



# Sunland Park 2040

Connecting Our Past ∞ Defining Our Future

**Comprehensive Plan**  
Sunland Park, New Mexico

Draft - June 13, 2018

(This page intentionally left blank)

# Acknowledgements



## City of Sunland Park

---

Mayor Javier Perea  
Julia T. Brown, Esq. – City Manager

### City Council

Jessica Avila – District 1  
Daisy G. Lira – District 2  
Bertha A. Salmon – District 3  
Carolina Renteria – District 4  
Olga Nuñez – District 5  
Don McBride – District 6

### Planning and Zoning Commission

Chairman Robert Ardivino  
Commissioner Kevin Huckabee  
Commissioner Cesar A. Irigoyen  
Commissioner Bill Jiménez  
Commissioner Jesus Soto  
Commissioner Jaime Chacon  
Commissioner Raul Telles

### Public Works Department

Hector Rangel, Director

### Community & Economic Development Department

Louise Marquez, Acting Director  
Jaime Castro, City Planner  
Estephania Cazale, City Planner

---

## Steering Committee

---

New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT)  
Binational Community  
Gadsden Independent School District  
International Boundary & Water Commission (IBWC)  
New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD)  
Tuscan Valley Properties  
Winton Flair Homes  
Border Industrial Association (BIA)

## Project Team

---

Mario Juarez-Infante – Project Manager,  
Wilson & Company, Engineers & Architects, Inc.  
Phyllis Taylor – Project Manager, Sites Southwest  
Richard Adkisson – Professor, Dept. of Economics, Applied  
Statistics, and International Business, New Mexico State  
University

(This page intentionally left blank)



## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	i
Role of the Comprehensive Plan .....	i
Purpose of the Plan.....	ii
Plan Development.....	iii
Legal Purpose of the Plan .....	iii
Public Engagement.....	iv
Sunland Park 2018 .....	iv
The Future of Sunland Park.....	vi
1.0   Introduction .....	1-1
1.1   Community History .....	1-4
1.1.1   Formation & Settlement .....	1-4
1.1.2   Attractions & Tourism .....	1-5
1.1.3   Demographic Trends.....	1-8
1.1.4   Previous Planning Efforts .....	1-12
2.0   Community Vision & Guiding Principles.....	2-1
2.1   The Vision.....	2-1
2.2   Community Values .....	2-3
2.2.1   People.....	2-3
2.2.2   Diversity.....	2-3

# Sunland Park 2040



2.2.3	Mobility.....	2-3
2.2.4	Natural Environment .....	2-4
2.2.5	Community Character.....	2-4
2.2.6	History .....	2-4
2.3	Guiding Principles .....	2-4
3.0	Land Use .....	3-1
3.1	Existing Land Use.....	3-2
3.2	Existing Community Character .....	3-6
3.2.1	Urban Design.....	3-6
3.2.2	Current Zoning .....	3-9
3.2.3	Other Land Use Regulations.....	3-14
3.2.4	Existing Annexation Criteria .....	3-17
3.2.5	Previous Plans.....	3-18
3.3	Issues & Opportunities .....	3-22
3.4	Future Land Use Recommendations.....	3-22
3.4.1	Future Land Use Plan.....	3-22
3.4.2	Future Growth Area.....	3-25
3.4.3	Border Crossing.....	3-26
3.4.4	Anapra Area .....	3-26
3.4.5	Identity.....	3-26
3.5	Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies .....	3-31



4.0   Housing & Neighborhoods.....	4-1
4.1   Housing Characteristics .....	4-2
4.2   Tenure and Vacancy .....	4-4
4.2.1   Vacancy.....	4-7
4.3   Affordability .....	4-8
4.4   Housing Opportunities.....	4-10
4.5   Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies .....	4-11
5.0   Transportation .....	5-1
5.1   Existing and Planned Transportation Infrastructure.....	5-1
5.1.1   Existing Roadway Network.....	5-2
5.1.2   Existing Transit Service.....	5-5
5.1.3   Existing Bicycle Infrastructure.....	5-10
5.1.4   Existing Pedestrian Infrastructure.....	5-13
5.1.5   Existing Aviation Infrastructure.....	5-15
5.1.6   Existing Freight Infrastructure.....	5-17
5.1.7   Existing Port of Entry.....	5-17
5.2   Issues & Opportunities .....	5-18
5.3   Recommendations .....	5-19
5.3.1   Future Roadway Network .....	5-19
5.3.2   Future Transit Service.....	5-28
5.3.3   Bicycle Infrastructure Recommendations .....	5-30



