

Scope of Work: 'Vision 2040' Regional & Comprehensive Planning Project

Task 1: Project Initiation/Project Meetings

Objectives

- To conduct an initial meeting with the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County Planning Departments to familiarize our team with the requirements of the project and desired project direction
- To collect available documentation, mapping and background information as well as identify additional information required
- To outline a detailed work program and schedule for the project.
- To identify special interest groups that should be involved in the planning process

Activities

- Collect and discuss all existing documentation, reports, studies and plans that have been completed for the City and County
- Collect all mapping and electronic databases available for the study area including GIS base mapping for the City and County and any other available mapping (infrastructure, buildings, wetland, floodplain, soils, aerial photos, etc.)
- Review project schedule, project scope and public input program including the designation of project meetings with the City and County
- Prepare agendas for all meetings and issue draft reports to the City and County one week prior to all meetings
- Conduct 10 regular Planning Committee meetings throughout the project (anticipating a two-year schedule) at approximately two to three month intervals

Deliverables

- Revised Schedule, Draft Work Plan and Public Input Program
- Ten (10) Meetings with Project Management Team
- Individual Meeting with each Las Cruces and Doña Ana County elected official

Task 2: Visioning Session "Charrette"

Objectives

- To conduct an interactive input session ('charrette') with the City and County to develop a focus for the Vision 2040 regional plan and updates to the comprehensive plans of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County
- To encourage input from the City and County representatives, MPOs, ETZ Authority, regional economic development councils, neighborhood associations, BLM, State Land Office, and various other community service organizations, in the determination of potentials, issues, strengths, weaknesses and the "ideal" future of the County as a region, its municipalities as individual entities, and the City of Las Cruces

Activities

- Contact community and regional members, groups and agencies and other interested parties involved with Vision 2040 and updates to the comprehensive plans
- Conduct a visioning session to target the ideal future for Doña Ana County and Las Cruces
- Discuss the character of the neighborhoods and commercial areas of the municipalities within Doña Ana County and the City of Las Cruces – identify unique features and opportunities for regional themes
- Prepare visioning session questions and workbook
- Prepare mapping for graphic representation of issues and opportunities

Exhibit A

Deliverables

- Vision Session workbooks
- Summary of Vision Session
- Mapping for graphic representation of issues and opportunities

Task 3: Interactive Public Forums

Objectives

- To encourage **input and consensus building** from the community on the issues and opportunities facing Las Cruces and the communities in Doña Ana County through **citizen workshops** to be held during the five stages of the project, as identified in the RFP. It is anticipated that a combined total of up to 35 geographically diverse meetings will be held (more than one meeting per Project Stage per community can be scheduled if determined necessary based on size and geographic extent of the community)
- To **solicit input regarding a visioning strategy** for the County and City and to determine priorities including community data, suitability of land for various types of development, characterization of regional issues affected by growth, identification of zoning codes and impacts on regional growth, build-out analysis and its impacts of implementing Smart Growth principles, evaluation of the ETZ with respect to growth and development issues, and an analysis to identify key issues the region is facing and may face
- To educate and encourage consensus building and conflict resolution around key issues from the residents of Las Cruces, Village of Hatch, Rincon Valley, Mesilla, Mesilla Valley, Sunland Park, Chaparral, and Anthony

Activities

- Conduct 35 separate interactive citizen workshops to determine the issues and potentials of the community; identify key issues that the Plans should address
- Conduct a final presentation of Vision 2040 and updates to respective Comprehensive Plans
- Prepare PowerPoint presentations to summarize the planning progress and upcoming planning elements for each public forum
- Prepare workbooks and base maps for interactive public meetings to help participants follow the meeting process and share opinions on the direction of Vision 2040 and updates to the Comprehensive Plans
- Prepare newspaper advertisements, announcing meeting locations, date, and time, for placement by City staff

Deliverables

- Thirty-five citizen workshops with available Spanish translation to accommodate each region in Doña Ana County through the five project phases
- Presentation of the planning process status for public forums
- Workbooks and base map for public meeting participation
- Summary of both public meeting workbooks and mapping results
- Final presentation to City Council and County Commission
- Newspaper Advertisements to then be placed by City staff
- Design and web pages containing meeting information, feedback forms, and draft maps and documents, with host to be determined.

