the adoption of a light control ordinance that reduces the amount of ambient light that can interfere with nighttime activities, including glare and light trespass.

7.4 Any adopted light control ordinance should be considered for all types of land use, from residential to commercial and industrial, and should include provisions that allow for appropriate, yet limited nighttime security lighting. This should also include provisions for screening or deflecting all types of outdoor lighting fixtures, including:

- Private and public exterior lights,
- Sports Facility lights, and
- Commercial lights, signs, and advertising.

Objective 8: Increase the awareness and protection of endangered, threatened, or rare wildlife and plant species within Dona Ana County and their respective habitats.

Policies:

- 8.1 The City should hire a consultant to conduct a biological survey of endangered species within the current City limits and future urbanized areas to determine, if any, the types and habitats of existing endangered or threatened species. This survey should:
- a. Follow established guidelines used by the USFWS and the New Mexico Game and Fish Department or the Forestry Division of the New Mexican Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department.
 - b. Provide recommended activities that can be implemented for reducing impacts to the specific species,
 - c. Serve the City in providing background information on species habitats that should be useful in preparing any necessary environmental documentation for federally or state funded highway and public facility construction projects,
 - d. Utilize tools, such as remote sensing and other known data sources, to limit the amount of field inventory work, and
 - e. Be incorporated into a GIS environment for future use and update.
- 8.2 Amendments should be made to development procedures that could assist in the identification of known endangered or threatened species habitats.
- 8.3 The City of Las Cruces should consider either assisting in or taking the lead in the preparation of required Habitat Conservation Plans for threatened or endangered

species that lie within the path of future urban development.

- 8.4 The City should consider the investigation and incorporation of further defined goals, objectives and policies related to species protection within an existing Level 3 comprehensive plan (e.g. Stormwater Management Policy Plan) or the creation of a new Level 3 Plan. This could include incorporation with a new Hillside and Escarpment Policy Plan since species protection, and not just endangered species, is closely related to hillside and escarpment development.

Objective 9: Address safe and reasonable hillside and escarpment development as the City grows toward the Organ Mountains to the east and the West Mesa escarpment to the west.

Policies:

- 9.1 The City should provide an amendment to the Uniform Building Code that addresses both cut and fill and the treatment of fill material as part of construction projects.
- 9.2 The City should amend the Storm Water Management Policy Plan to address the amounts and types of cut and fill activity allowed adjacent to and surrounding identified arroyos and drainage facilities.
- 9.3 The City should determine, identify and map hillsides and escarpments within both the ETZ and the City limits and then prepare a plan to determine the types of development allowed, topographical issues, and other development requirements in order to develop said hillsides and escarpments. The Plan should address, but not limited to:
 - a. Determination of appropriate degree of slope,
 - b. Stability requirements,
 - c. Fire protection and emergency access,
 - d. Stormwater run-off and erosion controls,
 - e. Wildlife protection and interaction,
 - f. Aesthetics, urban design, and visual quality guidelines,
 - g. Open space,

- h. Infrastructure and roadway development standards,
- i. Allowed land uses and density restrictions, and
- j. Development standards related to lot size, setbacks, and building heights.

Objective 10: Attain an overall high level of environmental quality and ensure timely review by the appropriate boards and agencies at all levels of government as part of the development processes within the City and ETZ.

Policies:

- 10.1 Continue to utilize the City's Environmental Quality Advisory Committee on a regular basis and to use the Committee in the development and review of environmentally related plans, ordinances, and resolutions.
- 10.2 Implement activities within existing ordinances that address specific environmental issues that are related to specific department functions, including, zone change and subdivision reviews and business registration activities.
- 10.3 The City should designate a specific staff person to serve as an information source for the activities associated with BORDER XXI.
- 10.4 The City, may participate in the implementation of the plans produced by the BORDER XXI committees as they relate to Las Cruces and the surrounding area and provide for sustainable development, improve and maintain environmental quality, and improve environmental health.
- 10.5 The City should continually strive to address all aspects of environmental quality and issues and identify and differentiate those environmental issues for both residential and commercial/industrial users.
- 10.6 The City may consider the creation or implementation of an environmental officer position to administer, review, implement, and coordinate environmental activities.

