

# MISSION TRAIL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



September 2019



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# 1 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

This comprehensive plan looks at the Mission Valley Historic Trail area, its three distinct communities, and looks for ways for each community to protect and enhance its character and quality of life for its residents. This plan builds upon the efforts and guidance of the previous 1993 plan. Like the 1993 plan, the purpose of this plan is to provide the framework to preserve a portion of El Paso’s heritage. This plan presents guidelines and policy recommendations for the preservation, protection, and enhancement of the structures, sites, character, and culture of the Mission Trail Historical Area and the surrounding environment along the Camino Real.

Key objectives of the 1993 plan included:

1. Create an Historic Corridor along Socorro Road
2. Creation of Historic Districts within each community,
3. Create Design Guidelines for development within the historic districts.

El Paso’s Mission Valley has a long and complex history that should be highlighted and celebrated, but is often unknown to people even within El Paso. County officials in El Paso have began efforts to increase awareness of the Mission Trail including the installation of historic place markers. The undertaking to promote the trail is an effort of different partnerships including El Paso County, the City of El Paso, the City of Socorro, Tigua Indian Tribe, City of San Elizario, Ysleta community and the Santa Fe National Trail office.

Some believe that the inscription of the area as a UNESCO World Heritage Site is possible and will help to promote these historic assets as well as benefit the surrounding communities. Tourism and preservation is one of the methods to accomplish this, but this plan is not limited to only those solutions. Designation as a World Heritage Site would greatly benefit the community, but is a long and complex process. Other paths may be easier to accomplish and start benefitting the community while UNESCO designation is still pursued.

This plan is a living document. Planning is an ongoing conversation about the future. The conversation that this planning effort began does not end with the plan’s adoption. The needs of any community continually evolve and just as the plan for one’s own life must be allowed to evolve as opportunities and challenges change, so must the *Mission Trail Comprehensive Plan*.

“The effort to promote the Mission Trail is extremely important to the local community, as well as the tourism community and park visitors.”

U.S. National Park Ranger  
Anne Doherty-Stephan

# Location

## The Mission Trail

The El Paso Mission Valley is located on to the western edge of Texas and borders the Mexico-United States Border as well as the state of New Mexico. The County of El Paso is home to a national treasure: The Mission Trail, which includes two historic missions and a presidio. The Ysleta Mission, the Socorro Mission, and the presidio chapel of San Elizario illustrate a linked network of communities necessary in understanding the origins of the nation from southern colonization and the fusion of different cultures resulting in a unique cultural heritage in the El Paso Mission Valley.

For four centuries, El Paso del Rio del Norte was New Spain’s northern frontier. The Ysleta Mission, the Socorro Mission, and the San Elizario Presidio Chapel are all situated along Socorro Road which is a portion of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro established by the Spaniards as their route from Mexico City to Santa Fe. The cultural heritage of the missions and presidio chapel is epitomized in the historic road which links them directly to El Paso.

The trail dates back thousands of years as a route for trade, commerce and survival among indigenous people. The importance of this route’s collaborative history and heritage between the indigenous people, Mexico, Spain, and the American Southwest territory, predates the pilgrims landing at Plymouth in 1620. This route signifies that America was first influenced by the Spanish Crown from the southern border, colliding with the existing cultures present in Southwest America. Don Juan Oñate is attributed with leading the exploration, having arrived in present day San Elizario and traveling upstream (west) in search of an area conducive for crossing the river before deciding on a location in New Mexico.

The two missions and presidio that were established along the Rio Grande are among the most important historical sites in the State of Texas because they pre-date the other missions in both Texas and California by many decades. The missions and presidio chapel are priceless reminders of the elaborate system of Spanish missions and forts, colonial villages, and Indian traditions created along these trade routes. It is no coincidence that El Paso’s missions and the San Elizario presidio were established near the Rio Grande as the trade routes often followed water sources for travelers. One very interesting fact concerning the missions and presidio in El Paso County is that they changed nationalities depending on the vagaries of the Rio Grande River. Prior to 1829, both missions and the presidio were located on the southerly bank of the Rio Grande River. But that year the river flooded the entire valley. When the floodwater subsided, the river had created a new channel for itself which left the communities of Ysleta, Socorro, and San Elizario on the northerly bank of the river.

The Rio Grande gave the mission and presidio chapel communities life, in addition to causing great destruction. The Ysleta and Socorro missions were flooded, as the river periodically changed its course. The transmigration of the river moved the boundary between the United States and Mexico further south after each flood. The Mission de Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe (in Cd. Juárez) remained on the southerly side of the river. In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo between the United States and Mexico established the deepest channel of the river as the international boundary, thereby permanently placing the missions of Ysleta and Socorro, and the San Elizario presidio chapel on Texas soil.

El Paso County has recognized the historical and commercial values of the Lower Valley for years. Portions of the Valley have a history which spans almost 400 years and are heavily influenced by the Mexican and Indian cultures.

**1,600 Miles**

Mexico City to  
San Juan Pueblo,  
New Mexico

**400 Miles** in US

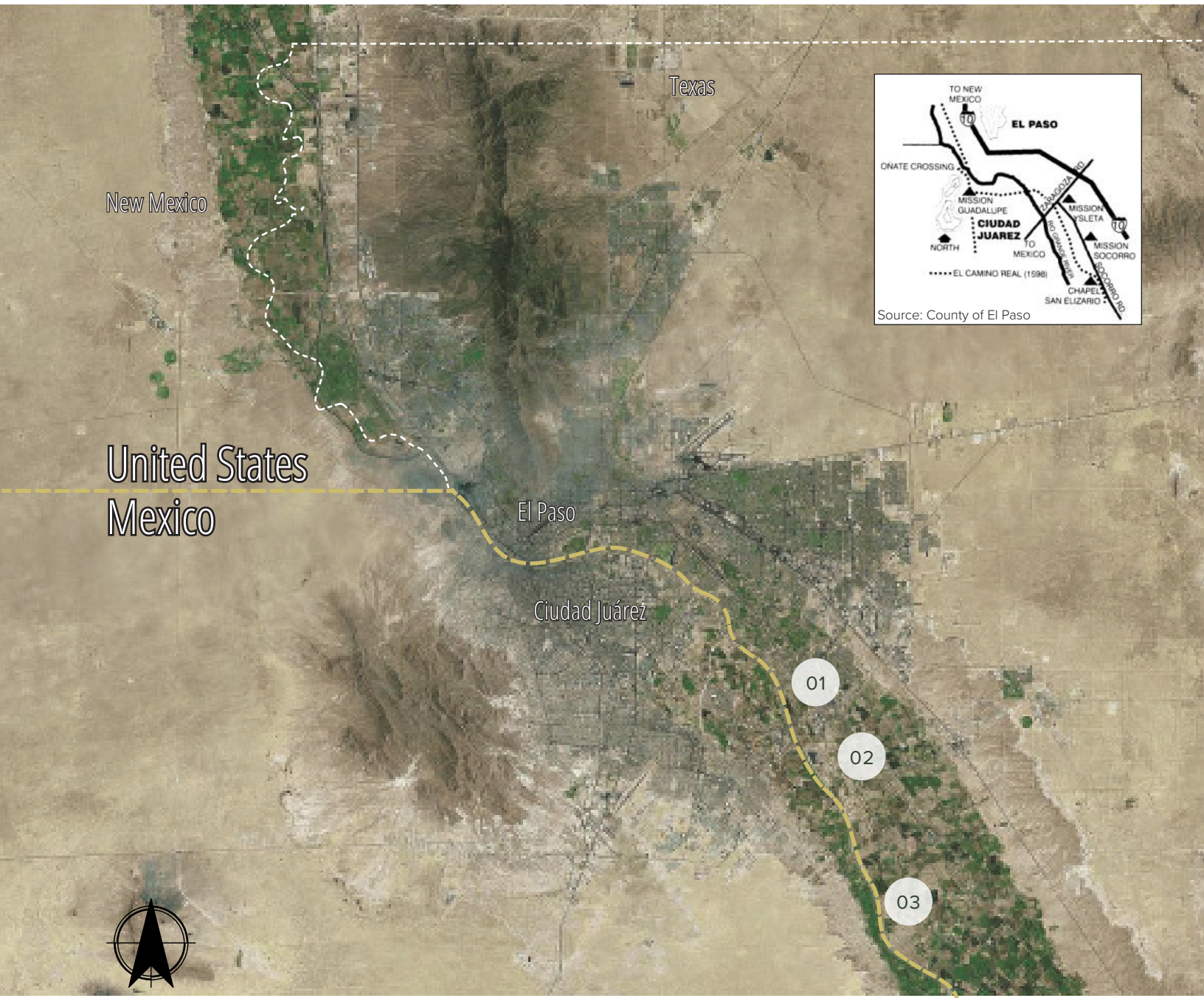
National Historic  
Trail under National  
Park Service & BLM

Catholic Diocese  
of El Paso own the  
Missions and Chapel

Mission Trail  
Historical Area

**9 Miles** Along  
Socorro Road

- Ysleta District - 2.5 Miles
- Socorro District - 3.5 Miles
- San Elizario District - 1.0 Mile



1. Ysleta Mission (Ysleta del Sur Pueblo in El Paso)  
(original - 1682 | current built - 1908)
2. Socorro Mission (City of Socorro)  
(original - 1691 | current built - 1843)
3. Presidio Chapel of San Elizario (City of San Elizario)  
(original - 1788 | current built - 1889)



Corpus Christi de la Ysleta del Sur

# Ysleta Mission

## Brief History & Existing Conditions

The Ysleta Mission was originally built by the Tigua (Tiwa) Indians as a sanctuary for Franciscan padres escaping the Pueblo Revolt in New Mexico. The Ysleta Mission is one of the oldest continuously-used churches in the United States. Today, descendants of the original Tigua Indian Tribe continue to worship at the mission. Historical records confirm that the Ysleta Mission was constructed in 1682. A Franciscan friar named Fray Garcia de San Francisco Y Zuniga later added a rectory.

The Ysleta Grant recognized acreage set aside for the Tiguas by the Spanish Crown. The crafts, ceremonial dances, and bread-baking methods of the Tiguas have remained virtually intact for centuries. The Mission is recognized by both the Texas Historical Survey Committee and the National Register of Historical Places.



Corpus Christi de la Ysleta del Sur



Interior view: Corpus Christi de la Ysleta del Sur



The community is a living example of the unification of different cultures as is evident through its architectural elements, décor and interiors. The original mission has been rebuilt several times over its existence. It was rebuilt in 1744 due to a flood which destroyed the original mission. Unfortunately, this reconstruction was also heavily damaged after the flood of the Rio Grande in 1829, which changed its natural course and officially relocated Ysleta from Mexico to the United States.

During reconstruction, the church employed outdated elements from the previous mission, which were offensive to the culture of the community residents. Furthermore, the chemical fire in 1907 resulted in only parts of the mission surviving such as some of its walls and church bell. The mission that exists today was built in 1908 using the old missions surviving elements. The mission and grounds were most recently restored by the Tigua Tribe in 2017.

History between the church and Native American residents have not always been amicable. However, the native community has been able to maintain a strong presence in El Paso and maintain its cultural heritage, despite challenges such as modern development and ongoing legal disputes over land. Ysleta's land area diminished with every change in government overtime, from the Spanish Crown to Mexico, to the Republic of Texas, to the United States. The Ysleta Mission is a testament to the "complex cultural landscape, distinguishing it as a place where missions and roads may rise and die, but history prevails" (National Park Service).

Ysleta Mission is located toward the southeast edge of the City of El Paso and is the northern most mission out of the Mission Trail network in the El Paso valley. The area around the Ysleta Mission, especially, has become more urbanized with demand for more residential development and urban facilities such as the Mission Valley Transfer Center, parks, libraries, and shopping centers.



Aerial View of Ysleta Mission area today.

SOURCE: GOOGLE EARTH

## Ysleta Mission Timeline

- 16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY ● Origins of Camino Real begins era of Spaniard Colonization in Southwest America
- 1680 ● Revolt causes Tigua Indians to relocate to Ysleta del Sur, along the Mission Trail
- 1684 ●
- 1682 ● Original mission constructed
- 1740 ● Ysleta Mission destroyed by flooding of the Rio Grande and reconstructed in 1744
- 1821 ● Rule transitions from Spain to Mexico
- 1829 ● Rio Grande floods, damages Mission, and changes course, placing Mission in US
- 1848 ● Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo sets international border with Mission in US
- 1907 ● Wall portions, sacristy, church bell and Spanish statue only items to survive a fire
- 1908 ● Mission reconstructed from surviving elements
- 2016 ● Mission & ground restored by Tigua Tribe
- 2017 ●



Mission Nuestra Señora de la Limpia Concepción de Los Piro de Socorro; 1766 - La Purisima Concepción de Socorro

# Socorro Mission

## Brief History & Existing Conditions

The Socorro Mission is known as the second oldest mission in Texas. The mission is described as one of the best preserved examples of mission architecture and exudes a sense of strength and dignity with its six-foot-thick adobe walls and massive crossbeams. The Socorro Mission shares with Ysleta the distinction of being among the oldest continuous settlements in the Southwest, as well as being one of the oldest continuously operated missions, functioning for more than three hundred and fifty years. The Mission is recognized by both the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark by the Texas Historical Commission (RTHL-THC) and the National Register of Historical Places.

The mission was established by the Franciscan order and influenced by the Spanish and the Piro, Tano, and Jemez Indian communities who relocated there after the Pueblo revolt in New Mexico. The mission is a symbol of geopolitical history and cultural fusion shaped under multiple governments as claims on the land changed between Spain, Mexico, Republic of Texas, and the United States.



Socorro Mission exterior



Socorro Mission interior

Similar to the Ysleta Mission, the Rio Grande flooded the region altering the its landscape numerous times with “flooding destroy[ing] the mission as many as five times” (Howard Campbell, 2005). A flooding event in 1829 caused the Ysleta Mission, the Socorro Mission, as well as the Chapel of San Elizario to fall north of the Rio Grande. After political land annexation and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the missions are now permanently part of Texas and the United States. The reconstruction of the Socorro Mission after the devastating flooding of the Rio Grande brought forth the mission present today.

The Socorro Mission standing today serves as a testimony to the community’s multicultural history and culture. The present mission, constructed in 1843, is a replacement for one that was destroyed in the flood of 1829. The 1843 reconstruction followed 17<sup>th</sup> Century Spanish New Mexican architectural traditions of building their church to the same dimensions, specifications and building techniques as the previous structure, forming massive adobe walls, laying hard-packed clay and gesso floors, and plastering the exterior with lime.

The mission emphasized the joint fusion of Spanish culture and American Indian population through the merging of the Catholic church and native design elements. The Mission embodies several historical objects which were salvaged from the remains of the original church. According to the El Paso Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the Socorro Mission remains an outstanding example of Spanish Mission architecture, representing the best elements of Indian and Spanish design.

The trial of time has had its hand on the Socorro community, including 1900’s development and increased railroad activity ending commercial activity. Trapped moisture led the community to launch a restoration project in 1998 to reinforce walls with 22,000 adobe bricks, as well as conservation of the interior.

## Socorro Mission Timeline

- 16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY ● Origins of El Camino Real begins era of Spaniard Colonization in Southwest America
- 1680 ● After Pueblo revolt in NM, Spaniard & indigenous people relocate along the Camino Real
- 1691 ● Permanent Piro-built church completed in place of the temporary Socorro Mission
- 1740 ● Socorro Mission destroyed by flooding of the Rio Grande
- 1821 ● Rule transitions from Spain to Mexico
- 1829 ● Rio Grande floods, damages Mission, and changes course, placing Mission in US
- 1843 ● Current Socorro Mission constructed
- 1848 ● Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo sets international border with Mission in US
- 1998 ● Mission restoration to reinforce walls and preserve interior due to trapped moisture



Aerial View of Socorro Mission area today.

SOURCE: GOOGLE EARTH



San Elizario Presidio Chapel

# San Elizario Presidio

## Brief History & Existing Conditions

Juan de Oñate’s crossing of the Rio Grande river took place at present day Old Fort Bliss. Juan de Oñate read La Toma, meaning ‘taking possession’, in present day San Elizario. The action declared possession of the land for King Phillip II of Spain and commenced the Spanish colonization in the American Southwest.

The San Elizario presidio chapel, established in 1789, evolved as part of the Spanish Presidio – a garrisoned fort established to protect communication lines and to defend the area against hostile Apache and Comanche Indian raiders. As a presidio, no more than 40 or 50 soldiers were stationed there to protect the settlements along the Mission Trail. The Apache raids caused the reorganization of Spain’s northern frontier defenses. A chain of presidios extending east from the gulf of California was established. This chain was formed in a line that resembled the current boundary line between Mexico and the United States.

A village then began to grow around the presidio. Casa Ronquillo represents one of the area’s oldest examples of classic Mexican hacienda architecture. Only one wing



Veterans Memorial Park



Interior view: San Elizario Presidio Chapel

(five rooms) of the original hacienda still stands. The high adobe wall which once surrounded the compound was an indication of wealth and prestige.

In 1829 the Rio Grande River re-directed its course leaving the San Elizario Presidio on the northern bank. The end of the American war with Mexico in 1848 left San Elizario on Texas soil. Since San Elizario was the largest settlement, it became the first county seat of El Paso County under State of Texas rule in 1850.

In 1853 a small chapel was built to accommodate the religious needs of the residents. The chapel's name came from the French patron saint of the military, San Elceario. The chapel was expanded into a larger church in 1877, and has been in use ever since. This larger structure is the current San Elizario Chapel. Tragically, a fire in 1935 destroyed most of the vigas and other objects that had been saved from the earlier buildings.

The architectural style of the chapel resembles those of southwest mission architecture and features thick adobe walls. However there is a difference in form between the chapel and the missions. The missions have long naves for seating with side wings extending before the central altar, forming a cross shape in plan. The chapel is more modest with a single nave form culminating in a triple apse altar.

Additional mortifications occurred after a 1935 electrical fire; the event resulted in the installation of a pressed tin ceiling, and replacement of its wooden supports with neoclassical posts. The fire caused no damage to the exterior 1877 façades. The chapel's white exterior paints a picture of purity and stability in an ever-changing world. The supplementation of European elements on the façade currently classifies the chapel as Spanish Colonial Revival.

The presidio chapel of San Elizario still serves as the heart of the community. San Elizario, like Socorro, lost its commercial brilliance when the railroad came to the region. The San Elizario Historic District is registered under the National Register of Historic Places by National Park Services. The district has 22 contributing buildings.



Aerial View of Socorro Mission area today.

SOURCE: GOOGLE EARTH

## San Elizario Presidio Timeline

- 1598 ● La Toma held in San Elizario on April 30, claims territory for Spain
- 1789 ● Presidio constructed to protect against Apaches & Comanche raiders
- 1821 ● Mexico gains independence from Spain
- 1829 ● Rio Grande floods, damages Presidio, and changes course, placing chapel in US
- 1848 ● Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo sets international border with Mission in US
- 1850 ● As largest settlement, becomes first county seat of El Paso County
- 1853 ● San Elizario Chapel first constructed, named San Elceario
- 1877 ● San Elizario Chapel expanded and is the present day construction
- 1935 ● Electrical fire destroys interior of chapel, no damage occurred to the exterior

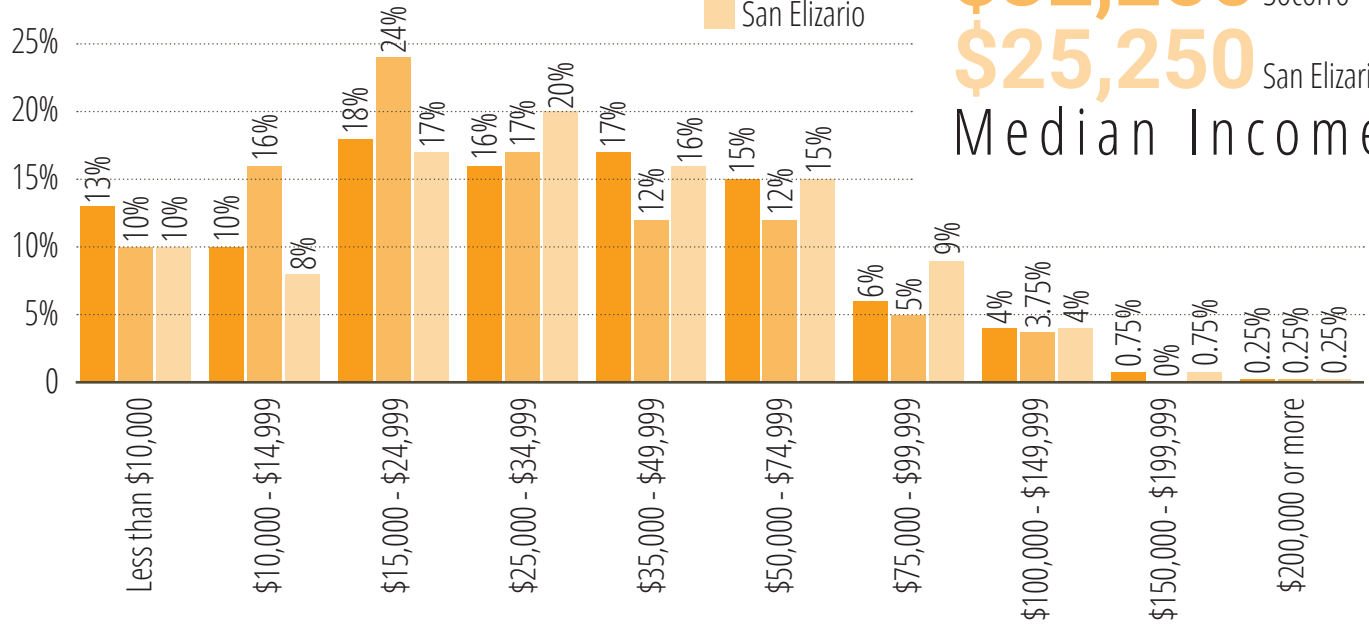
# Demographics

## Mission Valley Area

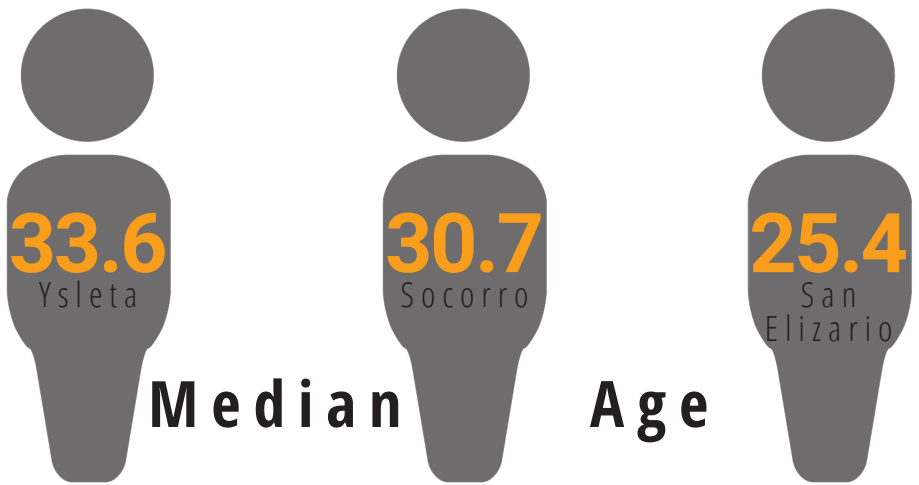
This section examines the demographics of the Mission Trail area, specifically the zip code level data for Ysleta (79907), Socorro (79927) and San Elizario (79849). This information will help to form an understanding of the Mission Trail area in terms of population, income, employment, or other data trends.

**\$33,700** El Paso  
**\$30,000** Ysleta  
**\$32,250** Socorro  
**\$25,250** San Elizario  
**Median Income**

### Income Distribution



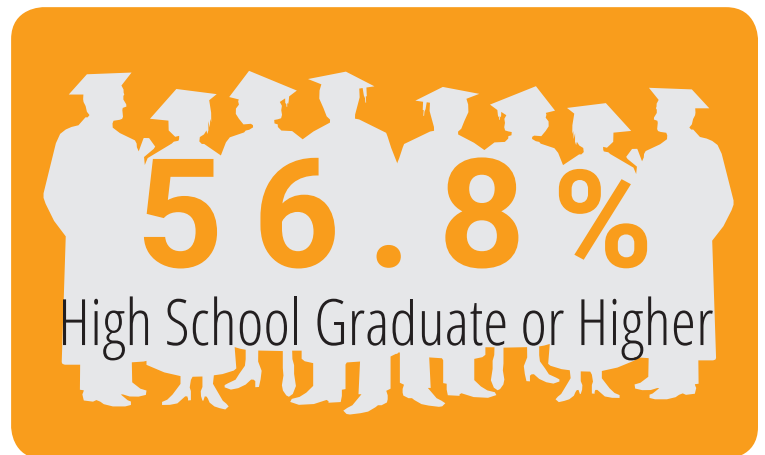
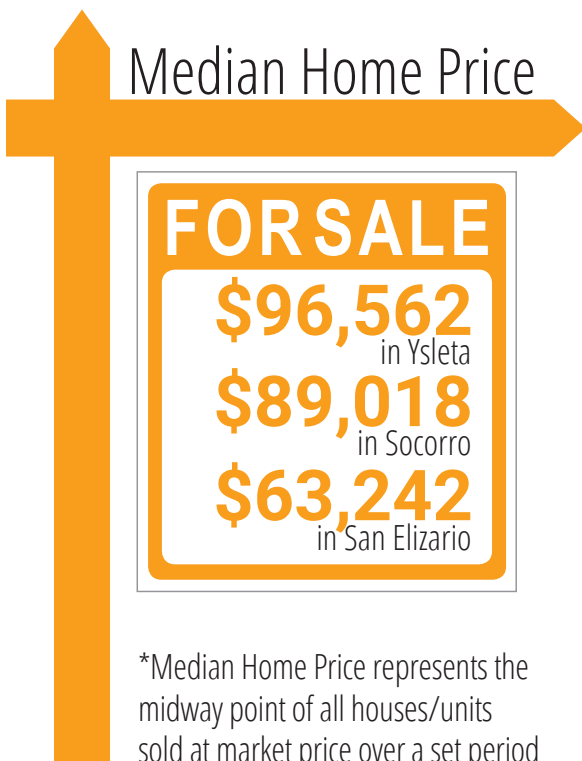
**97.2%**  
Hispanic Population



Source: ACS 2016



## Travel Time to work



## 4.1% Unemployment Rate

## Community Ownership Rates



# 5 Big Ideas

## Overview

This report will help city and county leaders, the business community, non-profit organizations, and residents improve the quality of life along the El Paso Mission Trail. The five “Big Ideas” developed during the public charrette form the key recommendations of this plan.

The five ideas (and many others) came from conversations held in the Mission Trail community. Although specific details may change as the plan is implemented, the “Big Ideas” should remain intact. The ideas began as notes presented to the public as part of a public workshop. The notes are included below and the ideas are described in more detail on the following pages.

This section provides short summaries of the Big Ideas. The report then describes how Land Use, Mobility, and Economic Development can help implement the five Big Ideas as well as address other community concerns. The report appendices describes the public process for creating the plan, design guidelines, and the merits of World Heritage Site designation.

Here’s a quick overview of the five big ideas that the plan describes:

### 1. Create Complete Centers Around Each Mission & Chapel

- Live, Work, and Play in the Mission Valley
- Encourage Each Community’s Unique Identity
- Support Existing Destinations

### 2. Protect & Enhance Historic Assets & Agricultural Landscapes

- Document Historical Assets, Landscapes & Artifacts
- Protect Historical Assets
- Preserve Agricultural Assets

### 3. Add Destinations and Events

- Destinations & Events in Each Community
- Common Links to Destinations

### 4. Add Trails, Improve Streets to Connect the Mission Valley

- Add Trails Along the Historic Irrigation Canals and Socorro Road.
- Improve the Auto-mobility of the Commuting Network.

### 5. Expand Economic Base and Identify Funding Sources

- Create a Mission Valley Alliance
- Coordinate Existing Funding Sources
- Seek Additional Funding Sources
- Establish Public Improvement Districts



# 1. Create Complete Centers

Around each Mission and the San Elizario Chapel

## Live, Work, and Play in the Mission Valley

The first big ideas presented by community members is to encourage a unique identity and creating complete centers. The concept incorporates live, work, and play in the Mission Trail area, while supporting existing destinations.

A complete center offers everything you could want within just a few blocks. A complete center contains a diversity of uses, such as small offices, accommodations, entertainment, cultural facilities and places to shop. Small centers are formed around the historical sites in Mission Valley, yet there is a lack of uses and services to fully support the activities of visitors and residents. Coffee shops and restaurants can be a rare find in the Socorro and San Elizario areas. Residents have also voiced a need for short term accommodations such as bed and breakfast or even hotel lodging. New uses can be integrated with existing elements to support the live, work, and play of both residents and visitors.

## Encourage Each Community's Unique Identity

Three communities have formed around the Ysleta Mission, Socorro Mission and the San Elizario presidio chapel. The existing activities and infrastructure differ in the three communities, and this leads to the distinct character of each mission and presidio chapel area. The vacant parcels along the Mission Trail pose opportunities for infill projects. New developments should strengthen the community's identity and characters, while at the same time aid in building complete centers.

Ysleta - Tigua Tribe / Indigenous Culture has several existing cultural and entertainment venues in place, including the Tigua Indian Cultural Center and Speaking Rock Entertainment Center. Ysleta has the a competitive advantage to being an entertainment and cultural hub in the Mission Valley. New development such as pueblo shops that support the existing activities should be encouraged.

The community of Socorro including the Rio Vista Farm and working bracero community has a more rural character. The residents embrace their heritage as farmers. The community wants to encourage organic farm life, agriculture, and food shops.

San Elizario takes pride in its vibrant art scene, rich history, agricultural tradition, and Bee Project with native plants. Local farmers are focusing on organic food options along with the pollinator initiatives, they are growing a specialty crop industry that will foster economic development. San Elizario has a noticeable community center built around the presidio chapel. The existing galleries and museums have formed a sizable historic art district recognized by the Texas Historical Commission. New community shops and places to eat should strengthen the artful and historical character of San Elizario.

Socorro Road connects these three communities. Historically, trees lined and shaded Socorro Road. Many of the trees there today are Cottonwood trees that were planted in the early 1900s. Community members expressed the desire to reintroduce street trees back into the Mission Trail. This would entail selecting appropriate species, whether that be the cottonwood tree still or another local drought tolerant species, and estimating the cost for trees. Locations for trees should not interfere with existing conditions or other plans in the works.

# 10/10

Tables Recommended Creating Complete Centers for each Mission with an unique identity

.....

Crucial to Continue Supporting Existing Destinations along the Mission Trail

.....



Main Street Mercantile - San Elizario



Veterans Memorial Park / La Placita, San Elizario

### Support Existing Destination

The existing destinations reflect the current community character and value. It is important to support the existing destinations so that the sense of place in a community can be preserved. Improved public streets, private infill development, and public art can also encourage visits and strengthen the connections to the existing destinations. The Visitor's Center at I-10 and Fabens exit encourages Mission Valley Tourism.

- Café Arte Mi Admore at La Bodega Art Center
- Galleries in Placita Madrid
- Farmer's Markets

### Things To Do & Events\*

- Speaking Rock Entertainment Center/ Tigua Cultural Center
- Rio Bosque Wetlands
- Outlaw Saloon at the Licon Dairy & Petting Zoo
- Veteran's Memorial Plaza
- Mission Trail Art Market
- San Elizario Historic Sculpture Series
- Tigua Performances
- Walking Tours
- Free Concert Series (Speaking Rock)
- La Cueva Theater - Socorro
- Golden Eagle Gallery
- Escamilla Art Gallery & Studio
- Main Street Mercantile
- Al Borrego Studio
- Adobe Horseshoe Theatre
- Eagle Path Gift Shop
- Casa Ronquillo
- Shooter's Smokin' BBQ

### Museums + Visitors Centers\*

- Tigua Indian Cultural Center
- Museum at Socorro Mission
- Veteran's Museum
- Los Portales Museum & Information Center
- Mission Valley Visitors Center
- Old El Paso County Jail Museum
- Rio Vista Farm

\*as of July 2019

# 2. Protect & Enhance

## Historic Assets & Agricultural Landscape

### Document Historic Assets, Landscapes & Artifacts

The historic structures and agricultural landscape are the physical representation of the Mission Trail's history and culture. These cultural assets have tremendous intangible value to the community. They define the community's identity and sense of place. Without clear identification and proper measures to protect them, these cultural assets can be endangered by development and as a result the sense of community can be lost. Therefore, it is paramount to protect and enhance the existing historic and agricultural assets. There are also numerous historic artifacts that have no place to go to protect them.

An initial step to protect historic assets is to complete a comprehensive survey of historic structures whether currently designated or not. Viewsheds and landscapes should also be documented to protect important agricultural landscapes. Documenting existing conditions helps to better evaluate the historic assets and agricultural landscapes, thus identifying the areas in need of protection and enhancement. Studies like a Historic Structure Report and Cultural Landscape Report by the US National Park Service is an example of what could be included.

### Protect Historic Assets

Once the existing structures and view sheds have been identified, they can be categorized according to specific focuses to help identify experts, groups, and funding sources that would help in protecting each asset. All historic assets are important and should have efforts to protect and enhance them. Federal and State tax deductions for restoration of significant historic sites could also be used as a tool for preservation.

Design guidelines is another tool to enhance the historic assets. The creation of design guidelines for new development requires a collaborated effort of all municipalities in the Mission Trail. These guidelines set clear common goals to promote historic rehabilitation, preservation, and new construction of a similar character to the existing communities. The City-County signage program can also be integrated into the design guidelines to facilitate wayfinding along the Mission Trail. The Socorro Historic District has a set of design guidelines. These guidelines should be enhanced and then applied to more areas along the Mission Trail. The enhanced guidelines are included in Appendix B of this report.

Another path to protect and enhance the historical assets of the Mission Trail is to seek World Heritage Site designation. World Heritage Sites are selected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). World Heritage Sites are legally protected under international treaties. The UNESCO World Heritage Site program catalogues and preserves the selected sites, and under certain circumstances endows capital from World Heritage Funds. A larger discussion on the possibilities for creating a World Heritage designation along the Mission Trail is included in Appendix C of this document.

# 8/10

Tables Recommended

protection due to the cultural heritage contribution

to the Mission Trail

# 1,092

Cultural & Natural UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Only **1** is in Texas



La Cueva Theatre, Socorro



Agricultural land adjacent to Socorro Road

### **Preserve Agricultural Assets**

Agricultural assets are essential to the community's way of life, in all three communities. The working farm lands are surrounded by commercial and residential development and the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo is working to reestablish farms, orchards, and community gardens. Crop rotations can grow food year round without the need of high water demanding crops to keep a field financially solvent. There has been a lot of progress in the area for smaller productive farms that are better at using natural resources wisely yet yield an abundance of specialty product. This should continue to be fostered and expanded to preserve productive farmland and grow the economy for this fertile area. The idea of homestead gardening, where people grow food staples, spices, and specialty crops that have been forgotten about can reduce a reliance on fresh foods from grocery stores and reduce a household's food bill.

As the population of the El Paso metropolitan area continues to grow, there will be economic pressure for farmers to sell their land for new development. Protection mechanisms such as conservation easements could be utilized to prevent urban encroachment. The Loya property, for example, has a current application for a conservation easement and has a recent USDA Heritage Farm designation. Growth might be inevitable in the Mission Valley, yet design guidelines can be created to make sure new development happens in a way that enhances the agricultural heritage and adds to the health and quality of life of residents.

# 3. Add Destinations & Events

## Destinations & Events in Each Community

When participants were asked in the November 2018 charrette to put down one word that comes to mind about the Mission Trail in the future, the word *destination* shows up most frequently. Community members proposed adding destinations and events in each community. New destinations and events are key to creating vibrant economic and community life along the Mission Trail. The additional programs should stem from community needs and solid market analysis, and at the same time, be consistent with the unique identity of each community.

As the Ysleta community features entertainment and culture, bed and breakfasts, pueblo shops, and hotels are appropriate new destinations and support infrastructure. Programs such as live concerts and bars can promote a music culture and enhance the existing character.

In the community of Socorro, the large area of vacant land near Apodaca Road and Socorro Road has the potential for infill developments. A placita surrounded by homes and businesses can be created; it can work as a destination that connects the Mission with the town.

San Elizario is already known for being a historic art district, programs and amenities such as museums and galleries are suitable for enhancing the City's charm. As the area has a rural character, farms stands, or botanical gardens could be added to complement the agricultural presence. Local coffee shops and restaurants can help create a more complete center as well.

# 9/10

Tables Recommended the addition of  
**News Destinations  
and Events to the  
Communities**

.....

# 78%

Of the Community supported creating a  
**New Town Center in  
Socorro**  
focusing on engaging public spaces

.....



Adobe Horseshoe Theatre, San Elizario



Main Street, San Elizario

### **Common Links to Destinations**

Even though the characters of different communities in Mission Valley are varied, there should be a common thread to create a coherent visiting experience. A visitor's streetcar service could help to welcome and educate guests, facilitate in wayfinding and transportation, and connect the three communities.

As Socorro Road is the main access between the communities, special emphasis should be placed along the road. The two sides of the road could be utilized for public art installation. The plantings, markers, and signage could also be applied as a common theme to unify Ysleta, Socorro and San Elizario. A trail for hiking, biking, and horse riding should also be considered.

# 4. Connect the Mission Valley

## Add Trails & Improve Streets

### Add Trails Along Historic Irrigation Canals & Socorro Road

The Mission Trail has been a vital route connecting the Mission Valley to the rest of the world for centuries. Today, the trail still serves this function as Socorro Road. As the Valley develops, there is increasing pressure on the road to handle more car trips and commercial traffic, straining its ability to balance mobility needs with its scenic and historic roles.

A common theme heard from the community during the charrette was the need for trails throughout the Valley for recreation and to connect community destinations. The historic acequias built for irrigating the arid fields of southwest Texas have ditch banks that are informally used for travel by people on foot and bike. Improvements to these paths and the creation of a formal trail network can expand connections across the Valley and increase mobility options. These trails would be intended for non-motorized use, such as walking, biking and horseback riding.

Currently, unauthorized use of these ditch banks by ATV's and off-road vehicles increasingly makes the canal banks unsafe as people carelessly traverse these spaces. As the trails are improved, a challenge will be to keep these vehicles off the trail while finding a more appropriate place for these activities.

The acequia trail network should be coordinated with and support the Paso del Norte Trail and its spurs to offer access to the larger El Paso region. With the completion of the Paso del Norte Trail system, it will become possible to walk or bike along a designated pathway from the San Elizario to downtown El Paso, UTEP, and the border with New Mexico.

Socorro Road itself, following the path of the historic Mission Trail, can be improved to support safer travel for multiple modes of travel. A shared-use trail located along Socorro Road would provide a designated space for people to experience the Trail on foot and bike. Lighting and street trees should be added along Socorro Road to improve the safety, comfort and aesthetics of the Mission Trail for all users.

### Improve Access and Visibility

Access and visibility to the area can be improved for those both traveling on Socorro Road and those passing through the area on the highway. There are currently plans for the billboards by I-10 at Anthony and Tornillo to highlight the Mission Trail. The 375 off ramps at Alameda Road and Carl Longuemare Road should have prevalent signage directing people to Socorro Road and the Mission Trail area. Corridor Signage on Socorro Road, like those heading to Kern Place and Manhattan Heights could be added.

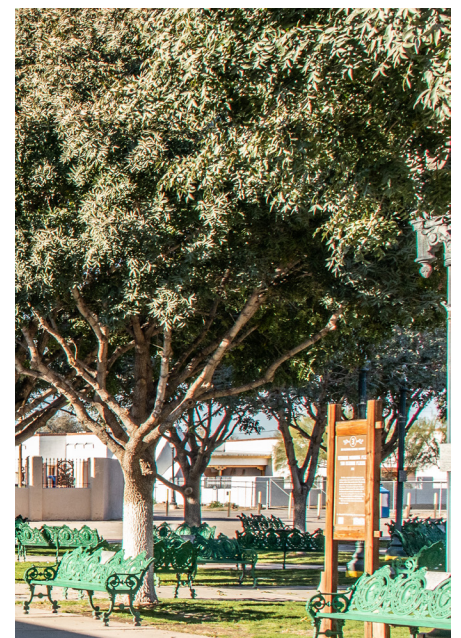
# 8/10

Tables Recommended the addition of Trails & Street Improvements in the Mission Valley

# 100%

Of the work-in-progress attendees supported the idea of Rural Pedestrian-Bike Trails

The TX Parks + Wildlife Trail in San Elizario should be extended beyond Casa Ronquillo along the acequia



Los Portales Museum, Adobe Horseshoe Theatre & Veterans Memorial Plaza, San Elizario



Potential trail location running parallel to Socorro Road near Tiwa Boulevard, Socorro

### **Maintain the auto-mobility of the commuting network**

The Mission Trail (Socorro Road) is the main traffic artery for the Mission Valley. As the primary way of getting from the Valley to the City of El Paso, Socorro Road's function as a critical mobility corridor must be maintained and improved upon. Many charrette attendees noted that traffic is a growing concern along Socorro Road, in addition to speeding. Creating a safe street environment for all modes of travel is paramount.

One way to create safe streets is to use context based street design; roadway capacity can be maintained while the street design and travel speed can be tailored to the areas through which the road passes. In rural sections, the street can maintain a rural character with moderate speeds. When the road passes through suburban areas, the street design changes to encourage slower speeds and in central areas, the design should change again with narrower lanes and street trees, to promote very slow speeds for the safety of those experiencing the place.

Another option is to create a safe consistent Socorro Road with a consistent speed limit of 30 mph. This will have an added benefit of increasing ridership of cyclists. Socorro Road would move people consistently, but at a lower speed. If people want to travel faster they could use Alameda Avenue.



# 5. Expand Economic Base

## Identify New Funding Sources

### Bring Together Mission Trail Advocacy Groups

An overarching group or alliance that brings together and coordinates efforts of groups already working to improve the Mission Trail should be formalized. Groups like the Mission Trail Association, El Paso County Historical Commission - Mission Trail Committee, Paso del Norte Community Foundation, and others can coordinate their efforts that effect all three communities such as road improvements and beautification along Socorro Road. Other communities across the country utilize non-profit development agencies to organize events and coordinate efforts.

A single entity with an overall vision for the Mission Trail area provides someone that is responsible for coordinating efforts and improving the Mission Trail areas. It can not be left up to everyone, or no one will get anything accomplished. Efforts to coordinate could include:

- Make the missions and San Elizario Chapel the center of commercial, civic, and cultural activity in their respective communities;
- Manage a special assessment fund aimed at making improvements;
- Form a volunteer Board of Directors comprised of property owners, business representatives, tenants, and community leaders;
- Coordinate a single branded marketing vision for all entities to increase exposure of what the Mission Trail has to offer local visitors as well as tourists;
- Facilitate beautification grant programs for local property owners and businesses with targeted advertising of façade grant improvements, chain-link fencing replacement grants, and sidewalk repair and installation programs, particularly within 1,000 feet of the missions and San Elizario Chapel;
- Coordinate with the Master Gardener Program to promote best management practices for home gardeners, increase local food production, and enhance the community with plant diversity;
- Implement beautification projects such as plantings, coordinated streetscape furniture, banners, public art, etc.; and
- Advocate for commercial and retail business development to create local jobs, in addition to new agriculture-related jobs.

### Coordinate Existing Funding Sources

There are numerous motivated non-profit organizations in the Mission Trail area who have the manpower and in some cases even capital, and are working on plans for specific aspects of the Mission Trail, such as canal side bike lanes and trails. Understanding the groups who are active and whose goals could easily support the area's wider economic development is important.

To the extent that they participate in a working group to improve the Mission Trail area, their efforts can be coordinated in a relatively simple manner of communicating back and forth on goals, timing, focus areas, and similar aspects of mutual interest. Some of these organizations may find where their efforts overlap or help to identify gaps where an entity may need to make something their focus.

# 6/10

Tables Recommended

## Finding New Ways to Fund Improvements

in the Mission Valley

More jobs and job types for all skill levels with rising incomes and a high quality of life



Street improvement along Socorro Road



Sombras del Pasado Restaurant (for sale), Socorro

### Seek Additional Funding Sources

Either as part of an Alliance or the County's Economic Development Department, a list of potential funding sources should be identified. This list can include sums to fund grant programs for façade improvements or repairs to larger State or Federal sources to improve the Mission Trail itself and provide funding for improvements to Socorro Road including new pavement, a multipurpose trail connection, street trees, and other drought tolerant plantings.

### Public Improvement District

A Public Improvement District (PID) in El Paso County is a designated area where improvements and services within that area can be funded by redirecting current taxes or assessing special fees. Funds can be used to provide improvements to the streets, sidewalks, street lights, parks or plazas, and off-street parking. A PID could be created for each of the communities - Ysleta, Socorro, and San Elizario individually or combined. The idea is that the community will see the results of their money being used directly in their community instead of never seeing a benefit from the taxes they pay.

When creating a PID, critical areas for infrastructure improvements would be identified and prioritized. In addition to expanding infrastructure, help could be provided to assist local businesses grow.

“I have been paying taxes for years and have never seen a benefit.”

Mission Trail Area Resident

# 2 LAND USE & URBAN DESIGN

## Existing Conditions

### Land Use and Development Patterns

Most new development in El Paso and the surrounding areas, including along the Mission Trail, takes the form of suburban development. What was largely a rural and agricultural area with the occasional village center has given way to the suburban expansion of El Paso. Residential subdivisions, strip malls, mechanics, tire shops, and yonkes (junk yards) have replaced farm fields, providing housing, but degrading the character and integrity of the historic Mission Trail.

The lack of connections within and between these places and the separation of uses results in driving being required for nearly every task and errand in everyday life. As Socorro Road is the only continuous north-south road connecting these isolated pods of housing and commerce, all trips will involve travel on it, in addition to commuting trips to El Paso. This sprawl development pattern contributes to the loss of agricultural heritage, degradation of the historic built environment, and growth in traffic congestion.

# Mission Valley Development

## Housing Types & Development Patterns

The development patterns along the Mission Trail reflect the similar patterns found throughout much of the Mission Valley area including Ysleta, Socorro, San Elizario, and the surrounding suburbs. The Mission Trail is rural in character with historic structures and interspersed with farmland and opens space encroached on by suburban housing developments and suburban housing designs. These most recent developments are low density, sprawling, suburban and many times do not fit with the rural, cultural, and architectural designs that make the Mission Trail unique and historic.

The following are examples of the most common type of land use patterns and housing design that are currently found along the Mission Trail and surrounding areas.

### Development Patterns



Enrique Perez Circle, San Elizario

**Sub-Urban:** These developments all look and feel the same because they all employ the same development pattern: low density housing, wide and disconnected streets, single-uses separated from each other (homes in one area, retail in another, and civic spaces separate from both), and little to no functional public space. These subdivisions bear no resemblance to the historic building patterns of the area. They occur sporadically along the Trail, with no cohesiveness with existing centers or other developments, forming a patchwork of disjointed suburban subdivisions and rural farms and villages.



Farm fields off Thompson Road, San Elizario

**Rural:** The remaining rural areas consist of farms and their associated buildings and structures. The agricultural lands provide a direct connection to the Trail's history and way of life.

### Housing Types



Restored Casa Ortiz, Socorro

**Historic Adobe Structures:** Throughout the Mission Trail, one can still see many historic adobe structures that date back to the early 1900s. These structures offer a glimpse of when the area was still remote and mostly agricultural without modern-day urbanization. When practical, these structures should be preserved and maintained.



Typical New Subdivision along the Mission Trail

**Suburban Development:** The most recent and typical residential developments have been in the form of suburban subdivisions. Starting with the annexation of Ysleta by the City of El Paso and the incorporation of Socorro as a city and expounded by population growth, suburban developments now come to represent the majority type of housing in the area. These are represented by a repetition of similar facades, large setbacks, and garages fronting the street.



Apartments in Socorro

**Multi-family Developments:** In the past few years, there have been a series of apartment complexes built along Socorro Road. These are mostly affordable housing units, funded in part by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs tax credit program. These developments do a good job of maintaining some of the area’s architecture through the Mission-style designs and maintaining an appropriate massing of buildings.



Pakitu (Pumpkin Village), Socorro

**Ysleta del Sur Reservation Housing:** Focusing mostly near the Ysleta Mission, there are several areas designated by the Tiguas for housing for tribal members. The most recent development is the Pakitu (Pumpkin Village) in Socorro. This development offers great examples of how new housing in general can be developed. From the architectural designs to the mix of uses, there are many neighborhood design principles that should be emulated in other areas.



Mobile Home Estates, Socorro

**Mobile Home Parks:** The area includes several mobile home parks along Socorro Road. There are also many scattered lots with mobile homes on them. This provides one type of low cost housing although it can have the perception that it does not contribute positively to the surrounding community.



Colonia in San Elizario

**Colonia Developments:** Colonias, which are typically classified as areas that have little to no infrastructure and have varied types of homes and housing conditions, can still be found in various of areas along the Mission Trail. These developments were prominent during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s and still exist today.



Infill Opportunity in Socorro

**Vacant Parcels:** While not commonly noticed, there are still many vacant parcels of land throughout the Mission Trail area. These “left-over” parcels of land can help fill in some of the housing needs in the area, without having to rely solely on new housing subdivisions. They offer opportunities for first-time homebuyers or young families to be able to move into the area in already established communities. These parcels are also good candidates to be used for smaller scaled farming which can create jobs, build the economy, and provide local specialty food options.



Agricultural land in Ysleta

**Agricultural Land & Open Space:** While not a housing type or a residential development pattern, the many acres of existing agricultural land and open space provide an opportunity to both develop housing in a context-sensitive manner or to preserve the remaining rural / agricultural land that makes the area unique. The appearance of productive agricultural land along Socorro Road is one of the key characteristics that defines the Mission Trail and the communities along it.

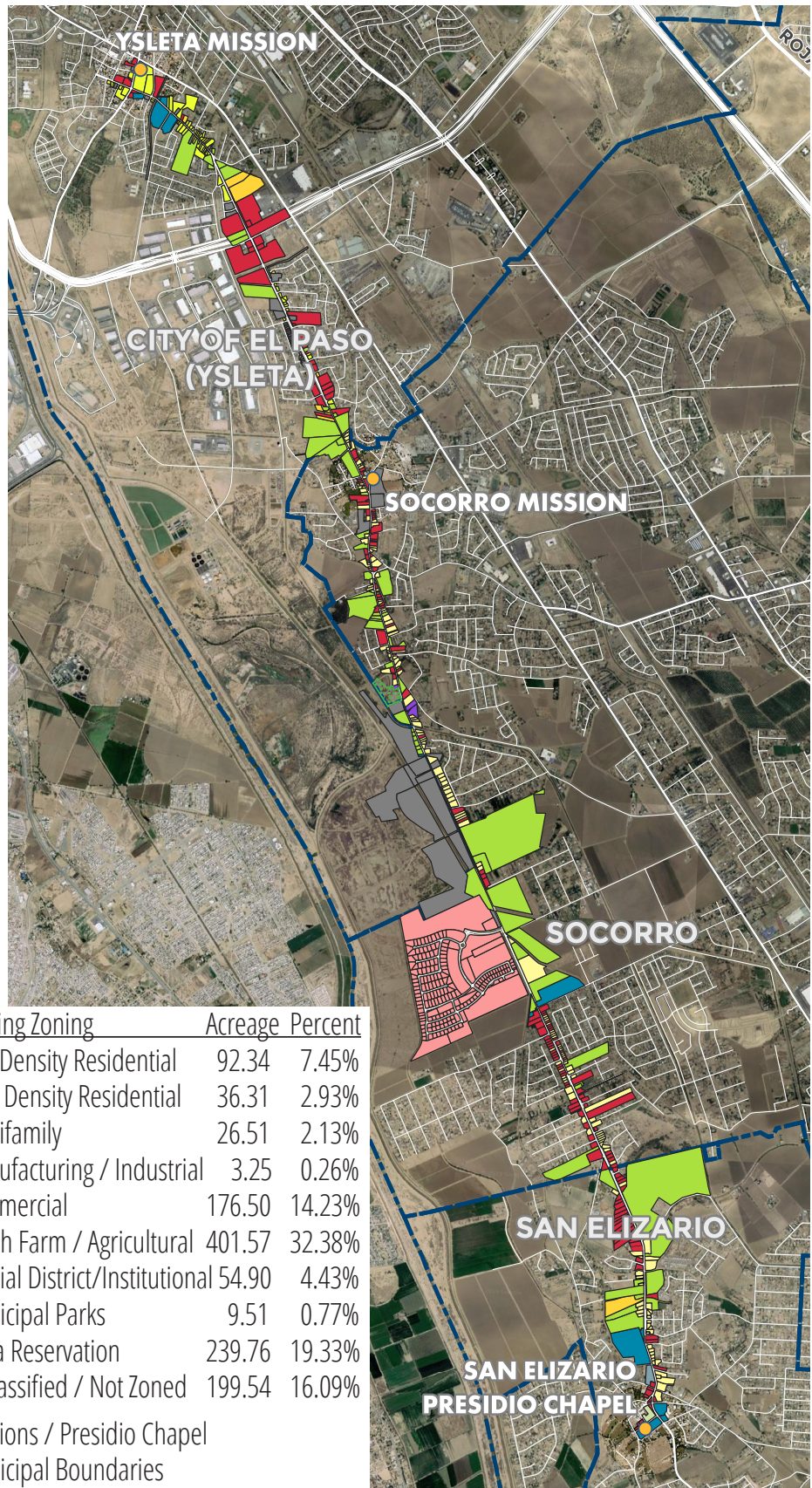
# Zoning & Land Use Data

## Mission Trail Along Socorro Road

The zoning map illustrates the parcels and zoning districts of the properties directly abutting Socorro Road through the Mission Trail area. Socorro Road has a mixture of zoning districts; from Commercial, to Single Family Residential districts, to small pockets of Manufacturing. There are also small areas of multifamily parcels.