Task 4: Focus Group Meetings

Objectives

Exhibit A

To conduct focus group sessions with special interest groups to ensure specific issues are addressed in Vision 2040 and the comprehensive plan updates

Activities

- Conduct focus groups sessions with groups identified by Las Cruces and Doña Ana County. These could include: municipal board, planning/zoning boards, business interests, environmental interests, development community, historic interests, arts and culture, neighborhood groups, transportation/circulation, etc.
- Prepare workbooks to guide the sessions and gather relevant input to the planning process
- Analysis of Focus Group Session workbooks

Deliverables

- Focus Group workbooks
- Summaries of Focus Group Sessions
- Eight (8) Focus Group Meetings

Task 5: Community Survey

Objectives

- To randomly survey residents and determine attitudes about various aspects of the community including historic and cultural issues, environmental issues, land use issues, economic issues, community character issues, circulation, etc.
- To develop an easily understood survey that corresponds directly to the format of Vision 2040 and addresses the issues as defined in the citizen workshop sessions, focus groups and public meetings

Activities

- Determine relevant issues that should be addressed in the survey including information obtained from the initial interactive public and visioning session
- Develop draft and final survey
- Obtain letterhead, envelopes and stamps for the survey and distribute to 664 households in Las Cruces, and 664 in Doña Ana County (assuming 30% response rate)
- Analyze results of survey

Deliverables

- Draft and final surveys
- Analysis of statistically valid survey

Task 6: Vision Statement, Goals & Objectives

Purpose

- To develop an overall guide for future land use planning through 2040 and beyond in Las Cruces and Doña Ana County based on community input
- To transform the comments and suggestions of the residents into straightforward, understandable goals and objectives that will help realize the community Vision
- To provide a basis for specific County, City, Town, and Village policies, actions and recommendations

Activities

- Develop a Vision Statement for Doña Ana County and Las Cruces based on Issues and Opportunities Interactive Public Meeting, Focus Groups, the Community Survey and City/County Planning Staff Meetings
- Review Vision Statement with the Advisory Group to ensure all public, City, and County needs are addressed clearly

Exhibit A

- Determine a goal or goals for each Plan element (including land use, community facilities and services, transportation, affordable housing, public safety, social equity concerns, population, economic development, etc.) that will reflect the Vision Statement, describing how each Plan element should develop
- Prepare specific objectives that further define what is included in each Plan goal
- Consult City of Las Cruces' Strategic Plan in development of Vision

Deliverables

- Las Cruces and Doña Ana Vision Statement
- Goals Defined Detailing Ideals to Target
- Objectives to Achieve Each Goal Defined

Task 7: Regional Considerations

Purpose

- To establish how Las Cruces and the other municipalities and communities of Doña Ana County fit together as a cohesive entity while also maintaining their respective individuality as a town or village.
- To consider and/or establish opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation and address the interconnectedness of Las Cruces and the other municipalities within Doña Ana with the region in the areas of transportation, economy, affordable housing, and overall quality of life

Activities

- Contact government officials, advisory groups, and municipal representatives to collect all plans and studies made for neighboring counties
- Conduct interviews with local, regional, county and state officials regarding identified trends and anticipated projects that could impact Las Cruces specifically, but Doña Ana as well, including regional water supply and sewer service authorities, transportation, and community facilities and services
- Determine what future planned activities, county or state level, could impact the County and Las Cruces
- Determine regulations and potential regulatory revisions at the federal or state level that could impact the County
- Review regional plans and establish what regional specializations the County serves or could serve and also how rapid growth in adjacent counties may affect Doña Ana and Las Cruces, specifically
- Identify issues that would benefit from intergovernmental cooperation and designated ways to pursue them
- Evaluate the successes and failures of the ETZ as a vehicle for intergovernmental planning, and recommend changes or alternatives.
- Prepare regional context map depicting transportation, open space, surrounding land uses and regional destinations

Deliverables

- Regional considerations incorporated in Policy Statements
- Regional Context Plan

Task 8: Existing Land Use & Zoning Analysis

Purpose

- To provide clear documentation of how development has occurred in Las Cruces and Doña Ana historically
- To visualize where there are concentrations in land uses in Las Cruces and the County