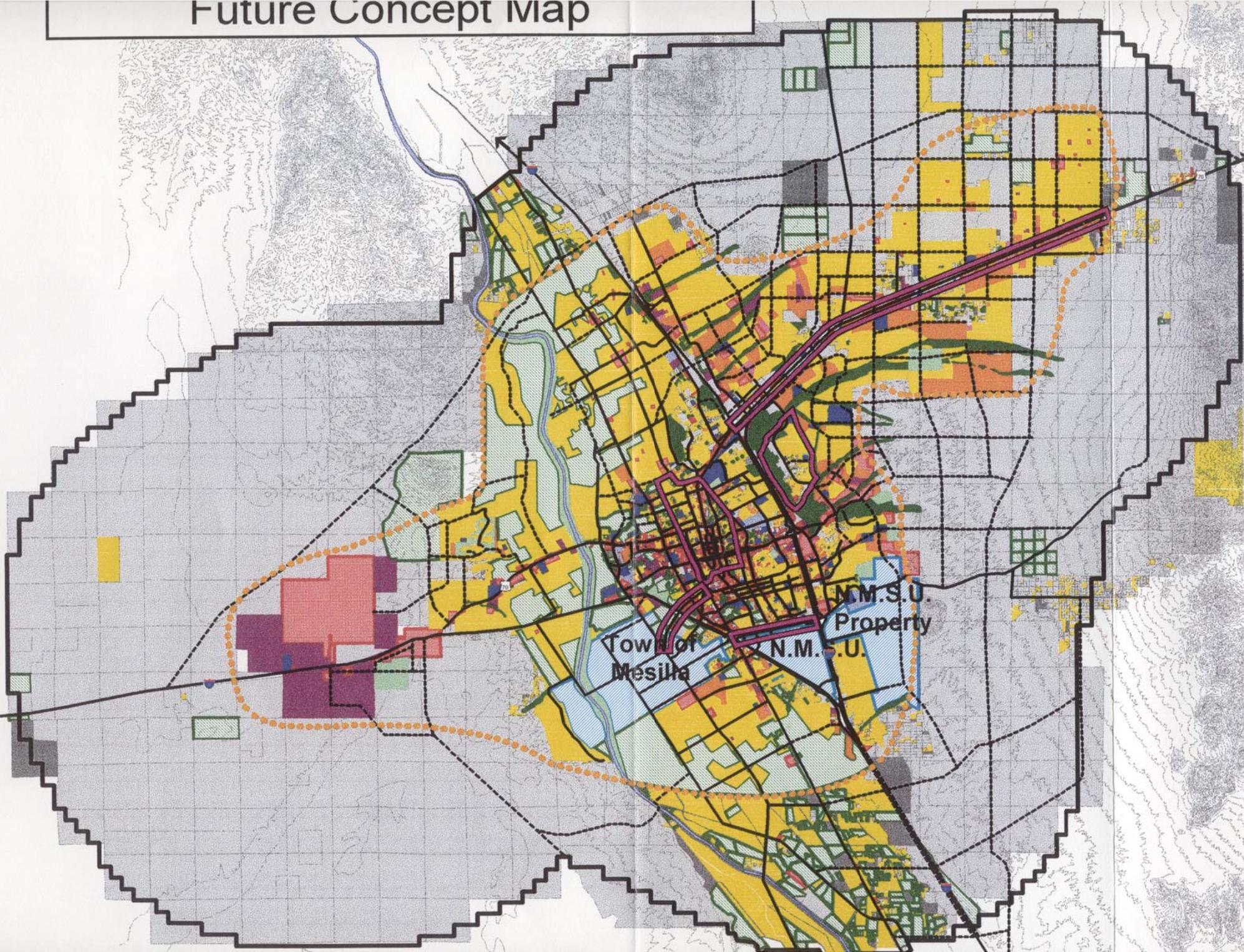
IMPLEMENTATION

1. The Environment Element will be implemented through the adoption of a new Zoning Code, Subdivision Code, and Design Standards and amendments to the Municipal Code.
2. The City should develop an amended NEAP by June 30, 1998 with required implementation completed by May 30, 1999.
3. The City should implement other air quality issues as they arise. The City should designate a specific staff person to serve as a liason with the New Mexico Environment Department's Air Quality Bureau and establish a routine data transfer program by July 1998.
4. The City should continue to monitor it's water quality to meet or exceed federal and state drinking water standards.
5. The City should review and amend, if necessary, the water conservation ordinance to continue smart water usage practices by April 1999. This should include an aggressive education and enforcement program.
6. The City and the South Central Solid Waste Authority should establish a community composting program by late 1998, review and determine the feasibility of community recycling and curb side recycling pilots by January 1999.
7. The City should continuously review its hazardous material program and should include new equipment as part of its yearly capital budget.
8. The City should consider the establishment of a telephone hotline to report illegal dumping within the Codes Enforcement and Solid Waste Departments.
9. The City should amend the Municipal Code to define and address all types of noise pollution and should consider the adoption of a Lighting Ordinance by December 1998.
10. The City should update, amend, and implement its Storm Water Management Policy Plan (SWMPP) by December 1999, and the plan should include provisions to further address soil erosion issues. The amendment should include the creation of the Major Arroyo Plan and Atlas, and provisions for its implementation.

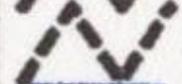
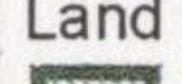
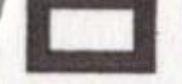
11. The City should include hillside and escarpment development related issues within the amendment to the SWMPP, where appropriate. The City should also determine, at what point, will a separate hillside and escarpment development plan will be created and adopted.
12. The City should hire a consultant to determine, if any, endangered, threatened, or rare wildlife and plant species exist within the City and ETZ boundaries by December 1999. This may include the creation of a separate Wildlife and Plant Protection Plans and Habitat Conservation Plans.
13. The City should continuously review it policies, resolutions, ordinances, and review processes to ensure that actions related to overall environmental quality are considered and implemented, where appropriate.



Future Concept Map



Legend

-  Proposed Urban Boundary
-  Existing and Future Overlay Zone
-  Major Thoroughfares
-  Existing
-  Proposed
-  Rio Grande
- Land Use Categories**
-  Agriculture
-  Commercial
-  Areas Excluded from Study
-  Industrial
-  Office
-  Open Space
-  Other
-  Parks
-  Public, Quasi-Public, Institutional
-  Multi-Family Residential
-  Single Family Residential
-  Unknown
-  Vacant
-  ETZ Boundary