5.3.4   Pedestrian Infrastructure Recommendations.....	5-36
5.3.5   Aviation Recommendations .....	5-38
5.3.6   Freight Recommendations .....	5-38
5.4   Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies .....	5-40
6.0   Community Facilities & Infrastructure .....	6-1
6.1   Existing Community Facilities.....	6-2
6.1.1   Community Facilities .....	6-2
6.1.2   Health Care.....	6-3
6.1.3   Education .....	6-4
6.1.4   Public Safety.....	6-5
6.1.5   Churches.....	6-6
6.2   Existing Infrastructure.....	6-7
6.2.1   Water & Sanitation .....	6-7
6.2.2   Stormwater Management.....	6-10
6.2.3   Power & Fiber .....	6-13
6.3   Issues & Opportunities .....	6-13
6.4   Recommendations.....	6-14
6.4.1   Community Facilities .....	6-14
6.4.2   Future Community Infrastructure.....	6-17
6.5   Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies .....	6-18





7.0   Economic Development.....	7-20
7.1   Issues & Opportunities .....	7-21
7.2   Recommendations .....	7-21
7.2.1   Fiscal Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies.....	7-22
7.2.2   Community and Economic Development Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies .....	7-24
7.2.3   Cost of Development Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies .....	7-29
8.0   Natural Resources.....	8-1
8.1   Existing Recreational Amenities .....	8-1
8.2   Existing Environment .....	8-6
8.2.1   Floodplain/Floodway.....	8-6
8.2.2   Hazardous Mitigation Areas.....	8-10
8.3   Issues & Opportunities .....	8-11
8.3.1   Rio Grande.....	8-11
8.3.2   Mount Cristo Rey .....	8-13
8.3.3   The Mesa.....	8-13
8.3.4   Anapra Area .....	8-15
8.4   Proposed Recreational Amenities .....	8-15
8.4.1   Sunland Park Riverfront and Rio Grande Trail .....	8-19
8.4.2   Mt. Cristo Rey Regional Park.....	8-21
8.4.3   Mesa Regional Recreation Destination .....	8-22
8.4.4   Environment.....	8-23



8.5	Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies .....	8-26
9.0	Implementation .....	9-1
9.1	Implementation Strategies.....	9-1
9.2	Funding.....	9-17
9.2.1	Federal and State Programs.....	9-17
9.2.2	Local funding.....	9-21
9.2.3	Other Sources.....	9-24



## List of Figures

Figure 1-1   Project Vicinity .....	1-1
Figure 1-2   Joint Planning Area.....	1-3
Figure 1-3   Annual Celebration on Mt. Cristo Rey .....	1-4
Figure 1-4   Key Destinations in Sunland Park, NM.....	1-7
Figure 1-5   Population Growth in New Mexico, Sunland Park, and Doña Ana County, NM .....	1-8
Figure 1-6   Educational Attainment for Residents 25 Years and Older.....	1-10
Figure 3-1   Existing Land Use .....	3-4
Figure 3-2   Undeveloped Land Ownership.....	3-5
Figure 3-3   Urban Design.....	3-7
Figure 3-4   Existing Zoning.....	3-12
Figure 3-5   Doña Ana County Zoning.....	3-13
Figure 3-6   Joint Authority Jurisdictional Areas (CRRUA).....	3-16
Figure 3-7   City of Sunland Park 2004 Master Plan – Proposed Land Use .....	3-20
Figure 3-8   Doña Ana County Future Land Use .....	3-21
Figure 3-9   Future Land Use Plan.....	3-23
Figure 3-10   Proposed Port of Entry Study Area in Sunland Park, NM.....	3-28
Figure 3-11   Community Gateway Signage .....	3-29
Figure 3-12   District Gateway Signage.....	3-30
Figure 4-1   Residential Land Use in Sunland Park .....	4-3
Figure 4-2   Housing Tenure.....	4-5
Figure 4-3   Household Size.....	4-6
Figure 5-1   Roadway Characteristics .....	5-4
Figure 5-2   Existing Transit Service in Sunland Park.....	5-5
Figure 5-3   Proposed Las Cruces-El Paso Commuter Rail Route.....	5-7
Figure 5-4   Existing Bus Stop Amenities .....	5-9
Figure 5-5   Bicycle Facilities.....	5-10