One of the highest concentration of land is zoned Ranch Farm / Agricultural. This is land that is still available for farming. This area does not reflect that other large tracts of Ranch Farm / Agricultural land that surrounds Socorro Road but are not directly abutting the thoroughfare. If combined, that amount of land represents a large area that is still available for agriculture cultivation or may be a great opportunity for preservation in order to maintain the rural character of the area.

Another important area to make note of on this zoning map is the large area in the City of Socorro that is dedicated land owned and managed by the Tiguas tribe. In total there are approximately 240 acres of tribal land abutting Socorro Road that is developed as a mixed-use subdivision.



Existing Zoning	Acreage	Percent
Low Density Residential	92.34	7.45%
High Density Residential	36.31	2.93%
Multifamily	26.51	2.13%
Manufacturing / Industrial	3.25	0.26%
Commercial	176.50	14.23%
Ranch Farm / Agricultural	401.57	32.38%
Special District/Institutional	54.90	4.43%
Municipal Parks	9.51	0.77%
Tigua Reservation	239.76	19.33%
Unclassified / Not Zoned	199.54	16.09%

- Missions / Presidio Chapel
- Municipal Boundaries

**269** Acres

**1/5** Total Acreage

Ranch Farm /  
Agricultural



# Ysleta

## Community Area

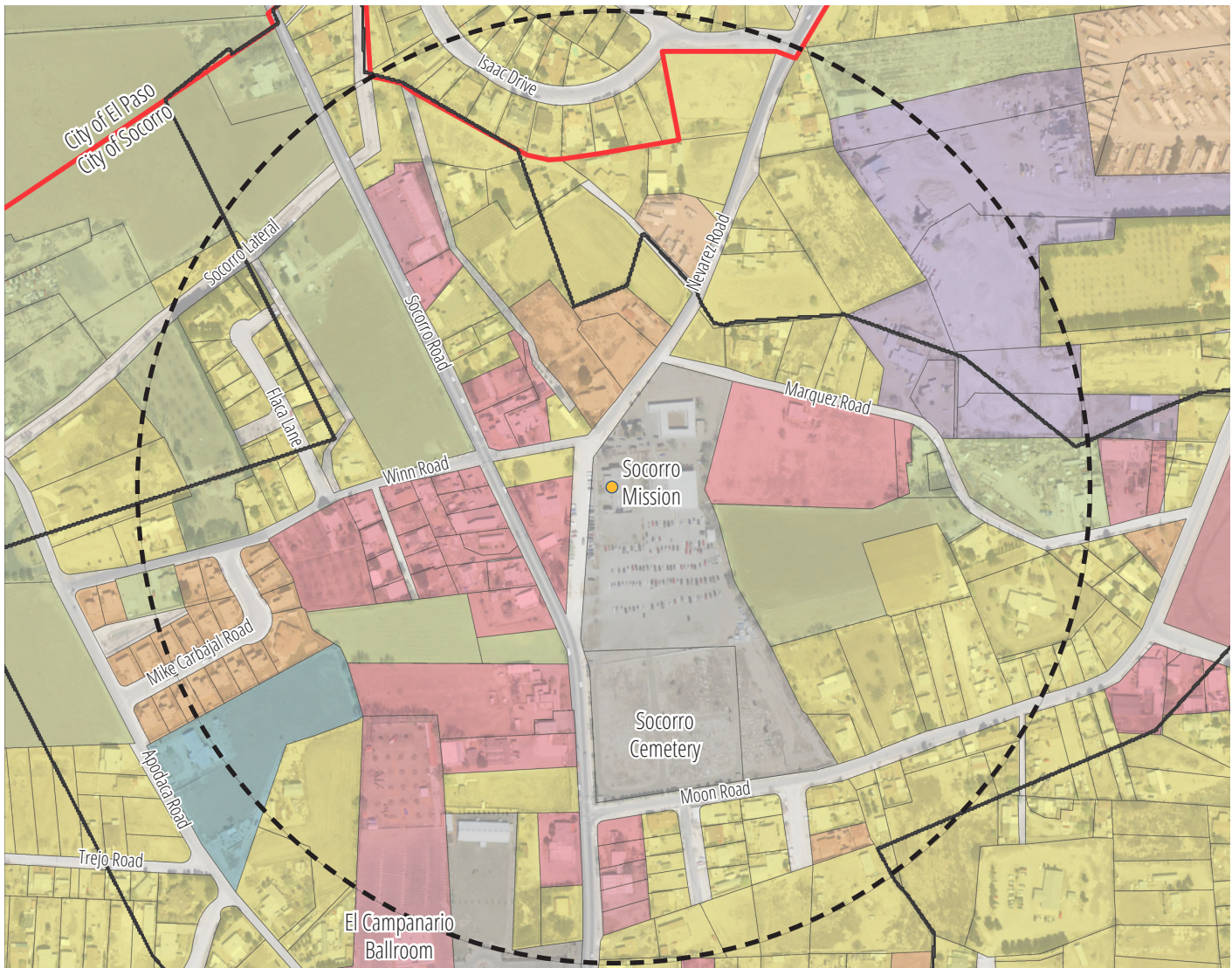
The Ysleta Mission is located within a historic district designated by the City of El Paso and includes landmark Buildings, contributing buildings and a portion of the commercial and residential area surrounding the Mission.

Ysleta lies within the limits of the City of El Paso and is the most urbanized of the three historic areas. The Ysleta Mission is accessible to most of the City by way of Alameda Avenue, or by transit via the Mission Valley Rapid Transit Center. The Speaking Rock Entertainment Center is located within the same block as the Mission. The Tigua Indians own quite a bit of property in the area and have services and housing for their community including the Ysleta Health Center, and the Tigua corporate offices funded through revenue of Speaking Rock Cultural Center.

Socorro Road begins as a residential street in this area with the Ysleta Mission being served more by Alameda Avenue, which is primarily neighborhood serving commercial. The immediate area is a mix of single and multi-family housing.

- Existing Zoning
- Residential
- Multifamily
- Commercial
- Special District
- Parks
- Mission
- 5 Minute Walk

**1955** Year  
El Paso annexed  
Ysleta



# Socorro

## Mission Area

The Socorro Mission and its cemetery next to Moon Road is zoned as a historic district by the City of Socorro. The mission is then surrounded by a mix of uses that include agricultural land, light commercial, single family homes, and some medium density homes. The mix of uses is good and the agricultural lands help to preserve the rural character of the area.

The former El Meson de Oñate and Pueblo de Socorro on Winn Road extends the historic feel of the area and provide potential places for people to lengthen their visit by eating and shopping close to the Mission. This collection of pueblo style buildings extends the historic nature of the area. Finding uses for these vacant buildings will help to bring life back to this area.

Collections of historic pueblo buildings are located at the intersections of Socorro and Moon Road and well as by Apodaca Road. A connection between these buildings and the ones around the Mission should be explored including improvements to Socorro Road.

### Existing Zoning

- Residential
- Multifamily
- Commercial
- Special District
- Light Industrial
- Agricultural
- Historic District
- Mission
- 5 Minute Walk
- City Boundary

City First Incorporated

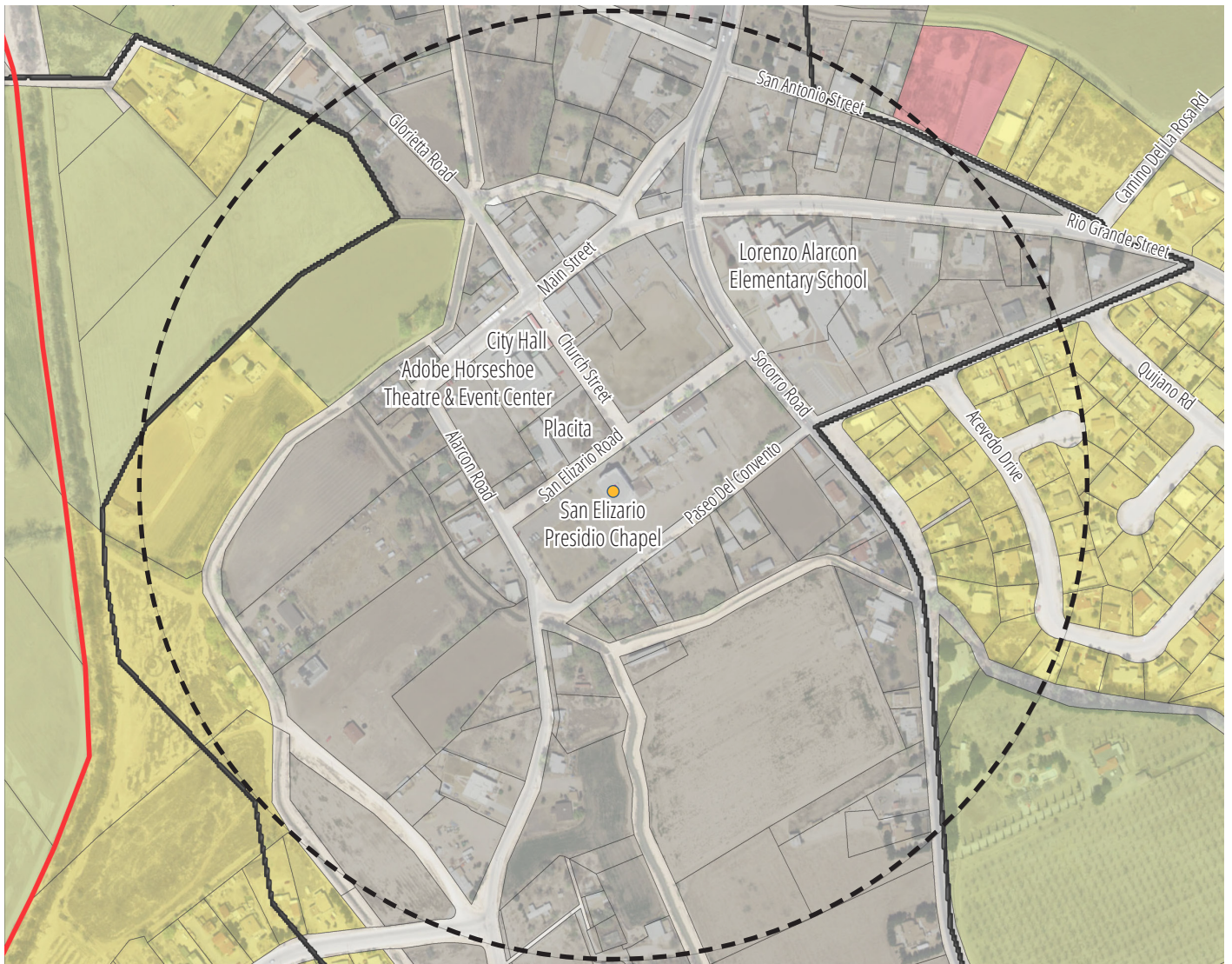
# 1871

Re-incorporated

# 1985

in response to an annexation attempt from neighboring El Paso





# San Elizario

## Presidio Chapel Area

San Elizario is the most rural of the three communities along the Mission Trail. The city incorporated in 2013 and has made great progress in distinguishing itself. Numerous buildings around the San Elizario Presidio Chapel have been renovated, rebuilt, or constructed. A focus on events and the artist community has rejuvenated the area.

The presidio chapel and its surroundings are within an historic district with some single family residential zoning around the edges. San Elizario is also the only community that has a full placita still intact. This provides a place for the community to gather, host, events, and for the community to build improvements around.

Some of the buildings around the presidio chapel are now occupied by City Hall, Old El Paso County Jail Museum, Adobe Horseshoe Theatre and Event Center, Los Portales Museum, Golden Eagle Gallery, Main Street Mercantile, and Escamilla, among others.

San Elizario should continue to expand on its success in bringing people to this end of the Mission Trail.

- Existing Zoning
- Residential
  - Commercial
  - Agricultural
  - Historic District
  - Presidio Chapel
  - 5 Minute Walk
  - City Boundary

City First Incorporated

# 1851

Re-incorporated

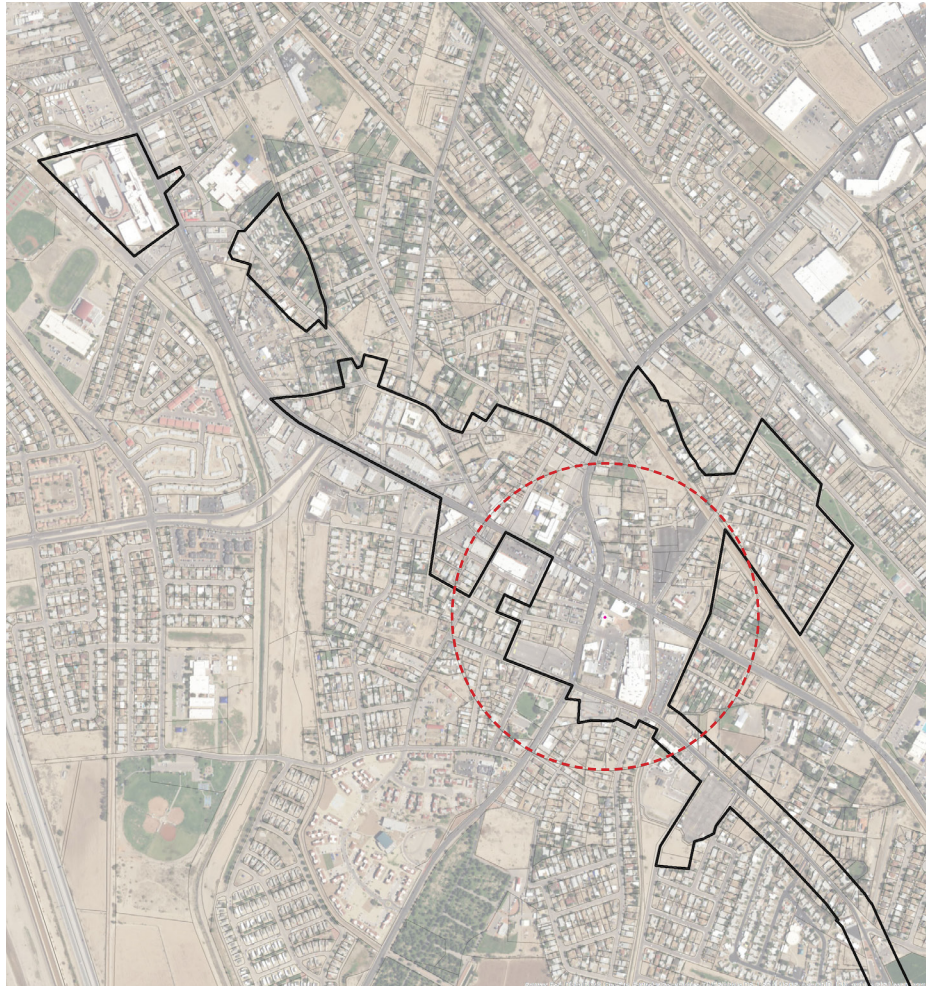
# 2013

in response to an annexation attempt from neighboring Socorro

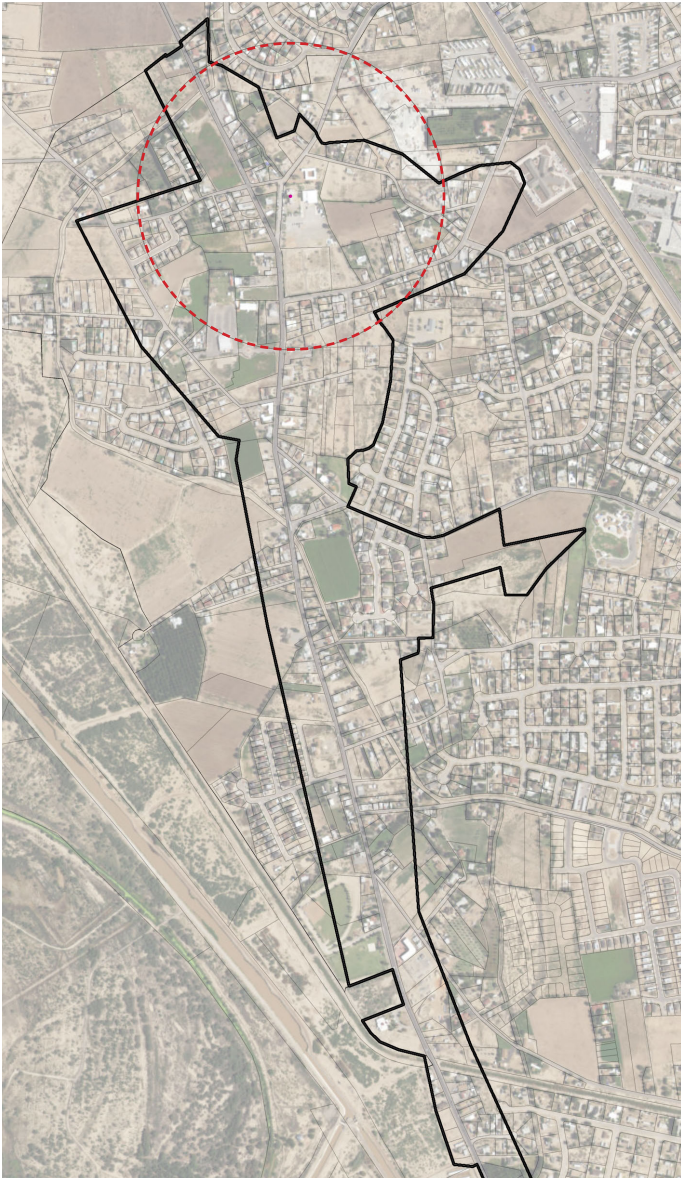
# Historic Districts

## Mission Trail Along Socorro Road

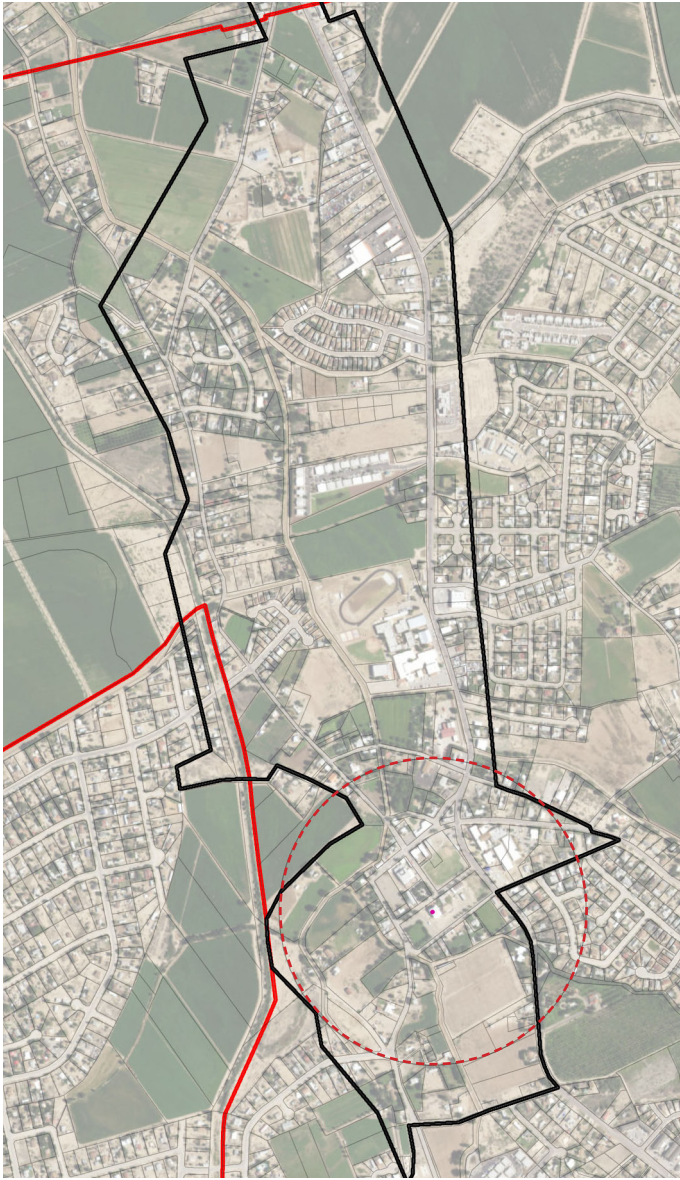
There are locally and federally designated historic districts around each mission and the presidio chapel as well as along Socorro Road. These areas are a good area to focus on with design guidelines so that new development that occurs will add to the character of the area. However, a special focus should be made to target properties within 1,000 feet (a walkable distance) of the missions and presidio chapel.



Ysleta Historic District



Socorro Historic District



San Elizario Historic District

# Community Concerns

## Land Use and Development Patterns

### Loss of Farmland & Open Space

Agricultural land can still be found along the Mission Trail and surrounding areas. This is a major aspect that makes this area unique and that helps attract visitors looking to escape urban settings. This open space is also a remnant of the not too distant past and serves as a reminder of why the area developed, this fertile land offered farming and ranching enterprises to many families, some of who still own the land and continue to live on it. In addition to the missions and presidio chapel, there is no other unique character that makes this area what it is: a rural and idyllic setting that gives us glimpses of how things used to be but also offers us a vision of what the future holds.

An overwhelming response during the public participation process—and through various stakeholder meetings with residents, business owners, and local leaders—was how much the people that live here appreciate and love the rural character of this area. Similarly, many expressed concern that these agricultural lands may give way to urbanization, more specifically to suburban type residential communities that may not fit into the existing fabric, making this area look like other more common areas in the city and region and also cause more traffic problems.

Residents want to see the remaining farmland be preserved. However, many recognize the economic realities and that inevitably development that will occur over time. If development will happen, residents would like to see new communities that fit into the existing fabric and that mirror the architectural designs that make the area so special. Future development should maintain some rural characteristics, uniformity with the history of the area, and have less of a generic suburban design.

### Too Many Vacant Parcels

The large parcels of agricultural land are some of the most ubiquitous sites that one sees driving along Socorro Road which add to the character of the area. These parcels are large and expansive. The high degree of vacant parcels that are neither farmland nor developed land are also very noticeable along the Mission Trail.

These vacant parcels of land serve very little purpose. They don't generate taxes or economic activity or add to the character and unique sense of place. Many times these parcels of land become unsightly with overgrown weeds and can become a health and environmental concern when used as illegal dumping grounds.

Incentivizing redevelopment of these vacant parcels through an infill policy can be a priority for developing areas of the Mission Valley. These areas can be prioritized over larger rural and greenfield sites. By building on these "left-over" parcels, development costs can be minimized by building on existing infrastructure such as the existing street network with hookups already available for water and wastewater lines, and by using available utility lines.

Another means of incentivizing is to encourage growth of specialty crops. These require less water and less space yet could yield commodities such as native foods, dye crops and ornamentals that may then be exported to other markets. Whether through financial assistance, tax incentives or simply providing the plant material and training, the City could easily incentivize specialty crops on small parcels.



In addition to the missions and presidio chapel, there is no other unique character that makes this area what it is: a rural and idyllic setting that gives us glimpses of how things used to be but also offers us a vision of what the future holds.



Vacant parcels along Socorro Road

# Lack of Park Space

From a quality of life perspective the more available park space in a community, the more opportunities for better physical health, increased mental wellbeing, and improved social interactions among residents there are. Parks provide areas for physical activities as well as communal areas for people to gather. The lack of parks is a critical item for improvement.

A major concern of many residents is the lack of available parks not only along the Mission Trail but also within all areas of the Mission Valley. The Existing Parks Map depicts the location of dedicated parkland within the boundaries of Alameda Avenue on the east, the Rio Grande/International Boundary on the west and from the Ysleta Mission down to the San Elizario Presidio Chapel. In total, this area has 511 acres of parks ranging in size from the large Rio Bosque Wetlands Park with 406 acres to the SPC Adrian Garcia park at about 6,600 square feet.

Vacant parcels that can be utilized as park space should be identified. This can include parcels along Socorro Road. New park spaces should include statues or other art related elements.

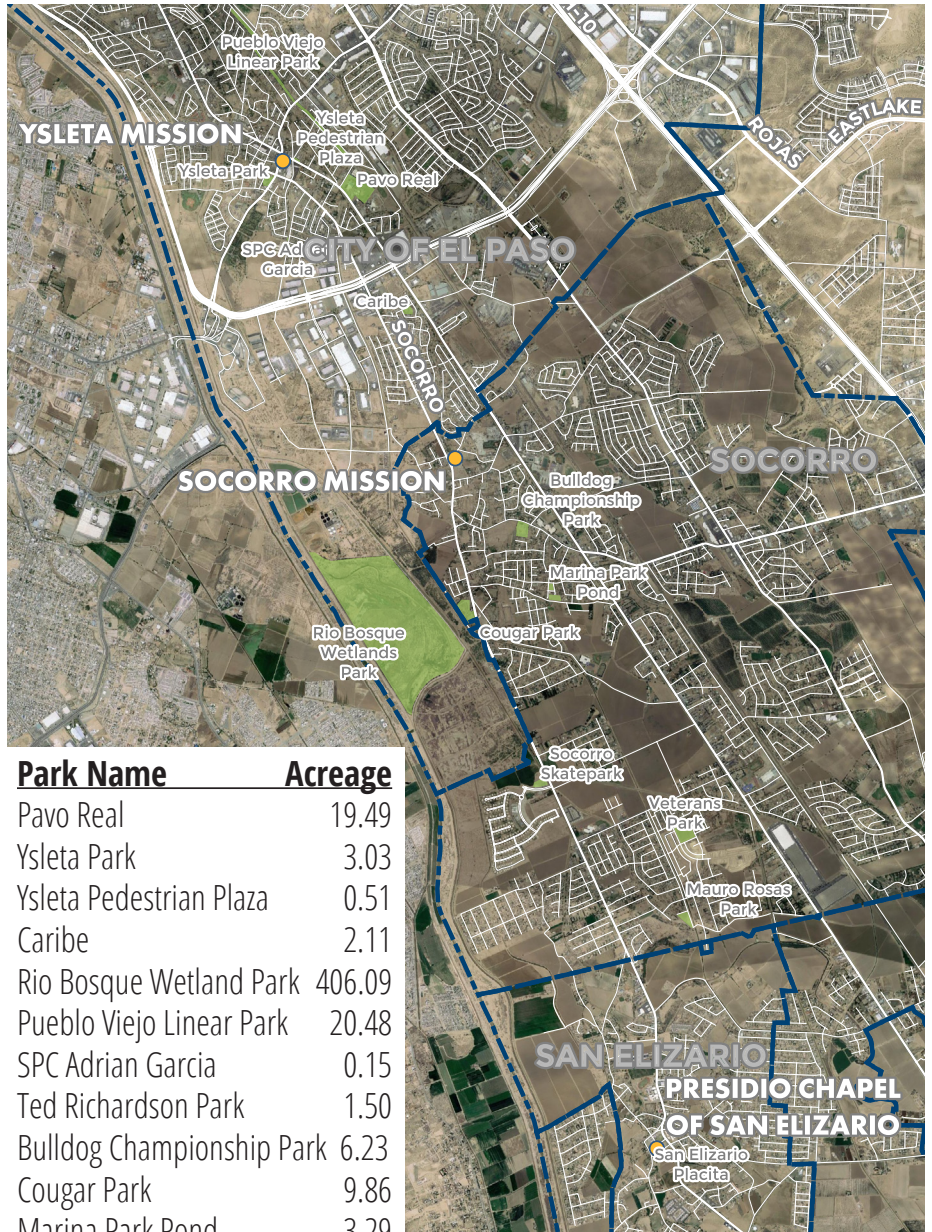
National Recreational Association recommends 10 Park Acres for Every 1,000 Residents

Approx 104,000 Mission Trail Residents =

**1,040** Acres Parks

Mission Trail Area currently has

**511** Acres of Parkland,  
Half the Recommended Acreage



Park Name	Acreage
Pavo Real	19.49
Ysleta Park	3.03
Ysleta Pedestrian Plaza	0.51
Caribe	2.11
Rio Bosque Wetland Park	406.09
Pueblo Viejo Linear Park	20.48
SPC Adrian Garcia	0.15
Ted Richardson Park	1.50
Bulldog Championship Park	6.23
Cougar Park	9.86
Marina Park Pond	3.29
Socorro Skatepark	3.28
Veterans Park	30.69
Mauro Rosas Park	4.53
San Elizario Placita	0.49

Total Parkland  
511 Acreage

## Time Commuting Too Long

Commuting time translates to the number of minutes a worker spends traveling from home to work. According to the United States Census Bureau the national average commute time is 26 minutes. The residents of the Mission Valley recognize that this is an issue given the amount of time they are spending traveling to work. Out of the three focus areas of this plan, the residents of Ysleta are spending the least amount of the time commuting. This makes sense given that Ysleta is closer to downtown El Paso (a major workforce hub) and many residents don't have to travel on Socorro Road to get to other major highways (Loop 375 or I-10).

We heard from many residents that long commute times are affecting their quality of life. They recognize the inconvenience and frustration of having to travel long distances to work. There are several reasons why commuters living along the Mission Trail are being affected by this issue. The major one is that jobs are concentrated away from their residents and this may be something that local government officials may not be able to remedy quickly. Other reasons include:

- **Socorro Road Congestion:** One of the few ways that residents can get in and out of their homes and to other portions of the city is along Socorro Road. This two-lane arterial road offers limited options for travel in that area of the Mission Valley.
- **Commercial Vehicles:** The combination of personal vehicles with commercial and freight trucks along Socorro Road creates unnecessary congestion causing delays for all people traveling on that road.
- **Lack of Connected Streets:** Recent and new residential subdivisions are being built without high connectivity to other streets and major roads. Often, Socorro Road is the only ingress and egress for these new communities. This lack of connected streets, means that all traffic is using one major street instead of being disbursed among many streets in many directions.

## Housing + Transportation Costs Too High

There is growing consensus among national experts that for many Americans, the combination of housing and transportation costs have become exceedingly difficult to maintain. Housing and transportation are two of the highest and necessary expenses for most households. When these two are combined, the general rule of thumb is that they should not exceed 45% of a families total expenses (generally, mortgage lenders look at housing affordability as no more than 30% of someone's income to be spent on a mortgage).

However, according to the Center for Neighborhood Technology there are many areas of El Paso, in the Mission Valley in particular, where these two expenses are above 45%. This means that transportation issues, which include high commuting times, are not only affecting residents' quality of life, they are also affecting their pocketbooks. The more financial resources spent on transportation, the less resources that are available for disposable incomes or less money that is spent on other items such as restaurants, shopping, healthcare, or savings; items that have an effect on a local economy.

## Commuting Time

Ysleta  
**22.6** Minutes a Day

Socorro  
**29.8** Minutes a Day

San Elizario  
**34.7** Minutes a Day

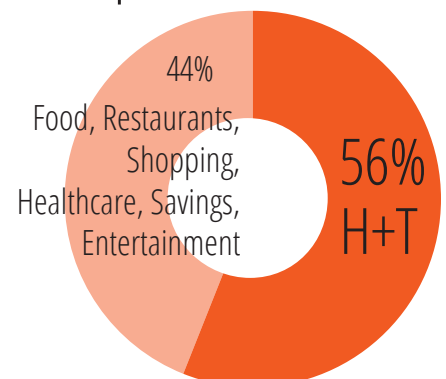
EQUALS

Ysleta  
**94** Hours or **4** Days a Year

Socorro  
**124** Hours or **5** Days a Year

San Elizario  
**144** Hours or **6** Days a Year

## Mission Valley Housing + Transportation Costs?



## Lack of Walkability

Given the Mission Valley’s rural and somewhat pastoral character and setting is favorable for walkable areas, residents still expressed concerns about the lack of walkability in the area. Many residents voice concerns about the lack of pedestrian amenities especially along Socorro Road and the absence of street connectivity that create walkable paths. Pedestrian-oriented amenities include sidewalks, safe streets with adequate speed limits, street trees, and bike lanes that create a barrier to traffic, pleasant and safe walking conditions, as well as destinations to walk to.

Having pedestrian amenities creates multiple assets to a community. The two most notable:

- One: They create physical activity opportunities by encouraging residents to get off the couch and out of the house; and
- Two: They provide aesthetically pleasing areas that create a sense of place through native landscaping and high quality urban design standards, which increases an area’s value.

Residents living along the Mission Trail understood both of these advantages and asked for more pedestrian amenities.

One way to measure an area’s walkability is through a national standard and resource called Walk Score. Walk Score gauges an area’s walkability using a patented methodology that analyzes certain criteria for that area. Walk Score is able to determine an area’s walkability probabilities by measuring pedestrian friendliness through population densities, block length, intersection densities, and providing distances to various walkable destinations such as restaurants, shops, or local points of interest.

Using available public transportation data such as locations of bus stops, bus routes, and bus frequencies, Walk Score can also measure the transit score of an area. Bike scores are also measured by determining if an area is good for biking by reviewing bike infrastructure (lanes, trails, etc.), topography, available destinations, and road connectivity.

Using these Walk Score metrics, we measured the Mission Valley’s three focal areas. The graphs reflect each of these area’s walk scores. For Ysleta, which is the most urbanized, and has a higher population density than Socorro, and San Elizario, the Walk Score is 56 making it “Somewhat Walkable”. Socorro and San Elizario both come in at “Car Dependent” with scores of 37 and 43 respectively. This data reflects the real and legitimate concerns expressed by residents.

Although these areas may be Car Dependent in a broader sense, having a rural center that is walkable can benefit these communities.

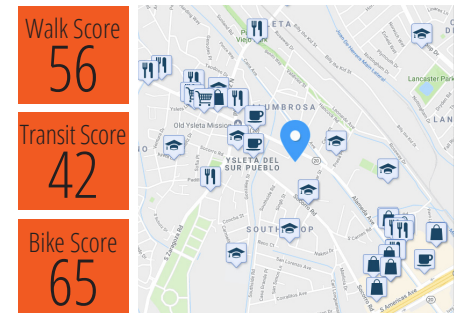
Walk Score	Description
90-100	Walker’s Paradise Daily errands do not require a car.
70-89	Very Walkable Most errands can be done on foot.
50-69	Somewhat Walkable Some errands can be done on foot.
25-49	Car Dependent Most errands require a car.
0-24	Car Dependent Almost all errands require a car.

## Walk Score®

Ysleta - 79907

Somewhat Walkable

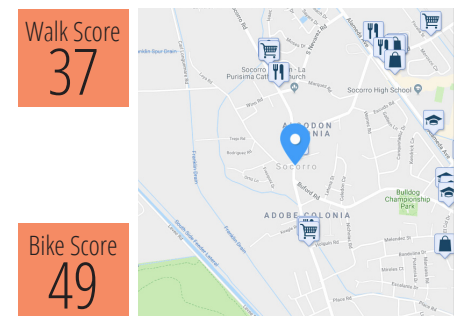
Some Transit  
Bikeable



Socorro - 79927

Car Dependent

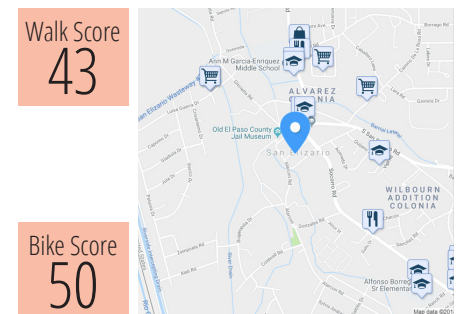
Somewhat Bikeable



San Elizario - 79849

Car Dependent

Bikeable



# Strategies

## To Address Community Concerns

### Infill Possibilities: Housing

People in the Mission Trail area are deeply connected with their built environment, many families have lived in the region for generations. In an effort to encourage development on underutilized or vacant parcels, the governmental entities along the Mission Trail should create an Infill Policy specific to the Mission Trail that facilitates the development process for property owners and not one that is county-wide and may not be applicable or effective to this area.

This initiative incentivizes certain types of development with very specific design guidelines and location criteria. These guidelines can mirror existing historical architectural designs already found along the Mission Trail. They can also encourage development regulations that focus on street-oriented designs that provide pedestrian amenities.

The existing conditions show a parcel that is currently used for livestock and surrounded by a single family home and a small garage structure along Socorro Road within the San Elizario community. This provides an example of how lands can better benefit and add to the community.

A proposed plan examines the possibility for residential development on that parcel. The rendering shows a series of small housing units whose front entrances are positioned towards a communal garden shared by the residents of the development. The existing single family home can stay; this opportunity gives the property owner the flexibility to re-imagine her property from a different use and still be able to stay on her existing home while generating income and re-purposing a piece of land that would otherwise stay vacant.



Existing Conditions

### Proposed Infill Housing in a Courtyard Housing Form - Plan View





This common yard space can be shared by all residents in the development and can become a number of things:

- Small community garden,
- A pocket park,
- Space for vendors, or
- A common green with native landscaping.

This development example is ideal for elderly housing. The small homes can accommodate a single individual or a couple. The design allows for independent living but also provides opportunities for community engagement through the shared green in the middle. Another potential development opportunity is to replace the physical structures with tiny homes that can share in communal living.

## Infill Possibilities: Small Organic Farms

Though farmland is important, a lot of local farming is moving away from traditional, large-scale farming that consists of mono-crops and is a drain on natural resources in favor of small-farm, urban agriculture based on specialty and organic crops and what historically has been grown in the mission valley—crops such as verdolagas, squash, quinoa, various dye crops, etc.

This industry, along with pollinator initiatives, should be supported and expanded. This specialized industry can grow the economy by exporting commodities as well as help to feed the local population base with healthy foods.



Proposed Infill Housing in a Courtyard Housing Form - Street Level View

Existing Conditions



# Infill on Vacant Parcels

Examples of Infill Opportunities for Housing: The images at right and below represent the kind of opportunity that can exist by redeveloping vacant parcels. The existing conditions show vacant land surrounded by existing homes and infrastructure. The image with proposed infill illustrates how new duplexes can revitalize a property by providing new construction and affordable housing.



Existing Conditions of infill Site

## Example of Proposed Infill



# The Pueblo

The pueblo as a settlement pattern has a long history in the American southwest including the El Paso del Norte region. These pueblos were the neighborhoods of the tribal and native peoples who lived here prior to the Spanish arrival in the region along the Mission Trail. Serving both as housing and as a communal setting, the pueblo was an important part of native peoples' identity and way of life. Centered around the home and the cultural lives of native peoples, the pueblo offered shelter, protection, and community.

There is much that we can learn from these pueblo settlements. Given the large swaths of open space and potential development areas along the Mission Trail, it is important that new developments take into consideration the pueblo-style of creating complete communities. The idea is to create a series of villages or pueblos that include housing, retail, cultural, and religious amenities all with uniform design standards that mirror the historical architectural designs of the Mission Trail.

Today, the Tigua Indians have done an excellent job of maintaining the pueblo style development pattern. Several of their newer developments reflect the history and legacy of the historic pueblos combining housing, recreational, and cultural activities all in one area. Most notably is the Tigua's Pakitu (Pumpkin Village) directly off Socorro Road on Tiwa Boulevard.

New developments should be encouraged to emulate some of the Tigua's design principles while adding other sustainable design elements that preserve open space and create higher densities making neighborhoods walkable. By having a mix of uses to include residential, recreational, entertainment, and cultural amenities, uses and buildings could be grouped together leaving additional acreage for open space or preservation.

# Pueblo

pueb·lo / 'pweblō/ n, plural, pueb·los

1. Native or North American Village, a village built by Native North or Central Americans in the southwestern United States, containing at least one, but typically a cluster of multistory stone or adobe houses
2. Village in Spanish-speaking countries, a town or village in Spanish-speaking countries.



San Elizario Historic District



Apartments with Pueblo Style Architecture

# Pakitu Village (Pumpkin Village)

## Tigua Pueblo del Sur Case Study

The Tigua's Pakitu Village provides many design elements that could be incorporated into future developments along Socorro Road. The development provides a mix of uses, plenty of open space, architecturally-sensitive designs in keeping with the area's pueblo style, public art, and pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks and street trees.



Education Library Center

The development provides children and families a library and education center within walking distance of homes. Homes reflect the pueblo architectural design that makes the Southwest unique. It is also in keeping with the area's aesthetics. Some homes have garages in the back or on the side, making the home's front facade more prominent.

While the streets are a bit wide, they offer landscaping, sidewalks, and a pleasant area for pedestrians. Public art is displayed prominently within the community. A statue paying homage to Cacique Santos Sanchez is part of the round-a-bout that helps mitigate traffic concerns.

The aerial photo illustrates the community layout and the potential that other future developments along Socorro Road can emulate. The neighborhood encompasses housing, recreational and entertainment opportunities and open space amenities. This type of layout creates walkable destinations within a single subdivision.



Cacique Santos Sanchez Statue in a roundabout



# Traditional Neighborhood or Clustered Development

In order to understand what Clustered Development entails, it is helpful to first understand what it is not. Most new developments in El Paso and the surrounding areas, including along the Mission Trail, take the form of suburban development. This is to say that these new subdivisions have characteristics that don't set them apart from each other. These neighborhoods all look the same because they all employ the same development patterns: low density housing, wide streets, sprawling areas, very little street landscaping, and single-use districts separated from each other (homes in one area, retail in another, and civic spaces separate from both). The most important factor that affects the Mission Trail is that these subdivisions take up as much available land as possible for development, leaving very little space for preservation or as open space.

A Clustered Development pattern does the opposite providing a key tool for preserving farmland and open space. The idea is that instead of taking up every available inch of land through horizontal development, clustered development encourages higher densities through more vertical development in a smaller area and footprint. This creates more land that can remain for the preservation of farmland or open space amenities for the residents and visitors to that development.

By higher densities, we mean two or three stories instead of one story buildings. This is a reasonable density for the Mission Trail area that creates taller buildings and houses and yields the same number of housing units but in a smaller area and still leaves open space and natural vistas throughout the community, making this a viable option for preserving farmland and maintaining the local rural character, instead of creating a generic suburban-style community.

Similar Traditional Neighborhood development is being created in the upper valley.



The Village of Rio Valley is being developed near the intersection of Westside Drive and Borderline Road.

## Existing Landscape

There are remaining large parcels of working farmland along the Mission Trail.



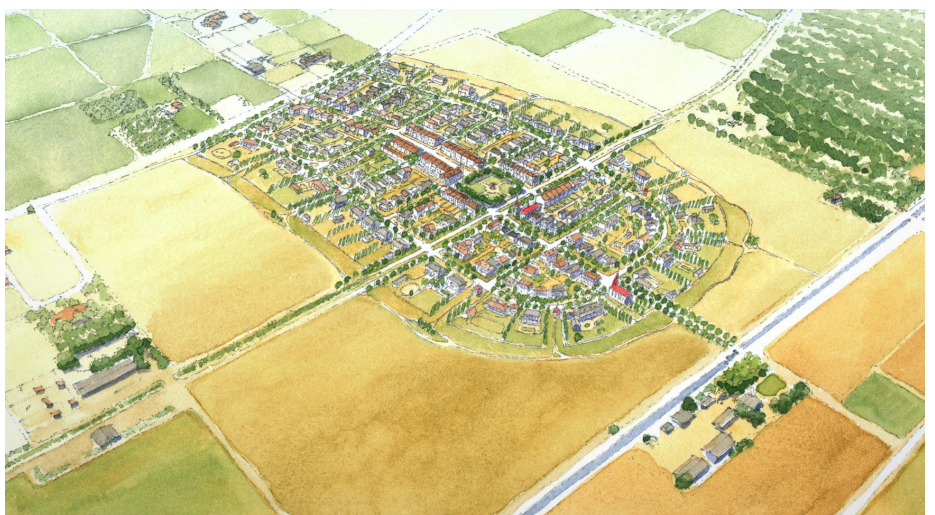
## 1 - Continuing the Suburban Trend

Following current development patterns, the entire area would be consumed by single-family homes, completely erasing any signs of the agricultural history and character.



## 2 - Traditional Neighborhood /or Cluster Development

The same amount of housing is provided in this scenario as above; however, by building more compactly and with a mix of uses, large portions of agricultural land can remain, preserving the experience of traveling along the Trail.



# Create Active Living Opportunities

The Mission Trail area has a deficiency of parks and recreational amenities for residents. This lack of physical activity opportunities prohibits people from getting healthy by not having the necessary parks or areas to exercise, play, or socially interact with one another.

The area offers opportunities that can enhance this aspect for residents, With relatively little investment, local natural resources can be programmed to promote physical activities and social gatherings that can enhance people’s mental health.

1. The San Elizario Placita should be used to host local events such as a farmer’s market, art market, movies under the stars, concerts, and food-oriented festivals. Fees for use of the placita should be reviewed to cover maintenance costs but not to discourage use of the placita for local events. The City of San Elizario would like to hold an annual birthday celebration around November 5 to include a fireworks display that is visible above the church and includes video map projection onto the church—making it the premiere fireworks display in the county. This would draw public from all around the county and will offer professional and amateur photographers some of the most magnificent visuals of one of the area’s most iconic amenities.
2. Working with the Water District #1, the use of the acequias for hiking and biking should be encouraged. People should be allowed on the levees. Through a series of these levy systems, residents and visitors can spend long hours strolling or jogging along these routes providing respite in a natural setting.
3. Closing off certain sections of Socorro Road or other side streets to vehicular traffic for a few hours periodically, will go a long way to promoting active lifestyles. The City of El Paso closes off Scenic Drive every Sunday morning. This activity provides joggers, young parents with strollers, and children on bikes a chance to get some exercise along a major street without the threat of cars. Events such as 5Ks or 10Ks can be incorporated into these programs.
4. Socorro Road can be improved with pedestrian amenities. While this can be a longer term project with a higher financial investment, it can offer another hike and bike trail for people to transverse along Socorro Road. Street trees, protected lanes, and even surfaces will encourage people to get out on Mission Trail for both leisure and exercise.



San Elizario Placita holds events and Artists Markets



Trails along the acequias can help connect the community and add greenspace.



Socorro Road with Pedestrian Improvements



# The Pedestrian Shed

The pedestrian shed is a planning and public health principle that encourages walkability within a community. Essentially, a pedestrian shed is a quarter-mile radius around a specific public space or community focal point such as a park, a church, a library, or another destination that many in the community would want to visit. This quarter-mile also represents a five-minute walk. The idea is that if this focal point is located within a quarter mile of homes and if the walk is pleasant (meaning the routes have great pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks, shade, and lighting for safety) and if the weather is nice, then most people would rather walk to this place than get in their cars.

The idea with this strategy is the following:

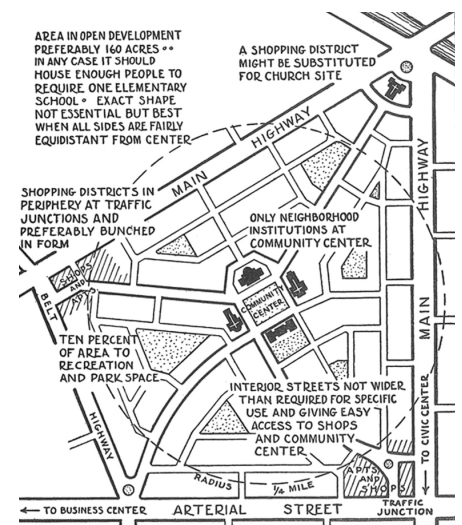
1. Encourage infill development on vacant parcels within each of the mission's pedestrian sheds by creating an Infill Policy specific to the Mission Trail. The images on the right show each of the mission's quarter-mile pedestrian shed and the parcels within that area. The images show vast areas of vacant farmland that can be redeveloped with the missions and presidio chapel serving as the focal point destination, encouraging residents to walk to church services or adjacent shops.
2. Through zoning regulations and/or through incentive policies, clustered development can be encouraged within the pedestrian sheds. By creating higher than normal densities in these areas, critical masses of residents can help support local business, encourage the development of pedestrian amenities, and by concentrating imminent development around the missions and presidio chapel through infill and clustered developments, other future developable areas can be held-off from development until further years, and thus helping preserve farmland for years to come.
3. Having large numbers of people walking and biking in these focal destinations, vehicular traffic can begin to slow along Socorro Road making the area safer for everyone, residents and visitors alike.
4. Adopt Design Guidelines for these all areas to ensure the character of the buildings remain intact and add to the quality of place. The 1993 Comprehensive Plan included design guidelines still used today in Socorro, and the City of San Elizario is considering making them standard as well. An updated version of these guidelines is included as Appendix B of this document.



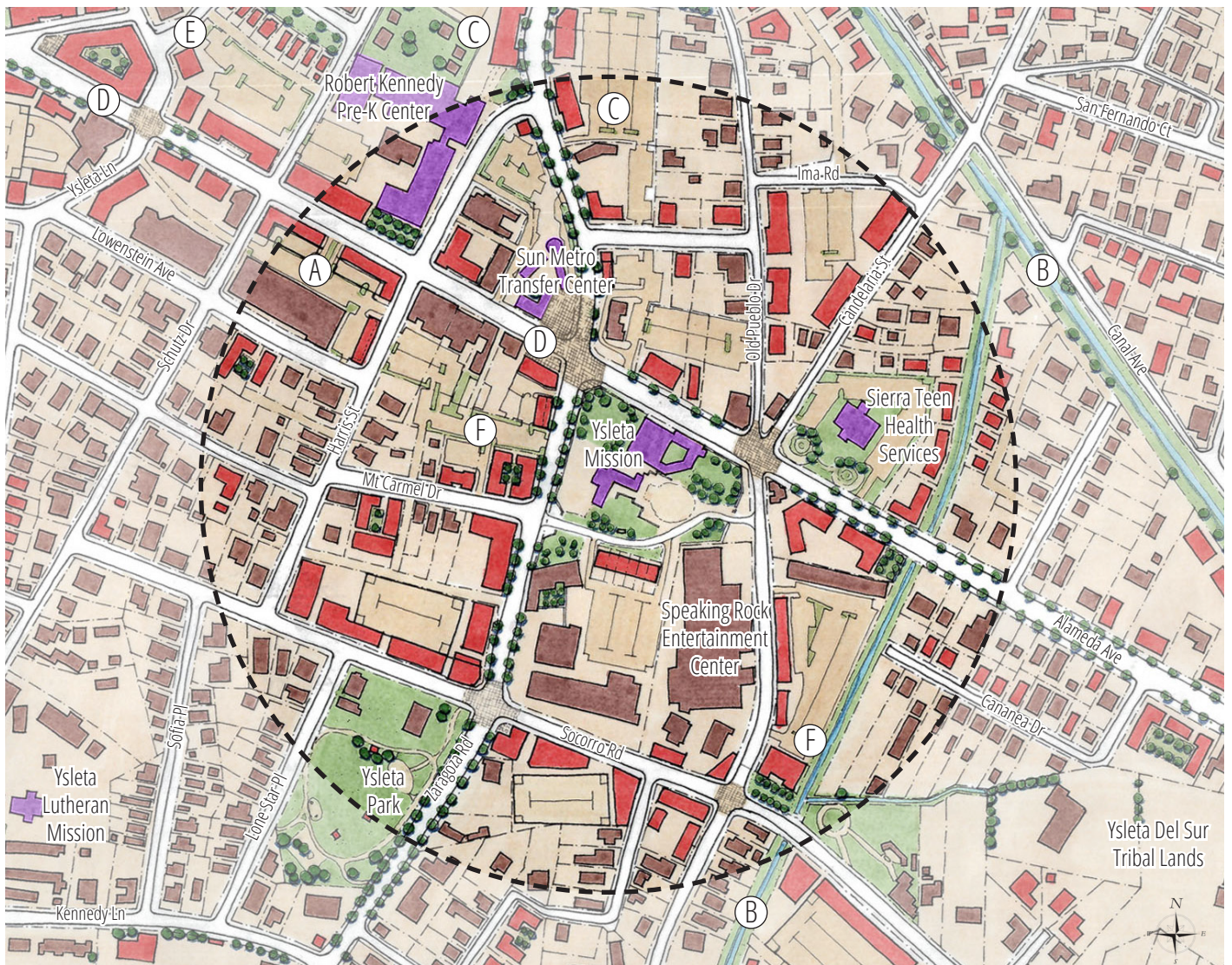
## What is a Ped Shed?

The idea of the pedestrian shed or 5-minute walk was conceived by Clarence Perry's idea of the ideal neighborhood unit.

Perry's diagram further illustrates the idea of the pedestrian shed and how it can support community life by providing walkable amenities and destinations within a neighborhood.



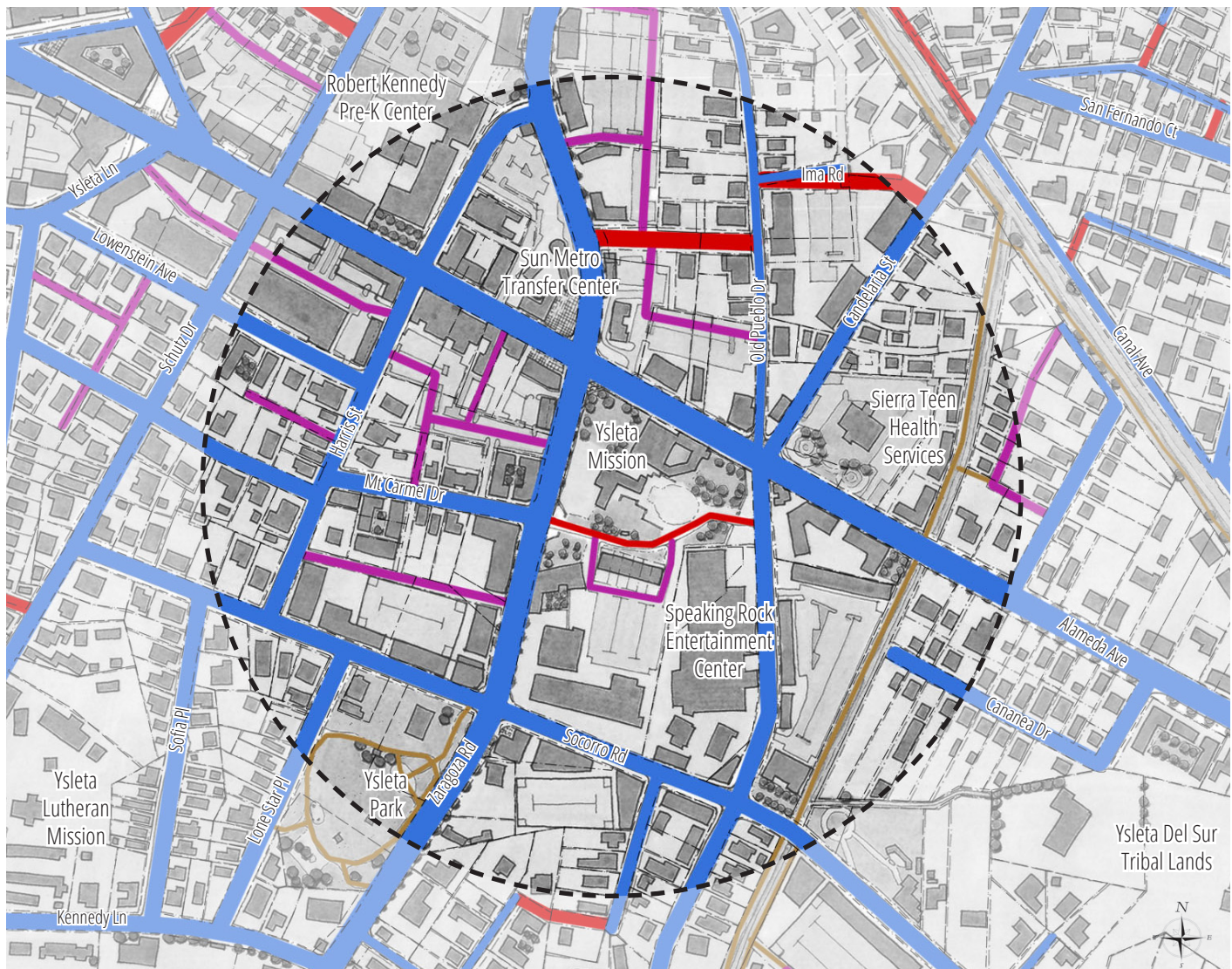




## Ysleta Mission Illustrative Plan

- Ⓐ Where possible, portions of parking lots fronting Alameda Avenue should be “infilled” with new commercial and residential opportunities.
- Ⓑ Trailways should continue to be added along the drainage canals.
- Ⓒ The school and RTS transfer should share parking lots.
- Ⓓ Special paving patterns should be used to mark gateways to the community and alert motorists they are entering a special area where they need to be more aware of pedestrians and cyclists.
- Ⓔ New street connections should be pursued to improve connectivity in the neighborhoods.
- Ⓕ New regulations could help larger lots densify with courtyard buildings.

