

**Vision 2040 Transportation Focus Group Meeting
March 4, 2008**

Participants:

Paul Pompeo
David Maestas
Trina Witter
A.K. Khera
Tom Murphy
Lisa Murphy
Joseph De La Rosa
Dan Soriano
Loretta Reyes
Michael Johnson
Larry Altamirano
Alvin Dominguez
Andrew Bencomo
Michael Bartholomew

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?

- Las Cruces is a city with growing pains, trying to meet rapidly growing demands
- Friendly, warm and inviting which is what has spurred much of our growth
- Behind on infrastructure planning due to its rapid growth
- Cultural environment in the area is becoming a positive point
- Las Cruces and Doña Ana County are bi-national crossroads serving three states; two countries
- The juxtaposition of a river/agriculture valley with an arid desert region
- A rapidly changing agricultural area
- On the crossroads of two major highways (I-10 and I-25) offering unique growth opportunities
- Great weather, beautiful mountains and sunsets and views should be protected. There's potential to make it a healthy community by encouraging biking and walking
- A diverse mix of cultural needs
- Very far behind in the construction of infrastructure

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

Opportunities/Potential

- Great quality of life
- Vast open spaces for outdoor activity (2X)

- Still provides a “small town” lifestyle
- Two major highways (2X)
- Increase recreational ability
- Continue economic growth
- Maintain some rural/agricultural characteristics that are part of the area’s history
- Climate –outdoor activity (2X)
- Proximity to wilderness - Organ Mountains, track ways
- Capitalize on the resources of NMSU, White Sands Missile Range and US/Mexico border (2X)
- Good weather offering opportunity to use “Total Street Concept” in our transportation system
- Fresh slate relative to expanding population
- No need to invest in snow plows
- Spaceport
- NMSU (high tech industries, technical workforce) (3X)
- El Paso Airport – quick access
- International trade opportunities (3X)
- Interstate facilities
- Rail facilities
- Establish roadway network
- Natural resource availability – water to meet growth
- Availability of people for jobs
- Potential to bring clean industries to the area
- Opportunity for well planned/managed growth since we are at the beginning of growth potential
- Growing cultural diversity
- Growing cultural and economic opportunities
- Being discovered as a good place to live and retire

Challenges

- Infrastructure construction (5X)
- Planned growth based on “local needs and history”
- Lack of funding (5X)
- Growth that anticipates/meets needs (3X)
- Accommodate expansion caused by other agencies
- Water – lack of water for agriculture
- Loss of farms to development
- Maintain farmland through conservation easements
- Lack of Planning to maximize opportunities
- Elected officials don’t have a large vision for growth of the area – think too small
- Water to sustain growth

- Providing transportation options for those who can't/don't drive
- Overcoming adversity to density
- Aging infrastructure – interchanges and lack of funding (2X)
- NM doesn't get fair share of FAA dollars
- El Paso Airport – lose EAS subsidy; funnels too many passengers away from Las Cruces International
- Unanticipated growth
- Lack of funding for infrastructure
- Large geographic/rural area – balance of rural and urban needs
- Maintain southwest culture
- More intermodal travel opportunities (2X)
- Sky is falling mentality – we are our own worst enemy – short sighted
- Construct roads in such a way that there is room for on-street parking and two-way traffic
- Communication between the core not just higher ups – all agencies need to be involved in decision making
- Appropriately trained persons for jobs
- More industry means more people and more traffic congestion
- Maintaining regional cooperation to manage growth well
- Urban sprawl
- Connecting communities in the County and El Paso with public transportation

Question 3: How can the transportation system become better equipped to handle future growth?

- Improve funding base – local, state (current NM does not fund general transit operation), nationally (2X)
- Make sure public transit is included as a key player in transportation infrastructure (key in both funding and planning)
- Improved bike ability and walk ability of community (e.g. pedestrians are running across I-25) – connectivity (3X)
- Regionally need to support Regional Transit District
- Encourage/force commercial growth in clusters and scattered over a larger area to disperse traffic
- Better planned developments that not only meet today's demand but also address future growth
- Create financing to meet our growing demands (i.e. toll roads, bonding etc.) (2X)
- Keep up with new technology (i.e. for traffic signals) (3X)
- Be able to address transportation growth by building roads and drainage prior to growth (2)
- City control of roadway construction – transportation infrastructure
- Strategic planning

- Create a master plan for building transportation systems beyond the MPO Thoroughfare Plans
- Implement impact fees so that the City has control over building the infrastructure (3X)
- Regional view of transportation (cooperation among different levels of government, step outside the blinders, seems like City line is a cutoff point)
- Better planning of routes/highways (2X)
- Develop a smarter system (ITS) for existing system(3X)
- Public works expand more into more precise planning efforts
- Manage growth more effectively-link land use and transportation planning
- Transit oriented development/principles of New Urbanism
- Educated/informed decision makers – good transportation planning principles
- Increase viability of the airport – longer runways, air traffic control tower
- Maintenance dollars
- Mixed use, more compact development to facilitate walking, biking and public transportation
- Provide corridor for high speed long distance travel but also have land use that minimizes need for that travel – reduce need to cross the City
- Implement RTD
- Consider forming Special Assessment Districts (per NM statute) for constructing transportation system instead of waiting for state/federal funding
- Improve inter-agency cooperation to undertake projects and complete projects expeditiously
- Better allocation and consolidation of funds from various UG utilities with transportation system funding
- Consideration for non-vehicular use to minimize use of roadways
- Think creatively – don't just automatically widen roads from 2to 4 lanes. In some areas (i.e. downtown, university corridor) make it harder to drive, to reduce traffic and make it easier to walk/bike
- Adopt performance measures to improve biking and walking
- Compact development – fine grained and pedestrian friendly
- Commuter – buses, rail, paths
- In existing areas finances based on a formula where everyone participates

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

- Can better determine the actual needs of transportation system to stretch minimal dollars and minimize waste
- Focus growth to allow us to place the infrastructure
- Make it implementable
- Tell us where and when to growth the County and how best to get there
- Provide policies, goals and objectives (strategic planning)

- Provide a vision and direction
- Address land use
- Address connectivity
- Provide a document that can be used for strategic planning to address growth
- Address regional view
- Provide an overall roadmap that outlines a strategy to make transportation as efficient as possible and including all forms of transportation
- If it includes public transit it will help to get it included. It will help with the broad picture