Exhibit A

- To examine what forces have caused the existing land use patterns to occur

Activities

- Review existing land use documentation (land use plans, zoning ordinances and data from the County, the State and other agencies) for comparison with current future land use map, proposed future land use map and zoning map
- Review tax mapping to obtain land use information
- Drive major thoroughfares within the County and City; conduct a windshield survey to correlate land use observations with that identified in the existing Comprehensive Plans
- Prepare Existing Land Use Plan based on windshield survey of these areas and aerial photos
- Collect and review current zoning regulations, subdivision regulations, signage regulations and other existing County and City regulations relevant to land use and community design for correlation with the existing Comprehensive Plans
- Identify other Land Use Regulations that could impact potential changes in land use

Deliverables

- Existing Land Use Plan and Analysis; Zoning Analysis and Map
- Evaluation of land uses based on density, intensity and distribution including urban and rural land uses

Task 9: Natural Resources and Environment Element

Purpose

- To ensure the protection of natural resources and environmentally significant areas in Las Cruces and Doña Ana County as development occurs
- To evaluate ways to incorporate the natural resources into the urban environment
- To encourage residents to learn about the importance of regional natural resources
- To ensure that water and energy resources are used sustainably, and that air and water quality do not deteriorate as population grows
- To mitigate the effects of natural disasters such as fire and flooding

Activities

- Complete an inventory of environmentally sensitive natural areas such as wetlands and wildlife habitats
- Review any existing documents that outline the location of significant natural resources including maps of agricultural districts, soil classifications, wetlands, waterways and marshes, floodplains, aquifers and wildlife habitats, including BLM's pending Resource Management Plan (as available).
- Map the Natural Resources
- Prepare recommendations on preservation, and enhancement of natural resources, and mitigation damage from natural disasters
- Review existing long-term projections for water supply, and evaluate conservation strategies to mitigate increased demand due to population growth, using the Lower Rio Grande Regional Water Plan.
- Review options to increase energy efficiency in development and transportation and to further regional development of clean energy technologies.

Deliverables

- Natural Resources Plan
- Environmental Protection Policy Statements

Task 10: Historic & Cultural Resources Element

Purpose

Exhibit A

- To retain Las Cruces and Doña Ana County's rich heritage by protecting significant historic and cultural resources as development occurs
- To provide residents with educational opportunities regarding community heritage

Activities

- Review available and existing inventory of cultural and historic resources including neighborhoods and individual buildings and sites having local, county, state or national significance
- Conduct interviews with local, county, state and federal historic preservation representatives
- Review existing documents that outline the location of all existing or potential Historic Districts, historic buildings and historic sites
- Map Historic and Cultural Resources
- Identify ways to highlight heritage elements in the community such as interpretive panels or linkages to other community amenities to promote heritage education opportunities
- Prepare recommendations on the preservation and enhancement of Historic Districts and Cultural Resources

Deliverables

- Historic and Cultural Resources Element
- Recommendations for architectural guidelines for historic and commercial corridors
- Policy Statements for the Preservation and Improvement of Historic and Cultural Resources

Task 11: Demographic & Housing Element

Purpose

- To appropriately plan for Las Cruces and Doña Ana County's future based on population characteristics and socio-economic trends
- To identify existing and future housing needs and requirements for all income levels
- Research real estate market trends for commercial and residential development and compare to regional and national markets

Activities

- Gather information from the County and the US Census Bureau on demographic characteristics of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County municipalities
- Analyze past and present population characteristics (growth rates, natural change and migration, mobility, density, age distribution, population changes, education level, etc.)
- Determine need and potentials for additional housing within the County to be completed by public, private or not-for-profit developers
- Determine role of affordable and workforce housing
- Prepare recommendations for future community services based on current and projected population growth for the County utilizing regional population projections
- Assess potential roles of Neighborhood Associations to foster communications within the County's planning communities
- Coordinate with upcoming City of Las Cruces affordable housing study (as available) to determine recommended implementation strategies, and translate results into County-wide effort

Deliverables

- Demographic Analysis with appropriate graphs and charts
- Policy Statements for Housing
- Housing Element of Plan

Exhibit A

Task 12: Transportation Element

Purpose

- To determine impacts of changes or potential changes in transportation infrastructure on future growth and development in Las Cruces and Doña Ana County and adjacent regional counties
- To develop policies for street connectivity between adjacent subdivisions; consider transit access in new development areas, including regional transit connections, multi-modal thoroughfares, and compatibility with adjacent land uses.