- Existing Buildings
- Infill Buildings
- Civic Buildings
- Greens
- 5 Minute Walk



## Street Network

**Existing Streets:** The Ysleta street network is well connected. Many of the existing streets are very narrow and slow-moving. The character of these streets should be emulated as new street connections are created or as roads are repaired and infrastructure is upgraded.

**Proposed Streets:** Several of the streets within this area dead end. In order to improve the street connectivity throughout Ysleta, these streets should be extended to connect to the surrounding street network. In addition, some new streets can be inserted to break up large blocks and create additional housing opportunities.

**Alleys:** There are few existing alleys in the Ysleta area. The network of alleys should be increased to improve opportunities for rear parking and service. Extending the alley network also aids in the ability to better utilize large parcels at the center of blocks.

**Pedestrian & Biking Paths:** The combination of streets, alleys, and pedestrian paths make up the pedestrian network. The more connected and continuous the pedestrian network is throughout an area, the greater the utility for the pedestrian. This will help to increase the distance a pedestrian will walk rather than choosing a different mode of transportation.

- Existing Streets
- Proposed Streets
- Alleys
- Pedestrian Paths
- 5 Minute Walk



## Green & Civic Spaces

The potential addition of mid-block greens and strategically placed parks will provide the recreational space necessary to maintain a healthy community. Ysleta has already begun to establish an effective green network with Ysleta Park, Pavo Real Park and Pueblo Viejo Park, a linear park stretching 1.5 miles including tennis courts, exercise stations, and five playgrounds. Additional green spaces throughout the neighborhood in mid-block locations will further enhance recreational opportunities for all residents and create pleasant walking routes throughout the neighborhood.

Ysleta features many civic institutions throughout and around its neighborhoods which should be preserved and enhanced. These include three elementary schools, a middle school, a high school, a Pre-K center, a senior center, Pavo Real Recreation Center, a Teen Center, several churches including the historic Ysleta Mission, the Mission Valley Transfer Center and Ysleta Del Sur Tribal Lands.

Ysleta also has the opportunity to utilize the drainage canals that run throughout the area as linear public spaces. By adding walking trails, the pedestrian network can be greatly increased. The Ysleta area generally has a well connected street and alley network. When possible multiuse trails suitable for biking should be implemented along the canals.

- Existing Civic Spaces
- Proposed Civic Spaces
- Civic Buildings
- 5 Minute Walk

# Ysleta Gateway

## Alameda Avenue as a Gateway to the Mission Trail

The existing conditions along both Socorro Road and Alameda Avenue do not provide a welcoming experience to the visitors and pedestrians. The street currently has very narrow sidewalks placed next to the driving lane with almost no street trees. The street frontages are also often occupied by large surface parking areas and vacant lots. There is a lack of clear signage available to provide guidance on wayfinding.

While Socorro Road connects the Mission Trail, Alameda Avenue connects the Mission Trail to Downtown El Paso. The following sequence illustrates the potential transformation of Alameda Avenue between Schutz Drive and Harris Street looking east towards Ysleta Mission and the Mission Valley Transfer Center.

**Existing Conditions:** Alameda Avenue through the Ysleta area is currently not a pleasant environment. The roadway features two wide travel lanes in each direction. Sidewalks are narrow and squeezed between flowing traffic and large fields of parking with no protection from passing vehicles. Lighting is oriented toward the vehicles. Between the intersections of Harris Street and Zaragoza Road, historic buildings frame the street, but elsewhere little effective spatial definition of the public space exists.



Existing Conditions

**Step 1:** Public improvements can be made that will enhance the streetscape. Travel lanes in this section of Alameda Avenue could be reduced to one lane in each direction with a central left turn lane. This creates enough space within the right-of-way to add on-street parking to one side of the street while widening the sidewalk and introducing pedestrian scaled lighting. Pedestrians begin to have a more comfortable, protected setting and the area can start to feel like a gateway to the Mission Trail.



Step 1

Step 2: An underutilized green space between the Robert F. Kennedy Pre-K Center and Alameda Avenue should be transformed into a formal public green space by relocating the fence closer to the building and adding streets trees. Additionally, a local market could be constructed at the intersection that fronts the street and shades the sidewalk with awnings.

Step 3: Parking lots may, over time, be lined with multi-story local-serving mixed-use buildings. Commercial stores and cafés activate the street while the upper floors can be filled with additional offices or residential lofts. The addition of on-street parking helps to mitigate the parking lost with the new liner buildings, supports street-oriented businesses, and helps pedestrians feel more comfortable now that they are more separated from the moving traffic.



Step 2



Step 3

# Socorro Road

## Residential Streetscape Improvements

Socorro Road connects the two missions and the presidio chapel. This road begins in a residential area just outside the Ysleta Mission. The following sequence illustrates the potential transformation at the start of Socorro Road looking west towards Schutz Drive. This change-over-time is an example of how a typical neighborhood street could densify over time while improving the character of the area and giving the start of this important road a stronger gateway feel.

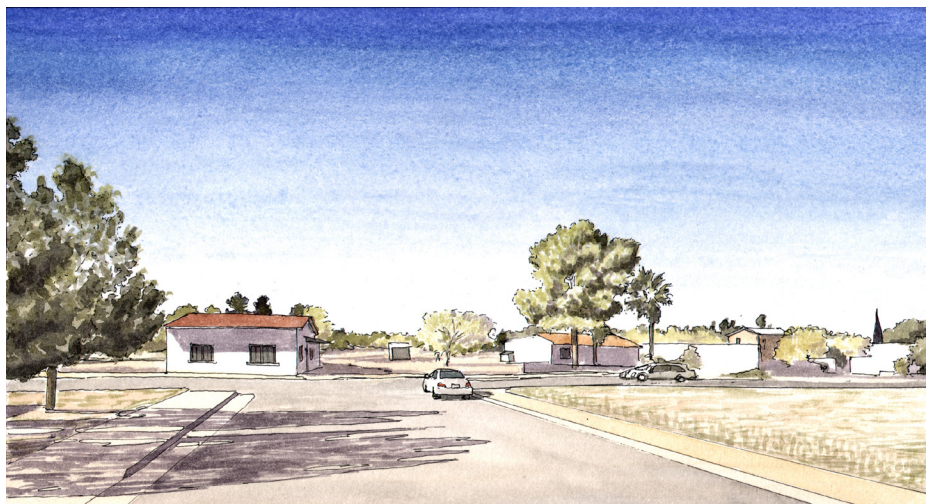
**Existing Conditions:** The view is dominated by chain-link fences, utility poles, cobra-head lanterns, and wires. Vacant lots present an opportunity for infill.

**Step 1:** As possible, utility poles and wires should be placed underground and chain link fences should be removed to dramatically improve the view of the existing conditions. Placing utilities underground can be an expensive and logistically challenging step and is not required for other improvements to take place.

**Step 2:** Infill housing can be built on vacant lots in the neighborhood. Multi-family housing can be designed to look like a large mansion or house. Low stone walls similar to those found throughout the City and along this street can define yard edges and help to separate the public and semi-public realms.



Existing Conditions



Step 1



Step 2



Step 3: Redevelopment or expansion of older housing stock can help make the neighborhood more complete.

Step 4: Redesign of the roadway should be undertaken to narrow the curb-to-curb dimension, thereby increasing the perception of visual friction and discouraging speeding. Planting strips should be landscaped with desert-appropriate species and groundcover.



Step 3



Step 4

# Socorro Road in Ysleta

## Commercial Streetscape Improvements

In many ways, Socorro Road is the “Mission Trail” for visitors. However, too often the road feels like a non-event for visitors without moments of arrival except at the missions and presidio chapel. There are, however, segments along Socorro Road with tremendous potential to provide a sense of arrival into a unique area.

One segment is bookended by the Speaking Rock Entertainment Center. The Center terminates the view looking west before Socorro Road curves. People traveling this segment see the Center in the distance and feel as if they have entered an enclosed space. The Tigua Tribe could work with the County to “build the walls of the space” with new buildings and create an improved streetscape for pedestrians. Done well, visitors will know that they are traveling native lands.

### Socorro Road Existing Streetscape at Southside Road



### The Plaza at Speaking Rock

Completed in 2018, Speaking Rock’s front plaza provides a safe, comfortable, and interesting place for pedestrians at the front door of the Entertainment Center. Sculptures and artful paving delineate the plaza.

That same level of thoughtfulness and pride could be applied to Socorro Road. The street needs to stay open to vehicular traffic, but it could still become a proud, welcoming, and interesting center.



Plaza at Speaking Rock



Socorro Road Proposed Streetscape at Southside Road

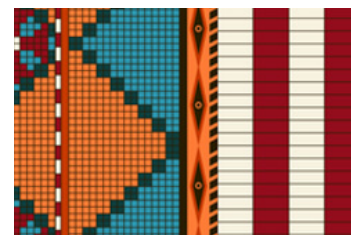
## Socorro Road Proposed Streetscape

The vacant lots can be utilized to provide desirable services and uses such as a bed and breakfast, coffee shop, and restaurants. The new building can be set back to provide a planting area for street trees. The street trees provide a more comfortable experience to pedestrians.

Socorro Road used to be lined with cottonwood trees. Bringing back the street trees restores the historical view of the area. Cottonwood trees, as with most trees, need an abundance of water for germination and to become established. Once established they do well in the typical drought like conditions found in the Mission Trail area. Cottonwood trees used to grow very well in this area where the Rio Grande would often flood, which is also why the area has such fertile farming ground. With the damming of the river, these trees do not always do as well as they historically did. A possible alternative could be either a Desert Willow or Mexican Palo Verde tree.

Street furniture such as signage and benches are added to provide wayfinding and seating. Crosswalks are provided at key intersections and mid-block locations to make it safe for people to cross the street.

The plan aims at reflecting and accentuating the unique character of the place with design details. The colors and geometries are derived from the traditions and culture of the Tigua Indians. Local artists should be consulted and their designs and handicrafts should be incorporated into the streetscape.



# Socorro Mission

## Enhancement of the Historic Site

The Socorro Mission is both an architectural and a cultural treasure, and today forms a direct link for visitors back to El Paso's early history. The mission building itself is beautifully preserved through diligent restoration efforts.

Today the building's foreground, however, is mostly utilized for automobile parking and does not contribute as much as it could to help reinforce the historic character of the mission or as an asset to the community. The visualizations shown here illustrate possibilities for visually improving the mission's foreground to better enhance the experience for visitors. The La Purisima Parish is currently working on a plan for the area and it is shown as "Socorro Mission Proposed Conditions" below.

The space directly in front of the mission building is shown configured as a revitalized plaza. The space is surrounded by a low stucco wall with openings at key entry points. It is framed by regularly-spaced shade trees to provide a respite from the strong Texas sun. The ground is hardscaped with pavers, which permit the space to be used flexibly for a wide variety of outdoor activities.

## Additional Sites

The most hallowed ground in Socorro is the site of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Missions at the corner of Nicolas Road and Buford Road. It has been excavated since 1984. Ten acres have been purchased by the Texas Historical Commission and that should be a center for additional historical investment.



Socorro Mission Existing Conditions



Socorro Mission Proposed Conditions

# Socorro Pueblo

## A New Pueblo for the City of Socorro

Of the historic sites along the Mission Trail, Socorro is unique in its isolated location. The Ysleta Mission and the San Elizario Presidio Chapel are located at the heart of historic pueblos with a mix of buildings, businesses, and residences. The Socorro Mission however, only has a small handful of historic buildings surrounding it. Commercial areas in other parts of Socorro consist primarily of auto-oriented suburban development.

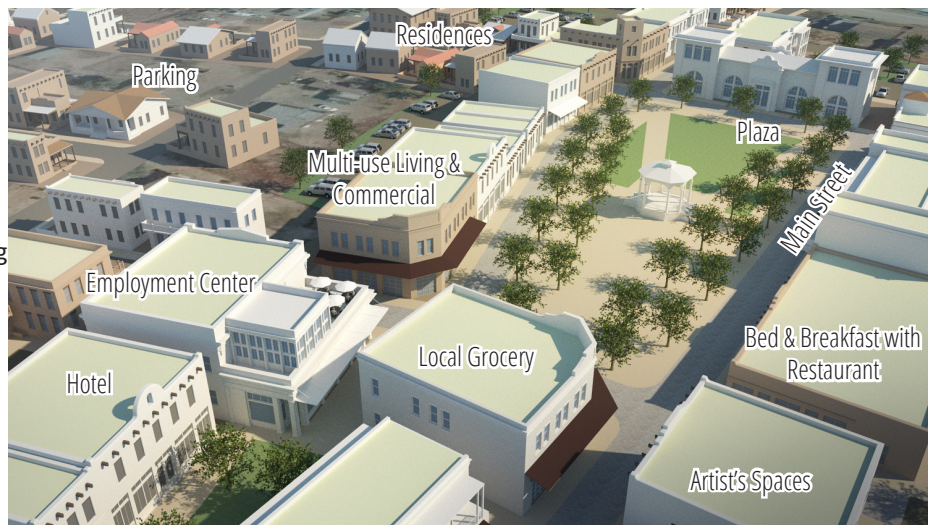
However, the historic buildings just south of Socorro have been lovingly restored. The newly renovated Casa Ortiz is at the center of a larger property with room to build a new walkable pueblo with a mix of buildings, businesses, and housing options. Constructed in the late 1700's by Father Ramon Ortiz, Casa Ortiz is a prime example of New Spain's frontier architecture. The authentic hacienda building is made of thick adobe walls and the original cottonwood and willow wood beams (vigas).



Casa Ortiz

A new pueblo could be designed around a public plaza without disturbing the existing view of the mission from Socorro Road. Narrow streets create a pedestrian-friendly environment and connect to the surrounding neighborhood. One and two-story buildings can be designed to fit into a neighborhood context and create welcoming public spaces.

Charrette participants recommended that the City of Socorro consider this area for a new municipal building around a plaza.



A Central Plaza forms the heart of the new Pueblo



Proposed Socorro Pueblo

# San Elizario Historic District

## City of San Elizario

### San Elizario Historic District Analysis

A lot of change has occurred in San Elizario since the previous comprehensive plan for the area. Buildings that were derelict and falling down in 2008 have been rebuilt and transformed into houses, art studios, shops, museums, and civic functions like City Hall. The community has embraced its history with its historic district and design guidelines. San Elizario positioned itself as an artist community with numerous events to bring the community together as well as visitors from El Paso.

San Elizario Historic District is listed under the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Services. The district has 22 contributing buildings. Its architectural character includes examples of Spanish Colonial (up to the 1850's) as well as Spanish Mission (1890's-1930's). These styles include typical one-story rectangular dwellings with modest characteristics and décor. They typically include terra-cotta scuppers and a parapet flat roof. The walls usually consist of adobe bricks with white stucco cement coating. In the San Elizario community, some buildings include a portico, insinuating the desire for a walkable community.



San Elizario Galleries and Art Shops



Los Portales Museum, San Elizario Genealogy and Historical Society



Adobe Horseshoe Dinner Theatre

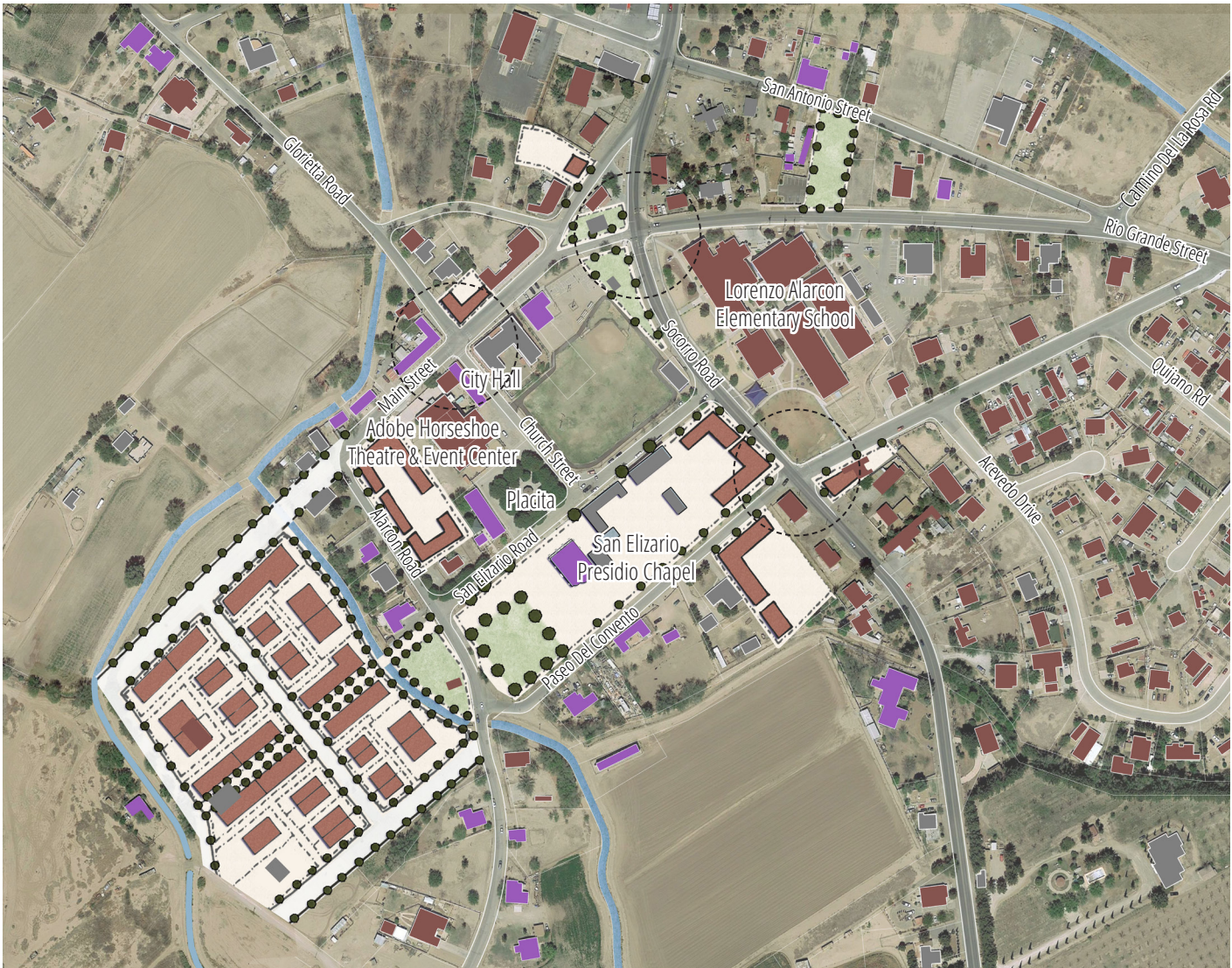


## San Elizario Historic District

Using local maps to demonstrate, one can consider where the evolving community would benefit from design interventions. This includes understanding which properties are in need of infrastructure up-keeping, which parcels should be preserved, and which buildings date back prior to the 1930s. Investigating further into the community suggest there could be two types of interventions: short-term and long-term interventions. Short-term improvements focus on pedestrian enhancements while long-term improvements would include substantial infill primarily for the tourist market.

After visiting the Mission Trail area and its residents, it became evident the vision for San Elizario is unique and preserves the experience of the community. The community takes pride in its agricultural history and sparse population. Therefore, new design options were created during the charrette which preserve the existing buildings, implements strategic infill projects, values pedestrian activity, and creates more green spaces within the community fabric. The proposed plan avoids big development projects.

- Building Built Before 1930
- Building Built After 1930
- No Building Data Available
- Parcels To Be Preserved
- 5 Minute Walk



Aerial view with proposed additional development

### Short-Term Improvements

Short term infill recommendations would include enhancing pedestrian activity in the community. This includes incorporating sidewalks and landscape interventions as well as pedestrian friendly intersections at key entry points into the community center. Fundamental roads which invite one to the Historic District should be reevaluated, starting with the intersections of Main Street and Socorro Road becoming gateways to the center of the community—the presidio chapel. In addition, the infrastructure of buildings contributing to the historic context of the community should be prioritized. By engaging street conditions, as well as corner conditions, small infill projects can make the experience for tourists better, and ultimately preserve the historic character by maintaining significant, contributing buildings.

- Building Built Before 1930
- Building Built After 1930
- No Building Data Available
- Proposed New Buildings

Focal Intersection



## Long-Term Improvements

Long-term recommendations include expanding infill housing and development to the west of the San Elizario Presidio Chapel and using the natural elements found in the landscape to begin development for tourist activity. An opportunity zone could be created that includes and follows San Elizario's Comprehensive Plan.

For instance, Main Street, San Elizario Road, and Paseo Del Convento can be extended to the west to begin to service this area. In order to protect the older historic neighborhood, choosing the parcels to the west of Alarcon Road for new development allows for a 5-min walking radius, limiting the need for cars in the historic area, as well as protecting the historic district from major urban development. This new development could include specific commercial opportunities to preserve local and artists shops already located in the community. A locally owned and operated bed and breakfast type accommodation for tourist, as well as residential housing for locals, could also be part of new development. By preserving the community and its identity, one continues to prioritize the cultural integrity generated by the historic district immediately around the presidio chapel.

Infill on the corner of Glorietta and Main Street. The gallery shop depicts introducing tree lined sidewalks and crosswalks.



Existing Conditions at Glorietta and Main Street





Bird's Eye View overlooking the San Elizario Historic District

Birds eye view of the San Elizario Historic District illustrating infill like a community café, green spaces, and a pedestrian oriented avenue in front of the presidio chapel.



Adobe Horseshoe Theatre Parking Lot

The café allows for open green space in a currently open lot which could also serve as a community garden.



# San Elizario Pollinator Boulevard

San Elizario is designated as a “Pollinator District” and has teamed with researchers at Auburn University to study local bee colonies. Based on this partnership, the City Council passed a biodiversity ordinance in late 2018 to protect three plant species that the bees rely on to thrive. They are the Desert Marigold (baileya), Purslane (portulaca), and Globe Mallows (sphaeralcea).

The city has been hosting “Bee Real” events to educate the public about the economic and environmental importance of bees. They are utilizing Parque de los Niños to create bee research and community garden areas.

San Elizario can further expand their focus on facilitating bee diversity by making Main Street a pollinator boulevard. Main Street should be planted with species that beautify and attract bees.

## “Bee” known for your Bees

Case Study: Pollinator Boulevard is in the Mission District of San Francisco and passes in front of Dolores Mission. A previously grassy median has been planted with plants that attract bees and butterflies to provide an oasis for pollinators in the center of the city.



The planting area with pollinators creates a buffer between vehicles and pedestrians enhancing visual interest and safety.



# Public Art

## Mission Valley

Public art can be present in various forms, such as murals, sculptures, large scale installations, or music. A good piece of public art can enhance and transform a public space, creating a sense of place and community. The culture and traditions of Mission Valley can be solidified in a piece of public art work, manifesting to the residents and visitors the unique stories of the community.



“Public art is a reflection of how we see the world – the artist’s response to our time and place combined with our own sense of who we are.”

- Association for Public Art

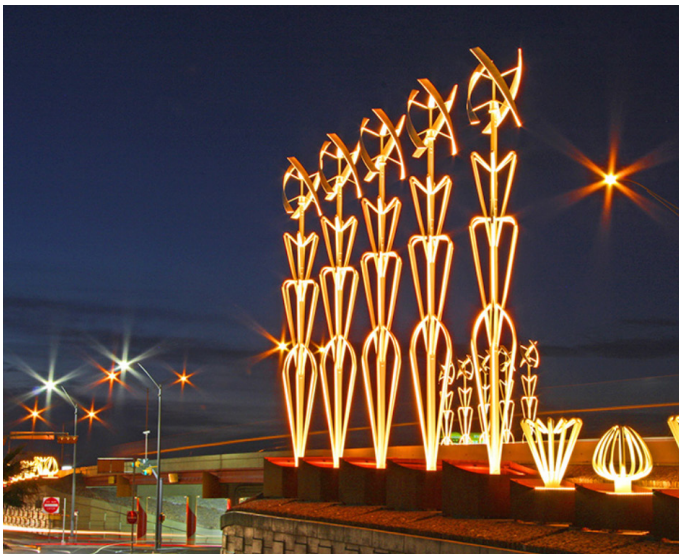
### Points of Light

Installation: 2015

Location: Pedestrian Pathway -

Downtown El Paso

Artist: Stephen Ingle



### Airway Gateway Renovation

Installation: 2011 - 2015 | Location: I-10, El Paso, TX

Artist: Vicki Scuri SiteWorks with Alexander Polzin and Jacobs Engineering Group



### Cacique Santos Sanchez Statue

Installation: 2018 | Location: Pakitu Village, San Elizario



## El Corrido Desegundo Barrio

Installation: 2012 | Location: 801 S. Florence  
 Artist: Jesus "Cimi" Alvarado and Victor "Mask" Casas



## El Paso Icons

Installation: 2018 | Location: 601 N. Oregon | Artist: Jesus "Cimi" Alvarado, Victor "Mask" Casas, and Martin "Blaster" Zubia



## Ceremonia

Installation: 2018 | Location: 419 Congress, Austin, TX  
 Artist: Los Dos and Jellyfish Colectivo for Ruta Coyote  
 Digital Augmentation by David Figueroa-Augment El Paso



## Sister Cities

Installation: 2015  
 Location: 100 E Father Rahm  
 Artist: Los Dos | Digital Augmentation by David Figueroa - Augment El Paso

# Sustainability

## Adapting to a changing climate

The world is roughly 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit (1 degree Celsius) warmer than in 1900, the rate of warming is accelerating, and human activity is the prime contributor.

Specifically, the scientific community has unanimously agreed that the world is warming, and *nearly* unanimously agreed that humans are the cause. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. They were created in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and thousands of scientists from all over the world contribute to the work of the IPCC.

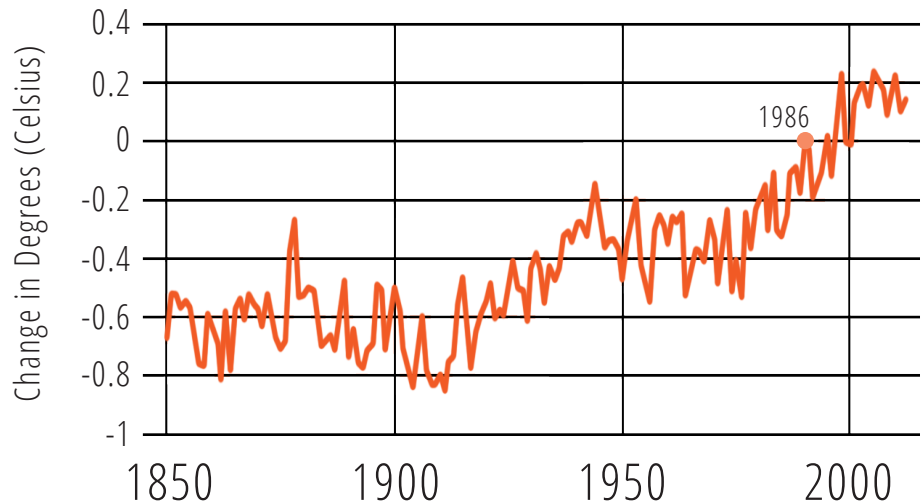
The IPCC's comprehensive assessment reports summarize tens of thousands of scientific papers published each year. The IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report is scheduled to be completed in 2022. The Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), completed in 2014, concluded that "warming of the climate system is unequivocal"<sup>1</sup> and "it is extremely likely (95 to 100% probability) that human influence was the dominant cause of global warming."<sup>2</sup>

Since the last National Climate Assessment was published, 2014 became the warmest year on record globally; 2015 surpassed 2014 by a wide margin; and 2016 surpassed 2015. Sixteen of the warmest years on record for the globe occurred in the last 17 years.

<sup>1</sup> IPCC (11 November 2013): B. Observed Changes in the Climate System, in: Summary for Policymakers (finalized version), in IPCC AR5 WG1 2013, p.2

<sup>2</sup> IPCC (11 November 2013): D. Understanding the Climate System and its Recent Changes, in: Summary for Policymakers (finalized version), in IPCC AR5 WG1 2013, p.13

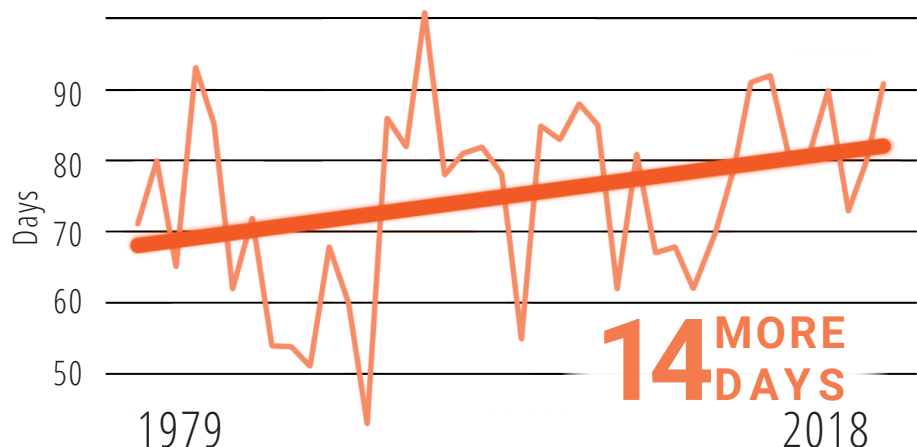
## The World is Warming



Globally Averaged Temperature Based on 1986 Averages

Source: IPCC - Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report

## El Paso is Getting Hotter



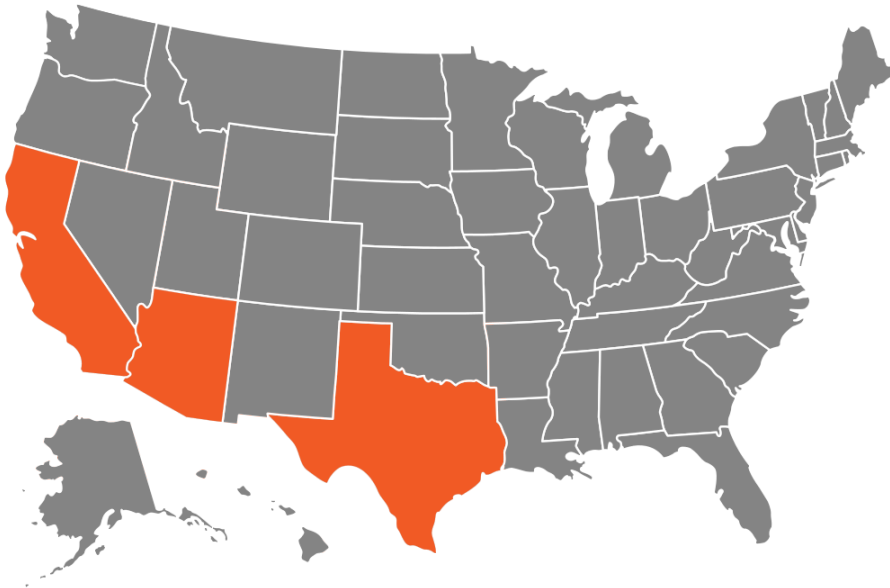
Days with Heat Index of 90+ Degrees

Annual days with a heat index of 90°F+  
Source: gridMET minimum relative humidity & maximum temperature datasets

CLIMATE  CENTRAL

# 43% of Heat Related Deaths in the U.S.

Occurred in Texas, Arizona and California 1999 – 2009



Source: CDC — Heat Related Illness Report

The implications of a warming planet for El Paso's Mission Valley are numerous and varied. The challenges ahead are probably best described in the city's *Resilient El Paso* report (2018). Climate dangers include extreme heat, drought, food access, flash flooding, preventable disease, and energy affordability, among others.

El Paso experienced 14 more days of 90+ degrees per year on average between 1979 and 2018 according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Heatwaves, storms, and high winds knock out power for thousands several times a year and contribute to heat-related deaths, especially among the elderly. Rain is scarce, less than ten inches a year and droughts common. The last major drought lasted five years, 2010 to 2015. All of this could become repeat occurrences in the near future, as extreme weather events increase.

However, the people of El Paso are resilient. Living in the middle of the Chihuahuan Desert, they have no other choice. In terms of climate change adaptation El Paso is on the cutting edge of water conservation and reclamation and El Paso mitigates its rising carbon levels by providing mass transit options.

## 8,081 Heat Related Deaths in the U.S. 1999-2010



Source: CDC — Heat Related Illness Report

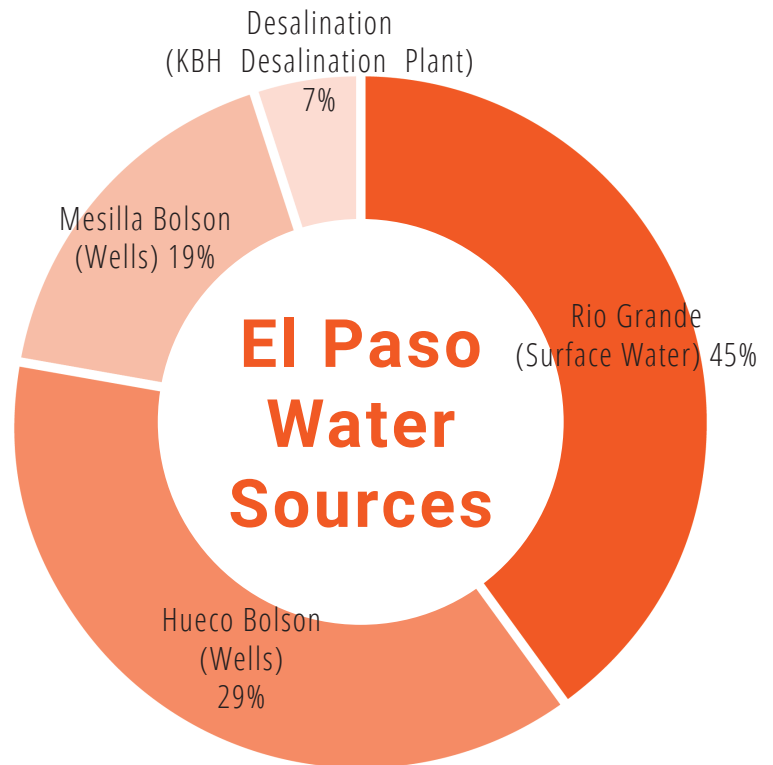
Since the 1980's, El Pasoans have cut per-person water consumption by 30 percent according to El Paso Water, the region's water supplier. This was accomplished through a combination of conservation programs that emphasized educational outreach to schools, incentives to change how the region uses water, and enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with conservation ordinances.

The next steps for El Paso County would be a Climate Action Plan and Sustainability Plan.

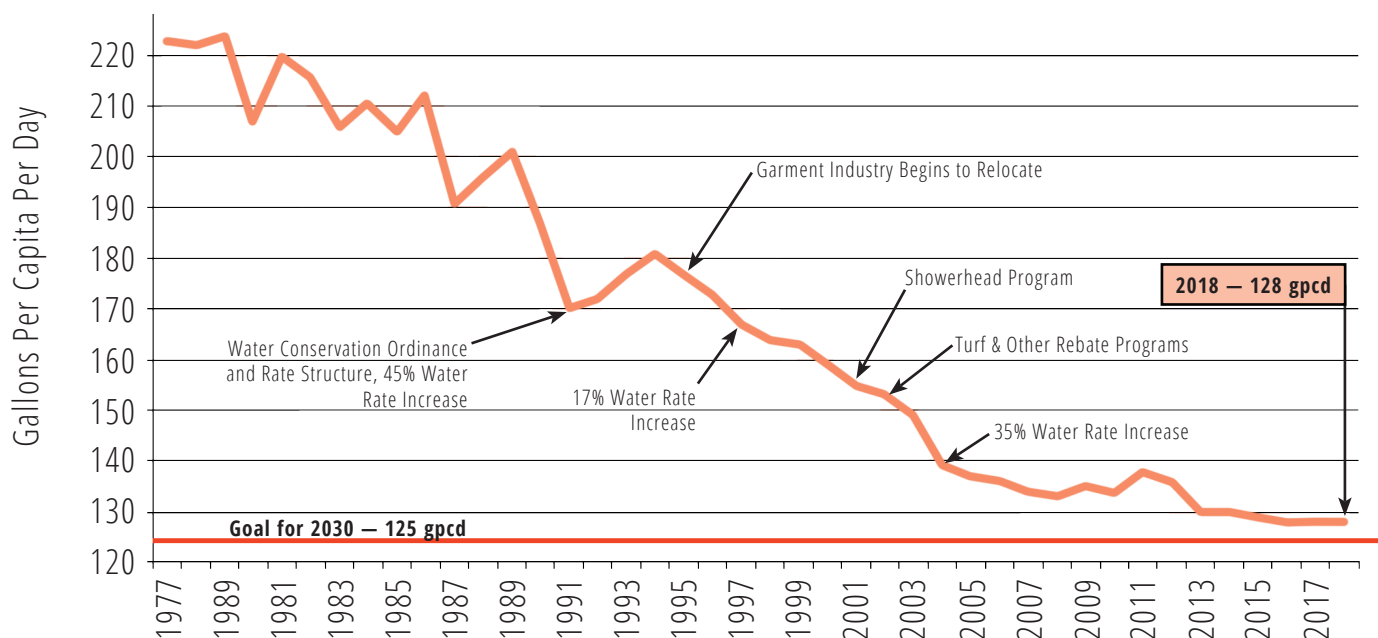
**Climate Action Plans (CAPs)** focus primarily on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including emissions resulting from both the local government's operations and from the community as a whole. They are compact documents and common projects include expanding a municipality's electric vehicle fleet and providing more transportation options.

**Sustainability Plans** seek to "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The three pillars of sustainable development are usually the environment, social equity, and economic development. Sustainability Plans tie together a community's goals, strategies, implementation plans, and metrics for improving sustainability.

## Typical Water Production



## Water Consumption in El Paso is Decreasing



Source: 2019 El Paso Water Conservation Plan



# Goals & Policies

## Land Use

Goal 2.1: Review existing zoning ordinances and revise to reflect 21<sup>st</sup> Century Best Practices planning principles.

- Policy 2.1.1: Establish a council or committee made up of members of all jurisdictional bodies along the Mission Trail to collectively review all existing zoning ordinances and make recommendations for uniformity to encourage better development all along the Mission Trail.
- Policy 2.1.2: If politically practical, create one uniform zoning ordinance, preferably a form-based code, for parcels along Socorro Road. This will encourage uniform building and development standards creating one seamless Socorro Road.

Goal 2.2: Review existing subdivision ordinances and revise to reflect 21<sup>st</sup> Century Best Practices platting principles.

- Policy 2.2.1: Each governing body along the trail should form a committee to review subdivision standards to encourage uniformity in platting standards.
- Policy 2.2.2: Require the dedication of parks and/or open space as part of the platting process. Parks should vary in size and have varying amenities to provide different types of physical activities for residents of all ages.
- Policy 2.2.3: Examine the possibility of requiring on-site ponding as part of the new revised uniform subdivision ordinance.

Goal 2.3: Review existing design guidelines and revise them to apply to each community along the Mission Trail.

- Policy 2.3.1: Review and adjust the 1993 Design Guidelines and adjust them to apply to all communities along the Mission Trail. The guidelines are to ensure renovations to existing structures and new development is in keeping with the historic character found along the mission trail.
- Policy 2.3.2: Each municipality should adopt a local historic district around the missions and presidio chapel along Socorro Road where the design guidelines would apply.
- Policy 2.3.3: Historic preservation guidelines should be included as a part of development regulations so there is only one set of rules people must follow.
- Policy 2.3.4: Provide support to individuals that want to comply with stricter standards for historic preservation by providing assistance in understanding the requirements and facilitating the approval process.
- Policy 2.3.5: Work with the state legislature, if possible, to allow local municipalities to govern themselves and to preserve their history and character through the use of historic districts and ordinances.

Goal 2.4: Adopt a Public Improvement District (or other funding mechanism) to provide funding for public improvements around the missions and presidio chapel.

- Policy 2.4.1: Each municipality should adopt a Public Improvement District around each mission and presidio chapel along Socorro Road to assist in funding public improvements.

Goal 2.5: Encourage the use of local public art throughout the Mission Valley.

- Policy 2.5.1: Utilize public art and artists in creating a marketing campaign for the Mission Trail.
- Policy 2.5.2: Use local artists for the design and creation of paving patterns, street furniture, sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, benches, and/or barriers.
- Policy 2.5.3: Use local artists for the creation and installation of public art in public places.

Goal 2.6: Prioritize “left-over” parcels for use as part of the Infill Strategy.

- Policy 2.6.1: Currently the County has an infill incentive policy that is county-wide. The County should create an infill incentive policy specifically designed for the Mission Trail that prioritizes development of vacant or dilapidated parcels, especially parcels surrounding the missions or the presidio chapel.
- Policy 2.6.2: The County and cities along the Mission Trail should create a master map identifying all available vacant parcels and pursue the use of these parcels.
- Policy 2.6.3: The infill policy should account for and incentivize pollinator and specialty crop initiatives (begun in the City of San Elizario) that need small spaces for urban agriculture. These initiatives would incentivize “small farms” that would help grow the economy by the creation of commodities that may be exported and keep the farming tradition of these areas alive.
- Policy 2.6.4: The new policy should establish design standards and redevelopment guidelines that focus on the land values, socio-economic demographics, and existing conditions along the Mission Trail.
- Policy 2.6.5: Parks, productive agriculture, and retirement villages can be prioritized as a potential use of these vacant lands.

Goal 2.7: Create more walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods, and denser communities.

- Policy 2.7.1: Utilize the infill policy to create compact walkable neighborhoods next to the missions and presidio chapel. This will encourage more people to walk to church on various occasions and create a critical mass of consumers that can sustain local restaurants and shops while lessening the need to drive. As a first phase of development, the policy should focus on increasing housing densities within the 5- and 10-minute pedestrian sheds surrounding the missions and San Elizario presidio chapel.
- Policy 2.7.2: Any new greenfield developments should reflect planning principles that encourage walkability by having smaller blocks, connected streets, ample sidewalks, street trees, and varying lot sizes. These principles should be codified so that developers know what to expect when seeking to develop new communities.

Goal 2.8: Provide housing and health services for the elderly.

- Policy 2.8.1: Increase multi-generational housing through zoning regulations that allow Accessory Dwelling Units, or other co-housing programs. This will allow elderly citizens to continue to live at home or near family members and loved ones while continuing to age with dignity.
- Policy 2.8.2: Encourage the creation of assisted-living facilities along the Mission Trail; ideally all areas of the trail would have multiple facilities. If integrated into the fabric of the existing community, these facilities could encourage access to nature and thus increase patients' wellbeing by exposing them to trees, sunlight, water, and other natural features and encouraging them to remain active.

Goal 2.9: Create sustainable design principles that utilize existing natural resources and help residents and the environment become healthier.

- Policy 2.9.1: Preserve farmland through a transfer of development rights or through the outright purchase of available farmland. The County and cities of El Paso, Socorro, and San Elizario should preserve as much farmland as possible.
- Policy 2.9.2: Encourage clustered development for any new subdivisions; this will encourage more compact and dense development while preserving areas for farmland or open space and maintaining the rural character of the Mission Valley.
- Policy 2.9.3: Incentivize the use of available farmland for actual farming. Through tax credits or other financial programs, the local governments should encourage property owners to utilize their land for farming.
- Policy 2.9.4: Utilize and inform people about the County of El Paso's Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) to assist local grocers, farmers, and other small businesses to increase access to healthy foods.
- Policy 2.9.5: Require on-site ponding on all new development that utilize Low-Impact Development standards. Instead of a single large retention facility to hold all of the stormwater, developers and local governments should have a series of options that provide multiple methods to carry, retain, and even harvest stormwater. This can include swales along landscaped medians, retaining water in basins or on green roofs, encouraging pervious materials instead of asphalt or cement, and leaving areas natural.

Goal 2.10: Increase parks and recreational opportunities to enhance the health of residents living along the Mission Trail.

- Policy 2.10.1: Work with other partners, in particular the Paso del Norte Health Foundation and Paso Del Norte Community Foundation, to develop, construct, and maintain the county-to-county trail and ensure that it transposes through the Mission Trail area.
- Policy 2.10.2: Require that new developments include dedicated parkland and varied amenities that provide different types of activities. This can include trails, basketball courts, soccer fields, and playgrounds.

- Policy 2.10.3: Cities should look to include libraries, recreation centers, or other physical health amenities within walking distance from the Mission Trail.
- Policy 2.10.4: Identify and protect ecologically sensitive habitats and biodiverse areas similar to Rio Bosque Wetlands. These areas could be incorporated into existing or future park systems to enhance and expand open spaces and natural habitats.
- Policy 2.10.5: Encourage and facilitate the creation of a Plaza in front of the Socorro Mission.

Goal 2.11: Increase physical activity through various events throughout the year.

- Policy 2.11.1: On certain days of the week or once a month, close down certain sections of Socorro Road, or other side street routes, to allow for pedestrians, children on bicycles, parents with strollers, joggers, and families to exercise and roam along Socorro Road free from the dangers of vehicular traffic.
- Policy 2.11.2: Support the City of Socorro's 5K / 10K race held annually along the length of the Mission Trail. This provides a great activity to encourage people to get out of their homes but also provides economic development opportunities to local businesses.
- Policy 2.11.3: Improve the mental health of residents by having weekly or monthly concerts, lectures, or other activities that encourage people to interact with each other. These can be centered around the plazas by the missions and presidio chapel or in adjacent areas.

Goal 2.12: Increase physical activity through a better built environment.

- Policy 2.12.1: Do an analysis to determine existing barriers prohibiting residents from getting exercise; this can also include an examination of physical barriers for physically disabled individuals.
- Policy 2.12.2: Decrease speed limits along Socorro Road and if necessary, provide flashers or other mechanisms alerting drivers of pedestrians. This will make Socorro Road more hospitable to pedestrians and cyclists.
- Policy 2.12.3: Improve the streetscape along Socorro Road to encourage drivers to reduce their speeds while increasing the safety and comfort of pedestrians and cyclists.
- Policy 2.12.4: Plant trees for shade and provide a multi-use trail along Socorro Road for the use of pedestrians, bikes, and horses.
- Policy 2.12.5: Utilize the acequias as multi-use trails to connect the Mission Trail for pedestrians, cyclists, and horses.

Goal 2.13: Increase residents' access to healthy foods.

- Policy 2.13.1: Encourage the use of available farmland for the production of fruits and vegetables that are native to the area.
- Policy 2.13.2: Determine if the areas along the Mission Trail are “food deserts” and provide programs to increase food production, access to healthy foods, and / or determine if a small grocery store might be needed in the area. El Paso County’s Healthy Food Financing Initiative should be utilized.
- Policy 2.13.3: Increase the capacity of local vendors and small businesses to create community gardens and farmers’ markets. This will provide local and healthy foods but also increase economic activity for small businesses. Ensure that marketing is provided for visitors and residents to know about these opportunities.
- Policy 2.13.4: Develop the practice of using pocket parks and small landscape areas as bee pollinators all along the Mission Trail, just as the local government in San Elizario is doing.
- Policy 2.13.5: Increase eco-tourism through the promotion of locally produced culinary experiences.

Goal 2.14: Reduce commuting time for residents living along Socorro Road.

- Policy 2.14.1: Make residents aware of the negative effects of spending large amounts of time commuting.
- Policy 2.14.2: Increase public transportation options along Socorro Road.
- Policy 2.14.3: Work with TxDOT and the El Paso MPO to look at other alternative routes that don’t require commuters to solely depend on Socorro Road for travel in and out of the Mission Trail area.
- Policy 2.14.4: Encourage more small business development by creating work-life balance opportunities for people to work and live within close proximity of each of those areas.
- Policy 2.14.5: Using similar data from the Center for Neighborhood Technology, create an affordability index to ensure a fair balance between housing and transportation costs.

Goal 2.15: Study ways to increase El Paso County’s climate resilience.

- Policy 2.15.1: Consider the creation of a Climate Adaptation Plan (CAP) for the County which looks at quantifying greenhouse gas emissions, mitigating carbon pollution, and adapting to potentially drier and more turbulent weather conditions.
- Policy 2.15.2: Consider the creation of Sustainability Plan for the County which seeks to seek to “meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” using more sustainable development, social equity initiatives, and “green” economic development practices.



# 3 MOBILITY

The Mission Trail has been a vital route connecting the Mission Valley to the rest of the world for centuries. It is part of a 1,600 mile route called the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail that begins in Mexico City and ends in San Juan Pueblo, New Mexico. This Trail was established by the indigenous people thousands of years ago who then led colonizers and created maps as a means of reporting back to the Spanish crown. The Ysleta Mission, the Socorro Mission, and the San Elizario Presidio Chapel are all situated along this Trail. Today, the Trail still serves the essential function of connecting the Mission Valley to the City of El Paso as Socorro Road.



SOURCE: NPS.gov

# Mobility in the Mission Valley

## An ancient roadway

### Mobility in the Mission Valley Today

Socorro Road is a County roadway providing the critical link between downtown El Paso and the Mission Valley. The roadway system in the Mission Valley was originally developed for a rural area which is now undergoing a transition into a more urbanized community. As the Valley develops in a suburban manner, the current roadway network will prove to be more and more inadequate. There is increasing pressure on Socorro Road to handle more car trips, straining its ability to balance mobility needs with its scenic and historic roles. These newly developing areas must make adjustments in order to provide the desired function; but the adjustments should not be at the cost of losing the historical ambience of the region.

El Paso County, like much of the country, is a place where mobility is synonymous with driving. Over 90 percent of commuting trips in the El Paso metropolitan area are made by driving, and this value is likely even higher in the Mission Valley where destinations are farther apart and transit service and sidewalks are limited. In fact, when the attendees at the community hands-on design session were asked about how they got around the city, 100 percent responded with “my personal car.”

The northern portion of the Mission Valley around the Ysleta Mission is fairly well served with transit and, because of its more urban nature, is more walkable than the rest of the Valley. Sun Metro’s Nestor A. Valencia Mission Valley Transfer Center is located at the intersection of Alameda Avenue and Zaragoza Road, across the street from the Mission, and is well served by numerous bus routes, including the Alameda Corridor of Sun Metro’s Rapid Transit System (RTS) called Brio.

There is one route (60) that extends the entire length of the Mission Valley to San Elizario. In addition, El Paso County operates a shuttle bus seven days a week from Ysleta to San Elizario and back again.

In a place so heavily invested in and dependent on travel by car, it is no surprise that it can be quite dangerous for those getting around by walking or biking. Smart Growth America, a nonprofit organization dedicated to researching, advocating for, and leading coalitions to bring better development to more communities nationwide, releases an annual report using their “Pedestrian Danger Index” (PDI) to rank states and metropolitan regions across the country on how deadly it is for people to walk. An unfortunate trend nationwide has been the significant increase in pedestrian deaths over the past decade. The El Paso metropolitan area is no exception. El Paso is the 38<sup>th</sup> most dangerous of the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the United States for walking in the year 2019 according to Dangerous by Design. And the PDI has risen nearly 12% since 2016.

The plan for the Mission Trail is part of the strategy for improving mobility and safety along Socorro Road and throughout the Mission Valley.

Texas is the  
**8<sup>th</sup> most dangerous**  
state for walking  
in the US\*

\*According to Dangerous by Design for 2019

.....

**100%**  
Of the hands-on design session attendees said that their  
Primary way of getting around is by personal car



# Transportation Transformation

Prior to 1900, citizens of many American cities routinely walked for short to medium length travel. Bicycle and streetcar travel helped achieve longer daily trips within urban centers. Surrounding land use patterns were compact and highly mixed to support this pedestrian-based mobility system. Urban streets routinely carried walkers, bicyclists and streetcar travelers at a slower, but safer speed, similar to the times when horse-drawn travel was a significant part of the mix.

With the introduction of assembly-line production of gasoline powered automobiles, dramatic changes occurred in urban mobility and urban land use patterns. Buildings became wider and more separated, and development sites became more independent. Almost overnight middle-class Americans could afford the luxury of long-distance travel by themselves or with small groups of family, friends or associates. Peter Norton in his book *Fighting Traffic* describes the extensive number of changes to the transportation system and the adjacent pattern of urban land development that occurred in the period between 1900 and 1940.

