

**Vision 2040 Arts, Culture and History Focus Group**  
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**Workbook Summaries**

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**Question 1: In one sentence, describe the character of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County- e.g. "Our region is..." What makes this region unique?**

- Agricultural heartland
- Culturally unique- multicultural
- Neglected from ABQ-SFe nexus
- Educational center
- Many factors make this area unique, but from my view point is more about visitors to the area. The unique factors are culture, history and art, which make us very special. We are also economical and have great weather.
- Diverse in its history of people. We have the Native Americans, Spaniards and Mexicans all have influenced our culture, agriculture and art.
- Las Cruces and Doña Ana County are growing in population but still retain a small town mentality. We are proud of our diversity and culture.
- Doña Ana County- Our region enjoys a rich historical culture steeped in Hispanic traditions, with an influx of students, retirees, and military families from everywhere, who bring new outlooks and traditions to the region.
- We are culturally unique community, rich in history, heritage, arts and culture! Las Cruces and Doña Ana County are identified by:
  - New Mexico "chiles" and our awesome native foods
  - Mariachi music and folkloric dance
  - Unique landscaping and geography- the Organ Mountains are unique!
  - The rich culture and native
- A multicultural border community attracting a small national influx of residents interested in a non-urban area, yet heavily cultural area that's warmer and more affordable than Santa Fe.
- Culturally diverse, interested and participation in arts and culture, proud of its heritage and future focused

**Question 2: What are the three most important opportunities for the future of this region? What are the three most important challenges the region faces?**

### Opportunities:

- Retirement center
- Scientific research and development
- Cultural enrichment
- Create more tourist opportunities- museum and track
- Growth
- Combining of cultures
- Spaceport
- Work as a region to coordinate cultural and historical events and ideas
- Sustain agriculture
- Improve colonias
- Coordination of the downtown plan- Main St. Las Cruces; it ties together museums, art groups, etc.
- A young population that is bringing the City into the future while respecting the traditions of the past
- Spaceport and growth in aerospace: "It's the economy, stupid!"
- Economic tourism
- Culture- i.e. cultural and traditional arts
- Education- educating the general population
- Culinary aspects
- Retain strong artistic personality
- Developing arts and culture and heritage as an economic engine
- Providing opportunities to enhance quality of life
- Assimilating newcomers and engaging them in our culture

### Challenges:

- Planning
- Downtown Las Cruces
- Water
- Money
- Identity
- No city planning
- Finding the funds and support to provide more cultural opportunities
- Convincing local residents of the value of growth (Poverty)
- Government to be more progressive locally and in Santa Fe; if anything goes the vision 2040 is toast
- Preparing for growth
- Infrastructure
- Environmental protection issues
- Water
- Unplanned growth
- Loss of identity
- Economy- lack of money in the school system

- Economy- brain drain due to lack of jobs for graduates
- Economy- distance from governmental centers in North of New Mexico leads to being Overlooked/shafted
- Apathy to the arts
- Lack of cultural/arts activities
- Economy-lack of discretionary funds in population impacts funding of cultural activities
- Keeping the feeling of a small town: controlled growth, transportation, clustering, density, lack of employment for college students, keep open space, encourage participation
- Funding for arts and culture
- Maintaining the character of our community in a rapidly changing demographic
- Convincing our “deciders” of the value of arts, culture and heritage appreciation

**Question 3: How can arts, history and culture play a part in the lives of the many future residents who will make the County their home?**

- We should also add the role will the arts, history and culture play in the lives of future visitors to the County.
- Bring in outside interest, money and participation
- Provide enough to do
- Support infrastructure- chicken and egg problem
- Find leadership- but need leadership development
- By providing more arts and culture at a more national level
- More things to do
- Things like public parks, music and plays
- Newcomers are always interested in the arts history and culture of an area they relocate to. These need to be brought to the forefront with marketing and educational programs in public buildings.
- More advertising locally and nationally
- Coordination of events
- Enrich their lives
- Introduce them to our culture
- Arts, history and culture are the basis for our identity- the thing that makes our lives in the valley special. By expanding upon our unique cultural identity, we enhance the lives of current residents and appeal to future residents who expect these types of amenities. Museum system and New Mexico Farm and Ranch are doing a great job of starting this process.
- These can contribute to the overall “quality of life” in DAC. Arts, history and culture are a necessary part of the interweaving of community activities- they provide the “color” to the rich tapestry of our community.
- We need: more activities, more education about the arts, more infrastructure in our arts activities and organizations.
- Arts provide opportunities for participation, education, economic, culinary coalition
- Provide employment
- Improving quality of life

- Provide an appreciation of where we are and how we got here- assimilated stimulate vision for our community in the future

**Question 4: How can the completed 2040 Regional Planning Project best benefit the cultural community?**

- The “culture” of Las Cruces is defined in many ways, first Hispanic background, second agrarian, third “borderland”, now very mixed- retired, youth, Anglo, minorities and Hispanic.
- Scenic beauty and culture of the community- where it comes from
- Diverse cultural background
- The community will be more cohesive. The amount of opportunities to experience culture will be endless. Doña Ana County and Las Cruces will be heard when legislative money is given.
- Bring all community together
- The culture of Las Cruces is rooted in a Hispanic agrarian tradition that has embraced newer populations that have moved here.
- Including the arts and culture in our 2040 Planning Project reinforces and prioritizes the arts in our community
- Culture isn’t separation into ethnicity; it’s people sharing ideas, encouraging interpersonal participation