Activities

- Collect relevant transportation data from Las Cruces and El Paso MPOs including improvement plans and other relevant transportation studies
- Define job centers and commercial centers within and proximate to the County
- Review and evaluate highway classifications
- Review traffic counts and design capacities
- Review traffic congestion areas
- Assess bicycle and pedestrian circulation systems
- Assess public transportation opportunities
- Address overall safety of the transportation system and the role of the system in emergency response
- Determine need for traffic calming techniques
- Conduct interviews with relevant transportation organizations
- Coordinate and share resources with Las Cruces and El Paso MPOs as they update their Metropolitan Transportation Plans, and with the South Central Regional Transit District as it develops its Service Plan
- Investigate strategies to maintain air quality and improve transit level of service as the region heads toward TMA status

Deliverables

- Transportation Element of Plan
- Transportation and Circulation Policy

Task 13: Infrastructure Element

Purpose

- To prioritize future infrastructure improvements that are supportive of future land use decisions
- To determine how infrastructure development should affect the Future Land Use Plan

Activities

- Review County maps and studies on water, sanitary sewer and storm water facilities to determine the location and capacities of water, sewer, gas, fiber optics, etc.
- Acquire information on the specific water and sewer systems including: treatment plant capacities and ability to expand, line capacities and potential to expand, age of system, use of natural or piped drainage systems
- Investigate areas that need new or improved infrastructure and how this should affect the Future Land Use Plan
- Collect background information from and interviews with the City, County, and utility providers
- Address issues of infrastructure security/vulnerability

Deliverables

- Infrastructure Element
- Infrastructure Policy Statements

Exhibit A

Task 14: Community Facilities & Services Element

Purpose

- To inventory existing community facilities and services within the County including: Schools, Fire & Rescue, Law Enforcement and Waste Management
- To identify the need for additional community facilities specifying type and location based on inventory and public input
- To identify opportunities for intergovernmental coordination with counties within region

Activities

- Acquire information on the specific services that are available to residents including: libraries; schools; fire, police and ambulance services; health services; cultural facilities; senior services
- Inventory the types, numbers and condition of available community facilities and existing plans for new facilities, if any.
- Gather input from Community Service Providers, including, but not limited to, Fire Departments, Police Departments and Ambulance Services
- Identify and assess need for facilities based on the Public Survey and the inventory
- Map the Community Facilities

Deliverables

- Community Services Map
- Community Services Policy Statements

Task 15: Open Space & Recreation Element

Purpose

- To protect significant open spaces in Las Cruces and Doña Ana County and address the need for additional open space and recreation facilities based on state and national standards, as well as public demand
- To explore possibilities for developing an interconnected system of open spaces between the subdivisions

Activities

- Review New Mexico's State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)
- Review existing data including type, number and condition of existing open spaces, parks, trails and recreation facilities and programs both public and private within and adjacent to the County; update information where appropriate
- Map significant open spaces and recreation resources in the County
- Collect input from Open Space and Recreation providers including, but not limited to, state agencies, federal agencies, churches, YMCA/YWCA, schools
- Conduct interviews with City and County Parks Departments
- Assess need for open space and recreation facilities based on the Public Survey
- Address way to connect the County park and recreation systems to neighboring communities
- Map a conceptual system of open spaces, recreational resources and linkages in the County

Deliverables

- Open Space and Recreation Element
- Open Space and Recreation Policy Statements

Task 16: Economic Element

Purpose

Exhibit A

- To evaluate the current economic conditions of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County to focus on effective economic development
- To recognize and improve the regional economic strengths and diversification of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County
- To outline public finance alternatives including: impact fees, special assessment districts, business development districts, etc.