After World War I, the 1930s worldwide depression and World War II, America was ready to move to new suburban locations and drive new automobiles for every trip, every day of the week. The relatively small number of urban design and transportation professionals opposing this march to the suburbs were unable to stem the tide rushing toward automobile only transportation. Experience through the 1970s and 1980s began to expose the harmful side effects of subordinating pedestrian travel in our cities.

The car and truck based transportation network that evolved since 1940 in the United States had a profound impact on the style and location of buildings adjacent to streets. The Mission Valley corridor, is no exception to this pattern. Most buildings built after 1940 are suburban. Land developers simply had to provide a street connection to each building without regard to the distance between the major land-uses such as residential, commercial, office and civic. This wide dispersion of buildings and separation of different land uses further reinforced the suburban sprawl pattern of automobile and truck dominance.

In the year 1980, a new town was planned on the Florida Gulf Coast designed and built with the pedestrian in mind. Seaside emerged as the birthplace of traditional neighborhood development, establishing the principles of pedestrian scale, mixed-land use and compact development. Hundreds of walkable communities have since been designed and built both in greenfield locations and developments within urban jurisdictions. The City of El Paso followed the same path; first, away from, then back to, the concept of walking as an important transportation mode. Complete Streets, for all travel modes, are once again public policy.

Complete Streets, for all travel modes, are public policy in El Paso due to Plan El Paso.

# LU1 - TR2: Land Use First, Transportation Second

## Streets of Both Capacity & Character

The Mission Valley's centuries of culture and built heritage accompanying a scenic agricultural landscape is a point of pride for the Valley's residents. During the charrette, participants spoke fondly of the trees which once graced Socorro Road and the experience of traveling along it. It is the intent of this Plan to help set the stage for restoring Socorro Road as a pleasant and enjoyable experience, as a place to be and not just travel across. To make Socorro Road the centerpiece of the Mission Valley and not just another arterial connection for getting to and from El Paso will require a shift in the way streets are designed.

## Context-Based Street Design

There are two dimensions to classifying streets, functional classification and context area type. Functional classification refers to typical engineering language such as highway, arterial, collector, or local roads. The context area type refers to the type of place in which the road traverses, such as identified in this chapter. Both aspects need to be considered when looking for the appropriate design of a street and its surrounding context.

Context describes the physical form and characteristics of a place, interpreted on a block-by-block basis for thoroughfare design. What happens within the bounds of the right-of-way should largely be determined by the setting of private development laying outside of the right-of-way lines. Context-based design is one of those fundamental solutions regarding development planning, infrastructure design, and engineering. When places are well understood, treasured context can be preserved. Also, unacceptable places can be programmed for future changes — changes based on a better balance between public and private interests.

New, context-based awareness, such as through the development of this Comprehensive Plan, will result in careful planning and effective implementation, all based on clear and lean plans and regulations. The vision for redevelopment and new development leads to successful places when transportation is designed in harmony with the future vision. This Mobility element aspires to be part of an enhanced Mission Valley Comprehensive Plan placemaking, assisted to a great degree, by context based, balanced mobility.

Context-based street design is critical to balance the multiple and sometimes competing demands placed on streets to create a transportation system that provides mobility and also functions as vibrant places of commerce and community. For the Mission Trail, the street design must also reflect the community's hundreds of years of culture and built heritage.

The context will help determine where streets should prioritize commerce and community and where mobility should be prioritized. In all cases, streets should be designed to safely and comfortably accommodate all modes of travel, although some modes are given more prioritization than others depending on the context. The challenge for Socorro Road is that it must be the "main street" and historic trail while also being a route for commuting.

In those areas that are envisioned as walkable town places, streets should prioritize pedestrians and bicyclists. In those areas envisioned as driveable suburban and rural, streets should be still be designed for all users, although an emphasis may be placed on the motorist.

It is not surprising that, given their multiple roles in urban life, streets require and use vast amounts of land. In the United States, from 25 to 35 percent of a city's developed land is likely to be in public right-of-way, mostly streets. If we can develop and design streets so that they are wonderful, fulfilling places to be, community building places, attractive public places for all people of cities and neighborhoods, then we will have successfully designed about 1/3 of the city directly and will have an immense impact on the rest.

- Allan Jacobs,  
Great Streets

In those areas near the missions and presidio chapel, increased focus on walkable, complete streets will help shift new development toward a traditional, compact land pattern. New street trees will provide shade for travelers and even parked vehicles; buildings with doors and windows facing streets will increase pedestrian comfort; motor vehicle speeds managed to the 25 and 30 mile-per-hour range will increase pedestrian and bicycle safety. While suburban patterns appear quick and profitable for land developers, the long-term economic sustainability of traditional, compact and a walkable development is much higher.

To achieve the County’s multiple goals of vibrant nodes of commercial and community, revitalization, and walkability, new street standards will need to be adopted with the following features:

- Lower target speed;
- Shorter curb radii;
- On-street parking; and,
- Narrower travel lane widths.

Arterial roads should become main streets as they enter more urban areas and centers near the missions and presidio chapel. High-speed roads should transform to low-speed designs as they enter neighborhoods to slow traffic to pedestrian-friendly speeds of 20 miles per hour or less for the sake of safety.

Widening roads to accommodate through-traffic decreases local livability and should be avoided. New road capacity created through widening is quickly absorbed by drivers who previously avoided the congested road. This is known as “induced traffic” and explains the failure of newer, wider roads to reduce traffic congestion. Every increase in roadway capacity leads to increases in vehicle miles travelled. To reduce congestion, public transit, bikeways, sidewalks and mixed-use zoning and land use patterns that allow people to walk between destinations rather than drive should be explored.

The arterial, collector, and local street classifications are still applicable, although the design of each is guided by the Context Area in which the street is located. These designations are based on intended network function. Different street types of various functional classifications should still be designed differently, but with respect to the Context Area in which it is traveling through. In most cases, context should override conventional planning by functional classification of streets and highways.



Two Ways of Building: In both of these images, development is occurring along a major thoroughfare. In the top image, the development occurs in a suburban pattern along a highway with disconnected streets. This type of place is hostile to pedestrians and lacks any character tied to the region. In the bottom image, the development occurs in a town or pueblo pattern. The experience along the main street is a pleasant one and the resulting place has a defining character.

# Streets by Context

## Functional Classification

The Mission Trail (Socorro Road) is the main traffic artery for the Mission Valley. As the primary way of getting from the Valley to the City of El Paso, Socorro Road's function as a critical mobility corridor must be maintained and improved upon. Many charrette attendees noted that traffic is a growing concern along Socorro Road, in addition to speeding.

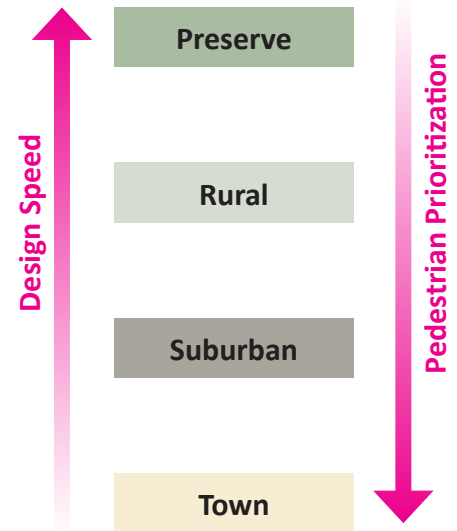
The context-based street design recommendations provide street cross sections that are applicable to each context area found along Socorro Road. Complete streets thoroughfare designs for each context area incorporating a shared-use trail are recommended for use in future planning and design. These street sections provide conceptual design guidance regarding the number of lanes, parking, street trees, sidewalks, and street edge condition. Final design will lead to refinement of these initial concepts based on existing right-of-way and surrounding conditions. These typical sections may also be interrupted for intersections, bump-outs, driveways, or traffic calming devices. All changes should maintain the complete street, walkable, multimodal character built into these recommended sections.

Context areas designated as Preserve include state parks and nature preserves where trails and minor roads would be required. Roads in Rural and Suburban context assume faster motor vehicle speeds and little attention to other travel modes. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are separated from roads for safety reasons. Finally, in the Town context, travel modes are more often mixed or in close proximity, requiring low motor vehicle speeds to enhance safety. Street trees, wide sidewalks and frequent on-street parking attract more pedestrian and bicycle activity to urban streets.

### It's all About Speed

Street design should be appropriate for the places it passes through. The experience (and driver behavior) of travel is largely influenced by the street design. Visual and geometric cues in the street design alert the driver and (subconsciously) encourage faster or slower driving speeds. Narrower lanes, trees close to the pavement, on-street parking, buildings brought up to the sidewalk, and lots of pedestrian activity, all provide cues to drive slower. As it stands today, Socorro Road's design is relatively uniform through the Mission Valley, although it passes through all kinds of places. The only thing changing is the posted speed limit, but all other factors remain the same and drivers will likely travel at the speed comfortable to them based on the street's design. Most of the changes to the street design proposed in this Comprehensive plan require reduced travel speeds to be permitted by the various design manuals.

In the Mission Valley, there are four general Context Areas:

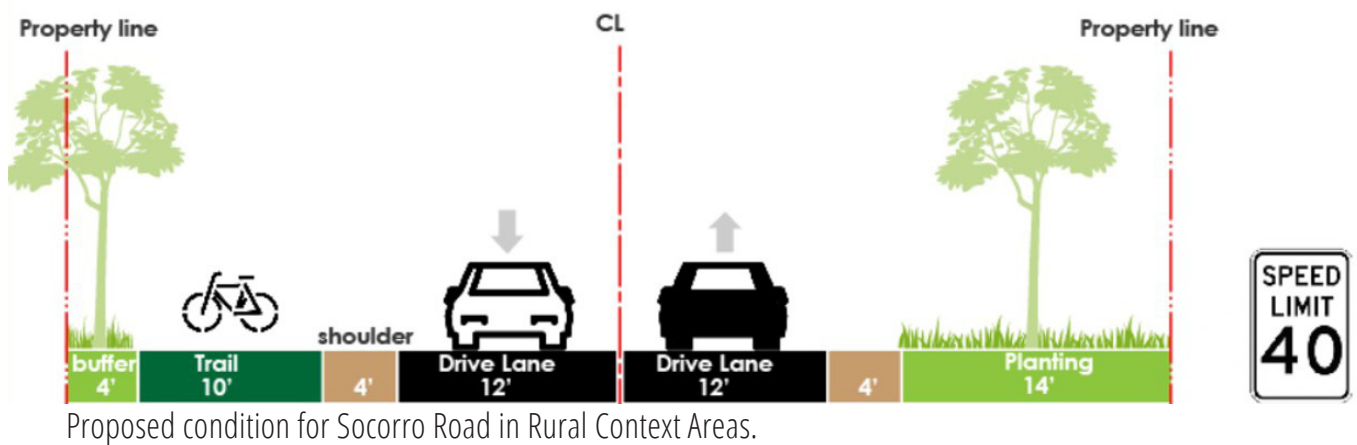


### Fatalities Based on Speed of Vehicle

Source: Campaign to Make America Walkable, Walk Tall (Washington, DC, 1994)



Existing Conditions: Socorro Road in the Rural Context Areas is bordered by agricultural lands and a mix of other smaller uses and buildings.



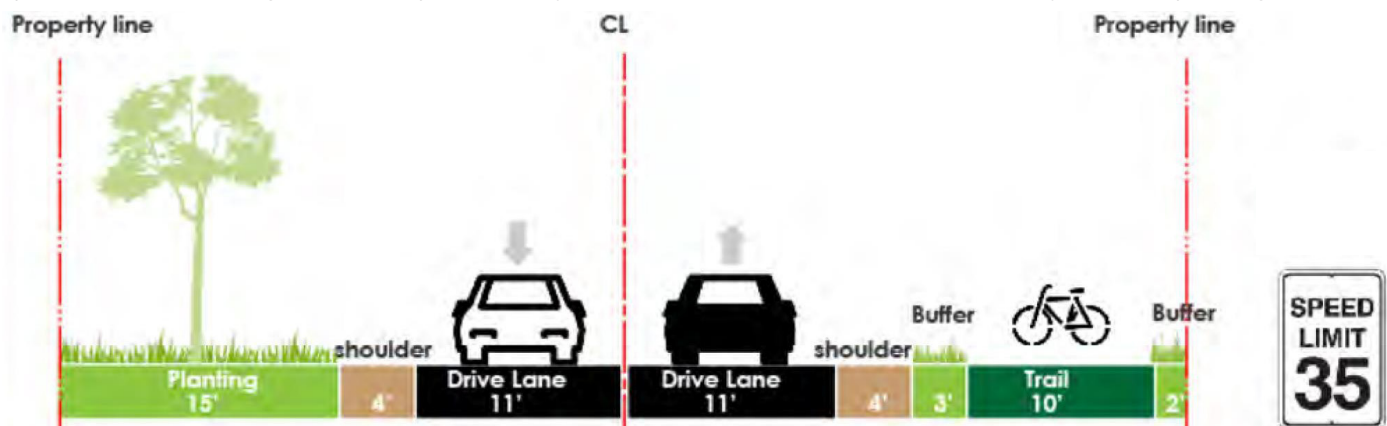
# Rural

## Street Context

In this context, mobility and through-travel is prioritized, so a design speed of 40 mph is appropriate. The separation of modes is essential at 40 mph for motor vehicles. The recommended rural road configuration is shown in this cross section. Travel way lane widths of 12 feet accommodate the higher travel speed and a 10 foot pedestrian-bike trail is located within the right-of-way but separate from the travel way. Intersection design requires special attention when travel modes come in close proximity.



Existing Conditions: Socorro Road in suburban areas may or may not have curbs, but maintains the 40 miles per hour speed limit. Even though sidewalks present, they are narrow, unshaded, and uncomfortably close to speeding traffic.



Proposed condition for Socorro Road in Suburban Context Areas.

# Suburban

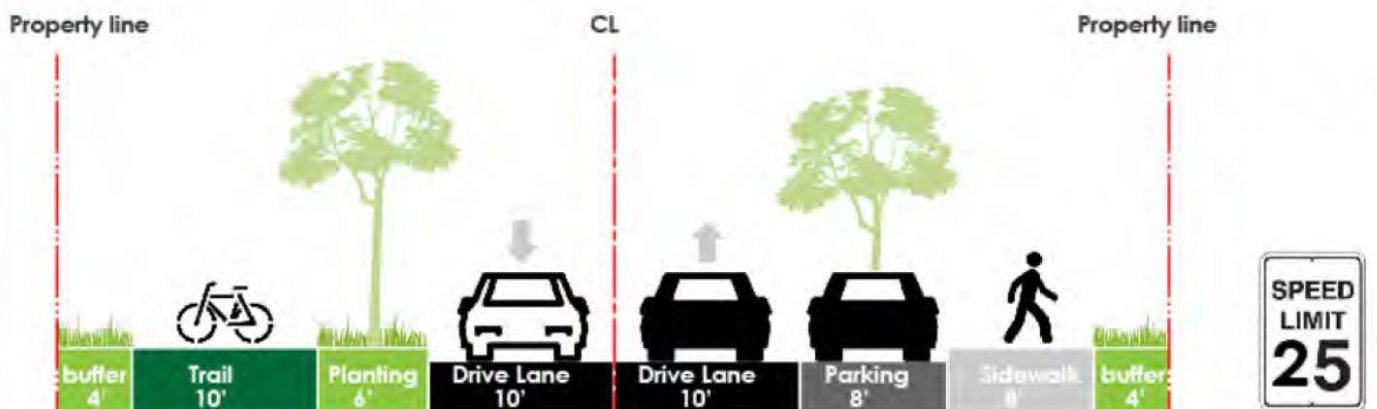
## Street Context

In suburban areas, sections of Socorro Road should be designed as shown here to encourage a motor vehicle travel speed of 35 miles per hour. Lanes for moving motor vehicles are 11 feet wide, slightly narrower than in the rural areas, indicating to motorists to reduce their speed. Shade trees are located in a planting strip outside the edge of pavement. Again, as in the rural areas, a separate 10 foot wide pedestrian/bicycle trail is placed to one side. Intersections must integrate the flow patterns of these separate modes.

The posted speed limit must be lowered to match the updated design. Generally, suburban speed should not be posted higher than 35 miles per hour.



Existing Conditions: Socorro Road near the Socorro Mission is an uncomfortable place to be on foot or bike. Travel here is an experience lacking in any character reflective of the area's rich heritage.



Proposed condition for Socorro Road in Town Context Areas. The Town cross section has the narrowest travel lanes, at 10 feet, to facilitate 25 mile-per-hour travel and achieve a complete streets balance with pedestrian and bicycle elements as part of the cross section.

## Town Street Context

Motor vehicle travel lanes are further reduced to 10 feet wide, slowing, but not stopping, traffic. 8 foot wide parallel parking is introduced where space permits to provide parking for businesses, protect pedestrians on the adjacent sidewalk from moving vehicles, and to add another cue for slower travel. The posted and design speeds are set at 25 miles per hour. Shade trees are located within the parking lane, one tree between every second parked car and another row of shade trees between the vehicle lane and the bicycle-Pedestrian trail. The path is separated from the faster motor vehicle lanes, outside the edge of pavement/curb. Sidewalks are a generous 8 to 10 feet wide, depending on adjacent building density and placement and associated number of pedestrians.

Traffic signals and lights can be more ornate in Town context areas.

Utilities should be located along rear lot lines or placed underground.

# Trails

## Walk | Bike | Equestrian

A common theme heard from the community during the charrette was the need for trails throughout the Valley for recreation and to connect community destinations. The historic acequias built for irrigating the arid fields of southwest Texas have ditch banks that are informally used for travel by people on foot and bike. Improvements to these paths and the creation of a formal trail network can expand connections across the Valley and increase mobility options. These trails would be intended for non-motorized use, such as walking, biking and horseback riding.

The acequia trail network should be coordinated with and support the Paso del Norte Trail and its spurs to offer access to the larger El Paso region. At the completion of the Paso del Norte Trail, it will become possible to walk or bike along a designated pathway from the Mission Valley to downtown El Paso, UTEP, and up to the border with New Mexico.

Socorro Road itself, following the path of the historic Mission Trail, can also be improved to support safer travel for multiple modes of travel. A shared-use trail located along Socorro Road would provide a designated space for people to experience the Trail on foot and bike. Lighting and street trees should be added along Socorro Road to improve the safety, comfort and aesthetics of the Mission Trail for all users.



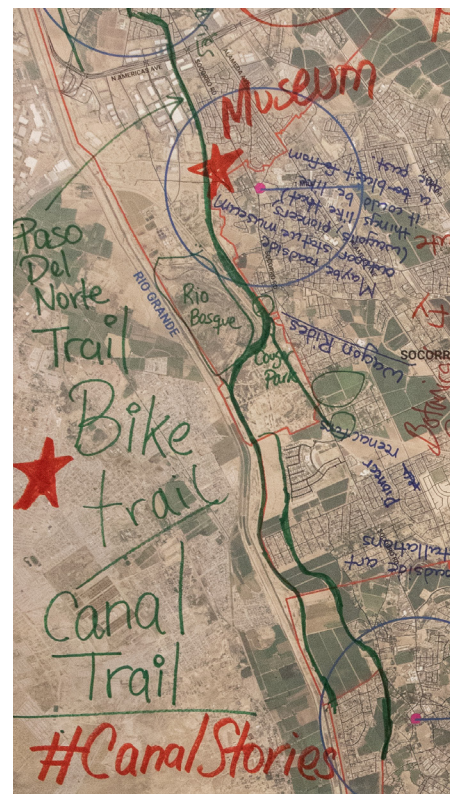
Acequia in San Elizario

## What is an Acequia?

Acequias are historic engineered canals for transporting water to distant fields for irrigation. They are typically simple, open ditches with dirt banks. Acequias were brought to the American Southwest by the Spanish over 400 years ago. Many still exist today, irrigating farming and ranching operations.



Planning for mobility in the Mission Valley must accommodate all modes of transportation, including equestrian.

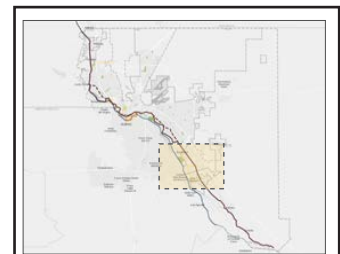




# Connect to Regional Trails

## Paso del Norte Trail

The Paso del Norte (PDN) Trail is a proposed trail spanning the length of El Paso County for approximately 60 miles. The trail is an initiative of Paso del Norte Health Foundation's Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) Priority Area and will connect dozens of neighborhoods and communities to the outdoors and community destinations. The PDN Trail will cross the Mission Valley with connections to the Rio Bosque. The primary spine alignment of the PDN Trail through the Mission Valley is proposed along the Franklin Canal and Alameda Avenue, with spur trails along canals and connecting to the two missions and the presidio chapel.



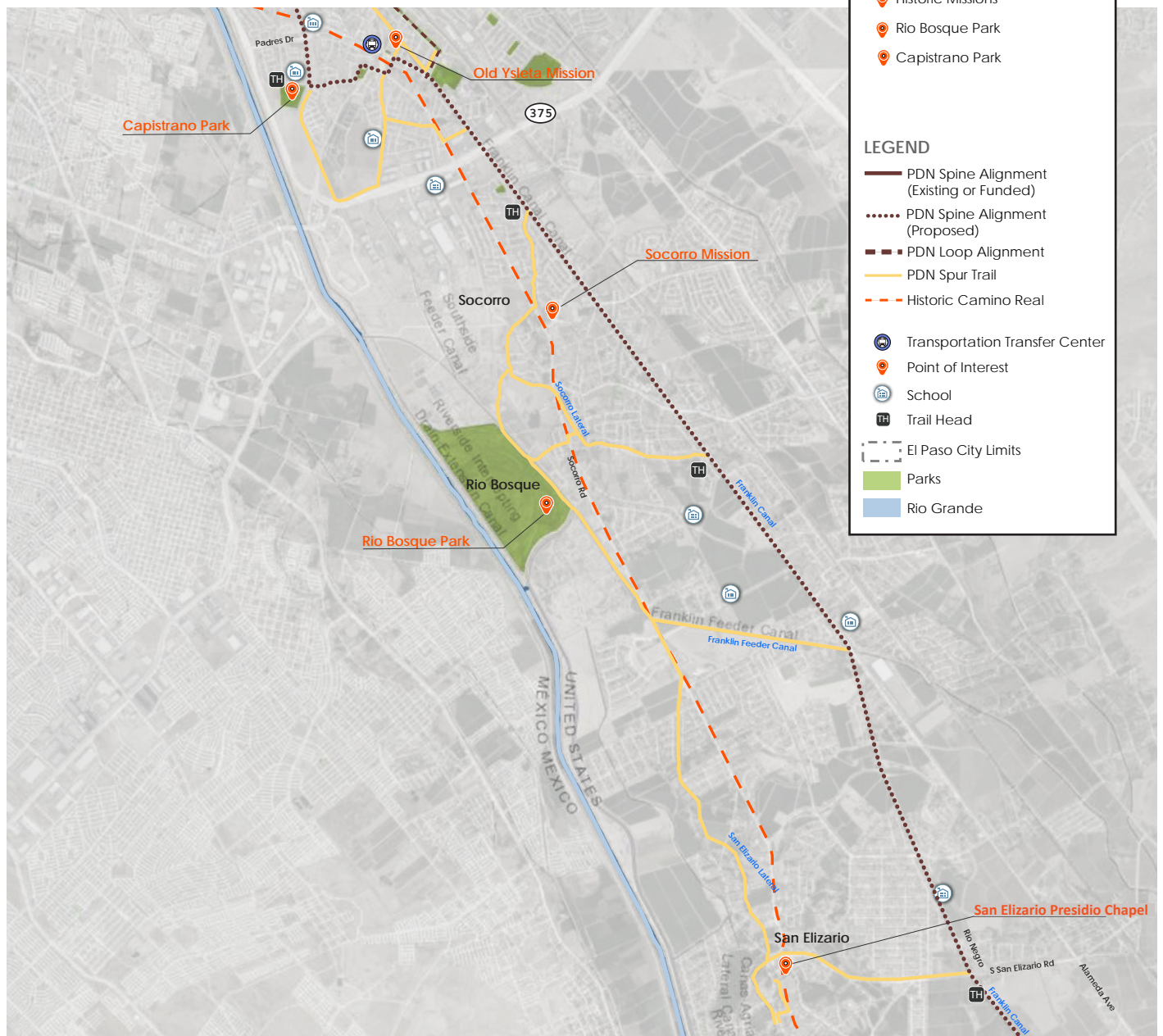
KEY MAP

### POINTS OF INTEREST

- Historic Missions
- Rio Bosque Park
- Capistrano Park

### LEGEND

- PDN Spine Alignment (Existing or Funded)
- PDN Spine Alignment (Proposed)
- PDN Loop Alignment
- PDN Spur Trail
- Historic Camino Real
- Transportation Transfer Center
- Point of Interest
- School
- Trail Head
- El Paso City Limits
- Parks
- Rio Grande



Map of the Paso del Norte Trail in the Mission Valley District (Map 27 in the Paso del Norte Trail Master Plan)



Acequia in San Elizario

### **Trails for Recreation and Tourism**

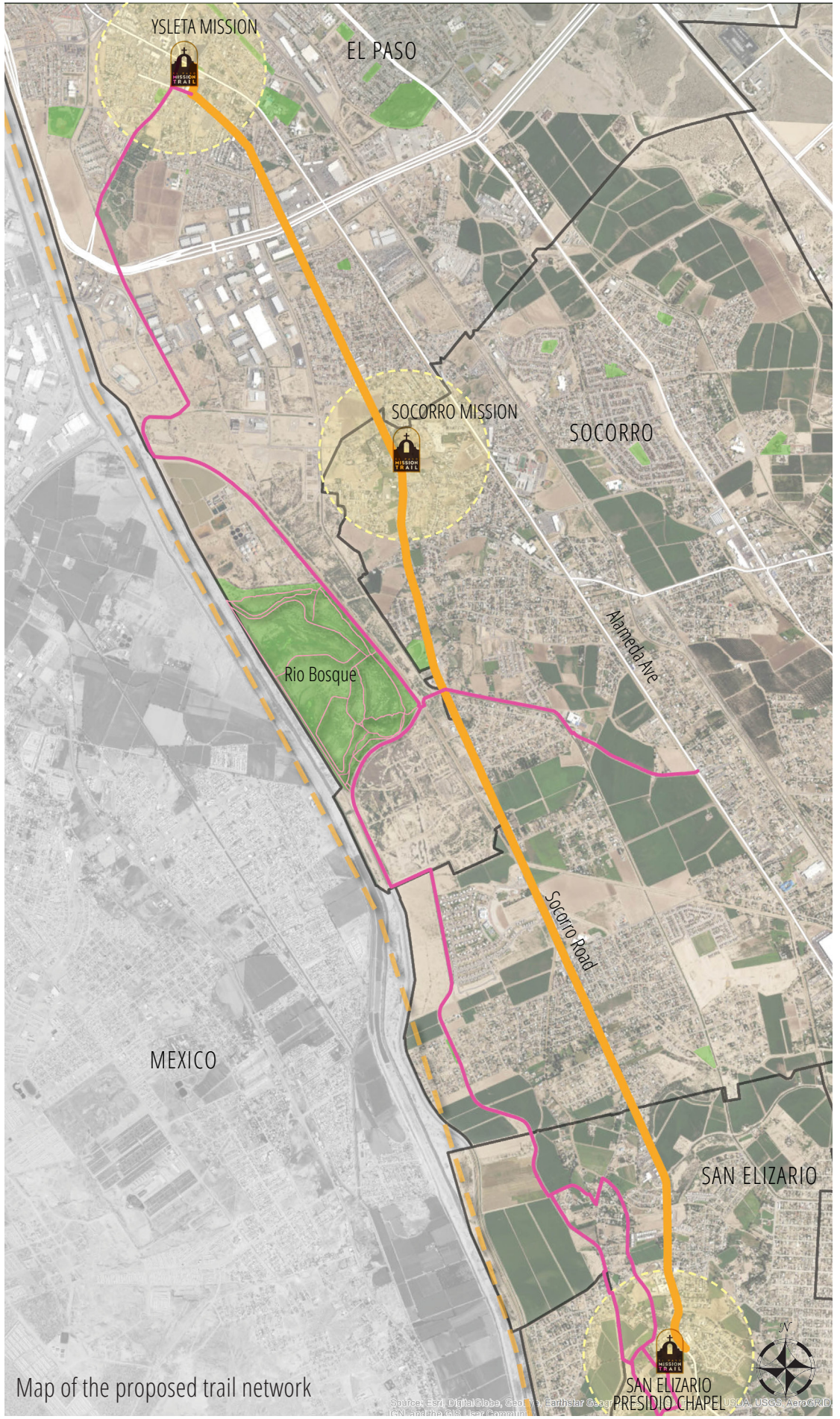
The Mission Valley has the potential to become a premier bicycling destination through strategic policy changes and infrastructure investments. There are opportunities to further link to the region's natural beauty with connections from the City of El Paso to the missions, presidio chapel, and the surrounding countryside, as well as enhance the network of streets. Scenic walking, biking, and equestrian trails through the villages and agricultural lands alongside the historic acequias can be a destination themselves.

A major goal of the Mission Trail Comprehensive Master Plan is increased visitation. In addition to automobile travelers, bicycle and pedestrian trail users can become a significant part of the visitor population. Careful design of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the corridor is therefore an important solution for the overall project. The trails should connect to missions and presidio chapel to the Rio Bosque Wetland Park. Various loops should also be created throughout the Valley to offer opportunities for people to select a route of their desired length.

Designing and implementing a bikeway network that is appropriate for the surrounding context should be strongly correlated to land use characteristics and to the desired development or preservation goals for each neighborhood in the Mission Valley. The proposed network should be further fine-tuned at the scale of the block. This can occur through a Bicycle Master Plan that incorporates the Paso del Norte Trails, proposed trails in this plan, and the latest advancements in bicycle planning.

As planning for the trails proposed in this plan continues, alternate routes may be easier to implement or make a better overall network as well as better meet the needs and concerns of the community.

In addition to the trail network, numerous design countermeasures may be applied to streets to increase the visibility and safety of existing and proposed bikeways. These include bicycle boxes, bicycle detection and signal heads, wayfinding and informational signs, and bicycle refuge islands. These and other Complete Street design elements should be focused around nodes at each mission to improve the modal balance.



Proposed shared-use trail along Socorro Rd



Proposed Acequia Trails



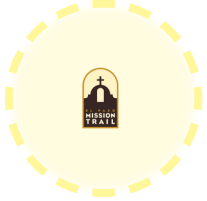
Rio Bosque Trails



Municipal Boundaries



10 Minute Walk around Missions & Presidio Chapel



Map of the proposed trail network

Source: Esri, Digital Globe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geo, IGN, and the GIS User Community



Rio Bosque Wetland Park

# Rio Bosque Wetland Park

## Park History & Trails

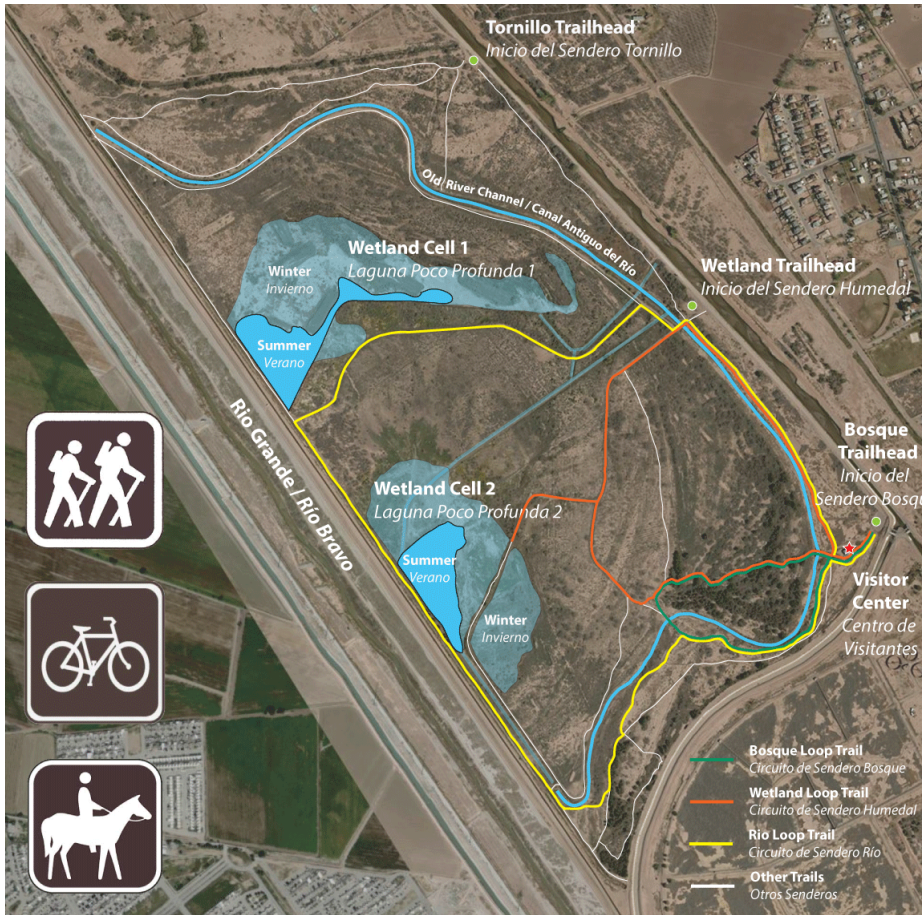
The Rio Bosque Wetland Park is a 372 acre City of El Paso Park. The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) manages it via the Center for Environmental Resource Management. The productive natural habitat once gracing the banks of the Rio Grande is almost gone today. The wetland park is a remnant of this unique and valuable ecosystem once found in the river valley, brought back by a diverse partnership.

The Park is enclosed by irrigation canals and drains on three sides. The western boundary of the park lies adjacent to the Rio Grande, the international border between the US and Mexico. The wetland project at Rio Bosque was built in 1997 as a mitigation effort to offset the loss of wildlife habitat due to the building of a concrete-lined canal extending along the river from downtown El Paso to the Rio Bosque area. Today, UTEP and its partners are working to guide and shape the recovery of Rio Bosque to promote native river-valley plant communities.

**372** Acre Park



Woodhouse's Toad



### Rio Bosque Wetlands Park Trails

A network of trails winds throughout the park. Three are loop trails marked with distinctive logos: a frog for the 0.6-mile Bosque Trail (fully accessible), a duck for the 1.5-mile Wetland Trail and a dragonfly for the 2.4-mile Rio Trail. This trail network should connect with the trails proposed in this plan and the Paso del Norte spur trails to facilitate access to the park by walking, biking, and horseback riding.



### Bosque Loop

**0.6 miles**

A hard surfaced trail, suitable for wheelchairs, this trail introduces the Rio Bosque landscape and the ways that it is changing.



### Wetland Loop

**1.5 miles**

This trail crosses the Park's interior and bosque, including a side trip to a wetland overlook and a stroll along the old river channel.



### Rio Loop

**2.4 miles**

The longest of the Park's loop trails, the Rio Loop offers the most complete look at the Park's varied habitats and has the best views of the wetlands.



Road Runner on the Border Fence



Great Blue Heron



Burrowing Owl Habitat Project

# Strategies

## For Connecting the Mission Valley

### Expand Walkability

Towns and cities throughout the country are in the process of restoring old neighborhoods and creating new neighborhoods that are both walkable and accessible. Strategies that make the Mission Valley easier to navigate as a pedestrian (or cyclist), will also make the Mission Valley more livable and attractive. Most transportation corridors should be more than just roadways for cars. Corridors can be designed and classified to reflect a balance between many modes of transportation and the surrounding land uses. In other words, corridors should be designed with respect to the context in which they are located.

#### Active Transportation & Accessibility

A walkable community is a place that encourages a mix of travel modes, including pedestrians, bicycles and automobiles. The Campaign to Make America Walkable, a national project, has developed some general descriptions for a walkable community. Characteristics include:

- Places where people of all ages and abilities have easy access to their community “on-foot”
- Neighborhoods that are safer, healthier, and friendlier places,
- A place where pedestrians are given priority and motor vehicle speeds are reduced, and
- Towns and cities with good air and water quality.

#### Walking Distance

The County’s hot and sunny climate is frequently mentioned as a barrier to greater walkability. The typical comfortable walking distance for a pedestrian (“pedestrian shed”) is often defined as the area covered by a 5 minute walk, or about 1,320 feet. However, the challenges of a hot climate might reduce that comfortable walking distance down to 3 minutes, or 800 feet. Providing trees, shade structures, and reductions in pavement (or use of reflective materials), can provide improved comfort for longer distances.

A highly effective method for improving walkability is through the process of installing Complete Streets and road diets. These concepts convert roadways from auto-centric thoroughfares into people or community-oriented streets that accommodate the safe and efficient movement of all transportation users. The complete street principle includes design enhancements such as medians, street trees, on-street parking, and bike lanes, all set in an attractive, pedestrian-scaled environment.

Typically, complete streets and road diets should be applied to streets within Town Context Areas. These are places where the pedestrian is to be prioritized and slower moving traffic and vibrant street scenes are critical to meeting the envisioned future of these areas.

#### Complete Streets

“Complete Streets” is a concept for streets designed to enable safe access and mobility for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Like safe vehicular travel, bicyclists and pedestrians are important components of the Mission Trails’s transportation system. Where gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian networks exist, effective and safe circulation is hindered. In key locations, such as near the missions and presidio chapel, retail and mixed-use centers, schools, and parks, a well-connected network is especially important. Streets within Town Context Areas should be prioritized for complete streets treatments.



In many places in the El Paso region, pedestrians are not given much space



Road Diet, part of the Indianapolis Cultural Trail, Indiana



A pedestrian friendly example of curb extensions that can help slow down traffic and reduce crossing distances.

## Road Diets

One technique for creating Complete Streets includes implementing road diets, or re-shaping the public right-of-way to have a balanced amount of road space dedicated to all users (pedestrians, bikes, transit users, and cars).

But first, check the context, or surrounding land development pattern. Community vision from the Comprehensive Plan and zoning should be the foundation upon which the road diet design stands. In the compact urban context, slow moving vehicles and shared space guide the street design. Conversely, in suburban and rural settings, with higher vehicle speeds, the modes rely more on signals to separate the times when they move and separate space on which they move. When there are desired context changes, this re-urbanization should be planned and documented as justification for the road diet. Road diets based on economic revival have the greatest chance of success. They can be beneficial for revitalizing commercial corridors that have been eroded by road widening over the years.

Current best practices, which are shaping local ordinances throughout the country, include the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) and the Congress for the New Urbanism/Institute of Transportation Engineers Manual (CNU/ITE Manual). These references recommend adjustments to street dimensions that are required for a road diet (e.g. narrowed lane widths and parking space dimensions, wider sidewalks, minimum size of bike lanes, etc.). Lower vehicle speeds are necessary to both implement the design elements of a road diet according to the referenced manuals and to create a safer environment for non-motorists.

In addition, on existing four-lane streets with less than 25,000 (ADT), transportation experts around the country are recommending road diets as a priority. Conversion of a four-lane undivided road to a three-lane undivided road, made up of two through-lanes and a center two-way left-turn lane is a common retrofit. In these instances, the four-lane to three-lane roadway diet does not result in a loss of traffic capacity. This is because the two left lanes on a four-lane undivided highway function as left turn lanes and “block” the through going traffic. The center two-way left-turn lane in the three-lane undivided road scenario effectively takes the place of the two left lanes.

Streets with three-lanes or two-lanes may also be considered for a road diet. Road diets can be completed on streets of all sizes; however, the redesign will need to be customized, depending on where the street is located (town, suburban, or rural) and the desired land uses adjacent to the roadway that are envisioned for the future. Any road diet decisions should be made with respect to the surrounding envisioned context.

These types of conditions are being transformed around the country, typically adding bike lanes, on-street parking, and landscaping, such as street trees, to the street. Where these streets traverse through Town Street Context Areas, complete streets treatments should be considered. Where these streets traverse through the Suburban Street Context Areas, a “road diet” or lane reallocation should be considered.

In addition, changes to the development standards along Socorro Road where it traverses through Town Context Areas should be considered. Development standards should reflect the form and mix of uses desired for the context area.

## Benefits of a Road Diet may include:

- An overall crash reduction of 19% to 47%;
- Reduction of rear-end and left-turn crashes through the use of a dedicated left-turn lane;
- Fewer lanes for pedestrians to cross and an opportunity to install pedestrian refuge islands;
- The opportunity to install bike facilities when the cross-section width is reallocated;
- Reduced right-angle crashes as side street motorists must cross only three lanes of traffic instead of four;
- Traffic calming and reduced speed differential, which can decrease the number of crashes and reduce the severity of crashes if they occur;
- The opportunity to allocate the extra roadway width for other purposes, such as on-street parking, landscaping, street trees, and bike or pedestrian enhancements;
- A community-focused, “Complete Streets” environment with places for people, not just cars; and
- Simplifying road scanning and gap selection for motorists (especially older and younger drivers), making left turns from or onto the mainline.

## Speed Management

Another important aspect of walkability and public safety involves reduced traffic speeds and the use of traffic calming devices. The speed of vehicles is a critical component to pedestrian safety and comfort. A pedestrian involved in a collision with a vehicle has a 95% chance of survival if the car is traveling at 20 miles per hour; there is a 10% chance of pedestrian survival if the car is traveling at 40 miles per hour. Pedestrian-friendly speeds are typically 20-25 miles per hour, and are no more than 30 miles per hour.

Furthermore, many of the key design criteria for streets that are safe and comfortable for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as for streets that are beautiful, such as lane widths, tree placement and curb radii, are dimensions stipulated in the design manuals as factors of speed. With slower speeds, acceptable lane widths decrease and the space between street tree and curb is reduced. Designing for slower speeds is critical for creating streets that actually encourage motorists to travel at lower speeds rather than relying on signage and posted speed limits alone. The geometry of the street has a much greater affect on motorist behavior.

## Sidewalks

The availability of a complete sidewalk network also supports the mobility of Mission Valley residents and visitors. Wide and continuous sidewalks allow for active, safe, and healthy lifestyles for citizens. Properly-designed pedestrian networks accommodate persons with disabilities, the elderly, and children who walk to school and other places. Currently, many neighborhoods in the Mission Valley have incomplete sidewalk networks, with some segments being broken, overgrown with weeds, or nonexistent.

For walking to become a regular, acceptable, and dignified means of transportation in the Mission Valley, the three cities should embark on a process of adding sidewalks. A comprehensive sidewalk plan should be developed to prioritize sidewalk investments and to ensure the investments result in a connected network. Emphasis should be placed on creating connected networks around the missions, presidio chapel and in the town areas, along routes used by students, and along Socorro Road.

Sidewalks must also be comfortable places as well, and in El Paso's hot climate, shade is much needed to make walking an inviting means of getting around. Sidewalks should be lined with street trees that have shade-providing canopies or covered with galleries and arcades. The street trees should be planted between the sidewalk and edge of pavement to provide a buffer between motor vehicles and pedestrians. All sidewalks should have a minimum clear zone of 5 feet, which should be wider along main corridors and mixed-use/commercial streets.



Some sidewalks in San Elizario exhibit the characteristics that make for an inviting pedestrian experience, in this case, shade



# Planning for Bicycles

Methods for creating a safe and desirable bicycle network include the process of making all significant destinations accessible. Traits of a proper bicycle network include the use of a combination of four types of bikeways:

1. **Bicycle paths** - are physically separated from vehicular traffic and are often located outside of the downtown.
2. **Bicycle lanes** - are demarcated by striping within medium-speed roadways.
3. **Separated Bicycle Facilities** - include a cycle track, with a buffer (physical or paint), separating bikes from car traffic.
4. **Shared Routes** - the majority of thoroughfares— are low-speed streets in which cars and bikes mix comfortably. These streets have low traffic volumes and often include various traffic-calming devices and signing.

Generally, there are two distinct types of cyclists: recreational cyclists and 'last choice' cyclists. The recreational cyclists are those that use their bicycles for either exercise or just for fun rides. These types of users have greater flexibility in selecting routes that are safe and comfortable, rarely using their bikes on city streets or in urban conditions. The 'last choice' cyclists include a group that uses their bike because it is their primary mode of transportation. These users many times must brave dangerous higher speed corridors, putting their own lives in danger.

## Bicycle Parking

Adopting bicycle parking regulations is an important step in creating a bicycle-friendly community and should accompany the creation of the trail network - people riding on the trails and bike network will need places to securely store their bicycles once they arrive at their destinations.

Bicycle parking regulations should address two basic types of bicycle parking facilities: short-term and long-term. The regulations should also show where each type should be located, depending on surrounding land uses. This distinction is crucial in the bicycle parking regulations, which is essential for meeting the needs of various types of cyclists and the multiplicity of trip types (commuting, errands, recreational, etc).

Bicycle parking should not be tied to automobile parking requirements; supply and demand for cars is not an adequate indicator of actual bicycle parking need. Furthermore, if a municipality adopts automobile parking maximums, or later reduces such parking requirements, the amount of bicycle parking would also be reduced when the opposite may be necessary. Therefore, bicycle parking ratios should be based on uses of the property (e.g., a gym would require more bicycle parking than a lumberyard) and quantifiable indicators like unit count, employee count, or building square footage.

Bicycle parking standards should be created that include graphics depicting acceptable and unacceptable bicycle rack types, locations, and placement. For those who manually install bicycle parking facilities, visual guidance will prevent the poor location and configuration of otherwise acceptable bicycle parking types.

Promote bikes  
along the Mission  
Trail with an annual  
Bike Race

# 10 Steps for Making Walkable and Bikeable Streets

## 1. Design for pedestrians first.

Thoroughfares should be designed for the pedestrian first, then the car. Great neighborhood streets are designed to provide a high-caliber experience for pedestrians foremost; once this is accomplished, great streets generally accommodate a wide range of other modes of travel.

## 2. Proportions matter.

A street should function as an outdoor room, surrounding its occupants in a space that is welcoming and usable. A 1:3 ratio of building height to street width is often cited as a minimum section for a sense of enclosure. Creating this sense of enclosure involves more than just narrow street width, however. There are well-defined eight-lane roads just as there are two-lane roads that seem to be impassable. Streets must be sized properly for their use and should be defined with appropriate building sizes. Street trees and features such as lighting also play a critical role in defining the space of the street.

## 3. Design the street as a unified whole.

An essential distinction of great streets is that the entire space is designed as an ensemble, from the travel lanes, trees and sidewalks, to the very buildings that line the roadway. Building form and character is particularly important in shaping a sense of place. The best streets invariably have buildings fronting them, with a particular height and massing that creates an appropriate sense of enclosure. The random setbacks generated by conventional zoning rarely produce this effect; form-based regulations should be put in place to control building form and placement. Furthermore, urban buildings must front the street with features such as doors, windows, balconies, and porches. These features promote a lively streetscape, and ultimately provide passive security for pedestrians by focusing "eyes on the street."

## 4. Include sidewalks.

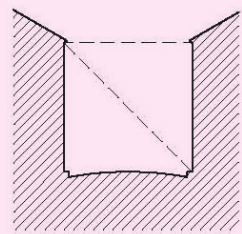
Appropriately designed sidewalks are essential for active pedestrian life. Pedestrians will be more willing to utilize sidewalks if they are protected from automobile traffic. One of the simplest ways to buffer the pedestrian is to place street trees between the street and the sidewalk. Other street furniture such as streetlights, bus shelters, and benches occupy wider sidewalks and provide additional separation between pedestrians and automobile traffic.

The width of the sidewalk will vary according to the location. On most single-family residential streets, five or six feet is an appropriate width, but streets with townhouses and multi-family buildings require a more generous sidewalk. On Main Streets, fourteen feet is an ideal minimum sidewalk width, which must never fall below an absolute minimum of eight feet.

## Scale Streets Comfortably for Users

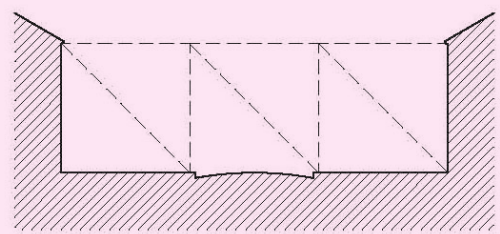
The height-to-width ratio is the proportion of spatial enclosure. As a general rule, the tighter the ratio, the stronger the sense of place. The ratio of 1:6 is the perceivable maximum. The ratio of 1:3 is best for public spaces. The ratio of 1:1 creates pedestrian paseos. Note that the ratio is not based merely on the curb to curb measurement but instead on the entire right-of-way and including building frontages, from building face to building face. In the absence of spatial definition by facades, disciplined tree planting is an alternative.

-- AIA Graphic Standards



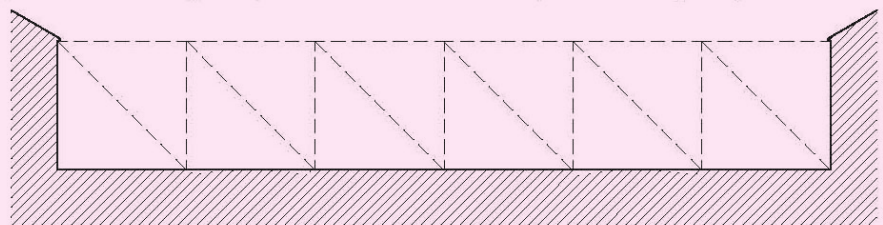
1:1

(The best for thoroughfares)



1:3

(The best for squares)



1:6

(The perceivable maximum)

## 5. Provide shade.

Pedestrians and cyclists need shady streets. Shade provides protection from heat and sun and contributes to the spatial definition of a street. Shade can be provided with canopy trees or architectural encroachments over the sidewalk. Canopy trees should be planted in a planting zone between the sidewalk and the street in order to provide continuous definition and shade for both the street and the sidewalk. Architectural encroachments over the sidewalk such as awnings, arcades, and cantilevered balconies are another way to protect pedestrians from the elements and shield storefronts from glare.

## 6. Make medians sufficiently wide.

Where divided thoroughfares are unavoidable, medians must be generous enough to serve as a pedestrian amenity. A minimum median width of 8' will accommodate a row of street trees and will provide adequate refuge for pedestrians crossing a wide roadway. Quite often an 8' median isn't possible. That's okay, the right tree species can grow in even a 3' median. The tree may never reach its growth potential but it isn't necessary that it does in order to provide shade and beauty.

## 7. Plant the street trees in an orderly manner.

Great streets are typically planted with rows of regularly-spaced trees, using consistent species. This formal tree alignment has a powerful effect; it at once shapes the space and reflects conscious design. More importantly, the shade produced by the trees will be continuous enough to make walking viable. Furthermore, the spatial impression of aligned trees also has a traffic calming effect.

## 8. Use smart lighting.

Streets should be appropriately lit for automobile and pedestrian safety. Pedestrians naturally avoid streets where they feel unsafe. Widely-spaced, highway-scaled "cobra head" light fixtures do not provide appropriate light intensity and consistency for pedestrian well-being. More frequently-spaced, shorter fixtures are more appropriate, and provide light beneath the tree canopy as street trees mature.

## 9. Allow on-street parking in suitable locations.

On-street parking buffers pedestrians from moving cars and calms traffic by forcing drivers to stay alert. Parallel parking is the ideal arrangement, because it keeps streets as narrow as possible. Diagonal parking is acceptable on some shopping streets, as long as the extra curb-to-curb width is not achieved at the expense of sidewalk width. Parking located in front of a street-front business encourages people to get out of their cars and walk, and is essential to leasing street-oriented retail space.

## 10. Avoid parking lots in front of buildings.

The bulk of a building's parking supply should occur behind the building. The conventional practice of placing surface parking lots in front of buildings results in a disconnected pedestrian environment. If current zoning regulations are reformed to provide "build-to" lines rather than mandatory front setbacks for commercial buildings, parking can be accommodated in the interior of the block. As a result, the pedestrian realm of the sidewalk will be defined by shop fronts and building entrances rather than parking lots.



Savannah, GA



Alexandria, VA

# Goals & Policies

## Mobility

Goal 3.1: Transform Socorro Road into a street worthy and reflective of its natural environment, built heritage, and community culture. Create a context-based, coordinated, and efficient multimodal transportation system that supports, complements, and meets the needs of different types of places throughout the Mission Valley. ~~Land use patterns and connections between different land uses are key elements defining the form and character of places to yield quality urban design and sustainable economic activity.~~

- Policy 3.1.1: Develop a context area map to indicated the location of the different context areas along Socorro Road to set the basis for street design.
- Policy 3.1.2: Develop and adopt context-based street design guidelines and criteria to evaluate specific roadway designs and encourage multi-modal options in consultation with the text— Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach: An ITE Recommended Practice (2010).
- Policy 3.1.3: Changes to thoroughfare design should correspond to similar changes to the form and mix of uses in the development standards. This interface between public and private space is best addressed by adopting a uniform form-based zoning code for parcels along Socorro Road.
- Policy 3.1.4: Plant regularly spaced, climate appropriate canopy trees alongside Socorro Road in order to provide continuous shade for both the street and the sidewalk or trail and to enhance the scenic experience of the street.
- Policy 3.1.5: Locate and acquire properties along Socorro Road that are appropriate for pocket parks, particularly at the entrances to each municipality and at the entrances to special districts such as historic districts, art districts, or the areas around the missions and chapel.

Goal 3.2: Maintain Socorro Road’s functionality as a commuting route while also reducing speeding during periods of lighter traffic.

- Policy 3.2.1: Employ design-based speed management measures and road design standards along Socorro Road tailored to the context areas to reduce speeds while maintaining capacity.
- Policy 3.2.2: Traffic calming measures should be incorporated along Socorro Road at key locations of pedestrian activity: near trail crossings, near the missions, presidio chapel, and in town context areas. Pedestrian and bicyclists should have safe, convenient, well-marked means to cross the street.
- Policy 3.2.3: Consider the use of roundabouts to calm traffic, increase safety, diminish the need for traffic lights, and create sites for public art and monuments.
- Policy 3.2.4: Use gateways and special district designations to encourage slower speeds and walking.

