

**Vision 2040 Real Estate Development Focus Group Meeting
March 4, 2008**

Participants:

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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 area unique?

- An arid community of active young and adult people with big dreams and little money
- Open space – tons of public land
- Valley farming, attractive desert landscape and mountain ranges
- Farmland, organ mountains, large amounts of open space within a short travel distance from Las Cruces
- One of the fastest growing areas of the mixed land status
- Culturally diverse, vibrant, growing, changing, economically constrained (jobs based on government, education and development/construction)

Question 2: What are the three most important opportunities and or potentials for future growth in the region? What are the three most important challenges the region faces?

Opportunities/Potential

- Moderate climate
- Low cost of living and heating
- Large acreage are available for development (4X)
- Growth and development through population increase
- Fostering economic sector growth such as industry, government etc.
- Weather, community, culture
- Opportunity to organize development – master plan, zone, annex (2X)
- Shift development from the productive farm land to the more arid areas of the City/County
- Economic development (2X)
- Sustainable development
- Public transportation
- Avoid the mistakes of Southern California and Phoenix
- Spaceport

- Clean city in good financial condition
- General desire to locate in the southwest

Challenges

- Acceptance of need for government regulation
- Balance of large unit development with planned unit development
- Adequate water supply (4X)
- Support services
- Anti-growth sentiment
- Government – City, county, state
- Land status
- Lack of jobs/industry (too many service jobs)
- Government/Political regulation (difficult to be creative in design, affordable development) (2X)
- Getting community to work together on a common vision (2X)
- Political entities and developers working together
- Military growth management
- Automobile dependency/low density development
- Land uses are separated, land use compatibility
- Increasing housing costs
- Education
- We attract the very people who are opposed to growth

Question 3: How is development pressure impacting land uses?

- Urban sprawl is occurring
- New development ideas are transforming the process when the political process lags behind
- Increased residential development is spurring increase in commercial development
- Small, disconnected farmers are selling property to developers in areas that lack needed infrastructure which creates an affront to the existing residents
- Population growth is creating a perception of development pressure
- Housing here is cheaper than other US areas that are attracting new residents
- More vacant land is becoming single-family residential
- Anti-growth sentiment – don't want sprawl or high density; City's policies are development driven and not proactive; want walkable neighborhood but more connecting streets
- Anti-growth sentiment stems from how we have grown not necessary against growth itself
- Respecting existing neighborhoods vs. existing neighborhoods cannot be isolated on an island
- Bring commercial to residential and residential to commercial

- Great deal of land in the platting or development phase
- Development is expanding into previously undisturbed areas on all sides of Las Cruces – leads to increased need for adjacent recreation land, law enforcement issues, illegal trash dumps on adjacent undeveloped property
- More need for consistency in planning at the City and County levels
- Encroachment in the Valley
- More relief routes/streets need to be considered
- Water planning distribution development
- In the City, land use impacts development. The only pressure is when development application is submitted, the City's Comprehensive Plan will dictate the percentages of land use found within your development. Development pressure only impacts land use by increasing or decreasing a particular land use in that area
- In the ETZ/County there are no real guides to land use control. ETZ Comp Plan exists but not typically used. Land use is generally impacted more by political pressure/public pressure than incorporating land use strategies within development
- Land parcels are becoming smaller and smaller. More people, more land, more energy, more sewer, more money for land
- Set aside industrial park areas – most people don't want to live near a loud factory
- More impact on farmland, floodplains

Question 4: How can the completed Vision 2040 Regional Planning Project best benefit the real estate community?

- Identify the issues, address the problems, and gain consistency – especially in the area of commercial development
- Not succumb to the pressures of what the anti-growth sentiment and current political structure may want in this document
- Encourage flexible documents to better plan mixed-use developments if desired
- Educate the public/politicians on the fact that growth/development is not bad/evil (2X)
- The ETZ needs to be truly looked at for what it is- a five mile growth zone for the expansion for the City of Las Cruces. Boundaries. Density is not encouraged, sprawl is
- Consider some type of density boundary outside the ETZ
- Realize that there is a cost for more open space, green building/development, parks etc. (impacts housing affordability)
- Understand process
- Consistency (2X)
- Identify future needs, proposed future use, requirements, projected growth areas, recreation land status

- Develop a level playing field with clearly defined development rules that all have to follow. Use ETZ boundary rather than the City and County boundaries
- Limit the political influence in the development process
- Address how the BLM, the State, the County and the City will interact to implement the Vision 2040 Plan
- Zoning must have some permanence. Zone changes should be the exception not the rule
- Common vision between the City, County and ETZ
- Should have to use PUD process to do a good project
- Infill development is a fight in today's environment. Developers should be encouraged to develop in infill areas but they are not
- Affordable housing is impossible costs of development are constantly increased by regulation (2X)
- Be a living document – conditions change
- Provide direction, allow flexibility , community understanding about growth and growth related issues
- Create a boundary to growth and limit land values on land not included in the Study