Activities

- Review employment characteristics (unemployment rates, labor status, occupation, employment by industry, occupation, etc.) and evaluate implications of changes in the labor force using U.S. Census data
- Review existing economic plans for Las Cruces and Doña Ana County
- Interview representatives of major area employers by telephone and document current issues, opportunities and deficiencies
- Conduct interviews with significant local businesses as determined by Steering Committee
- Analyze income characteristics (median income, poverty rates, income levels, etc.) to determine requirements for specialized services and facilities, demand for goods, etc.
- Determine a generalized strategy for the diversity and direction of economic growth

Deliverables

- Economic Analysis
- Strategy for Economic Diversification
- Economic Policy Statements

Task 17: Community Character Element

Purpose

- To preserve the community character that gives Las Cruces and Doña Ana County its identity
- To determine an urban design concept that will suit the character of Las Cruces' heritage and vision
- Identify and enhance neighborhood character and identity

Activities

- Examine the community character including the neighborhoods and commercial/downtown centers and how they give Las Cruces and Doña Ana County its identity
- Determine what elements give the community its cultural distinctiveness
- Determine the need for preservation of certain character areas through historic preservation, architectural review or the creation of a district
- Develop an Urban Design concept for community character areas that will help the City and County retain and enhance their overall unique identity

Deliverables

- Determined Character Areas
- Urban Design Concept for Character Area(s)
- Recommendations for architectural guidelines for historic areas

Task 18: Growth Management/Development Standards

Purpose

- To enable the County to develop while protecting the characteristics that are important to the community

Exhibit A

- To outline development standards and architectural guidelines for the future planning of the County

Activities

- Define specific growth issues to be addressed and the respective growth issue locations within the County
- Recommend potential development standards for certain communities throughout the region (streetscapes and public spaces)
- Recommend architectural and development guidelines for historic and commercial buildings
- To research and demonstrate a variety of growth management techniques including but not limited to: design standards, and Specific Area Plans, etc.
- Determine and outline potential growth management techniques to guide future zoning
- Prepare text and graphics of scenarios to depict the application of growth management techniques
- Examine various annexation policies and their implications for both City and County development, and make recommendations for implementation
- Examine equitable strategies to preserve viable farmland in the region
- Investigate form-based codes as a tool to guide and enhance urban form

Deliverables

- Growth Management Techniques and application to specific scenarios in Las Cruces and Doña Ana County; outline development and architectural standards

Task 19: Build-Out Scenarios

Purpose

- To illustrate how potential growth could occur in Las Cruces and Doña Ana County
- To understand the impacts of land use scenarios on future community development
- To compare the impacts of alternative development scenarios on economic growth, infrastructure, transportation, open space, environment, population and housing

Activities

- Determine up to three (3) alternative land use scenarios each for Las Cruces and Doña Ana County; including an existing zoning map, an alternative growth pattern and a future land use map
- Determine potential land uses, building massing and density for each alternative
- Eliminate environmentally sensitive areas and no-build situations from the analysis
- Calculate the demographic impacts of each land use scenario
- Determine the community impacts of density and demographic change including: traffic, infrastructure, economic, environment
- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each scenario using a CommunityViz-based land use model
- Use community development standards (PAS, APA, NRPA, ITE, Sustainable Growth, pjs)

Deliverables

- Up to three (3) conceptual build-out scenario plans for Las Cruces and three (3) for Doña Ana County
- Narrative outlining method, assumptions, build out summary and impacts for each scenario
- Matrix comparing impacts of three (3) scenarios for City and County
- Land use model, users' manual, and one day group training for local staff

Exhibit A

Task 20: Future Land Use Plan

Objectives

- To demonstrate how Las Cruces and Doña Ana County should develop based on community needs and wants as well as current growth trends within the region
- To examine land use patterns and inter-relationships to determine their impact on the character of the County and City
- To ensure that neighboring land uses are complimentary and that areas are able to provide necessary community services