Goal 3.3: Establish a robust trail network throughout the Mission Valley.

- Policy 3.3.1: Create a trail masterplan for the Mission Trail area to ensure the build-out of a complete network. The trail network should incorporate connections to community destinations, parks, schools, neighborhoods, transit service, the missions, presidio chapel, and other historic sites.
- Policy 3.3.2: Utilize the historic acequias in the development of the trail network. Scenic trails can be created along the acequias' banks to provide access to the rural and agricultural parts of the Mission Valley and to create new connections where the roadway network is sparse.
- Policy 3.3.3: Develop a shared-use trail along Socorro Road to provide a designated space for people to experience the Mission Trail on foot and bike. This trail should be universally accessible, adequately lit, and properly designed to reduce conflicts between motor vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.
- Policy 3.3.4: Integrate the Paso del Norte Trail system into the build-out of the Mission Valley trail network.
- Policy 3.3.5: Continue support for the Paso del Norte Trail.
- Policy 3.3.6: The trail network should be treated as part of the County's transportation network and connections should be planned for accordingly.
- Policy 3.3.7: Where possible, and especially where pedestrians are prioritized, tools such as protected left turns, pedestrian head start, raised crosswalks, curb extensions, medians, pedestrian refuge islands or mid-block crossings, and restricted right turns on red should be used to improve pedestrian and bicycle movements and safety.
- Policy 3.3.8: Install infrastructure including bike racks, drinking fountains, benches, and signage at key locations along trail routes.
- Policy 3.3.9: Bicycle facilities such as secure racks, personal lockers, and showers should be encouraged at tourist locations and in new and redeveloped office and employment centers to facilitate bicycling and walking as viable alternative modes for mobility in the Mission Valley.
- Policy 3.3.10: Develop a unique branding for the Mission Valley Trail network and market it as an attraction for recreation and tourism as well as a functional means of mobility.

Goal 3.4: Increase access between the Mission Valley and El Paso for residents and visitors through an expansion of transit services.

- Policy 3.4.1: Expand transit connections from the Mission Valley Transit Center into the Mission Valley along Socorro Road to provide a reliable alternative to driving for commutes. This is an important strategy for maintaining Socorro Road's functionality for commuting while accommodating other desired functions of the street.
- Policy 3.4.2: Create a series of park-and-ride lots to serve commuters on expanded transit service along Socorro Road. These lots should serve multiple purposes, such as supplemental parking for the missions and presidio chapel during non-commuting hours, weekends, and special events.
- Policy 3.4.3: Investigate the possibility of a rubber tire trolley service between the two historic missions, San Elizario Presidio Chapel and the Mission Valley Transit Center with a focus on increasing visitation and access to the historic sites and their surrounding neighborhoods.
- Policy 3.4.4: Rubber tire trolley service can be initiated for special events, festivals, and weekends to reduce congestion within popular destination areas.

Goal 3.5: Explore the use of a road diet along sections of roadways in commercial cores or neighborhood centers to allow space for safer and more comfortable pedestrian and bicycle travel and to encourage investment in businesses.

- Policy 3.5.1: Where thoroughfares traverse through a neighborhood center or commercial core, a road diet or lane reallocation should be considered along with appropriate form-based zoning to encourage reinvestment and a walkable built form corresponding to the historic development pattern.
- Policy 3.5.2: Economic concerns for redevelopment and increasing jobs should lead to the street design effort. Plans for a road diet, if required by redevelopment, should be staged just before redevelopment occurs, not years before.
- Policy 3.5.3: Review of traffic data should play an important, but secondary role in the planning of a road diet.

Goal 3.6: Create a complete streets environment that forms a well-connected network supporting driving, walking, and bicycling and that ensures safety for users of all transportation modes, with attention to the most vulnerable users, including people with disabilities, those using mobility devices, the young, and the elderly.

- Policy 3.6.1: Complete street elements should be designed with all users in mind, with multimodal amenities appropriate for the type of roadway and its context.
- Policy 3.6.2: Street design standards should provide safe, accessible, and meaningful travel choices – driving, walking, and bicycling.
- Policy 3.6.3: The majority of the streets in the Mission Valley should be designed as public spaces that are scaled for pedestrians and should be enhanced with climate appropriate street trees and landscaping.

- Policy 3.6.4: When reviewing traffic impact analyses for infill and redevelopment, level of service measurements should consider all modes of transportation, including bicycles, pedestrians, and transit, in addition to automobile level of service.

Goal 3.7: Promote an interconnected network of blocks & streets.

- Policy 3.7.1: Capacity and redundancy should be created by a densely interconnected network rather than by achieving high capacities on individual arterial streets.
- Policy 3.7.2: Encourage or require walkable, small block size and connected streets in new developments.
- Policy 3.7.3: Eliminate the use of cul-de-sacs and dead ends in new neighborhood development.
- Policy 3.7.4: Gaps in the street system should be eliminated by providing for network connectivity. Where optimal street connectivity cannot be or has not been provided, non-motorized connections should be added to decrease walking and bicycling trip lengths.
- Policy 3.7.5: New residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments that require construction or extension of roadways should include a multimodal network and provide additional connectivity wherever possible.

Goal 3.8: Expand sidewalks throughout the Mission Valley with connections to community destinations, trails, schools, and transit service to increase pedestrian safety and encourage walking as a viable mode of transportation in the area.

- Policy 3.8.1: Create a Mission Valley-wide sidewalk master plan to ensure the build-out of a complete pedestrian network.
- Policy 3.8.2: Establish priority locations for sidewalks, sidewalk repairs, and sidewalk improvements in areas with high or potentially high levels of pedestrian activity such as near schools, parks, the missions, presidio chapel, and transit stops.
- Policy 3.8.3: Continually update the sidewalk master plan to monitor progress and reflect changing conditions and needs.





# 4 ECONOMICS

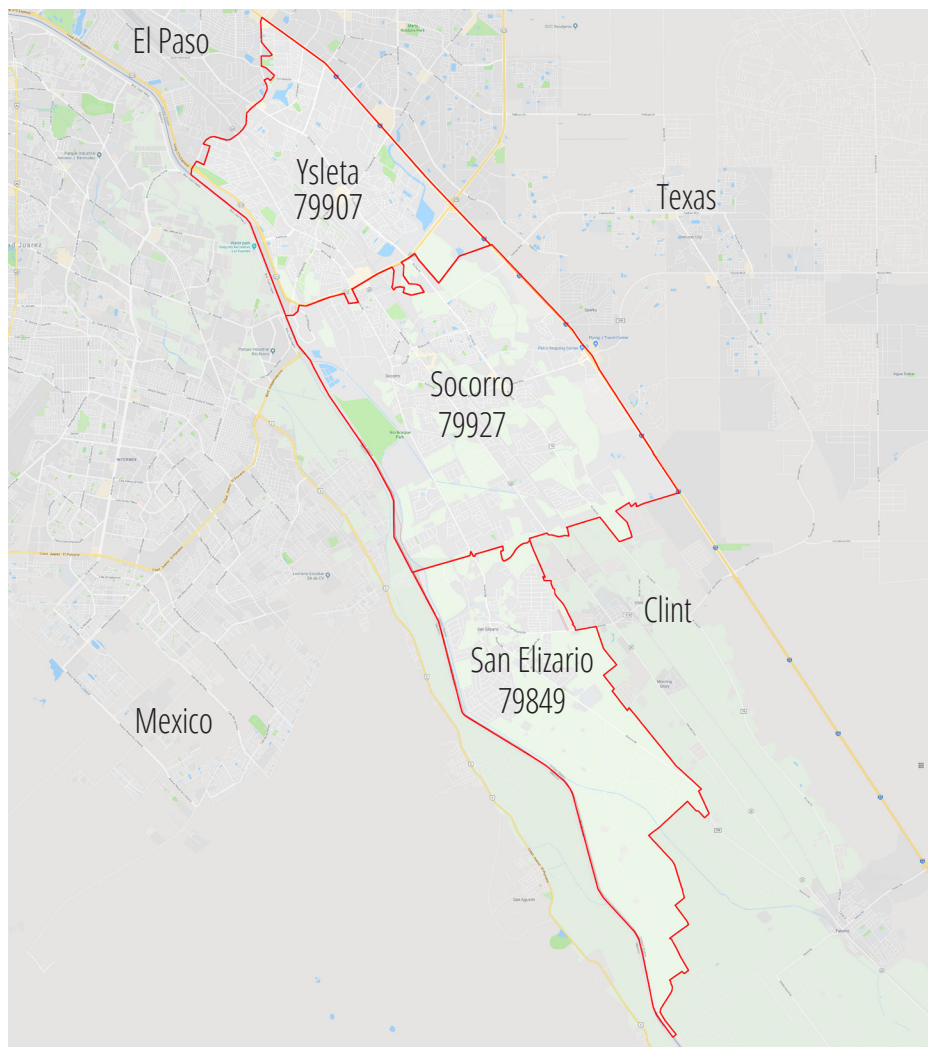
## Existing Conditions

### Mission Trail Area's Economic Situation

In this economic development element, the Mission Trail area refers to zip codes 79907, 79927 and 79849, covering Ysleta, Socorro and San Elizario respectively. These zip code areas are further broken down in to Metropolitan Statistical Area blocks for analysis purposes.

A brief review of the area's current state and recent trends in population, income, employment and housing provides the context for the later policy recommendations.

Many of the key facts about the Mission Trail area are similar across the three cities of Ysleta, Socorro and San Elizario. That said, San Elizario stands out for having a smaller, younger, less educated population. Socorro's population has the lowest unemployment rate and earns more than its neighbors. Ysleta, with the largest population, has both the highest number of renters and the greatest number of college graduates among the cities in the Mission Valley.



# People & Households

## Mission Trail Area

The number of people and households in an area typically helps to explain demand for housing and, when the population or household counts are meaningfully falling, overall economic conditions in an area are falling as well. Large youth populations indicate the potential for future population growth as the children grow up and form families of their own, while large elderly populations may indicate future demand for additional senior or health services.

### Age of Population

The Mission Trail Area's age bracket distribution is mostly normal, but for a rather significant drop beginning at age 25 and then returning to trend around age 60. In many cases, this pattern reflects young adults moving away from the area before returning later for family rearing or retirement. The 40 to 44-year-old age bracket bulge may indicate that that generation found stable employment, but those older and younger did not or that there was a move back by individuals in that age group as a result of wider economic challenges like the Great Recession.

The sizes of groups of age ranges (such as under 30 or over 65) gives an idea of the type of consumption and demand likely in the target area over the coming decade. Given that nearly 50% of the population is under 30 years old, the area's consumption potential (and productive capacity) will reflect family formation, child-rearing and youth consumption preferences more than those of the elderly.

**75%** Ysleta  
**66%** Socorro  
**57%** San Elizario

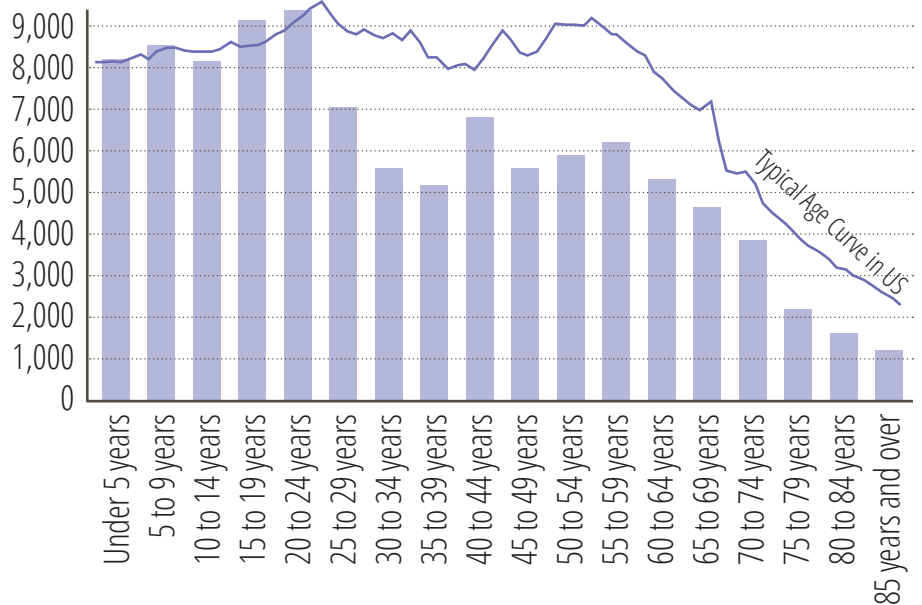
High School Diploma  
 or More

**11%** Ysleta  
**7%** Socorro  
**10%** San Elizario

Completed College

**107,200**  
 Approximate number  
 of people in Mission  
 Trail Area in 2016

### Population by Age Group



**48.4%**  
 Population Under 30

**12%**  
 Population Over 65

## Change in Population

Overall the three areas are relatively stable with only small population changes. The population data over time shows trends that are not even apparent in a single year's data. Ysleta is slowly losing residents, Socorro is slightly growing, and San Elizario is relatively stable. However, population changes by age group for each city along the Mission Trail show stark differences among the three cities.

Ysleta, the largest city along the trail, closest to the City of El Paso and home of the Tigua Indian Tribe has lost a large number of its youngest population in the four year time period between 2012 and 2016. Approximately 2,100 people under the age of 15 have left the city, likely because their parents in the 25 to 39-year-old age bracket also left. However, Ysleta grew its 60+ population by 1,744 over the same period. In the future, Ysleta must retain more of its working age population in order to retain their children, while also providing opportunities for the growing senior population.

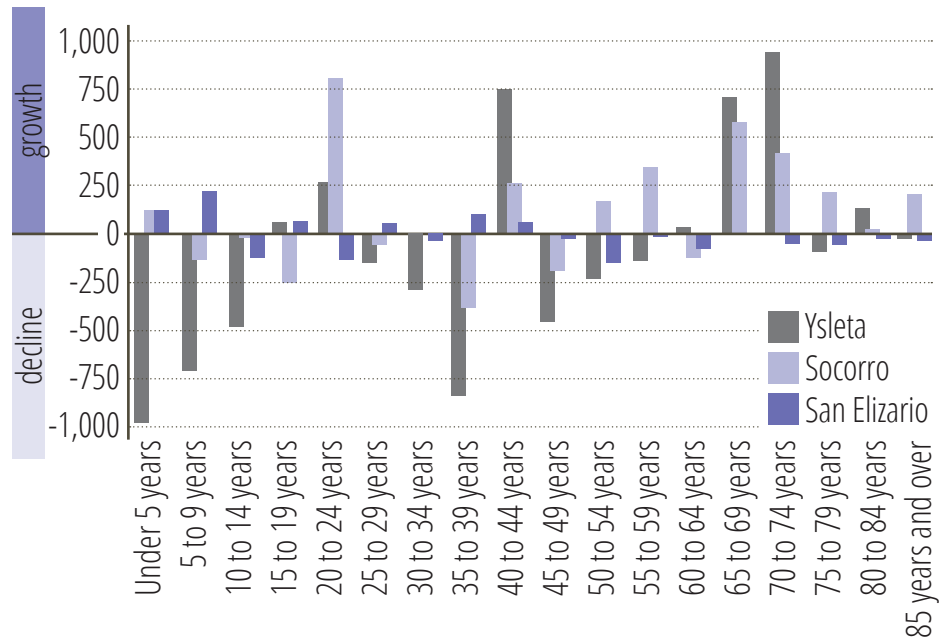
Socorro, by contrast, lost just 21 persons under 15 in the same timeframe, though it did lose roughly 434 persons in the prime working age years of 25 to 40. The growth in Socorro's 60+ population was nearly as great as Ysleta's, at 1,343. Socorro has similar population pressures to Ysleta, but with less urgency around population loss in the younger age groups.

San Elizario, by far the smallest of the three Mission Trail cities and farthest from the City of El Paso, actually grew its population of children under 15 by 243 persons between 2015 and 2016 and its prime 25 to 40-year-old working age population by 140 persons. At the same time its senior population over 60 years old declined by 236 persons. San Elizario's population challenge is to provide meaningful opportunities for its young population while retaining its seniors.

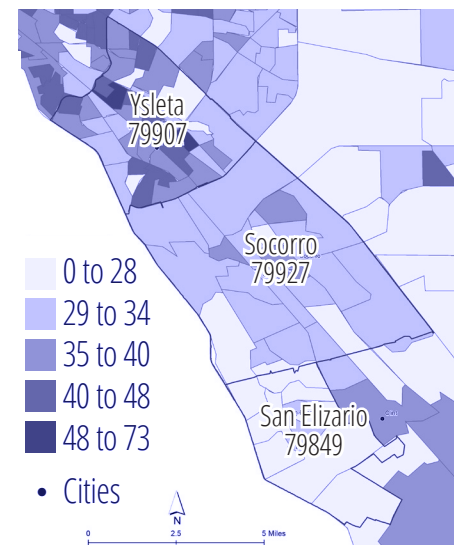
## Average Population Age

The map shows the relative average ages of the population within the target zip codes along the Mission Trail. The darker the color, the older the population. On this view Ysleta is home to relatively older residents than either the Socorro or San Elizario areas, with many areas being home to residents over age 40. San Elizario has the youngest population among the three examined, having average resident ages under 28 years old. The Socorro area is between those two age groups and reflects a large number of residents between 29 and 34 years old.

## Population Change by Age Group



**34.2** Ysleta  
**31.1** Socorro  
**27.5** San Elizario  
**Median Age**  
 Based on Total Population



# Who lives on Mission Trail?

## Major Market Segments that live in the Mission Trail Area



### Southwestern Families

27.8% Mission Trail Area

Residents in these neighborhoods are young families that form the foundation of Hispanic life in the Southwest. Children are the center of households that are composed mainly of married couples with children and single-parent families. Grandparents are caregivers in some of these households. Recent arrivals and older generations are language-isolated. Much of the working-age population is employed in blue-collar occupations, specializing in skilled work, as well as building maintenance and service jobs.

- Median Age: 34.6
- Average Household Size: 3.20
- Median Household Income: \$30,400
- Median Household Net Worth: \$93,300
- 46.3% Rent
- Neighborhoods are older; most of the homes constructed prior to 1970.
- Nearly 70% of all households have one or two vehicles available.
- While close to 32% have attended or graduated from college, nearly 40% did not complete high school, which has limited their employment prospects.
- Television is a primary source of entertainment, they shop at pharmacies such as Walgreens, dollar stores, and discount department stores.



### Barrios Urbanos

17.7% Mission Trail Area

Family is central within these diverse communities. Hispanics make up more than 70% of the residents. More than one in four are foreign born, bringing rich cultural traditions to these neighborhoods in the urban outskirts. Dominating this market are younger families with children or single-parent households with multiple generations living under the same roof. These households balance their budgets carefully but also indulge in the latest trends and purchase with an eye to brands. Most workers are employed in skilled positions across the manufacturing, construction, or retail trade sectors.

- Median Age: 28.9
- Average Household Size: 3.62
- Median Household Income: \$38,000
- Median Household Net Worth: \$93,300
- 40.5% Rent
- Homes are owner occupied, but fewer mortgages. Most are older homes, nearly 60% built from 1950 to 1989.
- Most households have one or two vehicles; many commuters
- Residents shop at discount and department stores like Walmart, Dollar General/Family Dollar, and JC Penney for baby and children's products.
- While a majority finished high school, over 40% have not. Unemployment is higher at 8.4%; labor force participation is slightly lower at 61%.





## Fresh Ambitions

15.3% Mission Trail Area

These young families, many of whom are recent immigrants, focus their life and work around their children. Fresh Ambitions residents are not highly educated, but many have overcome the language barrier and earned a high school diploma. They work overtime in service, in skilled and unskilled occupations, and spend what little they can save on their children. Multi generational families and close ties to their culture support many families living in poverty;



- Median Age: 28.6
- Average Household Size: 3.17
- Median Household Income: \$26,700
- Median Household Net Worth: \$93,300
- 72.9% Rent
- Resides in mostly multi-unit buildings; many were built before 1950.
- They predominantly rent; average gross rent is a little below the US average.
- Most households have at least one vehicle, and commuters drive alone to work. Walking to work or taking public transportation is common too.
- Unemployment is high for these recent immigrants.



## Up and Coming Families

5.1% Mission Trail Area

Up and Coming Families is a market in transition—residents are younger and more mobile and ethnically diverse than the previous generation. They are ambitious, working hard to get ahead, and willing to take some risks to achieve their goals. The recession has impacted their financial well-being, but they are optimistic. Their homes are new; their families are young. And this is one of the fastest-growing markets in the country.



- Median Age: 31.4
- Average Household Size: 3.12
- Median Household Income: \$72,000
- Median Household Net Worth: \$122,700
- 26.1% Rent
- Rely on the Internet for entertainment, information, shopping, and banking.
- Education: 67% have some college education or degree(s).
- Hard-working labor force with a participation rate of 71% and low unemployment at 4.6%.
- Careful shoppers, aware of prices, willing to shop around for the best deals and open to influence by others' opinions.
- Find leisure in family activities, movies at home, trips to theme parks or the zoo, and sports; from golfing, weight lifting, to taking a jog or run.

Source: GIS Business Analyst, 2018

# Income & Employment

## Mission Trail Area

Income and employment information are often the most important part of a market study as they provide much of the answer to the question “why live in a place?” When incomes are good and jobs plentiful, residents find it easier to remain in place than when the converse is true. This section will examine the labor force, income, employment (and types of employment by establishment function) to understand where opportunities may lie and where little economic activity is occurring.

### Labor Force

Labor force activity, like the population measures, partially reflects the size of the area investigated, but even among similarly sized blocks, clear differences in the size of the labor force can be seen in the three target zip codes. The lightest areas in the map show the lowest counts of labor force activity, while the darker colors reflect levels of more and more labor force participation. On this assessment, Socorro has the most blocks with relatively high labor force counts and Ysleta the fewest. San Elizario sits between the others.

### Unemployment

The unemployment rate reflects those persons in the labor force who cannot find a job. The long term unemployed who have gotten discouraged and stopped looking for work, and the disabled, for example, do not count towards these totals. In this view, each community has at least one, (and typically more) MSA blocks with unemployment rates between 15.9% and 26.8%. Further research would be needed to understand what is driving the employment disparities, but the data clearly show that the unemployment rate is widely varied, even in this relatively small area, particularly towards the southern border of San Elizario.

### Income Distribution

Income distribution gives an indication of purchasing power and the wealth or poverty of residents.

In Ysleta, the median income was \$30,021. Incomes here are midway between Socorro’s and San Elizario’s.

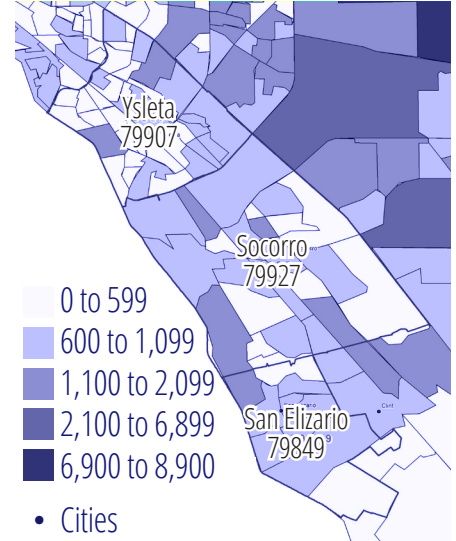
In San Elizario, the median income was \$25,340. San Elizario has the lowest median income among the three comparators, but fewer households (as a percentage of the total) earning under \$10,000 per year.

In Socorro, the median income was \$32,329. The median income here is the highest among the three cities and it is also home to fewer households (as a percentage of total) earning less than \$15,000 than among the other comparators.

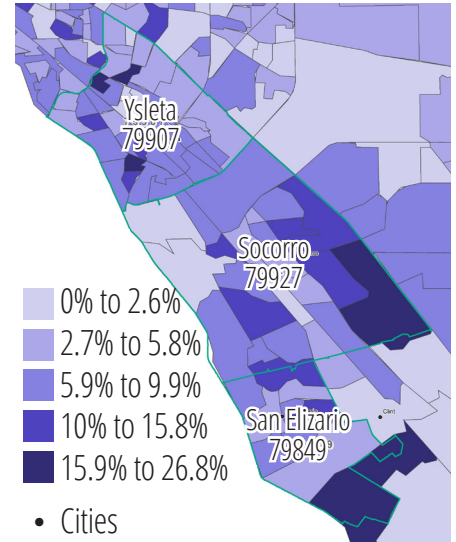
**41%** Ysleta  
**49.6%** Socorro  
**35%** San Elizario  
 Earn Less Than  
 \$25,000 a year

**17** Ysleta  
**22** Socorro  
**32** San Elizario  
 Households Earn  
 More Than \$300,000

## Persons in Labor Force 2018



**10.3%** Ysleta  
**8.3%** Socorro  
**11.2%** San Elizario  
 Unemployment Rate  
 2018



### Unemployment per City

The number of unemployed in each city can be approximately calculated by taking the total population in each city, the labor force participation rate and the unemployment rate, then multiplying them together. Using that logic across employment data for the various age groups by city, we can see the very high spike in unemployed persons between 20-24 in Ysleta (as well as generally high numbers of unemployed persons there between 16 to 44). Socorro's unemployment is concentrated in the under 24-year-old age group. San Elizario's unemployed are closer to middle age, with a relatively bell-shaped curve that peaks in the 25 to 29-year-old age group.

### Employment by Industry

The percentages of the population who are employed in different industries in the Mission Trail area are broadly similar for every category in the listing used by the American Community Survey.

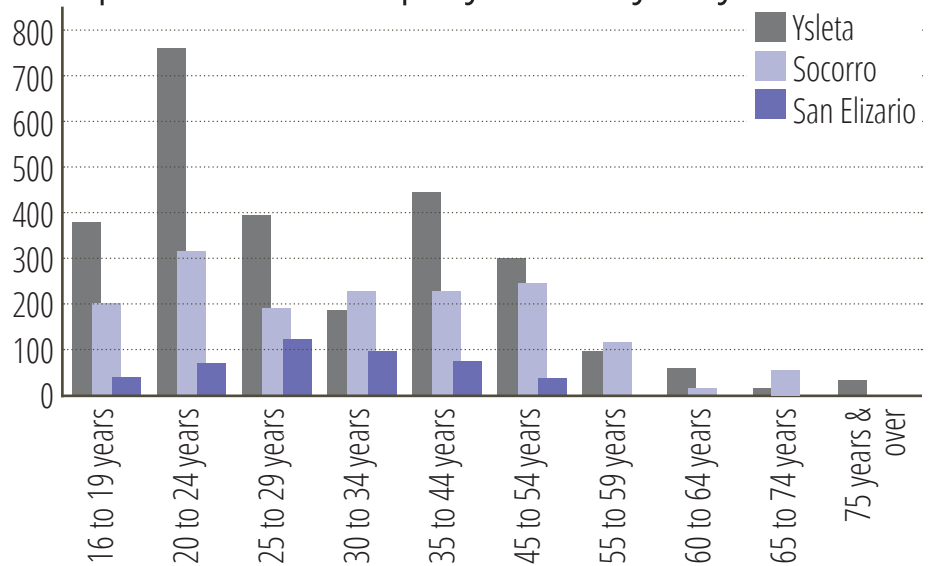
Employment across these three cities are most similar for public administration, other services except public administration, information and wholesale trade, each under 5%.

Ysleta leads the other cities in arts employment, educational services and health care jobs, professional, scientific and management industrial groupings. A similar trend can be seen in the finance industry, with Ysleta employing 5.4% of its population there, versus 3.4% in San Elizario and 3.9% in Socorro.

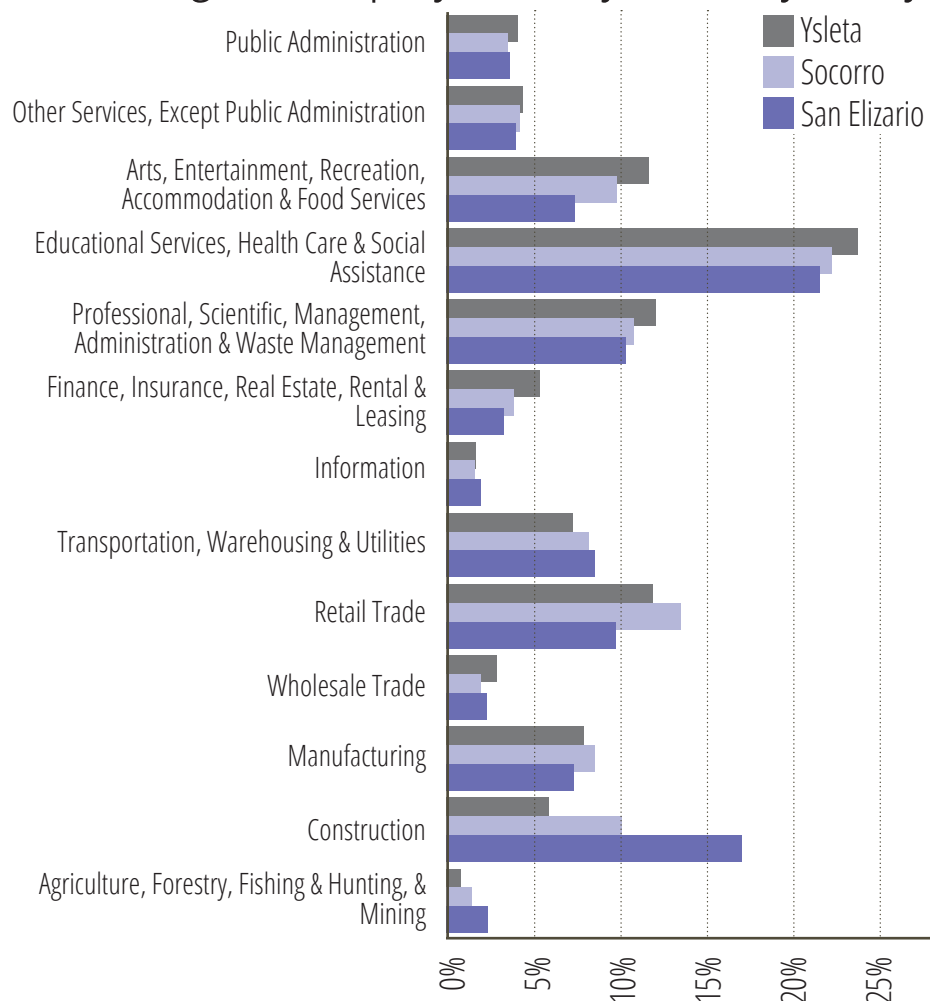
Socorro leads in employment only in retail trade.

San Elizario stands well ahead of its neighbors in construction employment, with 17% of its population employed in that industry, versus 10% in Socorro and just 6% in Ysleta. It also slightly leads in agricultural employment, but at 2% of total employment, versus 1% in the neighboring cities, the employment effect is fairly small.

## Comparative Unemployment by City



## Percentage of Employment by Industry & City



# Housing

## Mission Trail Area

Residential housing patterns help to explain pricing differences between different areas of the city as well as future development opportunities. This section analyzes housing related information within the Mission Trail area regarding renter versus owner households, home values, and areas with high numbers of households under housing stress.

### Home Ownership vs Renters

Ysleta has many more renter households than either Socorro or San Elizario. Some portions of Ysleta have between 81 to 100% renters while other portions have between 39 to 58% renters – still a very high concentration. By contrast, across much of Socorro and San Elizario, renters make up less than 39% of the total households.

Home owner households across the Mission Trail are just the inverse of the rental households. In Ysleta most of the block groups in the center of the geography contain fewer than 61% homeowners, while the northern and southern edges of the zip code have higher homeowner counts, in some cases as high as 77 to 100%.

Across Socorro, the majority of the area has 61 to 77% homeowners, although a number of areas are nearly completely owner-occupied. San Elizario is similar to the pattern seen in Socorro with most areas having between 61 to 77% homeowners, albeit with a number of areas even higher with 77 to 100%.

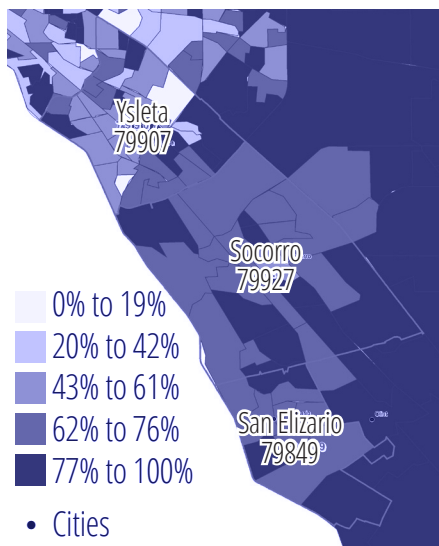
### Home Values

Home values across the broader Mission Trail area are generally affordable. Across nearly the length and breadth of the geography, homes are between \$43,000 to \$203,000. Ysleta and Socorro both have areas with home price averages between \$203,000 to \$324,000, though San Elizario has none. Given median incomes across the Mission Trail area, these prices are in line with expectations.

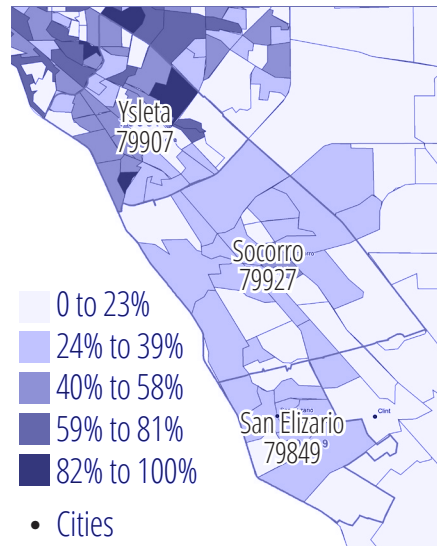
**60%** vs **40%** Ysleta  
**74%** vs **26%** Socorro  
**71%** vs **29%** San Elizario

### Home Owners vs Renters 2017

### Owner Households 2017

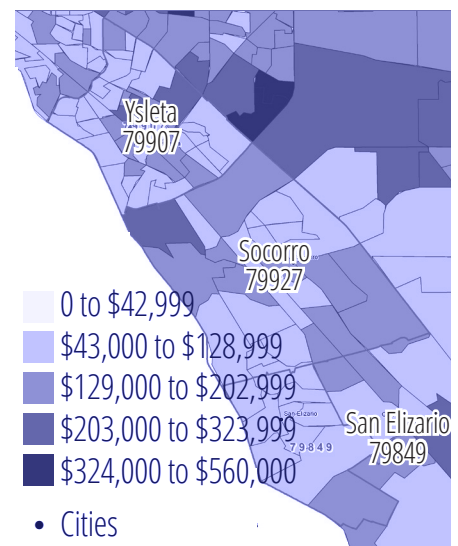


### Renter Households 2017



**\$87,800** Ysleta  
**\$86,100** Socorro  
**\$67,000** San Elizario

### Median Home Value 2017





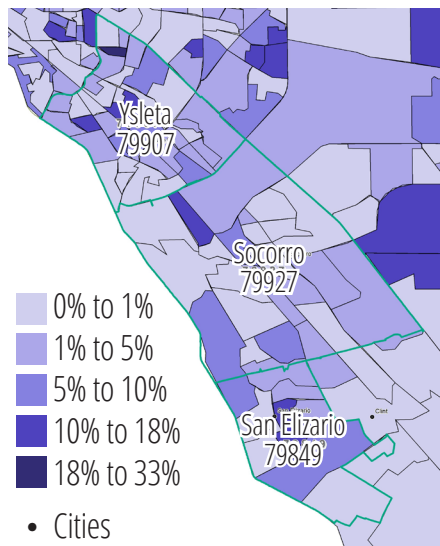
## Affordable Home Ownership and Rent Costs

Home owners or renters paying 30% to 35% of household income are at the limit of what is considered affordable. A decrease in income or increase in housing costs would put them into the “cost burdened” category, as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. When the size of the cost burdened category is high, then policy makers focus on housing costs or affordable housing support. The converse is also true: when the number of families who are cost burdened is concentrated or few in number, policy makers can focus on other activities that may indirectly provide housing cost relief through higher incomes.

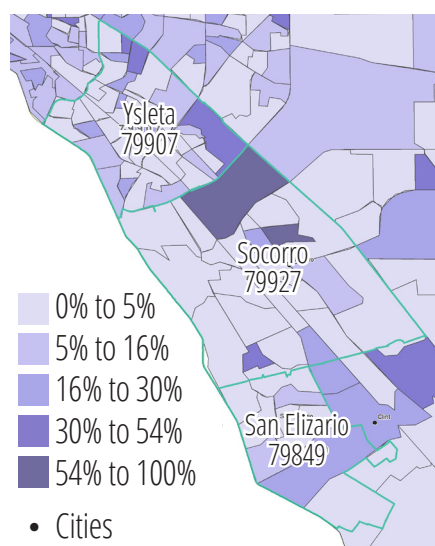
Overall, housing costs are not a heavy burden for most home owners in the Mission Trail area. Ysleta has two areas that have a cost burden rate among home owners of 10-18%, although most of Ysleta pays 5% or less of their income towards housing costs. Socorro has one small area at the 10% to 18% level, with another three small areas at the 5% to 10% level, and most of the rest of the area being under 5%.

For renters paying between 30% to 35% of income for rent, Much of Ysleta is affordable to renters as only a few pockets of the city are cost burdened. That said, Ysleta’s border with Socorro has a relatively high concentration of cost burdened renters (at up to 30% of total) and the Socorro side of that same border reflects a large area of high rental cost burden. This area could be an intervention point for policy makers in the future. In San Elizario, most areas are between 16-30% cost burdened. While any area of cost burden is not ideal, the overall picture along the Mission Trail is not one of high housing cost pressures.

### Owners Mortgage 30-35% income



### Renters Housing 30-35% income



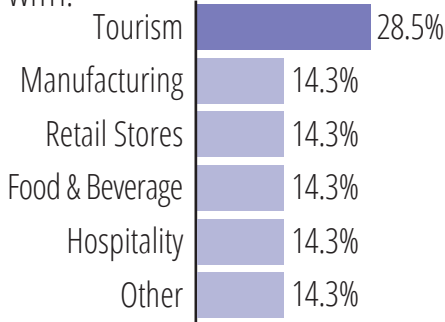
# Community Concerns

## Survey Results

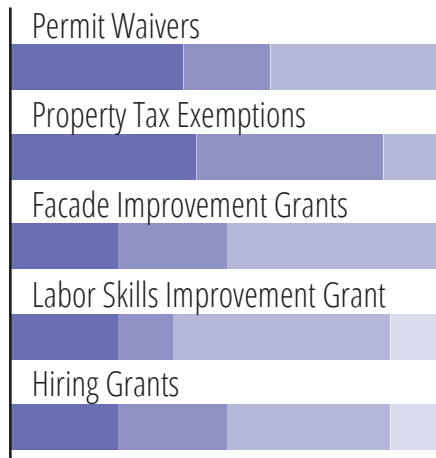
As part of the Mission Trail situation review, two surveys (each in both English and Spanish) were circulated online and throughout the communities. The first was a Business Conditions Survey and the other an Economic Opportunities Survey to gauge the views of local businesses and residents concerning their economic outlook for their communities. A positive outlook from the community bodes well for new business ventures; a negative outlook can bring a community down, even if other economic indicators say otherwise.

### Business Conditions Survey Results

WHAT PART OF THE MISSION TRAIL ARE YOU MOST CONCERNED WITH?

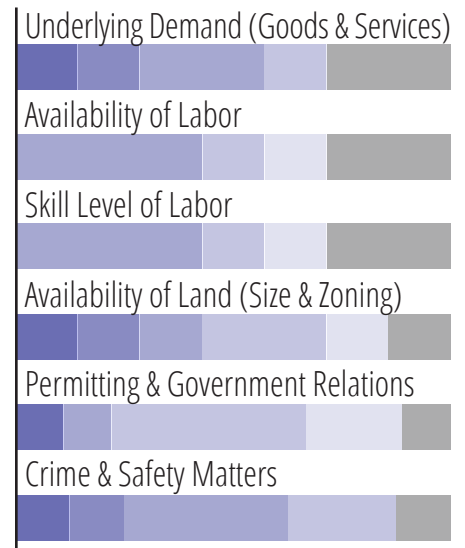


RANK HOW IMPORTANT THE FOLLOWING INCENTIVES WOULD BE FOR YOU TO OPEN OR MAINTAIN A BUSINESS?



■ CRITICAL  
■ IMPORTANT  
■ MEANINGFUL  
■ NOT IMPORTANT

HOW WOULD YOU RANK THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS CONDITIONS ALONG THE MISSION TRAIL?



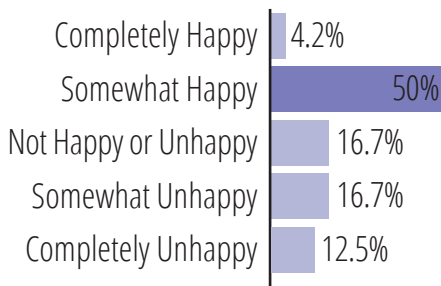
■ EXCELLENT  
■ VERY GOOD  
■ AVERAGE  
■ BELOW AVERAGE  
■ TERRIBLE  
■ DON'T KNOW

WOULD YOU CONSIDER OPENING A BUSINESS IN THE MISSION TRAIL AREA?

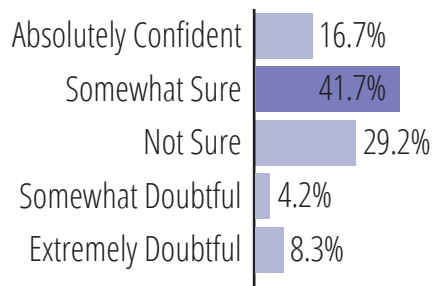
**50%** Yes  
 OPPORTUNITIES THERE LOOK GOOD  
**50%** Maybe  
 DEPENDS ON A NUMBER OF FACTORS

# Economic Opportunities Survey Results

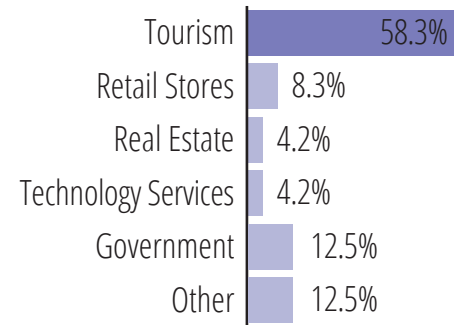
HOW **HAPPY** ARE YOU WITH THE LOCAL ECONOMY **RIGHT NOW?**



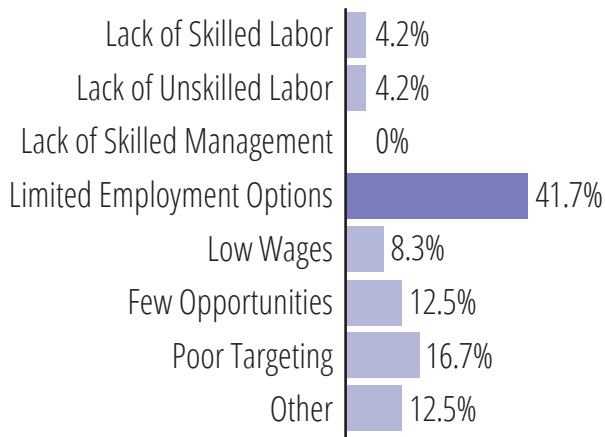
HOW **CONFIDENT** ARE YOU THAT THE LOCAL ECONOMY WILL BE MUCH **BETTER** IN 10 YEARS?



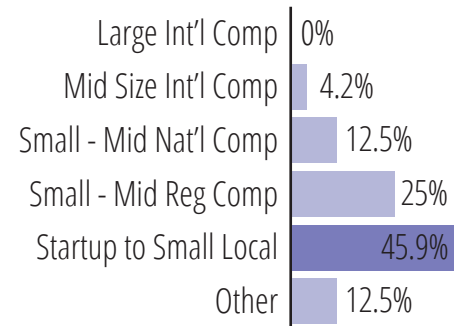
WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE THE **BIGGEST DRIVERS** OF ECONOMIC GROWTH OVER THE COMING DECADE?



WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST **WEAKNESSES** IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY?



WHAT **BUSINESSES** SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT FOCUS ON **RECRUITING?**



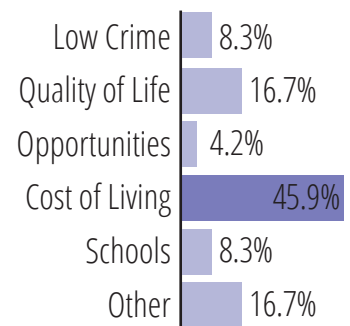
## The Economic Development Challenge

From the prior evaluation of the people, their incomes, employment patterns, housing and feelings about the future, a number of economic development opportunities and challenges can be seen.

The Mission Trail's economic development strategy must leverage its existing assets to create new employment opportunities for local residents. These opportunities should allow for families to remain in place and thrive, boosting incomes and facilitating educational and training opportunities. Employment should be available for a range of skill and educational levels.

The tourism potential of the Mission Trail is a natural engine to achieve these goals as it cannot be copied (the missions and presidio chapel are in place, and historical assets), existing visitor patterns already exist, particularly religious and heritage tourism visitors. The strategy must create long term competitive advantage for the area that takes advantage of the demand for tourism assets while providing a supportive policy environment to grow the supply side of the tourism offerings.

WHAT ARE THE AREA'S MOST **IMPORTANT ECONOMIC STRENGTHS?**



# Strategies

## An Economic Vision

A shared vision for the Mission Trail is an attempt to establish what the area would look like if its potential were fully realized. The vision should reflect enough stakeholder desires that it reflects a broad swath of opinion about the Mission Trail's potential, motivating stakeholders to want to work to achieve the goal. Strategies that are created without a shared and unifying vision lack underlying support and generic visions do not motivate successfully for action. A strong and powerful vision shifts attention from the here and now and parochial interests into what the wider community might be in the future when stakeholders pull together to work towards a common goal.

### Important Terms for the Vision

A number of key terms were mentioned repeatedly in the charrette and meetings with stakeholders. Though these words and phrases were not elicited as part of a specific visioning session, their repetition and the passion behind their usage convinced us that these are or should be core to any future vision statement. The following phrases were the most commonly heard:

- **Culturally sensitive:** the existing culture should not be pushed aside to make room for new tourism concepts, but rather, should be embraced and included within new offerings.
- **World-class:** the area's history and culture can compete with other, established tourism markets, so any plan should use what exists to its full potential.
- **Locally-owned:** creating economic opportunities for local ownership is more important than simply creating economic opportunities that do not materially change local economic conditions because profits flow out of the area.
- **Unique experiences:** letting visitors explore living culture is as important as just reading about and contextualizing competing historical narratives.

Other ideas that came through in various ways were that:

- Jobs should be available across all skill levels;
- The area should avoid becoming just another generic destination;
- The character of the area's development matters; and
- Employment opportunities are critical for retaining its population base.

### An Indicative Vision Statement for the Mission Trail Area

As a vision, therefore, for the economic development element in the Mission Trail's comprehensive plan (which may be adapted for future use by the plan's stakeholders), we propose this simple, but we believe, compelling statement:

The Mission Trail will be a world-class destination that wows visitors of all ages from its culturally sensitive tourism offerings, locally owned and operated businesses including active use of its agricultural lands, and density of unique experiences available to visitors and residents alike.

# Economic Development

## Agricultural-led Strategy

The rural nature of the area surrounding the Mission Trail is one of its greatest attributes. Keeping the farming active and productive can help to grow the economies of the Mission Trail communities.

There are several trends in food and farming practices converging that can bolster the agricultural economy in the Mission Valley. These include farm-to-table, organic food trends, specialty food crops, and locally grown food. These all stem from a growing concern by people about food safety, food freshness, food seasonality, and small-farm economics as well as growing concerns about the harm pesticides in our food cause to our bodies.

In addition to these food trends, this region has the added benefit of having one of the most diverse bee populations.

Farmers, entrepreneurs, citizens, educators, and the government, working together, can effectively build a vibrant local economy that respects the region's unique landscape.

### A Growing Market

The organic food market has been dominated by produce coming out of Mexico and California. But the past five or so years has seen a resurgence of organic food production in Texas. Beginning over the border from El Paso, in New Mexico, entrepreneurs have seen the potential of local organic farming which extends to the Mission Trail area. New farmers have begun growing specialty organic foods. They yield more product in less area and consume less water due to the building up of the soil with fungus and nitrogen rich material that acts like a sponge to hold the water instead of it running off the land.

The consumer demand for locally-produced food is creating jobs and opportunities throughout rural America for farms, businesses and entrepreneurs that store, process, market and distribute food locally and regionally. Farm and business opportunities continue to increase as the market share of local and regional foods grows.

### Distribution

Distribution is a key component of any local food system. Specifically, for small and mid-sized producers to remain profitable, they need an efficient yet economic means to transport inventory to customers. One way to accomplish this is for the municipalities to help set up a food hub to assist with the details of distribution both locally and nationwide.

## Farm-to-Table

A social movement that promotes the use of locally sourced food at restaurants and schools

.....

## Organic Food

Utilizes farming practices that cycle resources, promotes ecological balance, and conserves biodiversity. Use of pesticides and fertilizers is restricted.

.....

## Specialty Food Crop

Fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture that may only grow in certain regions and include heirloom and open-pollinated crops.

.....

## Locally Grown Food

Many people think that the "relocalization" of the food system will provide a range of public benefits, including lower carbon emissions, increased local economic activity, and closer connections between consumers, farmers, and communities.

.....

## Food Hubs

Food hubs make it possible for many small and mid sized producers to enter larger volume distribution markets by assisting in the distribution and marketing services of products.



Photo courtesy Auburn University

### **Bee Industries**

The growing of organic and specialty crops goes hand-in-hand with the San Elizario's Bee Real initiative. Researchers from the Auburn University have teamed up with the City of San Elizario to study the countries most diverse bee population and are working to develop new specialty crop industries with desert vegetables, spices, herbs, dyes, landscaping plants, and medicinal crops that harness bees to serve the city's economic future. The idea is to highlight specialty crops that are better suited to the region and have been identified as high demand crops nationwide.

The City of San Elizario has a five year plan to assist in the development of 'Bee Industries' for the area and to support local farmers. One of the early projects is the development of Parque de los Niños which is a collaboration of the City, Auburn University, San Elizario Independent School District, and the El Paso County Water Improvement District #1. The park includes play areas, community garden plots, and research and training gardens.

# Economic Development

## Tourism-led Strategy

### Economic Development Strategy Options

There is no one right way to grow an economy in a primarily market based system. Rather, individuals and communities will examine what potential competitive advantages they have, be it labor cost and availability, location, natural resource availability, existing economic clusters or something else.

For the Mission Trail, it's location along the US-Mexico border near a major US city (El Paso) is a potential competitive advantage for bringing visitors to it, but may not be an advantage for industrial development or manufacturing enterprises, as long as tax policy favors maquiladoras just over the border.

Additionally, the missions and presidio chapel, being historically important, with various Spanish, American Indian and European settler traditions providing living examples of in place development, the area's heritage tourism potential is difficult to duplicate (a key component of a defensible economic development strategy).

### Leveraging Tourism for Economic Growth

Globally, governments are and have been using tourism as an economic development driver for decades. There are a few reasons for this approach.

The first is that areas without exportable goods or resources but with natural or man-made assets, tourism represents a viable basis for economic growth, diversification and competitive advantage. Pre-existing culture and historical assets can be introduced to a wider audience, who in turn, tell others about their experiences and begin a process of developing positive economic feedback loops.

The second reason is that tourism provides opportunities for income growth without advanced educational qualifications, whether as tour guides, craft makers or employees in tourism establishments. While college level jobs do exist in such an economy, the wide existence of jobs that do not require a college degree makes it a particularly attractive economic development approach in areas without a high density of college graduates.

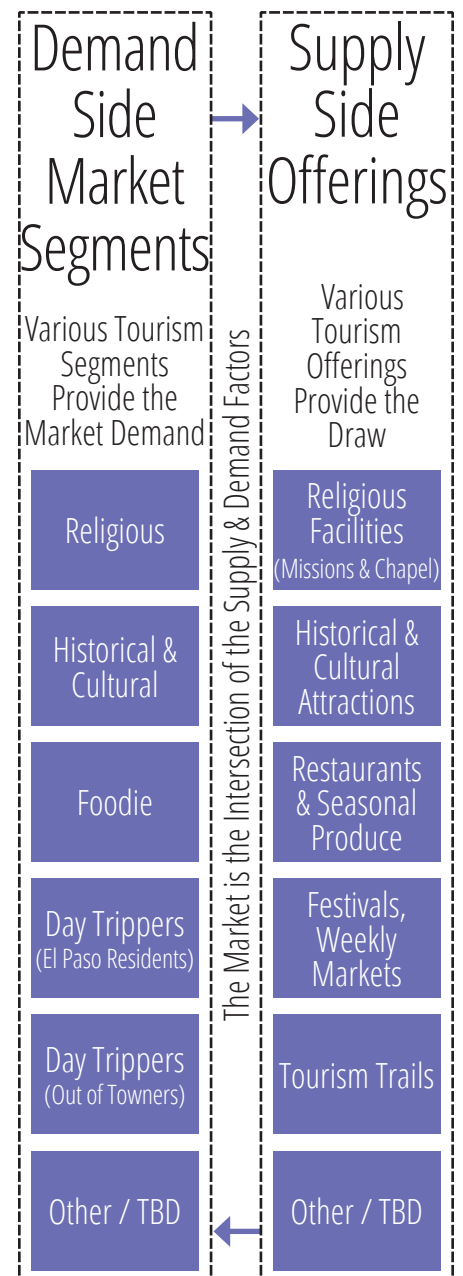
Finally, because tourism employment is often in small businesses with local ownership, it provides local economies with a versatile self-employment option both directly working with tourism and indirectly through tourism servicing businesses.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization cites a number of tourism development strategies that it finds to be effective in creating employment and income opportunities for vulnerable groups and communities (UNWTO, 2000; Ashley, Roe, & Goodwin, 2001). Among those approaches that have shown successes are those that seek to be inclusionary, particularly for individuals not in the labor force, developing fiscal strategies with taxing authorities to use incremental taxes for tourism infrastructure development, as well as education and training support.

In an ideal version of this strategy, the vast majority of the economic benefits remain local, provide meaningful employment and ownership opportunities to area residents, and encourage families and young people to remain in place. Thus, a dynamic economic niche grows and expands, providing additional demand for business support services along with its growth.

## Overview of a Tourism Market Vision

Use the missions and presidio chapel as the basis for a world class tourism destination that provides the best employment opportunities in the entire El Paso region for people of all skill and income levels.



## Linkages in a Tourism Economy

The tourism economy brings together different buyer interest groups with the wider supply and value chain of businesses that serves their needs. Market economies link together supply and demand conditions that are cleared based on their price and with profits showing where demand can be a productive use of investment assets.

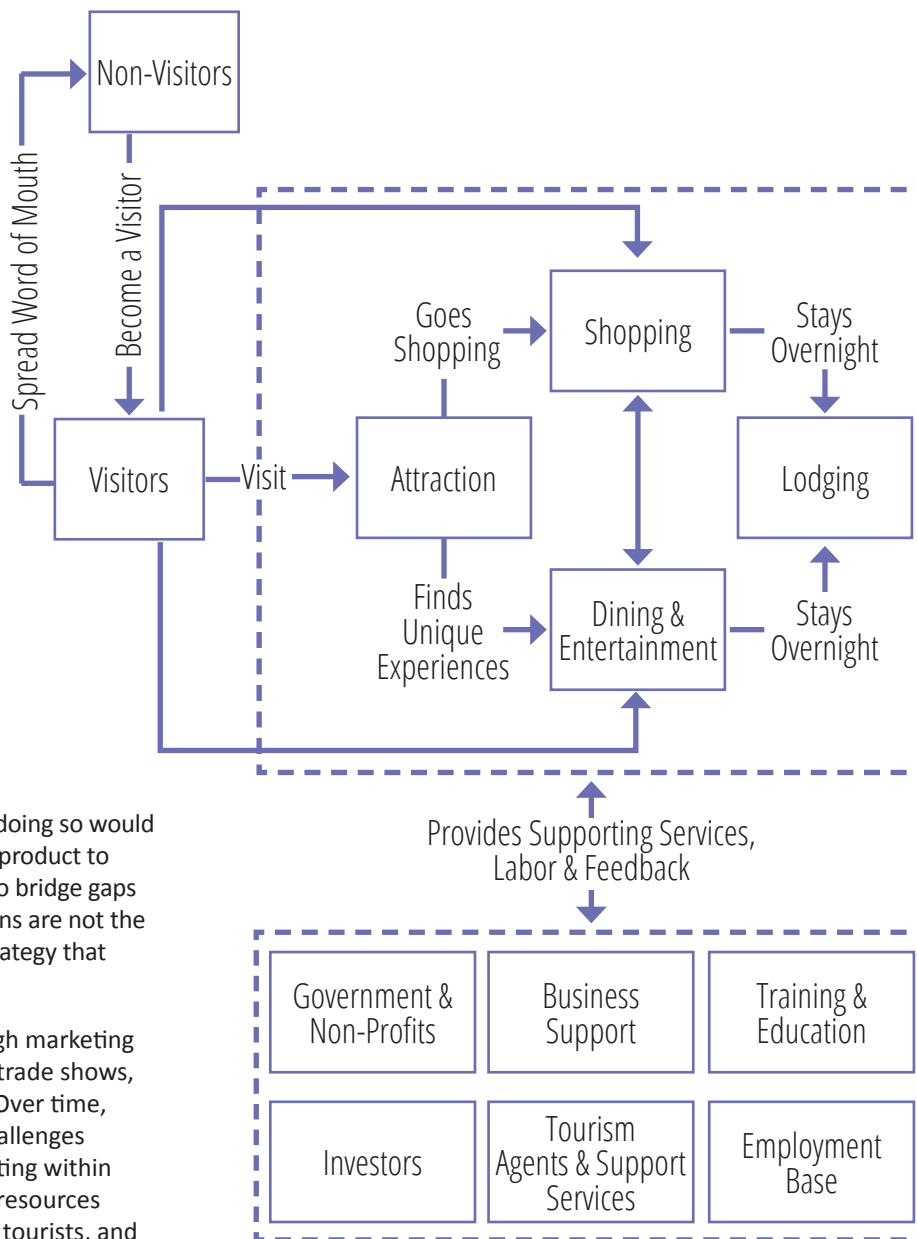
Supportive policy should seek to facilitate linkages among the tourism and non-tourism sectors of the economy. Therefore, hotels, restaurants, cafés and attractions are just one part of the policy focus. Agricultural businesses, food processors, manufacturers, artisans, artists, distributors, transportation and travel agents are all part of the wider economy as well.

As visitors to the Mission Trail increase, additional focus may be needed in one or more of these sectors to strengthen its ability to satisfy user demand. For example, small scale agricultural producers may lack the capacity to properly enter the supply chain for restaurants and tourism enterprises, though doing so would boost their incomes and provide a truly local product to visitors. Later policy actions may be needed to bridge gaps such as these (though these micro-level actions are not the initial focus of the economic development strategy that should be considered).

Linkages can be strengthened initially through marketing and coordination support by policy makers, trade shows, locally hosted events and training sessions. Over time, more attention can be given to structural challenges that hinder competitiveness, such as innovating within a given economic niche, preserving cultural resources while facilitating integration into the flow of tourists, and maintaining or achieving business sufficiency for small scale producers.

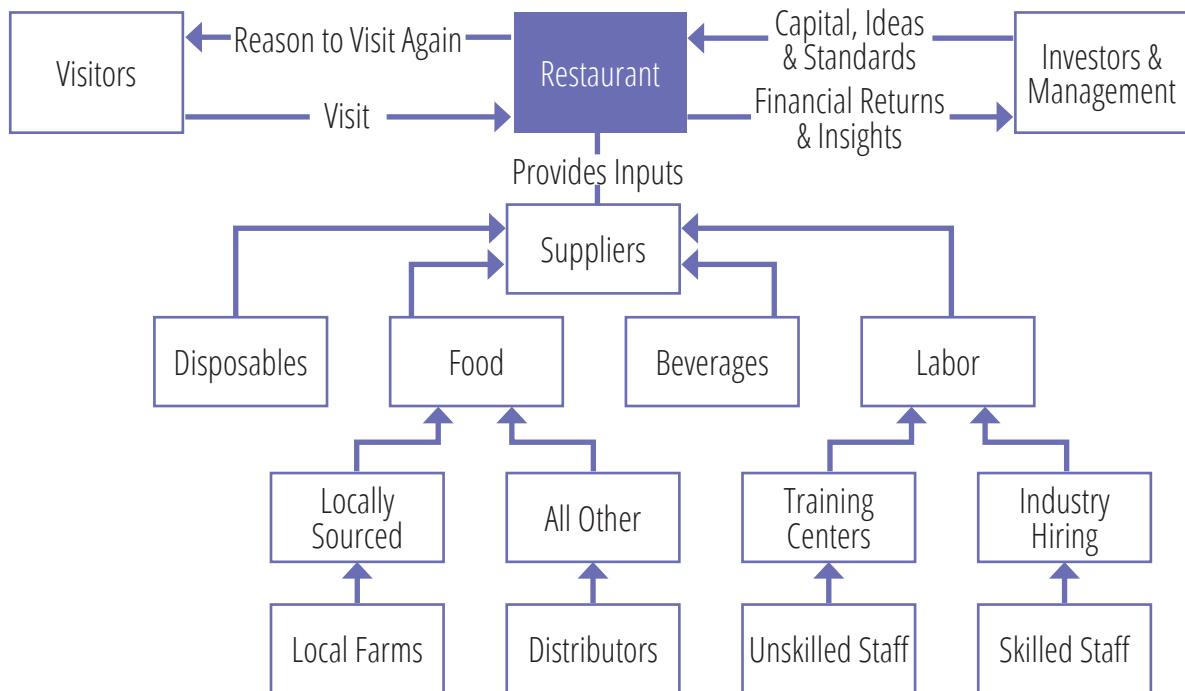
Looking at an example of an abstract tourism market at a macro level can help to highlight how the economic linkages work in practice. The first element to notice is that there is a chicken and egg issue regarding destination investments and tourism flows. Investors typically want to see established visitor flows of sufficient size so that new investments have a reasonable chance at not only repaying their cost, but also providing a financial return to the owner. Visitors tend to want to visit places with enough things to see and do to justify the time and money spent on the trip. When historical and culture assets exist in a location and visitors exist, then the essential elements of a tourism economy are in place and can be developed.

## Example of Linkages in the Tourism Market





## Example of a Restaurant's Linkages



The tourism assets themselves may cross promote their services in other tourism establishments (restaurants or hotels advertising in one another's businesses). Each of the tourism assets would be supported by direct suppliers and business support services. In the restaurant world, the providers of linens, wholesale food, cutlery and glasses all provide direct supplier services to the business that serves the tourists. The business support services are the accounting, marketing and specialists who provided limited specialized knowledge to the restaurant's owners and managers.

At the micro level the picture is similar: for a given business that directly faces tourists, there is a much wider network of supporting suppliers and support services that makes its business function well. Using a restaurant example, you can see that it's owners and managers start and run the business to take advantage of visitor flows (or to stimulate additional visitor flow). The restaurant itself, however, requires inputs in the form of labor, food and drink and consumable / disposable products (straws, napkins, etc). The food producers are linked into both local and national supply chains, providing different types of products. The labor is supplied not only by the available pool of interested people, but supported by training and skills development centers. Collectively, one restaurant creates demand for additional supplies from a wide array of other businesses. Repeated multiple times across a small economy, the impacts from tourism investments have the potential to build wider positive economic linkage impacts.

The tourism-led economic development strategy is thus not solely about tourism to the exclusion of other economic sectors, but rather, it is an approach that harnesses in place assets to bring additional spending to the region.

This spending helps to create the conditions for wider business linkage development, new venture formation, additional hiring and wage growth.

For Restaurant Example, linkages may include:

### Direct Service Suppliers

- Providers of Linen
- Wholesale Food
- Cutlery & Glasses

### Business Support Services

- Accounting
- Marketing
- Specialist who provide limited specialized knowledge to owners & managers

# Economic Development

## Key Opportunities

This section discusses the application of the tourism development approach to economic development for the Mission Trail area. Building the Base for Tourism (Pillar 1) provides recommendations around foundational issues that allow broad-based economic development to occur. Expanding Experiences (Pillar 2) provides recommendations that help to create the demand drivers for the area. Finally, Financial Support and Incentives (Pillar 3) provides recommendations for securing capital to support the comprehensive plan.

### Pillar 1: Building the Base for Tourism

With a number of interested groups, disjointed planning efforts, limited structured tourism data and no overarching management entity, the Mission Trail's tourism development requires foundational efforts to maximize its potential for success.

#### **Establishing a Tourism Working Group**

Because economic development involves numerous people with different goals, timelines, and concerns, a working group that approximately reflects the broad range of interests in the outcome is an essential first step towards coordinating and prioritizing activities and resources to improve the Mission Trail's tourism economy.

#### **Creating a Tourism-led Economic Development Vision**

The working group could, as a first action, create and refine the vision for the area to create a common touchstone that motivates action. The vision should be a stretch to achieve and should inspire its readers.

#### **Coordination of Existing Studies & Players**

There are motivated non-profit organizations working in the Mission Trail area now who have the manpower and even in some cases, capital, and are working on plans for specific aspects of the Mission Trail, such as canal side bike lanes and trails. Understanding the groups who are active and whose goals could easily support the area's wider economic development is important. To the extent that they participate in the working group as well, their coordination can be a relatively simple matter of communication back and forth on goals, timing, focus areas and similar aspects of mutual interest.

#### **Undertaking a Structured Tourism Analysis**

Tourism encompasses a wide breadth of economic activities. On the demand side (the visitors), there are a number of distinct niche markets that may find (or already find) the Mission Trail an attractive place to visit.

Consider how the tourism market could be supported. For example, the religious tourism market could be supported through outreach to other parishes, helping to reestablish a religious pilgrimage route that ended along the trail and with traveler services that ranged from hostels to hotels, much as is seen along the Camino de Santiago in Spain. In that case, there are businesses that developed to serve the religious visitors' needs along a range of price points. Whether it be lodging, food, entertainment, art or meditative areas, the Camino has multiple options all along its length.

Now, expand that image to include ecological tourists, culture and heritage tourists, and El Paso day trippers who simply want to explore something different, but that is close by. Each segment has different motivations for travel, spending tolerances, as well as visit and timing preferences.

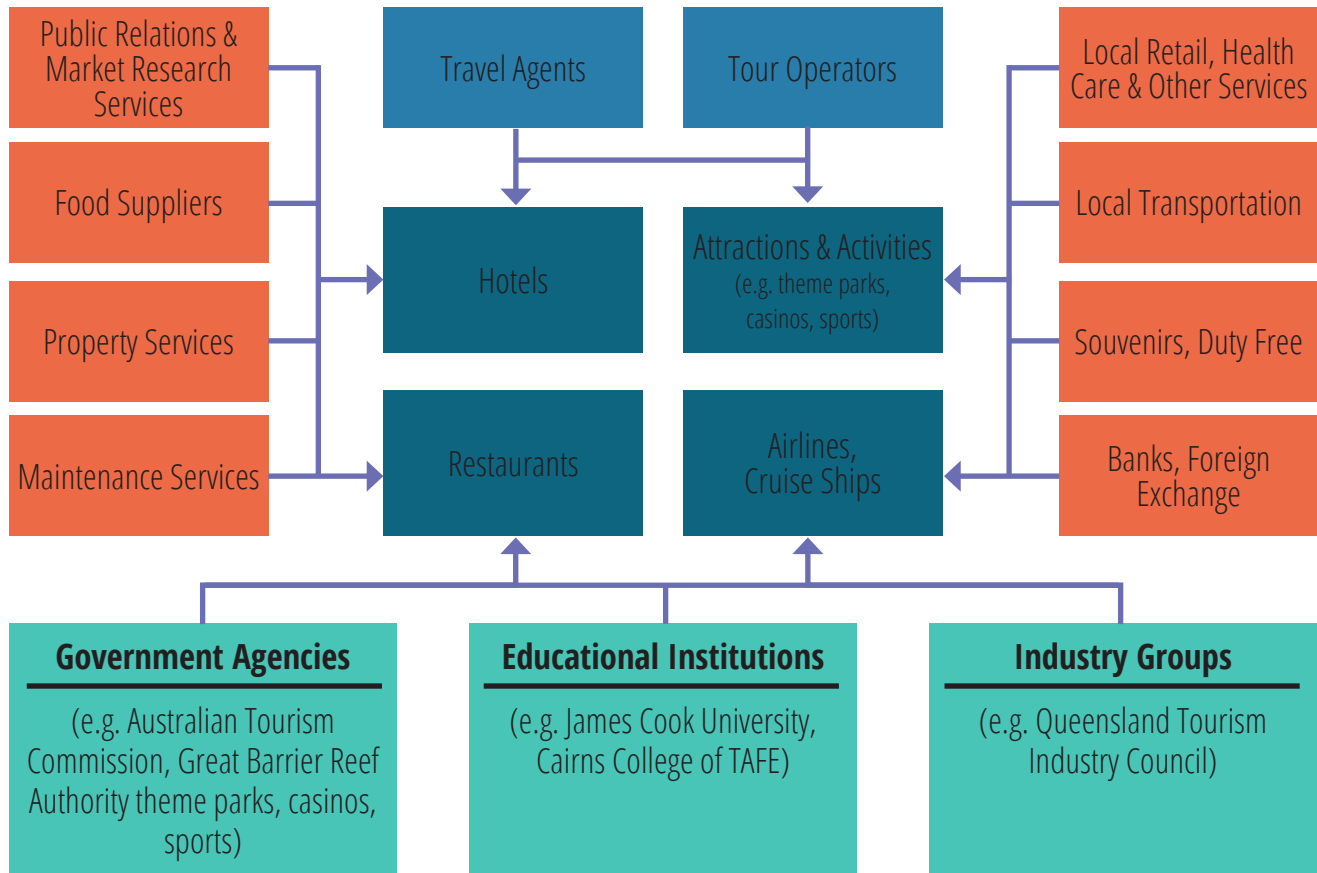


## Case Study: Camino De Santiago

On the supply side, direct providers of tourism services, whether the missions and presidio chapel themselves or the hotels, restaurants, cafés, bars and shopping venues, will have different thresholds for opening along the Mission Trail. There may be co-location factors and / or supplier availability issues to contend with. Together, the supply and demand sides of the tourism economy, along with their supporting services and policy and labor environment can be conceptualized as a small cluster.

The tourism cluster can be better understood and supported through a properly focused tourism strategy. The strategy would identify and quantify the potential demand segments, help to formulate a supply side approach for hotels and supporting retail services, and provide ideas about potential tourism trails that could be later refined as the area's tourism economy develops. Of particular interest would be to differentiate the visitor experience along the trail such that each city presented a different focus to the visitor, whether farm to table, handicrafts and art, living culture, or some other element.

# Example of a Tourism Cluster



## Aligning Marketing Messaging

Because the City of El Paso, El Paso County and the missions and presidio chapel are each conducting marketing activities with different geographical focus areas, target markets, budgets and media channels, an alignment of messaging and targeting may help to ensure that marketing outreach is optimized. Because the most expensive element in the marketing funnel is awareness building, a cohesive message across multiple channels will help to bring the Mission Trail’s tourism offerings to the top of mind for potential visitors when those elements are aligned.

## Investing in Tourism Infrastructure

Infrastructure that helps to establish an area as a unique place also supports tourism development. To that end, signage for historical events and buildings, art installations, lighting, biking and hiking trails and interpretive exhibits along the trail are essential components to the area’s development.

In addition, there’s no reason that lamp posts, crosswalks, benches and sidewalks can’t be designed to reflect influences from the many cultures along the Trail. The more photographically distinct the area, the easier it will be to not only establish the area as a tourism destination, but also to generate self-sustaining (and free!) marketing through social media posts from visitors, travel bloggers and others.

The Tourism Working Group may want to consider running competitions in local schools or the public for designs to be used. This open collaboration not only brings the public (especially young people) into the process, but provides the County with a range of ideas that can inform its final physical form while being locally and culturally sensitive.

### **Linking Existing Assets Together**

A tourism trail ties together experiences within an area so that tourists are not visiting one place and then leaving, but are making multiple stops along a path. The trail can be thematic around a single focus, religion, for example, or time bound, such as things to see if you have only an hour or half a day. At least initially, the focus of any trail development will likely include stops near the missions and presidio chapel and then connecting each location to the others. Later trail development should include options for biking, hiking, farm tours, handicraft workshops, restaurants and performances. Ideally each trail would include shopping and dining options, but differ in detail, time and focus.

The trail development process can also help to highlight gaps in the market's offerings. For example, when planning a tourism trail, it can become obvious that the travel time between two locations is long or should be broken up. In this case, the "gap" or "missing experience" can help to stimulate conversations with investors and local residents about how best to add to the inventory of experiences.

### **Establishing a Data Collection Framework**

In practical terms, managers and policy makers in tourism destinations cannot make good decisions over the long term about investments and experience offerings without reliable data about who is visiting and why. For this reason, information sharing policies and a framework for information to be collected should be created. Information collection should respect visitor privacy while also allowing the County, local municipalities and business owners to understand visitation patterns.

### **Determine the Viability of New Administrative Units**

Public Improvement Districts (PIDs) and / or Economic Development Authority (EDA)

While the County has cross-jurisdictional authority across the Mission Trail, an Economic Development Authority (EDA) with specific abilities under the law to provide incentives, coordinate wider area planning and generally be charged with projects that cross the city-level administrative boundaries but are not County-wide may be useful. Much of the usefulness of the EDA comes from its limited geographical focus and ability to work on specific issues of investment facilitation and jurisdictional independence along the Mission Trail.

As an official EDA requires statutory actions to give the entity legal status, operating authority and a budget, there should be a formal evaluation of the pros and cons of various management entities for the Mission Trail to verify that an EDA is indeed the most appropriate entity.

Another option would be for one or more (as needed) Public Improvement Districts (PID), allowed by Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 372. Property owners in a defined area can form a PID and can (through its Advisory Board) control the types of improvements, maintenance levels and assessments.

# What Can the Market Support?

...if the Mission Trail stays on track with the plan

## Summary of Market / Development Potential on the Mission Trail

USE	FORECAST PERIOD	MARKET POTENTIAL
Retail	2 to 5 years	88,400 sf
Restaurant	5 to 10 years	21,600 sf
Market-rate Housing	2 to 5 years	400 to 650 units
Office	5 to 8 years	Limited
Lodging / Hospitality	5 to 10 years	100 to 160 rooms

### How Much New Development can Mission Trail Expect or Support?

In order to guide the recommendations and strategies of the master plan with realistic market-driven expectations, a market analysis was performed to understand future growth in Mission Valley. Admittedly, there is no crystal ball for predicting new development, however, in recent years the data provided by ESRI BUSINESS Analyst has been used successfully to make forecasts based on demographics and business locations, consumer spending and purchasing power at multiple geographies.

### The Study Area

The study area for the market analysis was focused on the Mission Trail from Ysleta to San Elizario. The Mission Trail was a sub-set of a larger primary market area mapped using a ten-minute drive time from the Socorro Mission.

### Summary of Market / Development Potential on the Mission Trail

The market analyses forecast four sectors: market-rate housing, speculative office, lodging/ hospitality, restaurant and drinking establishments, and retail demand. The Plan seeks to unlock market potential that is currently untapped in the Mission Valley.



## Housing

The housing market in El Paso's East side and all Lower Valley areas is stabilized, and appears to have fully recovered from the 2007—2009 recession, with some new single-family development under construction, low vacancy rates, and moderate rental pricing.

Over the past 18 years, the population of El Paso's East side and all Lower Valley areas has grown slowly. The Mission Valley area along the nine-mile El Paso Mission Trail went from 53,638 people in 2010 to 56,719 people in 2018, a 6% increase of roughly 1% per year.

The number of homes went from 15,794 to 17,044 for a total of 1,250 units or 156 housing per year. Utilizing an annual (straight-line) growth rate of 1% per year consistent with actual population growth rates that occurred in the Mission Valley between 2000—2018, the pace of growth on the Mission Valley Trail would yield 1,014 new residents and roughly 664 new housing units (assuming that average household size of 1.52 remains unchanged) for a total of 132 housing units per year.

## Office Market

The market analysis suggests no demand for new office space on the Mission Trail over the next ten years. Currently, the Mission Trail's share of employment in El Paso's East side and all Lower is estimated at roughly 13%. The El Paso labor force is projected to grow at an annual rate of 0.6 percent according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Under a "fair share" analysis, the Mission Trail would capture approximately 13% of future job growth within the East side and Lower Valley or 122 new employees, by 2026.

Assuming similar proportions of office-using jobs and occupancy factors translates into gross demand for approximately 8,712 sq. ft. of office space over the next eight years. However, there are more than 12,800 sq. ft. of vacant office space available on the Mission Trail.

In order to strengthen Mission Trail's market, the following strategies are recommended:

1. Identify possible buildings/locations, such as those office properties with high vacancy rates, for conversion to alternative uses and/or demolition to accommodate new development.
2. Consider the creation of a business retention and recruitment strategy designed to identify office tenants with near-term lease expirations that could be candidates for relocation to new facilities. New facilities located within plan areas and follow plan recommendations will be more desirable over the long-term.
3. Provide a package of financial (and regulatory) assistance as part of the County's economic development strategy for office retention and recruitment.

# What actions are needed to create immediate development momentum?

## The Plan describes:

### Catalyst Projects

- Public and private projects that have the potential to stimulate significant momentum

### Regulatory Updates

- Policy updates and updates to the Land Development Regulations and Zoning

### Transportation Projects

- Public projects increase local spending capacity and quality of life

### Quality of Life Projects

- Public amenity projects that attract private investment to surrounding areas and preserve the natural environment unique to the Mission Valley

# Best Short-Term Opportunities for Retail

The Plan seeks to unlock market potential that is currently untapped in the Mission Valley





## Retail & Restaurant Development

The Mission Trail and surrounding area **can presently support** an additional 110,000 sf of retail and restaurant development. This new retail demand could be absorbed by existing businesses and/or with the opening of **20 to 25 new stores and restaurants.**

This could include:

- 2-5 Apparel Stores
- 4-5 Restaurants & Drinking Establishments
- 1-2 General Merchandise Stores
- 2-4 Electronics and Appliance Stores
- 2-3 Hobby, Sports, Books and Music Stores
- 1-2 Hardware Stores
- And an assortment of other retail offerings.

If the Mission Trail and surrounding area can currently support so much then why haven't these things been constructed? The purpose of the plan is to unlock market potential by helping envision the future, helping imagine public/private partnerships, and helping change the regulatory environment which inadvertently discourages new development.

## Hotel Market

Over the next 10 years, the lodging/hospitality market analysis suggests a demand for 100 to 160 rooms in the Mission Valley. There are presently very few lodging facilities in the study area. Those that do exist are near major highways and cater to long distance trucking and not tourism.

To advance efforts to secure a new lodging facility, appropriate incentives to secure new hotel development will need to be found. These may vary and could include zoning, entitlements, and infrastructure assistance.

## Summary of Market for All Retail Uses

18,840 sf	Grocery Stores
5,800 sf	General Merchandise Stores
5,065 sf	Apparel & Shoe Stores
13,000 sf	Department Clothing & Jewelry
3,500 sf	Electronics & Appliance Stores
5,200 sf	Hobby, Sports, Books, Music Stores
1,500 sf	Office Supplies & Gift Stores
900 sf	Special Food Services
18,000 sf	Hardware Stores
6,600 sf	Furniture & Home Furnishings
6,400 sf	Pharmacy
500 sf	Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores
3,000 sf	Florists
88,400 sf	Total
21,600 sf	Total Restaurants & Drinking Establishments

# Public Improvement Districts

## About

### What can PIDs be used for?

#### Services

- Advertising
- Promotion
- Public Safety
- Security
- Development
- Recreation
- Cultural Enhancement

#### Public Infrastructure Projects

- Landscaping
- Water & Sewer
- Drainage
- Art and Decorations
- Right of Ways
- Parks & Open Space
- Streets & Sidewalks
- Transit
- Libraries
- Lighting
- Signs
- Off-street Parking
- Pedestrian Malls
- Affordable Housing
- Formation Expenses
- Environmental Improvement

Public Improvement Districts (PIDs) are a powerful economic development tool authorized by the Texas State Legislature to provide services and improvements for an area that go beyond what a local government offers. A PID can be applied in both new developments and existing neighborhoods. PIDs are similar to the hundreds of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) found across the country, which have a proven track record of catalyzing investment and interest in downtowns and other business areas.

A PID is a designated area where property owners pay a special assessment for improvements and services specifically targeted within that area. These services must benefit the PID area with only those land owners benefiting from the improvements being responsible for covering the costs of them. The PID's special assessment can be used for public improvements, including through special assessment revenue tax-exempt bonds issued by a city or county. A PID can provide infrastructure improvements and special supplemental services for improving and promoting the district. See the sidebar on the left for a more comprehensive list of what PIDs can be used for. This allows local areas to identify their priorities and needed improvements and generate a funding source to implement those improvements without financial risk to the city or county.

#### Creating a PID

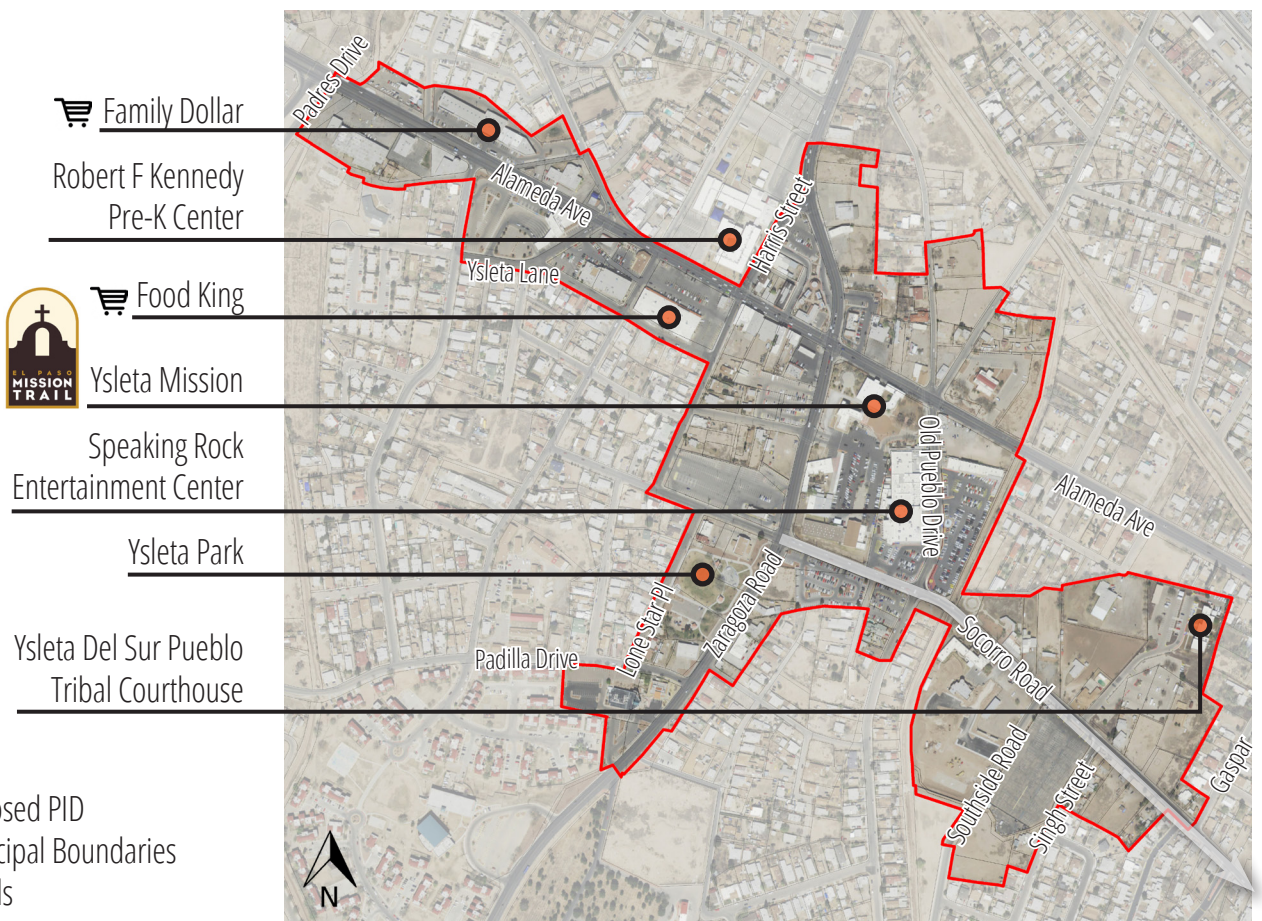
The creation of a PID can be initiated by a property owner group, developer, home owner association or similar entity, as well as by the governing body of the municipality or county. In all cases, the initiation of a PID requires a petition of more than 50% of owners of taxable real property liable for assessment under the proposed petition. The petition must include the general nature of the proposed improvement(s) as well as the costs and boundary of the district. Once petition requirements are met, a PID may then be created by the municipality or county in which the PID is located.

Within the district, different classes of assessable property may be assessed in different ways. For example, commercial properties may have a higher assessment than residential properties, or residential properties may be excluded from the assessment all together. An advisory board is established for the PID to manage the improvements. The board is required to prepare an annual 5-year service plan to guide the PID's efforts. In this way, the advisory board provides local autonomy for the property owners within the PID to tailor the types of improvements, level of maintenance, and amount of assessments to be levied.

#### Using PIDs in the Mission Valley

PIDs are one tool in the kit to be combined with other funding sources for realizing the vision outlined in this plan. PIDs can provide a dedicated funding source targeted to specific key sites in the Mission Valley. By focusing these districts around each of the missions and presidio chapel along the Mission Trail (Socorro Road), the local districts can work to create a more inviting experience for locals and tourists alike. Because PIDs have the most potential impact for commercial areas, the majority of parcels within each PID should be of a commercial or mixed-use nature, while residential properties should be avoided from inclusion to reduce the cost burden on residents.

The parcels and right-of-way included within a PID boundary should include all those areas where improvements are needed, as the PID can only make improvements within its boundary. Preliminary PID boundaries for the Ysleta, Socorro, and San Elizario areas are shown in the following figures as a starting point for discussion and refinement. The actual boundary and size of any PID established should be based on a more detailed economic analysis and determination of needs.



# Ysleta

## Public Improvement District

# 117 Acres

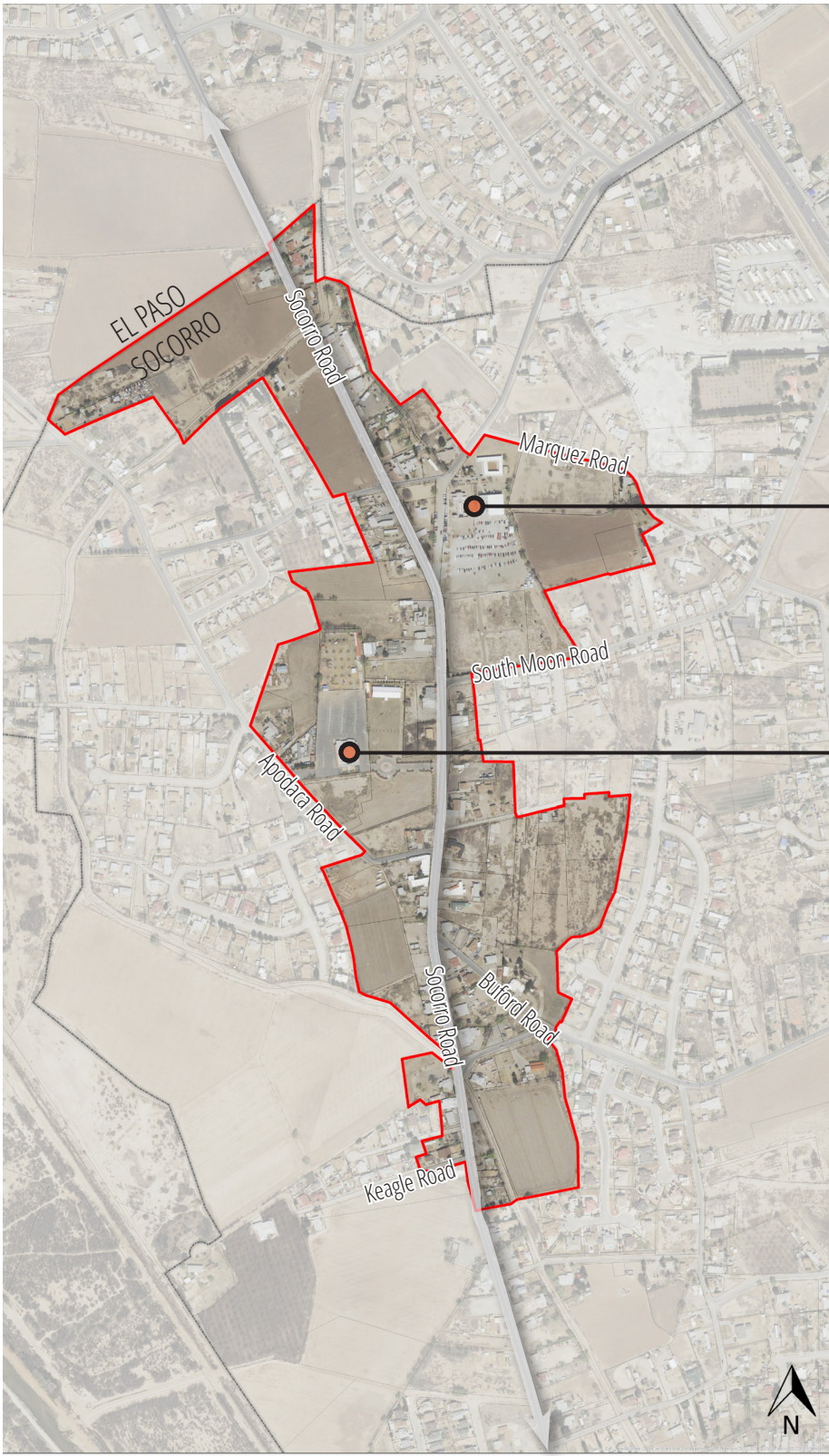
## Ysleta PID Area

# Socorro

Public Improvement District




# 114 Acres

Socorro PID Area



Socorro Mission

El Campanario Ballroom

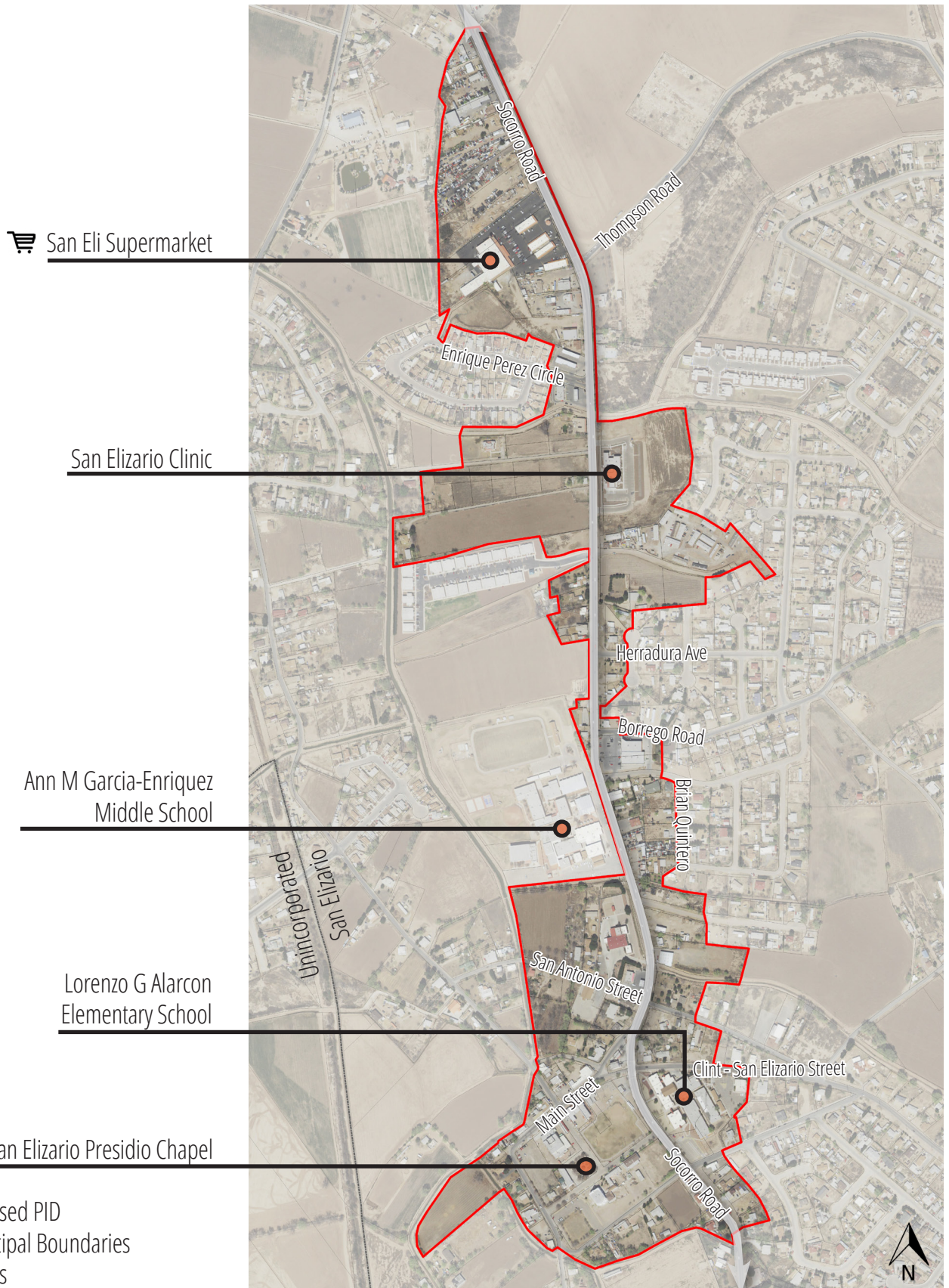
-  Proposed PID
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Parcels

# San Elizario

Public Improvement District

# 139 Acres

San Elizario PID Area



# PID Enhancements

## Illustrating the Possibilities

The small retail strip on the block of Alameda Avenue between Harris Street and Zaragoza Road provides a setting to illustrate how a PID can benefit an existing commercial area.

Offering the first glimpses of Ysleta Mission's shimmering silver cupola, this critical block functions as the gateway to the Mission Valley for those arriving from Downtown El Paso by car or transit. It is also a key site for pedestrians as it is the location of the Mission Valley Transfer Center, adjacent to a school, and within a few minutes walk of the Old Ysleta Mission.



Existing Conditions on Alameda Avenue  
Looking Towards the Old Ysleta Mission

The buildings along this stretch of Alameda Avenue come up to and front the sidewalk and street, at one time creating a walkable and vibrant commercial center. Today, many of the buildings are vacant and in various states of disrepair. Telephone poles and a tangle of wires disrupt the contrast between the buildings' simple adobe walls and clear deep blue sky. Any person braving the walk along these narrow sidewalks are faced with blank walls on one side and speeding traffic just feet away on the other. A place once meant for people has become completely given to motorists passing through with no consideration for what they are passing through or the area's history. Yet there is a strong foundation of walkable urbanism to build on with PID improvements.



Street Furniture & Plantings

Enhanced Crosswalks  
Buried Power Lines

Facade Improvements

Improvements within the right-of-way

Establishing a PID in Ysleta can aid the process of revitalizing the entrance to the Mission Valley from Downtown El Paso. The PID can establish a dedicated funding source and prioritize the projects that will have the biggest impact. This can start as simple steps, fixing the sidewalks and adding street furniture and plants. Building facades can be upgraded to better address the street with more transparency. New shops and businesses can be recruited. Crosswalks can be enhanced to facilitate safer crossing between the Bus Transfer Center and the Ysleta Mission. Later, larger improvements could include burying the power lines and adding more space for pedestrians and landscaping to make a more viable, inviting and, safe area for people and commerce.

However, even here, these improvements will only go so far with the allocation of right-of-way so heavily favoring motor vehicles. Minor improvements to the public realm can be the small change that builds support for larger improvements. For a gateway worthy of the Mission Valley’s entrance, a more balanced distribution of right-of-way between motor vehicles and pedestrians is critical. But there is only so much that these improvements can have with a five foot sidewalk next to a four-lane roadway.

Reallocating the right-of-way to provide additional space for pedestrians and landscaping can complete the picture. Trees add greenery and shade, protect pedestrians from cars, and encourage appropriate vehicle speeds. Native and drought-tolerant plants along a planting strip can further improve the aesthetic of the block. This reallocation of space can also allow for pedestrian-scaled, decorative lighting. Signs, banners and monuments can announce arrival within the Mission Valley, promote special events, and better highlight the Mission.

Reconfiguring the street to three lanes using a PID to implement the enhancements discussed here can help create a welcoming moment befitting the historic Mission Valley.



Long-Term Future

## Pillar 2: Expanding Experiences

Since there is an existing tourism flow into the Mission Trail from both religious visitors and heritage tourists, those people provide the most immediate path forward for economic development. To the extent that these visitors can find a reason to spend more time in the area, then additional demand will grow for goods and services along the Trail.

### Enhancing Existing Experiences

The very first step of the tourism development approach requires understanding what exists in the area via an inventory of assets along with proper categorization among tourism niches, basic information about each one and historical significance.

Once documented, a set of categorizations should be completed to establish priorities. For example, assets with low tourist visitation flow currently, but with high visitation potential could be treated in one group, while those with low visitation and low potential could be evaluated at a later stage.

For assets with high potential, the County may consider creating a common evaluation form that takes into account signage, other retail offerings, historical interpretation, comfortable walking and sitting areas to provide grades for each asset to create a priority list of improvements as a starting point.

### Creating New Tourism Attractions Near Existing Assets

With tourists and religious visitors on site already, the primary economic development challenge is how best to provide opportunities to them to remain in the area to explore, eat, drink, relax and shop within a 10 minutes' walk pedestrian shed. Ideally, new attractions provide differentiated offerings that are not easily replicated and combine to enhance the area's character.

An interesting local example that could be kept in mind for this effort is Mesilla, NM, particularly the old square. In that one place, visitors can walk from the old church to shops and restaurants or simply people watch around the square. The goal of adding to the existing asset base is to incrementally build on what people are already visiting.

#### *Eating and Drinking*

Restaurants and cafés provide opportunities to not only sample local cuisine and partake of local culture, but also to watch the world go by and build a relationship with the area that leads to word of mouth recommendations to others who have yet to visit the area.

#### *Shopping*

Retail experiences range from simple handicrafts and religious mementos to fine art, antiques and boutiques. What should tie the offerings together is some reflection of local culture, design, history or interpretation of established handicrafts.



Example of map of attractions in Las Cruces, NM

## Eating Establishments

- La Tapatia
- Gabriel's Restaurant & Bar
- Bowie Bakery
- Cocina 2 Go
- Café Arte Mi Admore at La Bodega Art Center
- Los Compadres Restaurant
- Tin Tan
- Clint King's Pizza
- Dona Chole's Mexican Restaurant
- Sofia's Mexican Restaurant
- San Elizario Bakery
- Mr. Poncho Restaurant
- PB's Pizza
- San Eli Super Market
- San Elizario's King's Pizza
- San Francisco Bakery
- Shooter's Smokin' BBQ
- Cattleman's Steakhouse



## Public Art and Performances

Art in the public space encompasses a myriad of physical forms. For the purposes of economic development, art should help to establish the place being visited as different from other places (no international styles that could be seen in any big city around the world). Instead, particularly if public funds are used for any art purchases, use local matters: artists, designs and techniques.

Public art is not primarily an employment strategy as much as it is a differentiation strategy — and differentiation in economic development leads to long term competitive advantage that other areas cannot copy easily. Such competitive advantages help to answer the question: “why visit the Mission Trail and not some other place?”

Performances, particularly those that occur in public spaces, provide a social, convivial atmosphere that brings new people to the area and helps to reinforce the habit of going to the Mission Trail for relaxation and entertainment in addition to heritage tourism.

## Historical Buildings & Monuments

History can be as much alive as dead. In well-developed tourism centers, the vitality, tensions and possibilities of a place are present, reinforcing the visitor’s desire to explore and experience what it has to offer. To this end, historical buildings should be protected, redevelopment supported and new development encouraged to follow traditional vernacular forms to enhance the area’s sense of place.

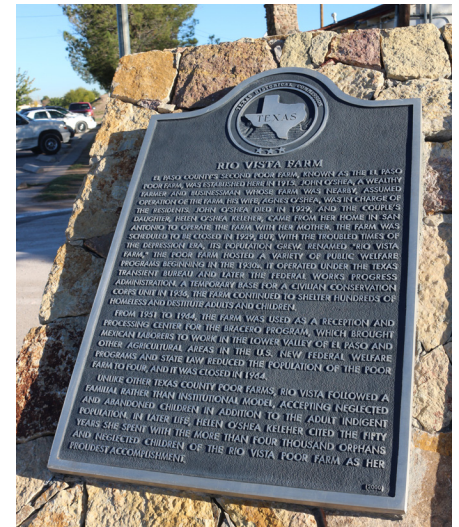
Monuments too can be interesting, even the controversial and conflicting. Human history is messy and one group’s boastful successes may be another’s long remembered loss. Rather than shy away from such stories, tell them openly. Have cultural celebrations from all the groups that call an area home. Let the visitor understand that syncretism happens, even after events long past. These stories, in fact, may form the basis for public art or performances that do not have to be oppositional, but can reinforce the area’s multi-layered history for residents and new audience alike.

## Museums

Museums do not just preserve and interpret the past in a stale, dead way. Rather, they provide an opportunity to present the past as relevant to understanding the present, while also centrally locating artifacts that might otherwise be lost or scattered. Tourist visits to museums can be useful as a way to gain an overview of an area’s history through archived documents, culture material and reenacted exhibits. This interpretation can help to bring local arts traditions to life and stimulate interest in visiting other parts of the Mission Trail.

## Creating Working Groups to Explore New Tourism Attractions Between Existing Assets

Much of the early focus of the Mission Trail’s economic development strategy is on the missions, presidio chapel, and the area’s adjacent to them. That focus, however, leaves much of the Mission Trail unaffected by economic development opportunities. One method of creating a framework for future development in these areas, especially the vehicular corridors and green spaces, is to form one or more working groups that include members from visitor, investor and local resident groups to understand better what would be possible, what is not acceptable and how quickly new experiences could be developed.



Rio Vista Farm, Socorro



Mesilla Plaza in New Mexico on the Day of the Dead Celebration

### **Building on Existing Events**

Supporting the concept of providing reasons for visitors to come to the area repeatedly and to spend incrementally more time there, events programming is an essential aspect of the economic development plan.

#### *Existing Cultural Events*

Stakeholders involved in existing cultural events should be encouraged and supported to continually answer the question: “what would make visitors to my event spend one more hour here?” Through the consistent review of opportunities to broaden cultural performances, provide additional pop-up dining options, link to other community groups and generally deepen the experience provided, additional opportunities for economic activity are introduced into the local economy.

#### *New Programming Opportunities*

In addition to growing existing events, new events can and should be encouraged, whether initially by the County, each city or private efforts. Such new events should aim to bring new visitors to the area, principally from the City of El Paso, then from the wider region. Music concerts, antique fairs, theater productions (especially if outdoor), movie screenings, area-wide art exhibits, farm-to-table culinary events, film festivals and literary events can each be included in a rotating quarterly calendar that builds on itself to establish visitation habits in the core demand segments to come to the Mission Trail regularly, and while there, to eat, drink, shop and explore.

## Annual Events

### **April**

- San Elizario Rio Grande Festival

### **May**

- Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Powwow

### **June**

- Feast of St. Anthony (Ysleta)
- Mission Valley Duathlon

### **July**

- Ysleta Mission Festival

### **August**

- San Lorenzo Fiesta

### **September**

- Socorro Mission Festival
- San Elizario Fiesta
- Bee Real Festival
- Eagle in the Sun Triathlon
- Red & Green Chile War Festival

### **October**

- Hueco Tanks Interpretive Fair
- Rocking the Rez Powwow
- Native American Arts & Crafts Festival

### **November**

- Veteran’s Day Celebration
- San Elizario Founder’s Day

### **December**

- Mission Trail Luminarias Festival
- Christ Kindle Market (San Elizario)

## Pillar 3: Financial Support & Incentives

Investments in economic development, particularly those that require new physical development in infrastructure and real estate, are an important component of creating a supportive framework of public sector assistance to private enterprises for wider economic growth. Programming regular events can be expensive and require dedicated staff to coordinate efforts among the different stakeholder groups. While some events may become very profitable, others may never break even, even though they enhance the area's competitive differentiation, and indirectly contribute to its tourism appeal.

The County and local jurisdictions, along with private and non-profit sources, have different aims, time horizons and requirements for funding or cost sharing economic development initiatives. Since the public sector's use of tax revenues are limited in scope and total available amount, priorities need to be set and regularly managed. Those projects with strong potential to kickstart wider economic development (to be "catalytic") should be considered for public investment.

As an example of a public payment mechanisms, the previously discussed Business Improvement Districts or Economic Development Authority may be able to work with the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) to structure a bond offering to bury electrical lines along key thoroughfares. The SIB would issue the bond with payments coming from tax levies in specified areas. Additionally, the newly beautified streetscape may be good targets for private or non-profit "adoption", having those groups take care of basic cleanup and flower-planting, for example, in exchange for advertising their role in maintaining the public space.

Traditional sources of support for new investment come from State and Federal sources. Some of these sources, such as the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program and the newly created Opportunity Zones, are well known, while others, such as the Federal Small Business Administration's Small Business Incentive Corporation incentives, as less well known.

The State of Texas has a large number of incentives programs available that may be combined for use along the Mission Trail. Among the programs that may be relevant for the Mission Trail are the Texas Enterprise Fund, which provides money to help "close a deal" by bringing a company to Texas, the Events Trust Fund, which can assist with paying event related costs, and the Texas Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program. Other programs that may be helpful to the Mission Trail's economic development with some planning are the state's Product Development and Small Business Incubator Fund, the Skills Development Fund and the Self Sufficiency Fund. Each of these offers targets support to businesses, educational providers and individuals under specific circumstances.

Together with grants from Family Offices, Foundations and large corporations, the capital needs of the economic development activities may be fundable within a reasonable period of time. The challenge to be solved with these various incentives is to understand how best to apply them as they tend to be very specific in their application and are often competitively awarded.

Incentives, therefore, are a critical part of supporting the development momentum of tourism experiences and should be regularly reviewed for appropriateness, usage, effectiveness and public purpose. Incentives should be used at the margin to provide financial feasibility to objectives that may take time to achieve on their own or that, like beautification initiatives, may be valued more highly by the public sector than existing owners.



Rio Vista Farm, Socorro

The current local incentives best placed to support the area's beautification are the Historic Façade Grant, the Chain Link Fence Removal Grant.

Since currently (as of early 2019) many or even most of the available incentives (whether locally or provided by the State of Texas) along the Mission Trail are not widely used, a critical tool for wider economic development activities is underperforming. The following tasks can help to maximize the usage and impact of incentives where needed.

### **Establish an Incentives Working Group**

Because incentives can leverage funding sources from different groups for different purposes, and because stakeholder feedback can improve the usage of such funding sources, an incentives working group should be formed to review and recommend changes to the existing incentives being offered, keeping in mind that many of the incentives available to investors along the Mission Trail are also offered statewide. As with tourism experiences, incentives are most powerful when they are compelling and differentiated. Creating new incentives that are only offered locally and fit stakeholder interests helps to reinforce the area's competitiveness.