Activities

- Consider issues surrounding existing and future land use (development, redevelopment and infill) including preservation and compatibility with surrounding land use, economic impact on existing retail/business sections, relationship to density and zoning, effect on existing character, affordable housing and business space, effect on public services and facilities, protection of the environment, effect on historic sites/structures/districts
- Determine needs for land use regulation additions, revisions and enforcement
- Determine existing land use acreage and compare to future land use needs
- Outline impacts of development and offer recommendations to direct and stimulate growth (zoning, design standards, facilitation of the approvals process, etc.)
- Clearly define current and future growth areas and ways to control this growth (design standards, planned unit development, mixed use districts, etc.)
- Assess potentials for character areas within Las Cruces
- Prepare Future Land Use Plan with recommendations to enhance the community character
- Prepare recommendations to enhance the community character

Deliverables

- Existing Land Use Plan and Future Land Use Plan
- Policy Statements on Future Land Use Development
- Recommendations on revisions to existing zoning ordinance

Task 21: Futures Plan

Purpose

- To graphically depict an overall strategy highlighting development recommendations in each community element to show the future direction of the County as outlined in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Activities

- Review all community elements and prepare a comprehensive list of all development recommendations
- Define a “Futures” development program based on the recommendations of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and public outreach programs
- Apply Growth Management Techniques
- Prepare a development program that may include feature areas and developments such as signature facilities, streetscapes, gateways, future projects, parks, museums/libraries, open spaces trails, historic areas, development nodes, retail areas, community identities
- Map the development program to create a schematic urban design plan for Las Cruces and portions of Doña Ana County

Deliverables

- Comprehensive list of all development recommendations
- Futures Plan
- Narrative describing the future layout of community features

Exhibit A

Task 22: Strategic Policy Plan

Purpose

- To outline an overall strategy for future development in the County and City and make recommendations on ordinance revisions
- To develop a comprehensive “policy plan” – guiding principles to measure future actions
- To develop a comprehensive “action plan” – steps to achieve the determined future

Activities

- Apply input from public outreach programs and the Advisory Group
- Review community-developed Vision Statement to ensure that all policies for Las Cruces and Doña Ana County will help to develop this ideal
- Review community-developed Goals and Objectives; elements inventory and recommendations to prepare policy that will help reach them
- Prepare comprehensive policy statements and actions along with an explanation of policy for all aspects of community development

Deliverables

- Strategic Policy and Actions Plan to efficiently accomplish the community Vision

Task 23: Implementation Plan

Purpose

- To develop specific recommendations and actions for Las Cruces and Doña Ana to undertake to effectively strive for the community vision
- To determine a rationale, responsibility, schedule, funding sources and budget for all actions as outlined

Activities

- Prepare recommendations for all updates to the Comprehensive Plan elements
- Determine the time frame and responsibilities for implementing recommendations
- Review strategies for the implementation plan with the County for their input
- Prepare an Implementation Matrix (check list) that clearly shows all implementation recommendations, time frame for action, responsibilities and funding sources

Deliverables

- Recommendations for changes to existing ordinances and regulations
- Recommendations and Implementation Strategies
- Implementation Matrix

Task 24: Tools & Techniques Workbook

Purpose

- To educate and inform the residents of Las Cruces and Doña Ana in a clear and concise summary document of the results of Vision 2040 and updates to the Comprehensive Plan
- To create an interactive tool to assist residents and decision makers on land use decisions in the City and County

Activities

- Prepare summary graphics and text in a poster or brochure format suitable for printing
- Prepare sketches/graphics of “futures” scenarios
- Format and summarize “Futures Plan”
- Review the workbook with the Advisory Group before presenting it to the public

Deliverables

Exhibit A

- Concise and easily understandable Poster/Brochure or Workbook in a digital/reproducible format

Task 25: Vision 2040 and Updates of Comprehensive Plans

Purpose

- To consolidate all the information obtained through the planning process into a comprehensive, concise and understandable Vision 2040 document that can be readily updated and accessible through the website; to prepare updates to Las Cruces and Doña Ana comprehensive plans

Activities

- Prepare Draft Document; seek input for revisions and changes
- Finalize Updated document and mapping
- Present Vision 2040 Regional Comprehensive Plan to the County and Community

Deliverables

- Final revisions on all sections
- Final Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Mapping
- Public Presentation for the final Vision 2040 Regional Plan and City and County Comprehensive Plans
- Twenty-five (25) hardcopies and an editable digital copy of each plan to both County and City Planning Departments, and one hardcopy of each plan to both NMSU and NMDFA