## Tourism Working Group

- Create Joint Vision
- Structured Tourism Analysis
- Collaborate with Existing Groups

## Subcommittees

- Incentives Working Group
- Data Working Group
- Opportunities Working Group

### **Create Incentives Strategy and Incentives Prioritization Framework**

As with all efforts that involve trade-offs, complex linkages, data collection and resource allocation, the County should develop a strategy for incentives. A good incentives strategy would include goals and targets for the incentives, challenges for the incentives to overcome, estimates of spending needed to overcome each challenge, an overview of co-funding sources and their targets and interests, a marketing approach that describes channels and messaging, as well as measurement and refinement approaches and schedules.

Importantly, the strategy should include a framework for prioritization of spending. Since money and resources to evaluate and screen all potential recipients of incentives are limited, having a framework in place that scores along defined measures both reduces misallocation of scarce resources, but also provides the basis for later scoring of incentives effectiveness, which can be shared with policy makers and the incentives working group for refinement.

### **Refine the Incentives Target Areas**

Beginning with the areas in which incentives are available, the County should prioritize the immediate zones around the existing missions and presidio chapel. This focus area can later be expanded to areas outside of the core zones. The goal here is not to starve areas outside of the core of resources, but to maximize the impact of public dollars, particularly for very specific grants, such as for fence replacement and façade improvements. Having target areas within the Mission Trail area would not eliminate funding projects outside of those areas, but it would force a justification of using public money outside of the core (where its impact is likely to be highest).

### **Refine Incentives Marketing Approaches**

Until the incentives strategy is in place, current marketing approaches for the incentives should be documented and measured for effectiveness. Discussions with the public showed a range of awareness of the available incentives as well as the presumed difficulty of the application procedure. Better measurement and management of the public awareness raising efforts may help to improve near-term use of existing incentives, particularly focusing on message repetition using multiple in person and digital communication channels.

One other option to improve marketing the Mission Trail's opportunities is to create an area-wide Investment Map with specific, high-potential projects, having Pre-Feasibility Studies done on them to prove their potential feasibility. Both the investment map and pre-feasibility studies could be given their own website with direct links to targeted incentives.

### **Establish Outreach to Potential Grant and Funding Sources**

Non-profit groups, family offices, for-profit businesses and government sources each offer distinct avenues for funding Mission Trail initiatives. The challenge is in identifying the capital sources available and matching them to specific opportunities or needs within the Mission Trail area. Whether it be simple Adopt a Highway type funding, corporate matchmaking with training programs, apprenticeships, direct investment facilitation, or nature preservation and ecologically sustainable initiatives, each of these goals will be best targeted to a specific type of capital source. The County should begin a general list of both funding needs and potential sources, make initial contacts to the funding sources, potentially even arranging tours of the area to stimulate interest. Some or all of this capital management function may devolve to local leaders or working groups between the County and local jurisdictions, depending on the specific initiatives to be funded.



Former Sombras del Pasado restaurant, Socorro

### **Leverage Existing Funding Sources**

Taking advantage of in place resources, such as the State Infrastructure Bank or Hotel Occupancy Taxes or property taxes, can be a low-cost, high impact mechanism to kick start specific development activities within the Mission Trail area. Tax flows can be directed to either directly pay for operating costs for programming and new events or to service debt on infrastructure improvements. The newly launched and highly anticipated Opportunity Zone Funds are only now getting guidance from the Department of Treasury on their use. They would allow highly favorable tax treatment of investments in any geographical area designated as an Opportunity Zone. Only a small section of the Mission Trail fits that designation, but Opportunity Fund investment there would have the potential to stimulate wider development in the area.

# Goals & Policies

The resulting policies from the strategies discussed in the economic development pillars are shown below, and provide El Paso County's administrators with a guide to future actions that support economic growth, while also giving residents a clear sense of the County's economic development priorities and focus.

## Overall Economic Development Goal

El Paso County should create an economic and investment environment that positively differentiates the Mission Trail area using agriculture and tourism as an economic development engines.

The expected outcomes from this action include:

- Increasing business openings or migrations into the area by 10% each year over the prior year
- Increasing the number of employed persons by at least 5% every year, drawing from both unemployed persons and those out of the workforce
- Increasing satisfaction as measured by a consistent tool by at least 10% annually among citizens and businesses when doing business with the area
- Each policy pillar shown below provides discrete actions and sub-goals that combine to achieve anticipated economic and employment growth.

## Agriculture Economy

Goal 4.1: Encourage the diversification of crops and farming methods best suited to support the local economy.

- Policy 4.1.1: Develop a strategy to train existing and new farm entrepreneurs to invest in agricultural development for local and national distribution of specialty crops.
- Policy 4.1.2: Remove existing policies that may dis-incentivize an increase in productivity, sustainability and resilience.
- Policy 4.1.3: Re-direct agricultural support towards ensuring the availability of public services benefit producers, consumers and society overall.
- Policy 4.1.4: Encourage collaboration on knowledge generation and transfer between public and private sectors.
- Policy 4.1.5: Develop coherent policy packages that can address the many opportunities and challenges confronting the sector and farm households.
- Policy 4.1.6: Continue to work with partners to expand research to preserve the local character and economy of the area.

# Pillar 1: Building The Base For Tourism

## **Establishing a Tourism Working Group**

Goal 4.2: Establish a representative working group to advise policy makers on actions that would benefit the Mission Trail's tourism development activities.

- Policy 4.2.1: Create open invitations for public discussion around tourism development and a Tourism Working Group.
- Policy 4.2.2: Determine the size, role, composition and meeting frequency of the working group.
- Policy 4.2.3: Regularly assess the group's contribution to economic development policy making, refining membership at least annually (though without a requirement for service or term limit).

## **Finalizing a tourism-led economic development vision**

Goal 4.3: Create an inclusive vision for the area's tourism economy that challenges and motivates residents into action.

- Policy 4.3.1: Use the Tourism Working Group to generate and refine ideas that can be crystallized into a wide-reaching vision.
- Policy 4.3.2: Communicate the vision to residents and stakeholders regularly.
- Policy 4.3.3: Refine the vision as needed to remain relevant and motivating.

## **Coordination of existing studies and players**

Goal 4.4: Create an up to date coordination of relevant studies and groups working on issues of interest to the Mission Trail's economic development.

- Policy 4.4.1: Develop a listing of groups working on medium to long term plans with direct relevance to the Mission Trail's economic development.
- Policy 4.4.2: Create an outreach and communication plan to understand the various groups, their leadership, goals and ways to work together.
- Policy 4.4.3: Regularly review and update the implementation status of the various plans to provide support where needed.

## **Undertaking a structured tourism analysis**

Goal 4.5: Generate a properly structured assessment of the current and projected tourism flows to the Mission Trail with a focus on market niches, activities and supply gaps.

- Policy 4.5.1: Understand who visits the trail, for how long, where they go and how much they spend.
- Policy 4.5.2: Create tracking metrics against the report to verify and refine visitor numbers against expectations.
- Policy 4.5.3: Undertake regular reviews of the analysis (consider a biannual review cycle to redo the analysis).
- Policy 4.5.4: Close the identified supply gaps using incentives and direct investor outreach.



## **Aligning marketing messaging**

Goal 4.6: Align and coordinate a coherent message about the Mission Trail's tourism offerings according to channels' targeted visitor segments.

- Policy 4.6.1: Identify current marketing entities, their messaging and channels.
- Policy 4.6.2: Work together to better refine messaging, channels, spending and timing of ads.
- Policy 4.6.3: Regularly track and review the impact of the spending against actual visitor numbers to better understand where ads are generating awareness and buying decisions.
- Policy 4.6.4: Consider creating an area-wide Investment Map with supporting Pre-Feasibility Studies to be published and promoted online and in person, highlighting investment opportunities along the Trail.

## **Investing in tourism infrastructure**

Goal 4.7: Invest in a comprehensive and attractive physical and technological infrastructure that supports best practices in competitive advantage creation and modern tourism place making.

- Policy 4.7.1: Create a plan to design and install distinctive area hardscaping that draws from local arts and design culture (light poles, benches, crosswalks, signage and so on).
- Policy 4.7.2: Develop a system of multi-modal trails for biking, walking or driving on and through the Mission Trail area.
- Policy 4.7.3: Invest in technology that facilitates visitor information (signage and digital apps, for example).
- Policy 4.7.4: Regularly review the Mission Trail's infrastructure offering against a comparator group of cities to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement.
- Policy 4.7.5: Support the development of lodging. This could be a larger hotel toward Ysleta that could support small conventions or a small locally owned bed and breakfast.

## **Linking existing assets together**

Goal 4.8: Establish a series of tourism trails that bring visitors along defined routes with varied focal points and time requirements.

- Policy 4.8.1: Create a map of potential tourism assets, both historical and convenience related.
- Policy 4.8.2: Conduct studies of potential trails to verify that timing, focus areas and convenience retail are viable for tourism.
- Policy 4.8.3: Add and refine trail plans as needed as new assets are established.

### **Establishing a data collection framework**

Goal 4.9: Establish a data collection framework that has a privacy-focused and comprehensive framework for counting visitors across sites to better understand who is visiting, when and what.

- Policy 4.9.1: Establish a data working group (may be a subset of the Tourism Working Group) and should include stakeholders with information collection needs.
- Policy 4.9.2: Determine the information relevant to tourism that can be tracked across various sites along the Mission Trail.
- Policy 4.9.3: Verify that visitor privacy is maintained and best practices for personally identifiable information are followed.
- Policy 4.9.4: Publish aggregate information in public channels, and more specific data to relevant tourism operators within the Mission Trail.
- Policy 4.9.5: Consider creative uses of technology to facilitate data collection (QR codes, discounts for check-ins and similar ideas).

### **Determine the viability of new administrative units: Public Improvement Districts (PIDs) and / or an Economic Development Authority (EDA)**

Goal 4.10: Determine the viability of new administrative units and create as few new administrative units within the Mission Trail as needed to support the development of new assets, facilitate investment into the area and provide cross jurisdictional oversight of tourism development plans.

- Policy 4.10.1: Verify the applicability and number of Public Improvement Districts along the Trail. Support their development within the local municipalities.
- Policy 4.10.2: Verify the applicability of an Economic Development Authority for the Trail. If applicable, begin process for formal registration.
- Policy 4.10.3: Consider other legal entities as appropriate to properly create a welcoming environment for capital and visitors.

## **Pillar 2: Expanding Experiences**

### **Enhancing existing experiences**

Goal 4.11: Maximize the economic potential of existing assets and experiences through continual programming options, expansion of successful events and elimination of negative attributes.

- Policy 4.11.1: Verify the most significant assets for experience development.
- Policy 4.11.2: For each one, document existing physical and programming opportunities and constraints.
- Policy 4.11.3: Create an action plan for each one that improves the visitor experience and creates new reasons to visit or remain on or near the site for longer than the previous year.

### **Creating new tourism attractions near existing assets**

Goal 4.12: Create world class tourism experiences that are culturally appropriate, support existing assets and generally conform with the vision of the area's tourism-led economic development strategy.

- Policy 4.12.1: Determine what types of experiences would strengthen the area's tourism potential.
- Policy 4.12.2: Hold specific idea generation meetings around eating and drinking establishments, shopping and retail, public art and performances, historical preservation and museum concepts. Use the meetings to answer the question: how can we create world class, area-appropriate examples within each of these categories?
- Policy 4.12.3: Create "pre-feasibility studies" that showcase the business viability of selected opportunities and can be used for marketing to investors.
- Policy 4.12.4: Track asset development, business openings and closings in target areas throughout the Mission Trail to better develop policies that support sustainable business growth.

### **Creating working groups to explore new tourism attractions between existing assets**

Goal 4.13: Provide completely new visitor experiences between the established missions and presidio chapel.

- Policy 4.13.1: Establish one or more working group(s) (can also be a subgroup within the Tourism Working Group) to discuss opportunities for new development between the missions and presidio chapel.
- Policy 4.13.2: Create targets for innovation around established or authentic agriculture, handicrafts, arts or green space use.
- Policy 4.13.3: Consider prioritizing seasonal markets, pop-up restaurants / food trucks or other intermittent uses that are not permanent and can be tested against market demand.

### **Building on existing events**

Goal 4.14: Build upon existing events to offer incrementally more experiences that attract and retain visitors on site for increasingly longer periods of time.

- Policy 4.14.1: Catalogue events that may be successfully expanded through additional programming offerings.
- Policy 4.14.2: Work with event sponsors to expand their events.
- Policy 4.14.3: Consider providing additional marketing resources and / or traffic control officers to stimulate attendance and maintain a pleasant, walking friendly environment for attendees.

## Pillar 3: Financial Support & Incentives

### **Create an incentives strategy and an incentives prioritization framework**

Goal 4.15: Create a strategy that creates goals for incentives use, establishes hierarchies of spending priorities and provides overall guidance to policy makers regarding incentive use and application.

- Policy 4.15.1: Create a strategy to identify and prioritize the potential for using in place funding sources for policy goals, particularly for infrastructure, with attention given to grant or loan sizing, application requirements, degree of competition and other relevant features.
- Policy 4.15.2: Review and refine the strategy at least annually with wider working group input.
- Policy 4.15.3: Establish and track metrics for the specified goals, with results feeding back into the strategy refinement process.

### **Establish an incentives working group**

Goal 4.16: Have an engaged group that understands the incentives strategy and can provide incentives policy guidance to policy makers.

- Policy 4.16.1: Create an incentives working group that includes members of key stakeholder groups (can be a subgroup within the larger Tourism Working Group).
- Policy 4.16.2: Review and refine membership at least annually, though with no requirement for term limits.

### **Refine the incentives target areas**

Goal 4.17: Maximize the impact of financial incentives within the Mission Trail area by concentrating their focus in key areas before moving to lower priority zones.

- Policy 4.17.1: Diagram the most high visibility areas for tourism with each of the cities within the Mission Trail and concentrate incentive availability to those areas.
- Policy 4.17.2: Tie public policy goals to receipt of funds (for example, allowing the city to paint a mural on a city-funded wall enhancement).
- Policy 4.17.3: Track and modify the target areas as needed to maximize incentive impact.

### **Refine incentives marketing approaches**

Goal 4.18: Refine a marketing effort that generates both awareness and usage of relevant incentives.

- Policy 4.18.1: Use multi-channel marketing and constant repetition to stimulate use with particular attention to differences in cost and response rates for in person, online and traditional marketing channel differences.

- Policy 4.18.2: Consider direct personal outreach to key targets who may be able to boost the marketing signal from Mission Trail activities (heads of non-profit or business organizations who may amplify Mission Trail messaging).
- Policy 4.18.3: Use the previously established tracking mechanisms to verify marketing effectiveness and feed results into future planning efforts to best link marketing spending with visitation results.

### **Establish outreach to potential grant and funding sources**

Goal 4.19: Ensure that potential funding needs are properly matched to appropriate funding sources, whether public or private.

- Policy 4.19.1: Catalogue spending needs by type and examples needed to close the gaps in the supply side analysis (consider infrastructure, operating businesses, real estate, arts and crafts, etc).
- Policy 4.19.2: Catalogue capital sources from the public (federal, state and local), non-profit, family office and private businesses with a focus on those with high probability of matching Mission Trail funding needs.
- Policy 4.19.3: Match likely sources and encourage non-profits, family offices and private businesses to take responsibility for aspects of the Trail's development that reflect good corporate social responsibility.
- Policy 4.19.4: Maintain active relationships with potential funding sources and encourage any financial support possible, even small scale programming sponsorship.

### **Leverage existing funding sources**

Goal 4.20: Maximize the impact of in-place resources to achieve infrastructure or operating goals within the Mission Trail area.

- Policy 4.20.1: Plan to use available mechanisms from the State Infrastructure Bank to finance infrastructure improvement plans within the Mission Trail. The wide number of available programs requires a careful assessment of funding needs with their funding mechanisms.
- Policy 4.20.2: Consider redirecting a portion of recurring taxes to fund new development programs. Examples include the Hotel Occupancy Taxes (HOT) to support Mission Trail infrastructure development or programming activities. Increments in ad valorem taxes and property taxes may also be used for development purposes.
- Policy 4.20.3: Consider establishing an Opportunity Zone fund or partnering with an existing fund to invest in larger assets along the trail, especially those with large real estate components, such as hotels or retail investments.
- Policy 4.20.4: Apply for relevant categories within the Texas Historical Commission's grant offerings, particularly the major grants for community projects, which may be effective for a wider area redevelopment kick-off series of presentations across a multi-month time horizon.



# A PUBLIC PROCESS

El Paso County wanted to update the 1993 comprehensive plan for the Mission Trail historic corridor and district. The document laid out a strong path, but was in need of updating it for today's economic climate. Situated within three municipalities, the county is the over arching entity to oversee the creation of the plan and coordinate efforts within the Ysleta, Socorro and San Elizario communities. In addition, with the inscription of the San Antonio missions as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2015, there were several discussions as to whether the missions and presidio chapel could work together to designate the Mission Trail.

El Paso County sought assistance through a request for proposal process and selected the Dover, Kohl & Partners (DK&P) to help them and the communities along the mission trail with this effort. An open planning process called a charrette was determined to be the best method to look at the communities along the trail to see how they are operating today, what they may need to help them succeed into the future and whether or not pursuing UNESCO World Heritage status made sense.

Participation from the community is critical to shaping the vision of any plan. The charrette process provides the residents of Mission Valley numerous opportunities to participate and provide input over a focused period of time so as the plan is developed, we know the key concerns of the community and direction for the plan.

## Planning Team

- Dover, Kohl & Partners
- Gallinar Planning & Development
- Daedalus Advisory Services
- Hall Planning & Engineering

## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

The guiding document to...



Direct capital improvements



Evaluate development projects



Guide public policy



Ensure that the mission valley is the place its residents want it to be

# Pre-Charrette Activities

## Getting to know the Area

### Base Information

At the start of the project, DK&P gathered base information and studied the existing physical and economic conditions of the area as well as existing ordinances and land-use regulations and any previous plans for the Mission Valley and surrounding areas. Some of the most relevant plans and studies included the 1993 Comprehensive Plan and Vision, The Mission Trail Historic Corridor & District Design Guidelines, and City of San Elizario Community Visioning Workshop.

### Getting the Word Out

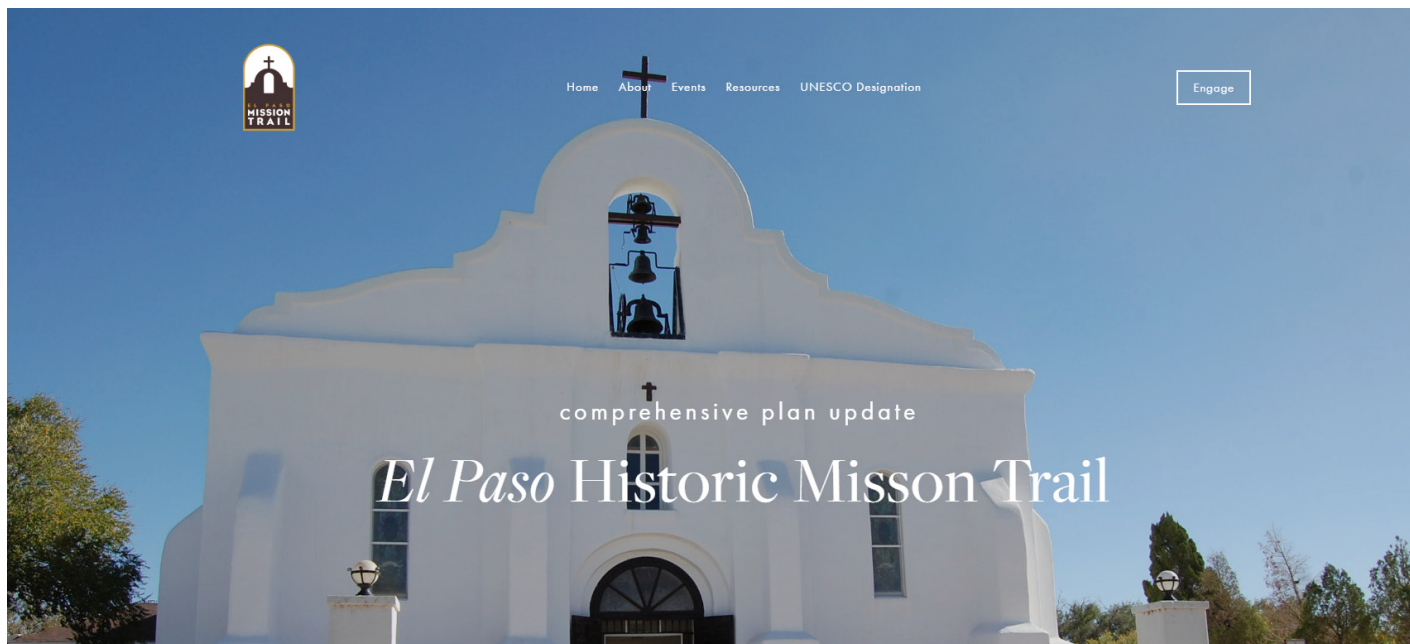
A Save the Date flyer in both English and Spanish was used to help get the word out about the public process. It was distributed both digitally and sent to local residents and posted in business windows. Our team understands that many people in the Mission Valley do not have access to online resources so it was important to approach people in their communities.

A website was created to supplement in-person meetings, providing the community with additional background information, project updates, and another way to share their thoughts and concerns. This plan is a direct result of all the information and feedback gathered during the charrette and from the online sources.

An economic survey was developed to supplement information gathered on site during the charrette. It was also available online and physical surveys were also made available to the community. These surveys are used to judge a communities positive or negative feelings and aspirations for their community because that has a direct effect on the immediate economic future of an area.



Save the Date Card



Website



# Site Visit

## Meetings & Area Tour

On November 1 and 2, Jason King and Carlos Gallinar joined with Valerie Venecia to meet with representatives of the communities as well as tour each area. These meetings further defined the goals for the comprehensive plan and to hear first hand some of the main concerns and aspirations of each community. The knowledge they gathered during the site visit allowed them to better tailor the charrette for the community.

Rick Quezada, Cultural Preservation Director of the Tigua Indian Ysleta del Sur Pueblo



## Stakeholder Meetings

- Judge Vogt / Judge Elect Samaniego
- Catholic Diocese
- City of San Elizario representatives
- City of Socorro representatives
- Ysleta representatives
- County Staff
- County Officials
- City of El Paso
- MPO
- TxDOT
- Housing Urban Development
- Water District



San Elizario restaurant, now closed

## Area Tours

- City of Socorro
- San Elizario Historic District
- Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Cultural Center
- Tigua Cultural Center, UNESCO Tourism
- Mesilla, Day of the Dead Celebration



Day of the Dead Celebration in Mesilla, NM



Tourists outside of old County Jail, San Elizario

# The Charrette

## Site Tour

The charrette was held November 13 to 16, 2018. The entire planning team traveled to El Paso to see the community, meet with residents, and form the basis of the Comprehensive Plan.

On the first day of the charrette the planning team gathered to tour the planning area and surrounding context beginning in downtown El Paso. The team explored the downtown on foot, taking time to photograph, and note key characteristics of the built environment such as building form, building placement, street design, and street connections to understand the greater context.

The DK&P team then headed to Mission Valley and was joined by members of the County Planning Department. The tour was guided by the City's Heritage Tourism Coordinator, Valerie Venecia, who described previous and current initiatives in the area.

Some of the key items from the tour included:

- The two missions and presidio chapel are located in three different municipalities, each municipality has very distinct characters.
- Socorro Road is the major spine that connects two missions and presidio chapel. Large surface parking and vacant lots frequent the street frontage.
- The Mission Trail area overall has poor walkability and is not bike friendly.
- There is a lack of businesses and services such as coffee shops and lodging to support residents and visitors.

The tour enhanced the team's understanding of current issues, concerns, and redevelopment prospects along the Mission valley and throughout the surrounding neighborhoods.



Rick Quezada, the director of cultural preservation in Ysleta explaining site conditions

# Kick-off Meeting

## Presentation & Hands-on Design Session

The DK&P team set-up at the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo Tribal Courthouse, where all the events for the rest of the week took place.

Over 80 residents, City and County leaders, elected officials, and local stakeholders gathered at the Courthouse's auditorium for the Kick-off Presentation and Hands-on Design Session on the first evening, November 13. The event began with an introduction and welcome by Jose Quinonez, the director of Economic Development and County Judge Ruben John Vogt. Rick Quezada, the Director of Cultural Preservation at the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, performed a special blessing for the event.

Jason King, principal and charrette leader from Dover, Kohl & Partners, outlined the unique characteristics and heritage in the Mission Valley while providing background information on UNESCO designation, national development trends, and New Urbanism design principles. Carlos Gallinar from Gallinar Planning and Shaun Bourgeois from Daedalus Advisory Services continued the presentation with more information on housing, health, and economic development.

Following the presentation, the meeting transitioned to the Hands-on Design Session. Working in small groups of approximately eight people per table, participants gathered around 10 tables to draw and share their varied ideas for the future of Mission Valley. Each table was equipped with a base map, markers, a sheet to record their top ideas, and a table facilitator from the DK&P team or County planning department. Citizens drew on the base maps to illustrate how they might like to see the communities evolve over time and described the uses, open spaces, building design, landscaping, street design, transportation, parking, and services they hoped to see in the area one day.

At the end of the meeting a representative from each table presented their tables three big ideas to the rest of the participants. Numerous common ideas materialized.



County Judge Ruben John Vogt giving opening speech



Table representative presented their big ideas at the table



Tables discussing ideas and issues at the Hands-On Design Session

# Input Results

## One Word Card & the Word Cloud

In addition to the table maps and group presentations, participants were also asked to complete an exit survey and “one word” card. Participants simply wrote down one word that came to mind about Mission Trail “Now” and “In the Future.”

A word cloud was created from the responses to the One Word Card for guidance on the plan. The larger the word appeared the more respondents used that word.

ONE WORD THAT COMES TO MIND ABOUT THE MISSION TRAIL



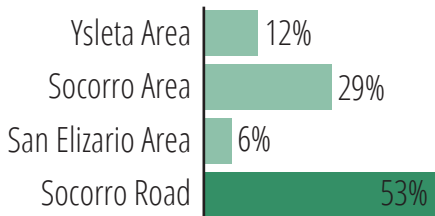
ONE WORD THAT COMES TO MIND ABOUT THE MISSION TRAIL

**IN THE FUTURE**

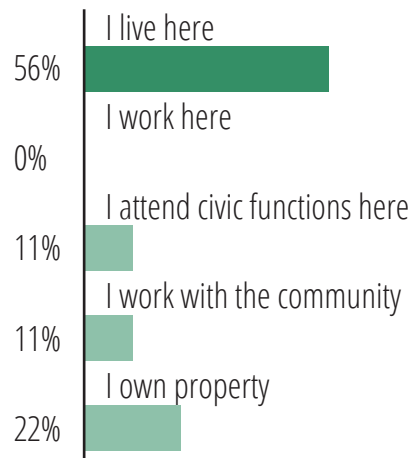


## Presentation Keypad Polling

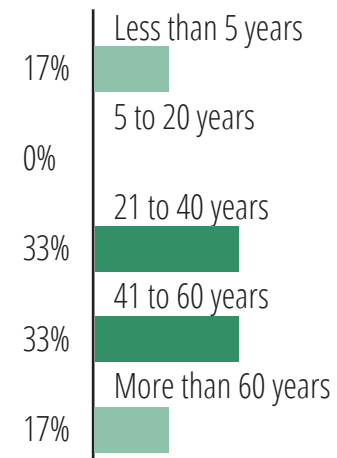
WHAT PART OF THE MISSION TRAIL ARE YOU MOST CONCERNED WITH?



WHAT IS YOUR MAIN INTEREST IN THE MISSION TRAIL AREA?



HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED OR WORKED IN THE MISSION VALLEY?

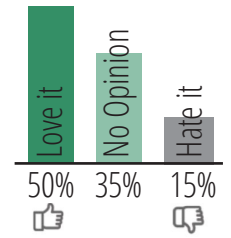
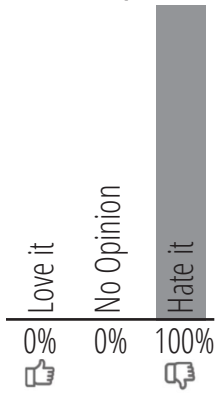


**100%**  
Personal Car:  
The Primary Way People Get Around

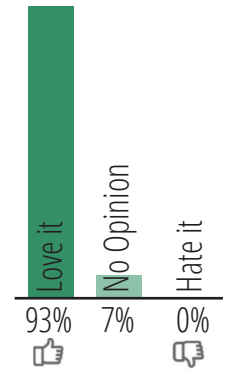
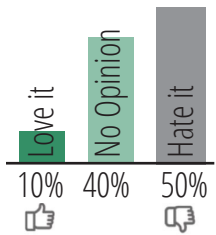
# Digital Visual Preference Survey

Do you **Like** this?

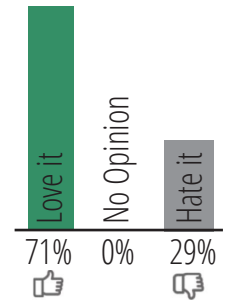
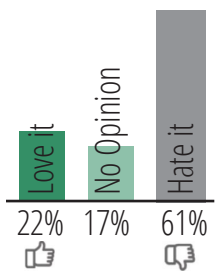
## Retail



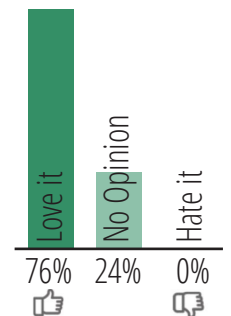
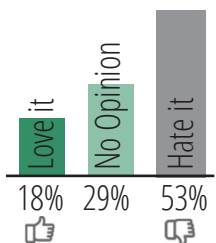
## Homes



## Fast Food



## Hotel



# Open Design Studio

## Charrette Week

From Wednesday, November 14 through Friday, November 16 the planning team continued to work with the community in an open design studio at the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo Tribal Courthouse which was generously shared by the Ysleta community. Residents and local leaders were encouraged to stop by the studio throughout the course of the three days to check the status of the plan, provide further input, and to make sure the plan was on the right track.

The convenient location of the studio within the study area, as well as the immense community interest, resulted in over 530 studio visitors, as event participants, stakeholder meeting attendees, and to have conversations on-site. The table drawings and plans from the Tuesday night's Hands-on Design Session were placed around the room for continual review.

While community members visited the studio, the design team continued to analyze the information gathered from the community to create a single synthesis plan. The synthesis plan included physical design elements, such as adding sidewalks and identifying opportunities for infill development, as well as placing desired uses along the main streets like Socorro Road. The planners and designers created lists, diagrams, drawings, and plans, working to combine and refine the ideas provided by the community.

Plans, renderings, and initial concepts developed during the day were pinned-up to the walls and discussed in the evenings. Technical aspects such as economics, land ownership, and first steps were discussed. Members of the public listened in and added their comments and observations of the plan as it was developing at this early stage to include their input as the plan was refined.

**536**  
Studio Visitors  
Event Participants  
Stakeholders  
Conversations On-site



Pin-up of Charrette products

# Technical Meetings

## Charrette Week

In addition to the public open design studio, members of the planning team held a series of technical meetings.

During the meetings, the team answered design questions and discussed the draft plan to gain input and ensure that the ideas being developed were balanced by many viewpoints.



Review of promotional film at Technical Meetings

## Technical Meetings

- El Paso County Historical Commission
- Transportation & Infrastructure
- Health Sustainability & Environment
- Housing & Community Development
- UNESCO / Heritage Tourism
- El Paso Water Improvement District
- Economic Development Organizations
- El Paso County & Elected Officials



Meeting with Elected Officials

# Work-in-Progress Presentation

## Charrette Week

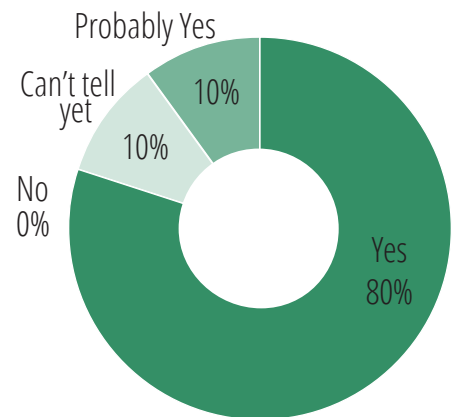
The charrette week ended with an evening “Work-in-Progress” presentation on Friday, November 16. Roughly 80 citizens gathered at the auditorium for the presentation. After introductions by Jose Quinonez, the Director of Economic Development, DK&P principal Jason King began the presentation with a summary of the week’s events.

Jason walked through the concepts and vision gathered from the public at the hands-on design session and developed throughout the week. Jason pointed out concepts found within the proposed plan that came directly from feedback from the local residents. The plan was discussed in a series of phases. Change would not happen overnight, he emphasized, but progress could be expected one step at a time at selected locations.

A series of renderings illustrated how Socorro Road, Socorro Mission area, and San Elizario Historical District could be revitalized, while aerial illustrations showed how targeted and context-sensitive development could fill out the neighborhood over time without compromising its warm and inviting character.

At the end of the presentation, attendants were surveyed using keypad polling to assess if the design team had properly translated their ideas into the vision for Mission Valley. Survey results showed that 90% of the audience believed the plan was on, or probably on, the right track. Following the survey, participants discussed the plan with the team during a question and answer period.

Do you think the draft ideas presented tonight are on the **right track**?



Jason King, Project Director from Dover, Kohl & Partners, giving work-in-progress presentation



# B DESIGN GUIDELINES

## Design Guideline Purpose

The Design Guidelines for the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District are a set of recommendations for the rehabilitation, restoration and new construction of structures.

The Comprehensive Plan for the Mission Trail Historical Area design guidelines serve to improve the quality of physical change, protect investments, preserve existing architectural characteristics, and prevent incompatible new construction. These guidelines have been established and updated to preserve the unique character and identity of the Mission Trail landmarks and their environments. They also serve as an outline for new construction so that future development will harmonize and support the existing structures.

These design guidelines for the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District are for guidance of professional and property owners who participate in the revitalization of the community.



# El Paso Mission Trail

## Design Guidelines

Introduction .....	B.4	Architectural Styles .....	B.20
Mission Trail Historic Preservation .....	B.4	Pueblo Colonial Style .....	B.20
Health & Safety .....	B.5	Pueblo Revival Style .....	B.21
El Paso Mission Trail Interventions .....	B.5	Territorial Style .....	B.22
General Design Standards: .....	B.6	Mission & Spanish Styles .....	B.23
<b>Neighborhood Design Standards</b> .....	<b>B.6</b>	Procedures .....	B.24
Connectivity .....	B.6	<b>General Considerations</b> .....	<b>B.24</b>
Orientation of Buildings .....	B.6	New Construction .....	B.24
<b>Site Planning</b> .....	<b>B.7</b>	Maintenance .....	B.24
Proportions .....	B.7	New Construction Considerations .....	B.24
Setbacks .....	B.7	Certificate of Demolition .....	B.24
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Driveways & Garages .....	B.8	Jurisdiction .....	B.25
Auxiliary Buildings .....	B.8	Certificate of Appropriateness .....	B.25
Landscape & Open Spaces .....	B.9	Action Taken by Historic Landmark Commission .....	B.26
Fencing .....	B.9		
Mechanical Equipment .....	B.10		
Sidewalks .....	B.10		
<b>Building Massing</b> .....	<b>B.11</b>		
Height & Scale .....	B.11		
Foundations .....	B.11		
Roofing .....	B.12		
Chimney & Vents .....	B.12		
<b>Façades</b> .....	<b>B.13</b>		
Materials & Finishes .....	B.13		
Pattern & Rhythm .....	B.14		
Three Foot Rule .....	B.14		
Openings: Windows & Doors .....	B.15		
Storefronts .....	B.15		
Signs .....	B.16		
<b>Appurtenances</b> .....	<b>B.17</b>		
Arcades, Porches & Portales .....	B.17		
Column & Pier Spacing .....	B.18		
Lighting .....	B.18		
Window Accessories .....	B.19		

Firmitas, Utilitas, Venustas  
-Vitruvius

# Introduction

## The El Paso Mission Trail Design Guidelines

In cooperation with the City of Socorro and El Paso County, the City of El Paso developed a plan for the preservation and development of two historic missions, one Presidio chapel and the road which links them. The sites include the Ysleta Mission (Nuestra Senora del Carmen), Socorro Mission (La Purisma), and San Elizario Presidio Chapel (Iglesia de San Elizario) located along Socorro Road (Camino Real).

### Historic Assets

The architectural character within the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District is diverse. Most structures cannot be identified as reflecting one particular architectural style. Rather, the majority of the structures are a mixture of styles, materials and construction techniques.

Three important historic landmarks tie the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District together: the Ysleta Mission, the Socorro Mission, and the San Elizario Chapel. These landmarks are used as the main points of reference in designating architectural zones in the area. Although a substantial amount of structures do not conform to any one particular architectural style, the intent of these guidelines is to set forth recommendations in cases where additions and/or new infill construction is being proposed. In addition, they provide guidance in the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing nonconforming structures, and existing adobe structures. Adobe structures are the typical and original type of construction in this valley.

### Legal Description

The Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District shall consist of a 300 foot wide corridor on Socorro Road (measuring 150 feet on each side of the center line) from the Ysleta Historic District to the San Elizario Historic District and including the Ysleta Historic District, Socorro Historic District, and the San Elizario Historic District (See map on B.2).

## The Mission Trail Historic Preservation:

The City of El Paso, the City of Socorro, the County of El Paso, and the State of Texas made a commitment to historic preservation when legislation was passed establishing the Mission Trail. These government entities found as a matter of public policy that:

**The protection, enhancement, preservation and use of the Mission Trail is a public necessity and is required in the interest of the culture, prosperity, education and general welfare of the people.**

The purposes of the legislation and ordinances are:

To protect, enhance and perpetuate historic landmarks which represent or reflect distinctive and important elements of the city's, state's, or nation's architectural, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, ethnic and political history and to develop appropriate settings for such places;

To safeguard the Mission Trail historic and cultural heritage, as embodied and reflected in such historic landmarks by appropriate regulations.

## 2 Missions 1 Presidio Chapel & 9 miles form the El Paso Mission Trail

## Health and Safety Codes

Because of its historical essence, the Mission Trail has many older structures. These structures, due to when they were constructed, may not be up to health and safety codes. As a matter of fact, most structures that are 50 years or older fail to meet the standard requirements of modern health and safety codes. For example, plumbing that was installed in the early 1900's might meet current codes, but pipes will more than likely be in need of repair or replacement or vice versa.

Additionally, electrical and mechanical systems are other important considerations in respect to safety. Electrical wiring was originally wrapped in cloth, as opposed to modern plastics commonly used today. Older circuits were not designed to accommodate modern appliances such as microwaves, stereos, televisions and specialty lighting.

It is important to check code compliance for fire prevention, building construction, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, not only for new construction, but for responsible maintenance as well.

Health and safety codes should be considered for buildings and may require rehabilitation or maintenance.

## Procedures

General procedures for approval are found at the end of these design guidelines. They include processes for Administrative Review and obtaining either a Certificate of Appropriateness or, in rare cases, a Certificate of Demolition for any El Paso Mission Trail Interventions from the Historic Landmark Commission (HLC).



Old County Jail, San Elizario

## El Paso Mission Trail Interventions

The purpose of reviewing proposed alterations to structures within the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District is to assure compatibility with existing buildings. This also applies to the way a building is situated on its site. Site development is important in maintaining the historic integrity of a building.

New Construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance are typical interventions for the region and will be part of this document. They are defined as the following:

New construction includes the construction of new structures or additions to existing structures.

*Example: building a new home, or adding a room to an existing building.*

Rehabilitation is the repair or replacement of general building elements.

*Example: roofs, windows, wall finishes, etc. It might also be an attempt to bring a building up to code, using original or similar materials.*

Maintenance refers to the general upkeep of a structure; an exception to this would be changing the color(s) of a structure.

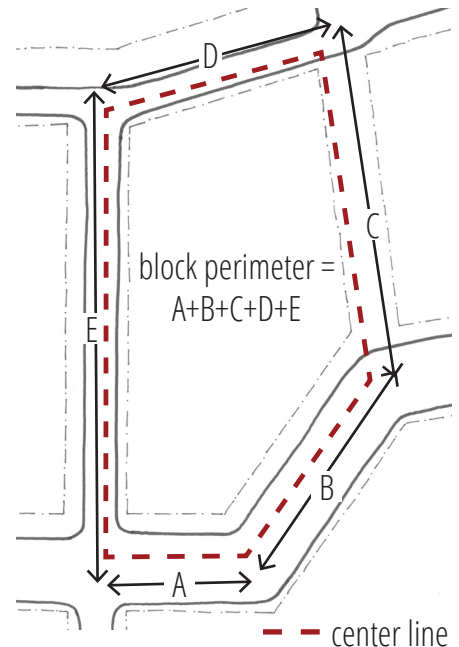
# General Design Standards

## Neighborhood Design Standards

### Connectivity

**Street Network:** New development projects should increase overall street connectivity. Create multiple pathways for vehicular movement, connect new neighborhood streets to existing adjacent streets, keep block sizes small, and limit the use of dead-end streets. All new neighborhood streets must connect to adjacent streets where connecting street stubs are available. Allow dead-ends and culs-de-sac only when required by hydrological constraints. Bend streets with restraint. Exaggerated curves are disorienting and difficult to connect to networks adjacent to the site.

**Block Size:** Block size is a critical feature of community design that contributes to the connectivity of both the vehicular and public realm. It is also an important component in the creation of a walkable community. Block sizes in new development shall not exceed 2,500 linear feet total. This minimum block size includes new blocks which are created adjacent to existing development.



Block measurements are taken along the center lines between right-of-ways regardless of roadway pavement locations.

### Orientation of Buildings

Building orientation is the first step in making great streets and public spaces. Buildings have fronts, sides, and backs; the appropriate and most carefully designed faces of buildings should front streets and public spaces. Building rears or sides, which often incorporate a building's service functions and typically have less doors and windows, should not face the public realm. The façade of all buildings shall be built parallel to a front lot line or to the tangent of a curved front lot line.

Reestablish the relationship between the fronts and backs of buildings to ensure that public spaces have natural surveillance from buildings and to avoid the blighting influence of the backs of buildings facing public spaces. Building fronts display a building's principal façade and shall face either streets or public spaces. Fronts of buildings shall face fronts of other buildings; fronts may face sides where necessary; fronts may never face backs.

Buildings with frontage on two thoroughfares, shall have their building front on the thoroughfare most likely to accommodate pedestrian traffic.

### Building Orientation Configurations

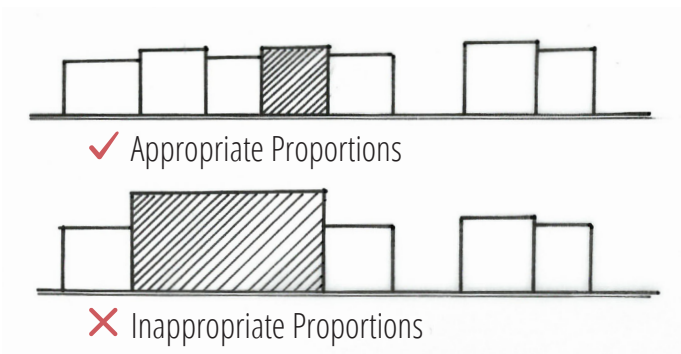
Fronts Facing Fronts	Acceptable (Preferred)
Backs Facing Backs	Acceptable (Preferred)
Fronts Facing Sides	Acceptable
Sides Facing Backs	Acceptable
Fronts Facing Backs	Not Permitted

# Site Planning

## Proportions

The relationship between the height and width of a building establishes proportion. The proportions of new buildings should be consistent with the dominant proportions of existing buildings. Proportions of a group of structures defines a pattern which is called a streetscape. Streetscapes help to establish the architectural character of a neighborhood. All new construction and additions to existing structures should preserve and enhance the streetscape.

Keep the massing and roofs of structures as simple as possible. Every building shall have a clear primary mass to which appurtenances (such as porches, arcades, small additions) and architectural details are affixed. The primary mass of a building should have four sides and be clearly discernible. Don't use overly complicated building forms or superfluous step-backs or bump-outs.



Preserve & enhance existing streetscapes & set proportions

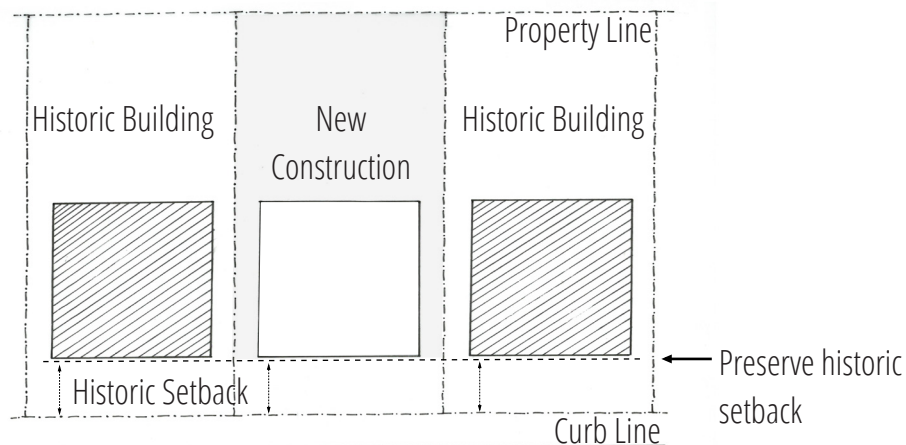
Maintain existing historic setbacks



Example of proportions of a typical building in the community of San Elizario

## Setbacks

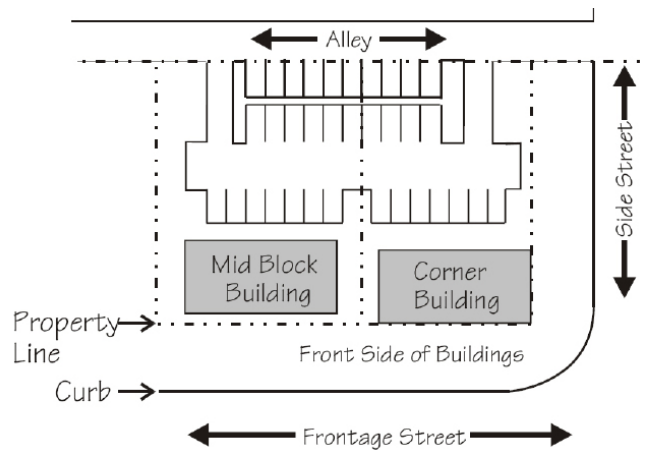
Setbacks help to create a unified rhythm along a street. Maintain the predominant existing building line. Existing building lines should not be disturbed by new construction. New construction of structures should be flush with the existing building line, and parking space should be located to the rear of the building. All other yard requirements as specified in the Zoning Ordinance shall apply.



# Parking and Access

Site all buildings along streets, not within parking lots. Parking shall be located behind or to the sides of all buildings, and shielded from view of adjacent sidewalks and public spaces.

1. Place the parking area where it will have minimal visual impact on the area.
2. Commercial parking should generally be located to the rear of the property.
3. Parking areas should not be placed in front or side yards.
4. Parking presently located in front of a structure should be screened with compatible fencing materials or landscaping.
5. The combining of vegetation with fencing materials will enhance the quality of the site.



Parking located behind structures, ideally along an alley and shared among businesses.

# Driveways and Garages

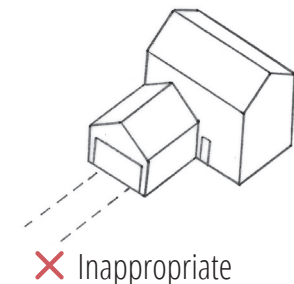
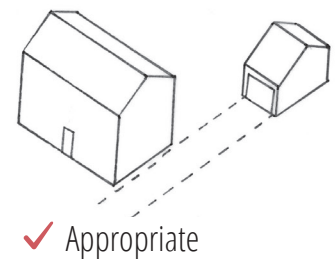
Most residential structures have parking at the side of the property in the form of a garage or carport. Effort should be taken to maintain the original parking area. When repair or replacement is required, the existing garage or driveway should be replaced in kind. Paved area for driveways should be kept to a minimum. Acceptable driveway materials are concrete, asphalt or masonry.

Use planters to screen parking areas.

Do place the garage to the rear of a house. Driveways should run along the side of the lot, with parking to the side and rear of the structure.

Don't place garages or carports on the front or immediately to the side of a house. Don't locate driveways or vehicle parking forward of the front facade of a home.

Use garage doors which are a single car bay width. Where access to a multi-car garage is needed, separate identical doors shall be used.



# Auxiliary Buildings

An auxiliary building is a free standing structure near the primary building. A garage would be considered an auxiliary building. Since most auxiliary, or secondary, buildings were usually built at the same time and in the same style as the primary structure, they play an important role in the architectural characteristic of a property. The same attention to detail should be observed while planning construction for an auxiliary structure as was given to the planning of the primary structure.

In respect to modernization, the most common element impacted is the garage door. Original doors should be repaired, but if replacement is necessary, new garage doors should match the original design as closely as possible.

Auxiliary structures contribute to the architectural character of a property and should be carefully designed.



# Landscape and Open Space

Landscaping is an inherent part of the siting and design of a building. Good landscaping reinforces and highlights the architectural qualities of a structure. Original vegetation should be maintained in good condition as it takes years for trees, shrubs, and lawns to properly mature and become established. When new landscaping is planned, it should be designed to complement the structure and the streetscape.

Socorro Road is a farm road in need of landscaping. Planting trees with a combination of shrubs and/or ground coverings can greatly enhance this road. Properly designed landscaping can set the tone for immediate and surrounding areas.

Along predominantly residential areas, property owners should be encouraged to plant trees with shrubs and/or ground coverings.

It is recommended that Socorro Road be the focus of a comprehensive and extensive landscaping program. Along Socorro Road a combination of trees, shrubs, and ground coverings should be planted from Zaragoza Road throughout the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District , including drought-tolerant, non-invasive plants.

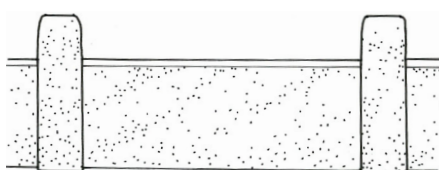
It is also recommended that within a 25' setback, landscaping or fencing be provided to screen incompatible buildings or land use.

# Fencing

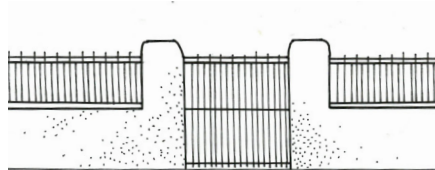
If fencing is desired, it should be incorporated into the overall design. Construction of new fences and replacement of older existing fences should be of compatible materials, in order to complement the building. Rock, brick, wood, and wrought iron are generally acceptable materials but each case should be decided individually. Chain link fence is prohibited within 1,000 ft. of the missions and chapel. If chain link fencing exist, grants should be sought to replace the fence.

*Examples:* rock with stucco, adobe with stucco, or cement with stucco, are appropriate fencing materials for a Pueblo Style structure. Wooden latilla style fencing may be used by itself or in combination with a low adobe wall as a low cost alternative for residential locations. Cinder block with stucco may be used for fencing but plastics should be avoided. Metal or wrought iron may be used with brick buildings and some adobe structures. The height of the proposed fence should complement the structure and should not obstruct the public's view of the building.

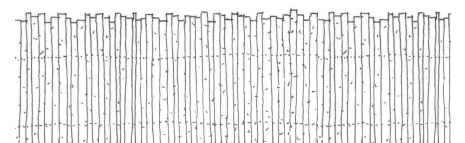
.....  
Compatible fencing materials should be used to complement the main building  
.....



Stucco Fencing



Stucco Fencing with Wrought-Iron

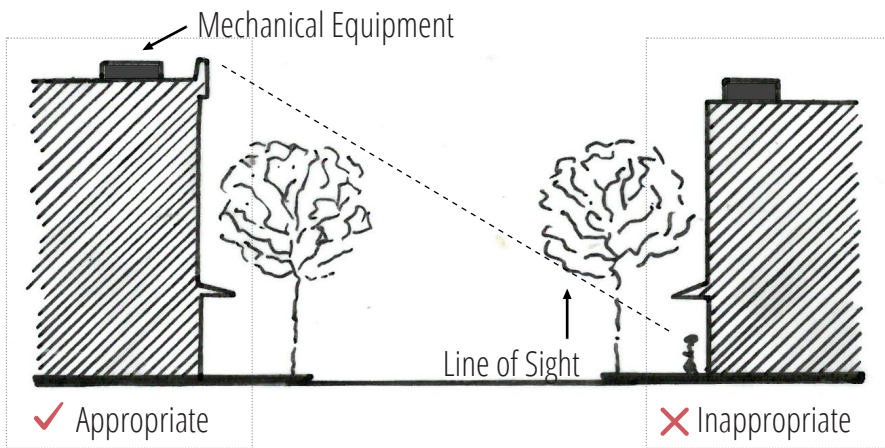


Latilla Style Fencing

# Mechanical Equipment

Mechanical, electrical and telephone equipment, as well as other obtrusive elements or structures, should be screened from view. Obtrusive structures include satellite dishes, air conditioning units, and radio and television antennae. Appropriate methods for screening obtrusive elements involve the use of landscape and harmonious architectural elements. Mechanical equipment should be located or screened as to not be visible on any public right-of-way. Landscape material should comply with appropriate vegetation. When screening with architectural elements, the intervention should be harmonious with the architectural character of the building.

On flat roofs, mechanical equipment shall be placed behind a parapet wall. On sloping roofs which run parallel to the front of a building, mechanical equipment shall be placed on the rear facing slope of the roof. On sloping roofs which run perpendicular to the front of a building, mechanical equipment shall be placed as far from the front as possible along the rear 25% of the roof.



Obtrusive elements should be screened from view

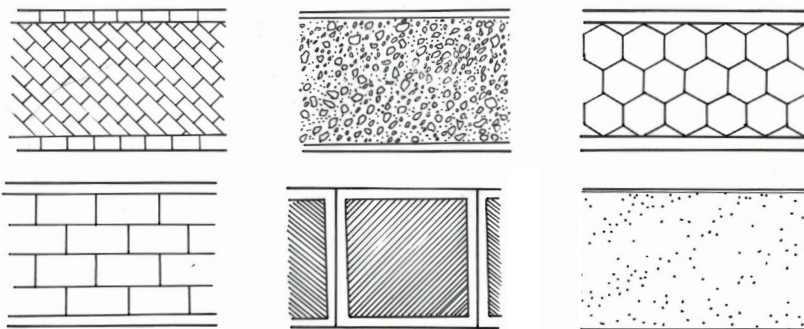


Typical roadside conditions of Socorro Road

# Sidewalks

Sidewalks within the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District are limited. This is due, in part, to the fact that the area is primarily rural. Almost all of the sidewalks are made of concrete; however, other alternatives exist. Brick and stone pavers are available in a wide assortment of colors and patterns and can contribute to the overall enhancement of an area. Exposed stones and pebbles set in concrete are other possibilities to consider as well. Sidewalks are encouraged within the rural center around the missions and chapel.

Mission Trail is mostly rural and therefore has limited sidewalks



Appropriate Sidewalk Alternative Patterns

Sidewalks should be included in the historic centers of both missions and the presidio chapel

# Building Massing

## Height and Scale

Height limitations are established primarily to ensure the compatibility of height and scale between existing structures and new construction. Height limits for the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District are specifically established in order to prevent new development from dominating or obscuring the view of the missions. No structure within 1,000 feet of the missions or chapel shall exceed 26 feet in height. Structures outside of the parameter shall comply with the building code requirements as stated in the City and the Zoning Ordinance.

26 ft. height limit for buildings within 1000 ft. of the focal sites



Ysleta Mission 1000 ft. radius from mission center



Socorro Mission 1000 ft. radius from mission center



San Elizario Presidio Chapel 1000 ft. radius from chapel center

## Foundations

All buildings have foundations of one kind or another; e.g., wooden post and beam, rock, or concrete. The majority of the structures in the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District, do not have exposed foundations. The exception is the one-part commercial type and some adobe buildings that have been rehabilitated. In these cases a thick coating of cement has been applied to the bottom courses to protect them from water damage.

The finished skin of the structure should run to the grade line or below it as required by building codes. Isolation joints are permitted at the floor line for the purpose of complying with code requirements. It is recommended that joints be finished with a color that complements the structure.

# Roofing

Roof types in the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District vary. Flat roofs are characteristic of Pueblo architecture. Mediterranean, however, may have flat roofs or hip roofs with red clay tile. Essentially, all structures are intended to be wall dominated, the geometry of a building should be more defined by walls than by roofs. The height of the roof above the wall should not be greater than the height of the wall itself.

If roofing is beyond repair, replacing materials should match the original as close as possible. A roof and all roofing materials should be compatible with the structure. Do not change the style or construction of the roof, e.g. constructing a gable or hip roof on top of an existing flat roof. If, however, the present roof is incompatible with the structure (and it needs to be replaced), it is recommended that compatible roofing materials, resembling the original architectural characteristic, be used to bring the structure together in overall design.

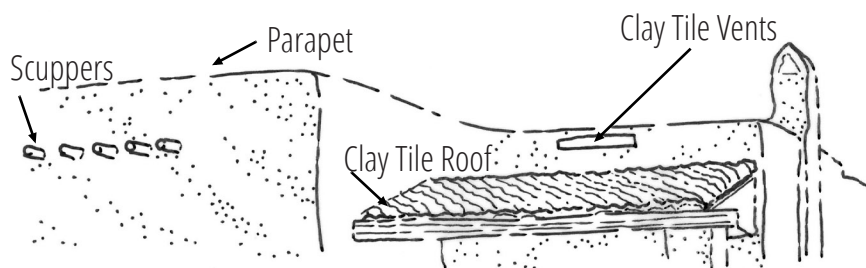
Use roofs which are symmetrically pitched and meet at a ridge. Gabled roofs shall have a minimum slope of 20 degrees and a maximum slope of 55 degrees. Hipped roofs shall have a minimum slope of 25 degrees and a maximum slope of 45 degrees. Flat roofs shall have a parapet wall on at least three sides, facing the front and sides of the structure. Parapet walls shall be an extension of the building walls below and shall rise a minimum of 2 feet above the adjacent roof.

Don't use asymmetrically sloped roofs, flat roofs with no parapet walls, or false mansard roofs. Don't use ornamental roofs which are affixed to the walls of a building.

# Chimneys and Vents

Existing chimneys and vents should be maintained. If repair is required, the original materials, style, color and construction should be matched. New construction should not involve the removal of these elements.

Spark arrestors should complement the termination of the chimney in design, shape and color. Installation of spark arrestors should not disturb the character of the chimney nor the character of the structure. In addition, all spark arrestors must meet city code requirements.



Despite the various roofing styles located in the Mission Trail District, all structures are to be wall dominated

.....

Original materials and style should be maintained where and whenever possible

.....



Typical roof in the San Elizario Historic District with scuppers, parapet roofing and wooden porch

# Façades

## Materials and Finishes

Much of the character of a structure is determined by the way materials and finishes are combined. The character of the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District should be preserved through proper design and construction practices.

**Masonry:** Appropriate masonry for the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District includes terra-cotta, stucco finishes, and adobe. Brick may be used as coping for Territorial Style.

**Cleaning:** Before cleaning any building, consult local experts on restoration who can help to research the surface of the building and determine the safest and most efficient cleaning method. **Sandblasting causes irreparable damage to terra-cotta, adobe, and stucco finishes.**

**Repair & Replace:** If masonry and/or mortar is beyond repair, use similar materials that match the color, size, composition and texture of the material being replaced. If a brick surface has previously been stuccoed, it should remain stuccoed since removal may damage the underlying masonry.

**Wood:** When working with exposed wood elements, original materials should be maintained where at all possible. If surface paint must be removed, safe chemical compounds are available to do so. Make sure to check for leaks.

If wood has deteriorated beyond repair, replace with wood to match the existing as closely as possible. Metal, vinyl, and other synthetic materials are inappropriate, although some of these may be considered on an individual basis.

**Metals:** Like wood, very little exterior metal has been used for construction within the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District. For the most part, metal is used for stair railings, balconies, windows, and fencing. Pueblo Revival Style architecture utilizes iron grill work as decoration or protection over windows and doors. This architecture also uses grill work in the ornamentation of balconies.

**Colors:** Color is one of the most personal decisions facing property owners. The natural color of originally exposed materials should be maintained. It is not appropriate to paint, stucco, or spray texture on brick.

If it can be determined, original color should be given first priority as a color choice. Documentation of colors for architectural styles and for certain periods in history is available in trade journals.

Keep the cladding of building facades simple. Lighter materials shall always be placed above heavier materials. Don't combine more than two materials on the same building, excluding windows and doors.

Wood is used predominantly in the framework of new structures and is commonly used around windows & doors as trimming

.....

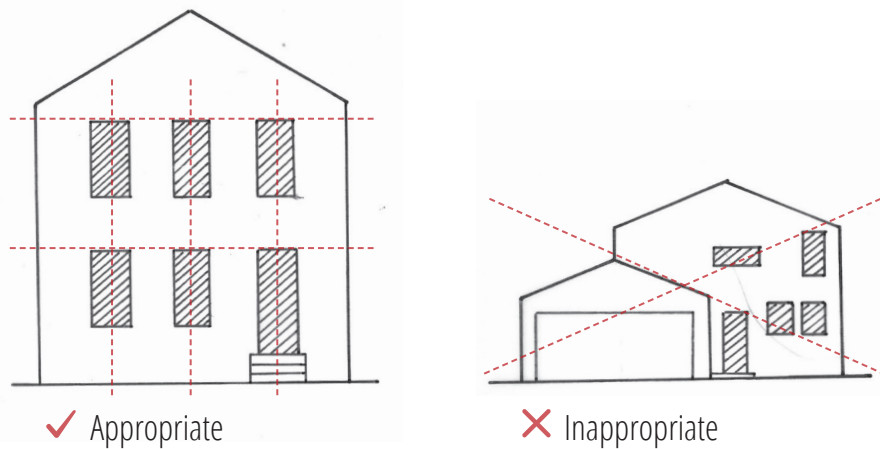
	Shutter, Window & Door Color	Wall Color	Trim Color
Pueblo Colonial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earth tones</li> <li>• Light blue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earth tones to white washes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earth tone stains</li> <li>• Light blue</li> </ul>
Pueblo Revival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural finish</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White wash</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural finish</li> </ul>
Territorial Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bright colors such as blue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earthly tones</li> <li>• Reddish browns</li> <li>• Sandy yellows</li> <li>• Turquoise blues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elaborate trimming</li> <li>• Bold, bright colors</li> </ul>
Mission Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dark brown</li> <li>• Dark earth tones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White smooth plaster</li> <li>• Earthly tones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety of colors</li> </ul>

Chart describing the color variation for different architectural elements according to its architectural style as evident in the Mission Trail District

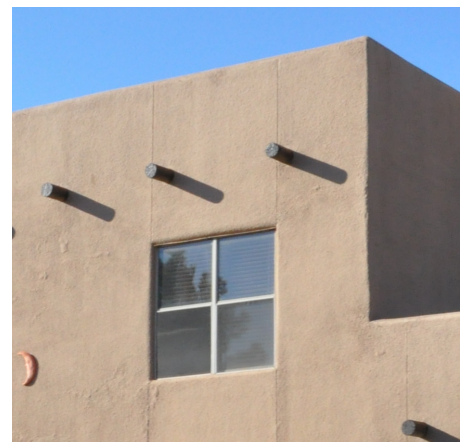
# Pattern and Rhythm

Solids and voids (walls vis-a-vis windows and doors) establishes a pattern in the façade of a building. A pattern of solids and voids establishes rhythm. Other architectural elements such as porches, projections and bays contribute to pattern and rhythm along a street. New construction or additions to existing structures should maintain and reinforce the existing pattern. The proportions of open space between façades should also remain constant so that the rhythm of the street is maintained.

Align window and door openings both vertically and horizontally at regular intervals. There should be a clear façade arrangement which reveals the underlying structural pattern of the building. Don't arbitrarily arrange doors, windows and other features on the front façade of a building.



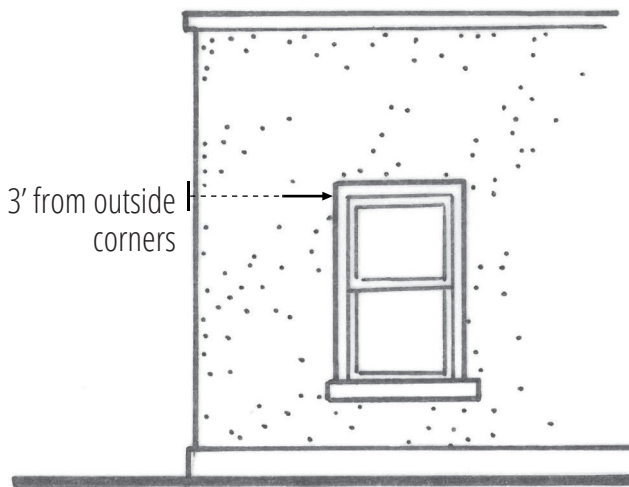
Window and door openings should follow the established pattern and rhythm



# Three Foot Rule

The integrity of adobe style buildings should be respected and protected. Windows and doors should not be placed within three feet of the outside corner of the structure, for in practice, the corner is load-bearing.

A newer building in Ysleta which depicts the window opening at least 3 feet away from the outside corner



It is important to preserve the integrity of adobe style structures by following the three foot rule

# Openings:

**Windows:** Windows should be repaired rather than replaced. If windows are damaged beyond repair, replacements windows should match the type and style, and either be or emulate the material and finish of the original. The window should retain its historic appearance, even if it is replaced with a modern day window. Do not plug, cover, or widen windows if they are on the exterior walls of the original structure.

Use windows which are either square or vertically proportioned. Horizontal openings shall be composed of individual identical operable windows which are each vertically proportioned. Don't use squat windows or windows which are composed of irregular or horizontally proportioned components.

**Doors:** Doors are important elements contributing to the character of a building. Proportion, composition in elevation, detail and trim are all essential to the overall scheme.

If possible, original doors should be retained. This includes original hardware e.g., doorknobs, hinges and pulls. Do not widen doorways or attempt to cut new ones, on the exterior walls of the original structure, however, a single doorway may be widened in order to make it ADA compliant.

If existing doors are beyond repair, new ones should be installed. New doors should match original materials and should also be similar in design.

# Storefronts:

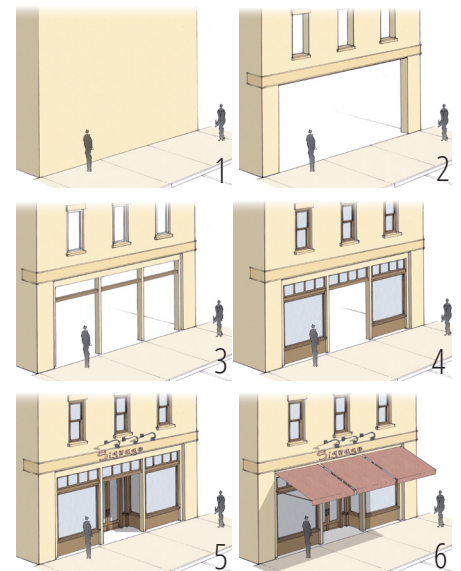
Although there is a variety of different storefront styles within the Mission Trail area, especially along Socorro Road, the following guidelines are flexible in that they are focused toward all storefronts in general.

Storefronts are the predominant elements of a commercial streetscape and should be restored whenever possible. If materials or elements are beyond repair, replacement materials should match the originals as closely as possible.

Storefront finish should be fabricated from adobe, masonry, or frame covered with stucco. Doors and windows should be of wood or metal sheathed wood sash. Supporting structure may be of any material allowed by the City Building Code.

Brickwork, pressed metal decorations, awnings, and wood-framed display windows are important storefront elements.

Security grillwork should be installed in such a manner that the grillwork does not detract from the storefront and its facade.



- Anatomy of a Storefront:**
1. Basic building mass is placed close to the street
  2. Generous shopfront with vertically-oriented windows above; Lintels and window sills provide a sense of structure
  3. Columns sub-divide the storefront opening; Transoms help achieve well-proportioned storefront windows
  4. Cased windows sit atop knee-height bulkheads
  5. Pedestrian-oriented entrance, signage and lighting
  6. Awnings provide shade and rain protection

# Signs

Signs are any public display boards bearing information or advertising. Depending on the underlying jurisdiction, the Zoning Ordinance specifically regulates design, color, material, location, and size of signs within that jurisdiction. These regulations can be found in the following chapters: City of El Paso, Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 20.66; City of Socorro, Zoning Ordinance, Section 46-634; and City of San Elizario & El Paso County, El Paso Mission Trail Historical Area Zoning Regulations, 1995. Article XI.

There are two types of signs:

1. On-premise (those signs identifying the actual business);
2. Off-premise (billboards).

These guidelines present recommendations for both types of signage, and a few basic sign regulations.

**Number of Signs:** For single-tenant buildings there may be a maximum of one sign for each street frontage per landmark structure or site. For multi-tenant buildings, one sign is allowed for each storefront tenant.

**Illumination/Motion:** Neon is permissible if implemented appropriately such as an “open” sign. Flashing, backlit, intermittent or moving light or lights are prohibited. Twirling or revolving signs are prohibited.

**Color/Design:** Colors should complement the building and the surrounding area. Fluorescent color should be avoided. Designs should be artistic, innovative, yet compatible with the building and the surrounding area. Lettering should not exceed 40% of the total area.

**Awning:** Awning signage should be limited to the drop flaps of awning. Awnings made of fabric are more appropriate for the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District, and colors should coordinate with and complement the building, adjacent buildings, and the general vicinity.

**Banners:** Banners are prohibited - with the exception that they may be used for a period not to exceed 10 days for grand openings and charitable functions only.

**Freestanding Signs:** These signs may be placed in the front yard no closer than 5 feet to the property line; the setback shall be 15 feet where the property line is located at the curb line. Signs shall be pedestrian oriented and should not detract from any historic landmarks. There must be 35 feet of spacing between freestanding signs. Freestanding auxiliary signs should not exceed 2.5 feet in height and 3 square feet in area.

**Projecting Signs:** Double-faced projecting wall signs must have a minimum nine feet clearance between the bottom of the sign and the ground level. Projecting signs are prohibited at the intersection of building corners - except if they are at right angles to a building front.

**Mural Signs:** One mural is permitted for a commercial business and is in addition to the building sign allotment. Murals shall not exceed 100 percent of the size of one wall. Text, lettering or logo on a mural shall not exceed ten percent of the sign area of the mural, or 200 square feet, whichever is less.

## Example of Signs



Band Sign



Shingle Sign



Free Standing Sign

**Wall Signs:** A minimum border of three feet is required between the sign and the sides and top of the building wall. There must be a minimum clearance of eight feet between the bottom of the sign and the ground level of the building wall. Signs mounted perpendicular to the front facade of the building should not be attached above the sill of the top story window. Signs may be placed on bland wall surfaces only.

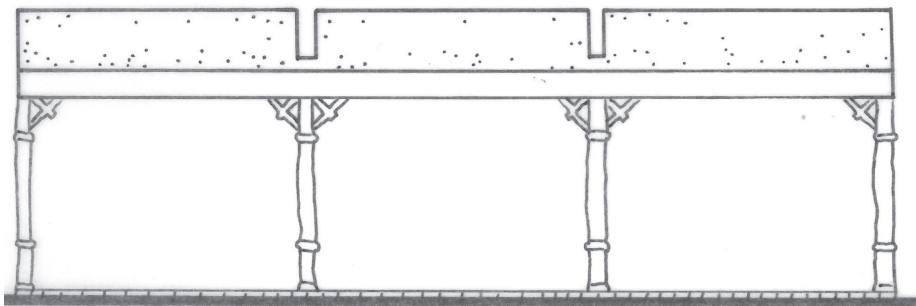


# Appurtenances

## Arcades / Porches / Portales

A porch and all of its architectural elements should be maintained and repaired as needed. If elements must be replaced, materials should match the original construction. Porch railings should be of wood. Steel pipes, brick columns and wrought iron are not characteristic of porch construction in the Pueblo architecture styles. They are therefore inappropriate materials for porch construction.

Exterior stairs to upper floors should be located to the side and/or rear of a structure - not adjacent to the porch. If major structural repairs are required, new construction should replicate the original work.



Make arcades that are low and deep, to provide adequate shelter from the sun as well as ample space for pedestrians and sidewalk furniture. Arcades shall be a minimum of 10 feet in depth, as measured from the wall face to the outside edge of the supporting column or pier. Arcades shall be a minimum of 10 feet and a maximum of 18 feet in height, as measured from the sidewalk to the underside of the arcade ceiling. In keeping with the architectural traditions of El Paso, the roof of arcades should always be separate from and lower than the roof of the building to which it's attached.

Don't make arcades which are narrow and too high to adequately shield pedestrians, shopfronts, and windows from the sun.

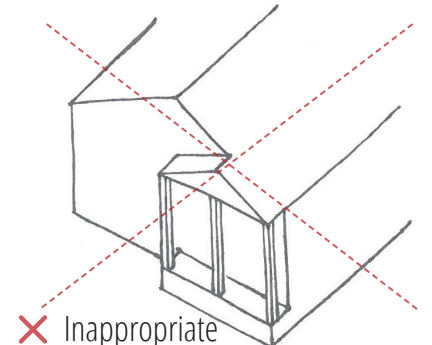
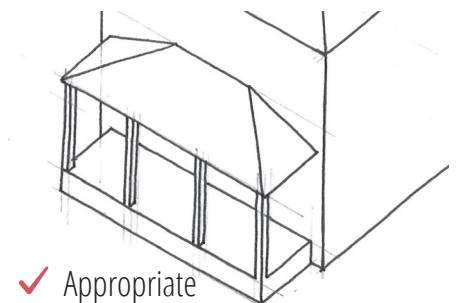
**Residential Porches & Stoops:** Create porches which are deep enough to accommodate furniture and be used in pleasant weather. Porches shall be a minimum of 7 feet in depth, as measured from the wall face to the outside edge of the supporting column or pier. Front porches, when used, shall occupy at least 30% of the length of the front facade of a house.

Front stoops which are meant to shelter the front entrance shall be at least 2 feet in depth and 4 feet wide. Stoops may either be recessed into the mass of the building or covered with a separate roof. Don't create superficial porches which are too narrow to be used.

Portales are both functional and decorative, and are characteristic of Pueblo style architecture



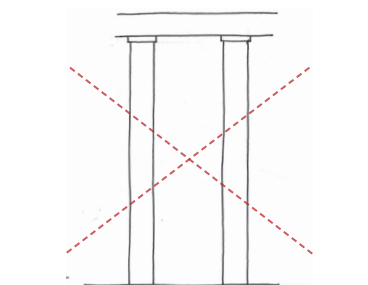
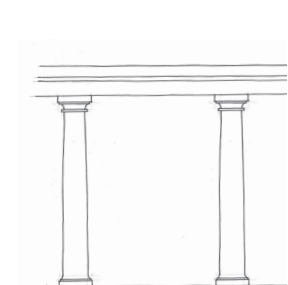
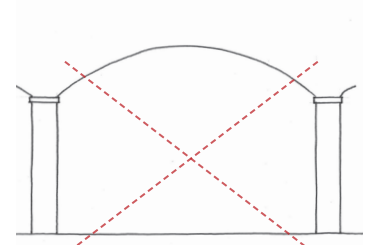
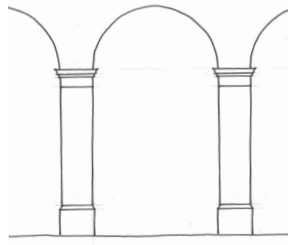
Continuous portales in San Elizario constructed of wood post and beams in this commercial area



# Columns & Pier Spacing

Place identical columns at regular intervals. The space between columns shall be either square or vertically proportioned, with a height to width ratio of no more than 3 to 1. Door and window openings should be centered on the spaces between columns.

Don't place columns at random intervals, or spaced in such a way that makes the openings between them horizontally proportioned.

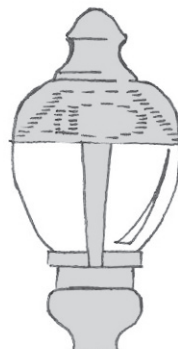
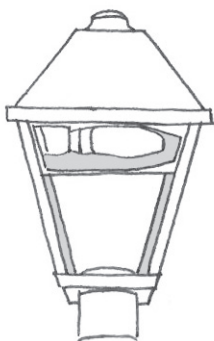


✓ Appropriate

✗ Inappropriate

# Lighting

Most properties in the district were not originally lighted in a decorative manner. If you wish to accent your property with exterior lighting, it is recommended to first try to find a dark sky compliant fixture that is a replica (or a modified original) of a late nineteenth or early twentieth century-style fixture. Modern lighting fixtures should be as simple as possible. Additional interventions can be made to make fixtures dark sky compliant and meet the local dark sky ordinance.



Examples of dark sky compliant light fixtures with a historically appropriate style



Example of the lighting fixtures found in the San Elizario Historic District

# Window Accessories

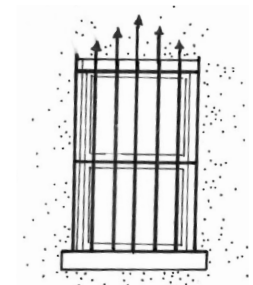
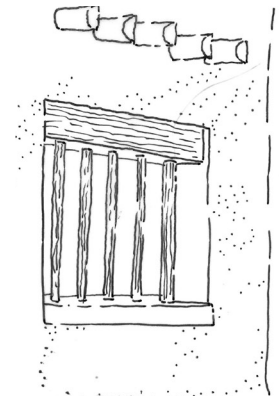
**Shutters and Awnings:** Shutters and awnings can only be installed if there is documentation they originally existed. They should be built to the appropriate proportions, even if they are not operable. Shutters should measure the full height of the window and half of its' width, so as to appear to cover the entire opening if closed. When opened, shutters should also lie flat against the wall.

Place awnings with the top aligned with or just above the top of the opening below.

Don't place awnings with the bottom edge higher than the window or door opening. Don't use backlit awnings. Don't use high-gloss, plasticized or quarter-round awnings.

**Security Considerations:** If bars are needed for security purposes, the bars should be installed on the interior of the building envelope. Bars can also be mounted within the window opening on the exterior of the building. Both cases will have to be considered individually in order to determine the impact of bar installation on the structure.

Simple bar designs will complement a structure far better than ornate patterns. A permit for bar installation must be obtained from the appropriate Department of Public Inspection.



Security bars installed on the interior of the building envelope (top image) and installed within the window opening on the exterior (lower image). Bars installed over windows are discouraged.

# Architectural Styles

## Pueblo Colonial Style

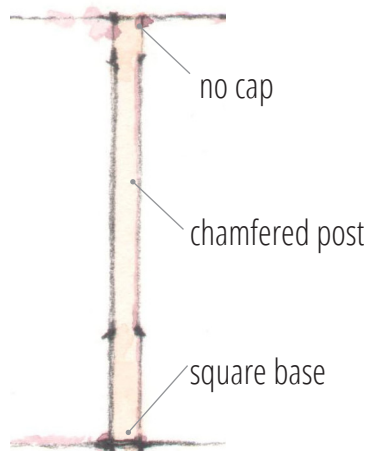
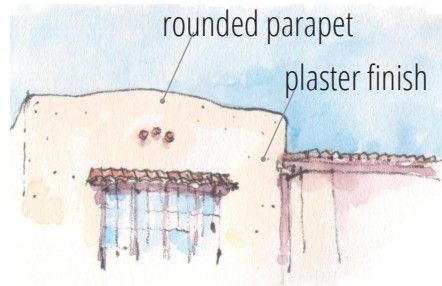
### Architectural Styles of the El Paso Mission Trail

It is essential that the qualities relating to the history of the Camino Real, and a harmonious outward appearance which preserves property values and attracts visitors and residence alike, be preserved. Some of these qualities are the continued existence and preservation of the historical area and buildings, the construction of buildings in the historic styles, and a general harmony as to style, form, color, proportion, texture and material between buildings of historic design and those of modern design.



Casa Ortiz, Socorro

Overview: This style is inspired by Spanish Colonial and Native American Pueblo architecture. The style can be traced back to the late 1800's and early 1900's. Most of the original Pueblo style buildings remain along the Mission Trail as well as in Arizona, New Mexico and throughout the southwestern states.



### Characteristics of the Pueblo Colonial Style

Building Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typically long and low one story buildings, with flat roofs with a slight slope</li> <li>Commercial and public buildings implement continuous portales that covers the entire sidewalk, the columns being set at the curb line</li> <li>Buildings have flat facades and present wooden column portales, projecting vigas or roof beams, and/or canales or waterspouts</li> </ul>
Exterior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wall colors should be those of natural adobe, ranging from light earth color to a white color</li> <li>There are exceptions such as protected space under portales in church derived designs where the chosen color might be white or a contrasting color, or have murals installed</li> <li>Single panes of glass larger than 30 inches square are not permissible</li> </ul>
Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional roofing elements, such as devices and other roof structures, need to be concealed by the parapet so as to not be viewed from the building front</li> </ul>
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walls are made of adobe bricks with adobe or lime plaster finish</li> <li>Other construction material which mimics adobe effect may be used but must be at least 8 inches in thickness and will require adobe plaster or stucco simulating adobe, laid on smoothly</li> </ul>

# Pueblo Revival Style



San Elizario

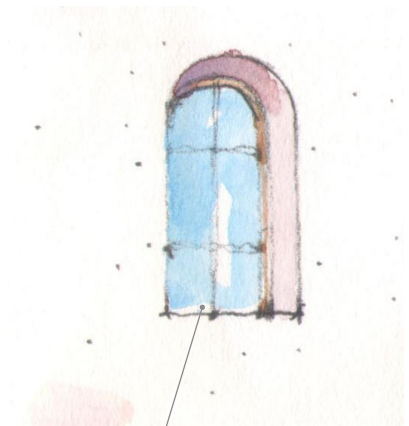
Overview: The style of Pueblo Revival is in essence Pueblo Style architecture with a few modifications. This style of architecture emerged around 1910-1920.



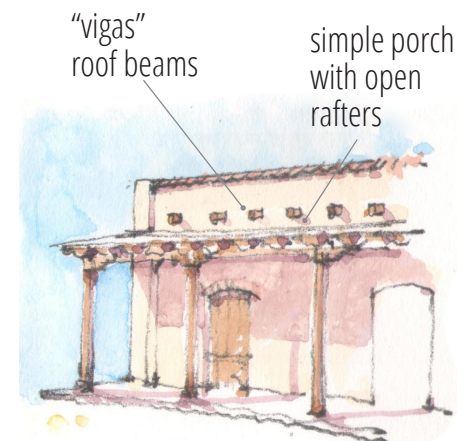
buttresses and wing walls

## Characteristics of the Pueblo Revival Style

Building Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buildings replaced vigas, or rough-hewn roof timber and rafters, with modern sewn lumber, and built-up roofing replaced mud roofs</li> <li>Imitates the traditional appearance of Pueblo adobe construction</li> </ul>
Exterior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walls are battered with rounder corners, projecting rounded vigas and round unpainted porch posts</li> <li>Small wood windows, with roughly hewn wooden lintels set deeply into the walls</li> </ul>
Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Architectural features found in the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District include high ceilings, adobe brick, wood windows and flat roofs with projecting vigas</li> </ul>
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modern Pueblo structures now use wood framed walls or CMU with stucco finish</li> </ul>



deep set window



"vigas" roof beams

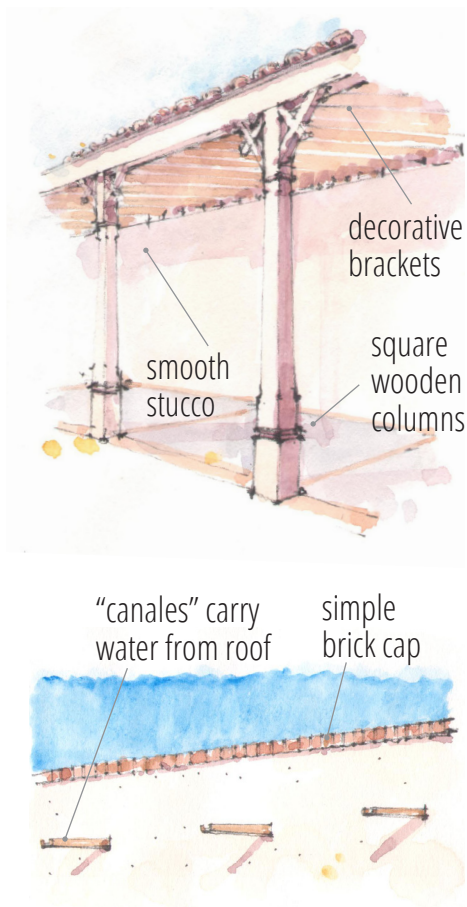
simple porch with open rafters

# Territorial Style



San Elizario

Overview: This style is a fusion of Pueblo and Victorian architecture styles. Territorial style is characterized as having straight lines and more crisp corners, a stark contrast to the Pueblo style. The style was developed from the mid 1800's to early 1900's around the time of the American occupation.



Characteristics of the Territorial Style	
Building Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rectangular structure with central corridor and a symmetrical plan</li> <li>Central flat roofed or gabled porch across portion of front with squared wood porch columns</li> </ul>
Exterior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elaborate central door with transoms or sidelights</li> <li>Four panel wooden doors</li> <li>Straight lines with crisp corners</li> </ul>
Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walls are covered in smooth stucco</li> <li>Wrought iron gates and courtyards</li> </ul>
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brick (coping at top of adobe wall)</li> <li>Adobe, ashlar tone and lime plaster</li> <li>Wood millwork</li> </ul>

# Spanish Mission Style

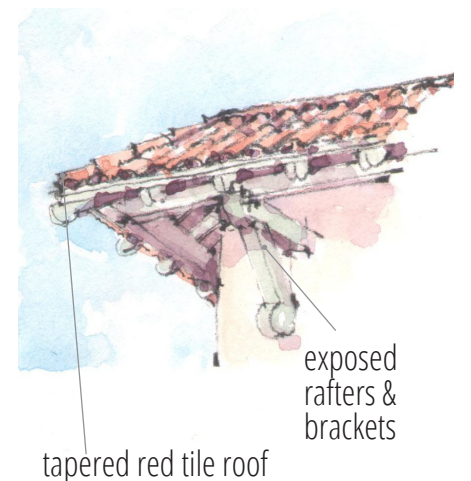
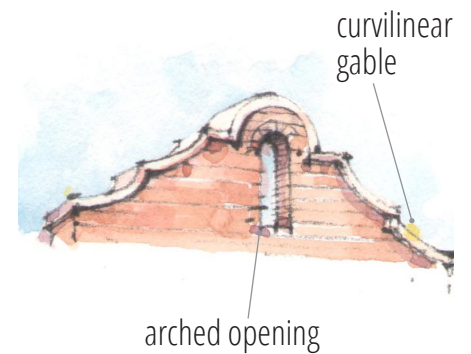


Wallace Apartments, El Paso

Overview: These styles can be traced back to the late 1800's. The greatest concentration of Mission and Spanish style buildings is found in the southwestern states. An example of these styles in El Paso includes the Wallace Apartments (1903) in Sunset Heights.

## Characteristics of the Spanish & Mission Style

Building Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asymmetrically composed façades</li> </ul>
Exterior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low pitched roofs</li> <li>Red tile roof</li> <li>Open, wide eaves or short eaves, with exposed rafters &amp; brackets</li> <li>Mission-shaped dormer or parapet</li> </ul>
Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prominent arches; usually above main entry ways or windows</li> <li>Large square columns supporting porch roof</li> </ul>
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stucco used for outside wall finish</li> <li>Wall thickness should be sufficient to emulate original adobe type construction</li> </ul>



# General Procedures

## General Considerations

### New Construction

New construction may be defined in two ways:

- (1) new infill construction on vacant land, or
- (2) building additions to an existing building

In either case, all of the general guidelines should be followed. Any new construction must be compatible in size, texture, color, design, proportion, and detail to adjacent buildings and streetscapes; it must follow the specific architectural styles designated appropriate for that particular zone. Incorporating existing architectural features with new design elements can contribute added interest and compatibility.

**Infill Construction:** Existing historic structures and the streetscape should be taken into consideration before designing new infill construction. Setbacks, proportion, rhythm, and building elements should all be addressed. Infill construction must follow the architectural style deemed appropriate for that particular area of the Mission Trail.

**Additions:** New additions should be planned so that they are constructed to the rear of the property or on a “non-character-defining elevation.” According to the US Department of Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation, new additions should be designed and constructed so that the character-defining features of buildings are not radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed in the process of rehabilitation. Instead, add to a more recent addition, or start a new one-to-two story addition on the side or rear of the building.

### Maintenance

Property owners should practice general upkeep in order to maintain structures and properties. General maintenance considerations include roofs, ceilings, walls, fences, and foundations.

Ceilings, roofs, and roof supports that sag, split, or buckle due to deterioration or defective materials should be repaired or replaced.

Walls, partitions, and fencing that lean, split, buckle, or are crumbling should be repaired or replaced. Loose plaster should be removed and replastered before any possible deterioration occurs. The reasons for such occurrences may be the result of deterioration or defective materials.

Faults in a building or structure that render it structurally unsafe should be repaired as soon as possible. Structural defects, such as damaged columns, should be corrected as soon as possible.

It is recommended that waterproofing and protection from the weather be included in maintenance. Protect a structure by waterproofing roofs, foundations, floors, windows, doors, and exterior walls. Exterior walls should be repainted when necessary or other protective coverings should be used to protect a structure from weathering elements.

### New Construction Considerations

There is a large amount of undeveloped land within the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District. New construction and design should not detract or adversely affect existing historic properties in any way.

### Certificate of Demolition

Once a property is demolished it is gone forever and can never be replaced. The demolition of any structure causes permanent change and damage to the character of an area. Plans to demolish a structure shall not be approved until attempts have been made to work with the existing structure, and approval has been granted by the Historic Landmark Commission. Certificates of Demolition are generally only granted where a significant threat to public health and safety exists.

An application for a Certificate of Demolition must be submitted to the Office of Historic Preservation. Information should include, but not be limited to photographs, drawings, and a written description detailing the proposed scope of work.

After receiving approval for a demolition project, the necessary permit must be obtained from the Department of Public Inspection before demolition can begin.



# Office Review of Historic Structures

## Jurisdiction

Any building or property lying completely beyond the prescribed limits of the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District shall be outside of the Historic Landmark Commission (HLC) jurisdiction. Any building wholly within or any portion that touches the boundary of the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District is subject to review by the HLC.

## Certificate of Appropriateness

The Historic Landmark Commission (HLC) is responsible for reviewing requests for modifications, alterations, additions, infill construction, and demolition of historic structures or any structure located within the Multi-jurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District. It is essential to identify and define the scope of the project for which a request is submitted.

After the scope of work of the proposed project has been identified and outlined by the applicant, the application process begins. The application for a Certificate of Appropriateness includes the following types of information and documentation:

1. Identification and location of the property
2. The Zoning Classification
3. The category of the structure
  - a. Landmark structure
  - b. Contributing structure
  - c. Non-contributing structure
4. Documentation for New Construction
  - a. Scope of work
  - b. Two (2) Sets of Drawings to show:
    - Site Plan - clearly indicating the location of the structure and site improvement elements
    - Floor Plans
    - Elevations - indicating the finishes of all four sides of the structure
    - Roof Plan - indicating material, roof slope, mechanical elements, and chimneys if intended
    - Details of architectural elements impacting the appearance or character of the structure
  - c. Photographs
  - d. Sample materials
  - e. Description of proposed work
5. Documentation for Rehabilitation
  - a. Scope of work
  - b. Two (2) Sets of Drawings to show:
    - Site Plan -clearly indicating the location of the structure and the scope of work
    - Floor Plans of the structure impacted by the scope of work
    - Full elevations of the structure impacted by scope of work
    - Roof Plans (if applicable) - indicating the roofing material
    - Details of architectural elements impacting the appearance or character of the structure
  - c. Photographs
  - d. Sample materials
6. Documentation for Maintenance
  - a. Scope of work
  - b. Photographs of areas to be worked on, clearly identifying the existing structure
7. The Application and all necessary documentation is submitted to the Office of Historic Preservation. (All documentation must be complete before the Historic Landmark Commission can consider the application for review)
8. Requests for new construction, rehabilitation and general maintenance will be reviewed by the Historic Landmark Commission;
9. The Historic Landmark Commission must take action within sixty (60) days from the date the application was first submitted to the Office of Historic Preservation.
10. After approval is granted, all necessary permits may be applied for from the appropriate office or department having jurisdiction for the location of the proposed project.

# Action Taken by the Historic Landmark Commission

The review of an application by the Commission may result in one of the following:

- Approval with no stipulations
- Approval with stipulations
- Tabled for further information
- Denial

Should the applicant disagree with the decision of the Historic Landmark Commission (HLC), the applicant has the right to appeal to the appropriate jurisdictions' City Council within sixty (60) days from the date of action taken by the HLC.

The appropriate jurisdictions' City Council decision is binding and final.

After receiving project approval, the applicant shall secure all necessary building permits from the appropriate Department of Public Inspection, in order to begin work.

# C UNESCO DESIGNATION

## Prior to World Heritage Site Designation

The process for inscription as a World Heritage Site can take some time, nearly a decade in some cases. Therefore, it is important to ensure that proper measures have been taken to ensure a positive nomination process, and to protect and preserve the cultural and natural heritage of the Mission Trail prior to a World Heritage Site designation. Here are some outlined steps the Mission Trail area can take right now in preparation for the nomination process:

### **Strengthen Local Historic Districts**

A World Heritage Site nominee must show local, state, and federal support for its conservation. There are locally and federally designated historic districts around each mission and the presidio chapel as well as along Socorro Road. By strengthening the local historic districts, it will not only show local support but preserve these assets during the pre-nomination process.

### **Support National Historic Districts and consider National Historic Landmark status**

The two missions and presidio chapel are all recognized on the National Register of Historic Places by National Park Services, which gives them national recognition as historical places worthy of preservation and can qualify them for national preservation benefits and incentives. To further strengthen their federal support as a heritage site, it may be beneficial to pursue National Historic Landmark Status.

### **Implement Multijurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District**

In order to provide a more cohesive front, the overlay district can serve as an overarching entity to implement design guidelines to the preservation of these assets while they pursue international designation.

### **Pursue Improvement Funding Prior to Designation**

While UNESCO offers certain advantages in pursuing international funding sources for preservation and site improvements, it is important to continue to pursue other funding sources in the interim as laid out in the Economics sections. This may be in the form of Business Improvement Districts, Public Improvement Districts (PIDs) and/or an Economic Development Authority (EDA).

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## National Historic Landmarks (NHLs)

are historic places that hold national significance. The Secretary of the Interior designates these places as exceptional because of their abilities to illustrate U.S. heritage. Today, we have almost 2,600 NHLs in the United States.

.....

## Design Guidelines for the Multijurisdictional Historic Mission Trail Overlay District

serves to improve the quality of physical change, protect investments, preserve existing architectural characteristics, and prevent incompatible new construction.

.....

# UNESCO

## What is a World Heritage Site?

A World Heritage Site is a landmark or area which is selected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as having cultural, historical, scientific or other form of significance, and is legally protected by international treaties. The sites are judged important to the collective interests of humanity. To be selected, a World Heritage Site must already be a classified landmark, unique in some respect as a geographically and historically identifiable place having special cultural or physical significance. It may signify a remarkable accomplishment of humanity, and serve as evidence of our intellectual history on the planet.

Sites listed often receive a boost in tourism due to their recognized significance and preservation. Under certain conditions, listed sites can obtain funds from the World Heritage Fund.

The program began with the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage, which was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on 16 November 1972. Since then, 193 state parties have ratified the convention, making it one of the most widely recognized international agreements and the world's most popular cultural program.



**1,092**  
Designated Sites  
Worldwide



**832**  
Cultural  
Sites



**206**  
Natural  
Sites



**35**  
Mixed  
Sites

## Most World Heritage Sites

- |                     |                             |                             |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. <b>53</b> Italy  | 5. <b>42</b> Germany        | 9. <b>28</b> Russia         |
| 2. <b>52</b> China  | 6. <b>36</b> India          | 10. <b>23</b> United States |
| 3. <b>46</b> Spain  | 7. <b>34</b> Mexico         | 11. <b>23</b> Iran          |
| 4. <b>43</b> France | 8. <b>31</b> United Kingdom | 12. <b>22</b> Japan         |



**195** member state parties.

# Criteria for Section

## Step 5 of Nomination Process

The Criteria for Selection cite six cultural and four natural explanations for selection which qualify heritage of substantial preservation.

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### Cultural Heritage Criteria



Represents a masterpiece of human creative genius



Exhibits an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design



Bears a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or has disappeared



Outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates a significant stage in human history



Outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture, or human interaction with the environment



Be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance

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### Natural Heritage Criteria



Contains superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance



Represents major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features



Represents significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals



Contains significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species

SOURCE: UNESCO

# Nomination Process

## To Designate a World Heritage Site

### How to Become a World Heritage Site

The process for inscription as a World Heritage Site is a complex and detailed process that must involve multiple levels of US government interest and coordination as well as coordination with international organizations within UNESCO. The degree of complexity is dependent on the nomination site in question.

First the site must be within a “State Party” which is a country that has pledged protection of their natural and cultural heritage sites at the World Heritage Convention.

The Nomination Process is provided by UNESCO as a 5-step process, which includes the Tentative List, the Nomination File, the Advisory Bodies, the World Heritage Committee, and the Criteria for Selection. State parties are limited to one nomination per year.

The Upstream Process, initiated in 2010, acknowledged not all nominations will be clear and unambiguous; the concept allowed Advisory Bodies to provide advance assistance through the form of advice, consultation and analysis prior to the submission of a nomination. The resource is available to all state parties.

For more information, the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention is a descriptive resource which provides documents for nomination preparedness.

### Nomination Process

1

The **Tentative List** is a catalogue of significant cultural and natural sites for potential inscription on the World Heritage List. The inventory can be updated at any time. Assistant Secretary of Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks decides what is on the list in the US.

2

The **Nomination** is the documentation file for a potential site selected from the Tentative List. The World Heritage Centre can aid in packaging necessary documentation, provides advice, and reviews file for completion. One nomination is permitted a year per country.

3

**Advisory Bodies** review completed nominations and provide an assessment. The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property provides consultation on training and the conservation of cultural sites.

4

The **World Heritage Committee** gathers once a year and ultimately decides which nominations are inscribed to the World Heritage List. The committee can also request additional supporting material.

5

A site must be considered of **Outstanding Universal Value** as well as be applicable to at least one of the ten selection **Criteria for Selection**.

# Benefits of Inscription

## as a World Heritage Site

There are numerous benefits of being a World Heritage site and recognized as an iconic site that is protected by the World Heritage Convention. Many sites start benefiting from the moment they are nominated for World Heritage status, and well before they are added to the World Heritage List.

For example, governments have improved sites, expanded park boundaries, and put improved protections in place in order to strengthen a World Heritage nomination.

Once added to the World Heritage List, a site gets the following benefits from World Heritage programs:

- **Identity:** The recognized site gets a new identity world over. The status itself confirms the outstanding and exceptional features of the listed site,
- **Funding:** The site gets funds from a global body for its protection and conservation,
- **Responsible Tourism:** once listed, it brings international attention to the site. Hence, ensures economic benefits to the nation,
- **Integration** of the site harmoniously into the broader landscape,
- **Protection** during wartime: the site becomes protected under **Geneva convention** against destruction or misuse during war,
- Access to **global project management resources** including drafting or improving management plans and adding and training new staff, and
- **Government's commitment** to maintaining the site.

### First Sites Protected

During the 1950's, the Aswan High Dam would have theoretically flooded the Abu Simbel temples and their surrounding communities in Egypt. After appeals from governing bodies, UNESCO intervened. The organization began to campaign for its safeguarding. Ultimately, the Abu Simbel temples were dismantled and moved to a safer location. The operation became a beacon for other heritage sites of universal value. As a result, other operations initiated the safeguarding of Venice and its Lagoons in Italy, the Archaeological Ruins at Monenjodaro in Pakistan, as well as the restoration for the Borobudur Temple Compounds in Indonesia. Both cultural and natural assets are fundamentally preserved; as components of heritage, the inter-connectedness of humans and their interaction with nature is a balance worth protecting.

## A Case for the Mission Trail

Two particular World Heritage Sites, the San Antonio Missions and the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro in Mexico, are listed on the World Heritage List due to meeting the criteria acknowledged in the previous section. These precedents offer a connection or similarities to the Mission Trail in El Paso, which are imperative in order to examine the sponsorship this site has for a potential designation. If the United States rejoins UNESCO, a case should be made to inscribe the Mission Trail in El Paso as an extension of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro and have the multinational trail designated within two countries. Coordinating efforts to connect the trail up to the San Juan Pueblo in New Mexico would make the inscription more complete with UNESCO designation from its historical start to finish.

Qualifying as unique missions and presidio chapel may be difficult due to the previously designated case studies.

A better pathway may be as an extension across the international border of the Camino Real.

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## Barriers to Inscription

As of January 1, 2019 the United States is no longer a UNESCO State Party

The United States has not paid their UNESCO dues since 2011.



Misión San José, San Antonio, TX

IMAGE SOURCE: NPCA

# San Antonio Missions

## 2015 Case Study

The San Antonio Missions are the most recent site to be inscribed as a World Heritage Site and one of the few culturally designated sites in the United States. In 2015, after approximately 9 years of community efforts and coordination, the Missions were nominated and approved by the World Heritage Committee. The San Antonio Missions are recognized as a symbol of the unification of multiple colliding cultures in an expanding world, therefore diversifying the landscape in unprecedented development.

The San Antonio Missions World Heritage Site includes five missions along the San Antonio River. The designation balances the missions and the river because both elements are necessary to fully fathom the role and purpose represented by colonization, evangelization, and consequently secularization.

### SAN ANTONIO MISSIONS





The 7.7 miles stretch of the San Antonio River encompasses the five San Antonio Missions: San Antonio de Valero also known as the Alamo (1718), Misión San José (1720), Misión San Juan Capistrano (1731), Misión Concepción (1731), and the Misión San Francisco de la Espada (1731). These reminders of past civilization demonstrate the fusion of colliding cultures: the indigenous people, missionaries, and colonizers. The mixing of cultures in this area resulting from the proximity of the missions includes the combination of shared knowledge and skill, as well as coexistence and tolerance of a blended group of people that were “neither wholly indigenous nor wholly Spanish that has proven exceptionally persistent and pervasive” (UNESCO).

During the process an issue concerning Outstanding Universal Value arose. The San Antonio Missions are significant to their community, Texas and the United States, but it needed to be proven that these missions are a universal symbol, important to all humans and human history, even those around the world. Paul Ringenbach, a historian and author, volunteered his time as the lead author of the 249-page World Heritage Nomination which set out to differentiate the San Antonio Missions from others already designated elsewhere. He concluded the difference stemmed from the fact that the missions were not entire working communities and not just the missions themselves. They included the agricultural lands, acequias (irrigation systems), churches, outdoor ovens, wells, a mill, a granary and even the outer wall. With support and influences in Washington D.C. and others like the president of the International Council of Monuments, the nomination was successful.

The nomination process was long and intensive, and believed to be a waste of time by many outside the community. It is evident the nomination and inscription as a World Heritage Site casts more popularity as a tourist destination. In anticipation of inscription and to strengthen the nomination, San Antonio spent more than \$40 million to improve the area for visitor opportunities.

The long process and preparation costs are balanced against the potential benefits to the community. It is estimated that by 2025, there will be an economic impact estimated between an additional \$44 million to \$105 million into the local economy they would not otherwise have received. Additionally, inscription would bring in approximately 1,000 new jobs, as well as hotel tax revenue adding more than \$2 million.

Preserving the historic communities cultural or natural heritage should be deemed a priority when establishing the groundwork for development opportunities. Developing areas surrounding the sites are to be taken as cautionary as possible. San Antonio has made it a goal for small community shops to benefit from the catalyst of socio-economic changes. However, certain development has been criticized as being insensitive to the historic nature of the area. For example, when a property was set to be sold next to the San Jose Mission for an apartment complex, many community members worried that the quality of the development and the precedent it would set for future developments would harm the integrity of the Mission. It is important to remember that a site can be removed from the World Heritage List, as well as Federal and State designations, if the integrity of the site is ruined, which has been done twice in history.

## Designation Criteria



**CRITERION 2:** Missions represent merging of cultures resulting in fundamental and permanent change in cultures.



**INTEGRITY:** Missions and river combine elements to understand their role in colonization, evangelization and secularization.



**AUTHENTICITY:** Legibility and physical remains easily identified. Retained use and function. Material, design and workmanship retained.



**MANAGEMENT:** Protected by Federal, State, & local laws, designations, ordinances, easements, and deed restrictions. US Park Service manages all properties.

.....  
**9+ Years**  
 For Inscription  
 .....

.....  
**\$44 M to**  
**\$105 M**  
 In Economic  
 Development  
 .....

.....  
**+1,000**  
 New Jobs  
 .....



Encinillas in Chihuahua, Mexico

IMAGE SOURCE: Vino Encinillas

# Camino Real De Tierra Adentro

## 2010 Case Study

The Camino Real de Tierra Adentro was designated a World Heritage site in 2010 as an intercontinental route. The nomination was listed on the tentative list by Mexico, therefore only the route on Mexican territory is considered part of the World Heritage Site.

The trade route and communication channel begins in Mexico City and stretches its way north to the San Juan Pueblo, New Mexico in the United States. The 1,600-mile trail served as the primary route between 1598 and 1882, and includes 55 sites and 5 other existing World Heritage Sites. This route was the main connection for the Spanish crown to dominate northern territory.

The exploitation of generated wealth from silver prompted an increased eagerness to colonize these northern territories for more silver exploration. This pursuit of silver caused development along the route, and economic development for Spain. As a result, the landscape was transformed, and the inter-exchange of cultural and religious ideas gave the nomination its footing for inscription.

## EL CAMINO REAL DE TIERRA ADENTRO



The impact of this route is enormous in terms of social tensions and social integration between numerous people and cultures that came to be involved in the economic development of this region. The structures along the route reflect aspects of this interchange of ideas and people. It is important to specify that certain sites along the trail were excluded from the original inscription; Mexico is preparing for a second nomination to inscribe the excluded sections.

Mexico, in general, has had an increase in tourist activity. Mexico has 34 World Heritage Sites which promote its cultural and natural heritage, and its history. It is estimated that tourism in 2016 brought in \$19.6 billion and 35 million visitors.

Overall, it is indisputable that the designation as a World Heritage Site has an impact on tourism, one which should be analyzed as to not negatively effect the integrity of these sites. The designation brings increased job opportunities and increased economic growth. Unfavorable impacts are also plausible, such as development that does not fit in with the historic context of the area and damage to the sites integrity through the integration of technological interventions. It cannot be understated that the significance in these historical communities and property lay in the essence of preservation and protection.

In attempting to cater to and entertain increased tourism, one World Heritage Site in Mexico was deemed to have compromised its integrity. The government decided to include a programmatic show on the pyramid grounds of El Templo de Quetzalcóatl and Las Pirámides del Sol y la Luna. Setting up the stage for the show resulted in the need to drill into the stones. This action increased humidity inside the pyramid and compromised the integrity of the structure. As a result, the show was pulled from visitor programming.



Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, Mexico



SOURCE: UNESCO



Bridge of Ojuelos, State of Jalisco, Mexico

SOURCE: Wikipedia

## Designation Criteria



**CRITERION 2 & 4:** Exchange of cultural & religious ideas between Spanish & indigenous peoples. Illustrates significant stage in history - Spanish colonial exploration.



**INTEGRITY:** Illustrates variety & diversity of functions & physical components that reflect its impact.



**AUTHENTICITY:** Individual components reflect overall impact of the road as a communication channel.



**MANAGEMENT:** Legal protection at Federal, State and local levels. Management at Federal level through National Institute on Anthropology & History (INAH)

.....

# 34 World Heritage Sites In Mexico

.....

# +35 Million Visitors

.....

In 2016, Tourism Industry Brought In

# \$19.6 B