# Sunland Park 2040



Figure 5-6   Existing Bike Lane and Off-Street Path .....	5-11
Figure 5-7   Existing Bicycle Facilities, Sunland Park and El Paso.....	5-12
Figure 5-8   Detached (Left) and Attached (Right) Sidewalk Example .....	5-13
Figure 5-9   Attached vs Detached Sidewalk.....	5-13
Figure 5-10   Sidewalk Gaps within Sunland Park .....	5-14
Figure 5-11  Doña Ana County Airport System Plan .....	5-16
Figure 5-12   Union Pacific Intermodal Facility and Santa Teresa POE .....	5-17
Figure 5-13   Thoroughfare Plan .....	5-22
Figure 5-15   Proposed Typical Sections, Principal and Minor Arterials.....	5-24
Figure 5-16   Proposed Typical Section, Collector .....	5-25
Figure 5-17   Proposed Bus/Transit Connections .....	5-28
Figure 5-18   Traffic Calming.....	5-31
Figure 5-19   Proposed Bicycle Facilities .....	5-32
Figure 5-20   Downtown Proposed Bicycle Facility .....	5-34
Figure 5-21   Proposed Bicycle Facility.....	5-35
Figure 5-22   Detached sidewalk along McNutt Rd .....	5-36
Figure 5-23   Traffic Calming Example.....	5-37
Figure 6-1   Sanitary Sewer & Water Infrastructure .....	6-8
Figure 6-2   Wastewater Infrastructure.....	6-9
Figure 6-3   Stormwater Drainage .....	6-11
Figure 6-4   Existing Culvert Condition .....	6-12
Figure 8-1   Existing Parks Inventory .....	8-4
Figure 8-2   Rio Grande.....	8-6
Figure 8-3   Floodplain/Floodway in Sunland Park .....	8-9
Figure 8-4   Issues and Opportunities for Extending Riverfront Trail in Sunland Park .....	8-14
Figure 8-5   Conceptual Neighborhood Park in Anapra.....	8-18
Figure 8-6   Rio Grande Trail Examples.....	8-19

# Sunland Park 2040



Figure 8-7   Rio Grande Trail Examples.....	8-20
Figure 8-8   Oklahoma Riverwalk Example .....	8-20
Figure 8-9   Mt. Cristo Rey Science Center/Museum Recommendation .....	8-21
Figure 8-10   OHV Park Site Layout Example.....	8-22
Figure 8-11   OHV Park Site Layout Example.....	8-22



## List of Tables

Table 3-1: Existing Land Use .....	3-3
Table 5-1   Roadway Adopted Functional Classification .....	5-2
Table 5-2   Existing Transit Facilities .....	5-6
Table 6-1: Sunland Park Community Facilities.....	6-3
Table 6-2   Sunland Park Health Care Services.....	6-4
Table 6-3   Sunland Park Schools .....	6-5
Table 6-4   Sunland Park Public Safety Facilities.....	6-6
Table 6-5   Churches within Sunland Park .....	6-6
Table 8-1   Park Inventory .....	8-3
Table 8-2   Mitigation Priority Hazards.....	8-10
Table 8-3   Mitigation Actions/Projects Identified by Sunland Park .....	8-23
Table 9-1   Implementation Strategies.....	9-1



# executive summary



## Executive Summary

In preparation for population and job growth, the *Sunland Park 2040: Connecting our Past ∞ Defining our Future* planning document is the City of Sunland Park’s Comprehensive Plan to guide development and investment projects. Sunland Park, New Mexico is a growing suburban community with hubs of activity, recreation, and enterprise. By 2040, the population of Sunland Park is expected to increase by approximately 14,000 people, representing a 46% increase from 2016<sup>1</sup>. Months of engagement with Sunland Park residents, leaders, business owners, and other stakeholders established a vision for Sunland Park 2040 that retains the community's character and culture. The Plan provides goals, policies, and actions related to land use, transportation, community facilities, infrastructure, economic development, and natural resources.

### Vision

Sunland Park is a unified city with an attractive economy that fosters a livable community. It is the largest city on the New Mexico border and the gateway city to New Mexico, Mexico, and beyond.



### Role of the Comprehensive Plan

*Sunland Park 2040: Connecting our Past ∞ Defining our Future* (Sunland Park 2040) is the planning tool for the City of Sunland Park. A Comprehensive Plan is the guiding document for both city staff and elected officials to support and advance the vision. The Plan documents present-day characteristics and the community’s vision for the future. The community vision is further supported by planning elements, which address issues of land use/development, transportation, infrastructure, and cultural and environmental resources. A unified plan helps weave together both previous planning efforts and developing trends to shape a

---

<sup>1</sup> Horizon 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization



# Executive Summary



positive future for Sunland Park. In addition to the Comprehensive Plan, the City’s zoning and development regulations have been updated to align with the Plan’s goals and future development expectations.

## Purpose of the Plan

**Examine Market Potential:** An economic and market study was conducted to explore opportunities for the community and land use potential for the area. This includes a conservative growth scenario using existing growth projections from the regional government, a refined growth scenario, and an aggressive growth scenario with the potential future development of a non-commercial Land Port of Entry (LPOE) in southern Sunland Park. See Section 6 for a discussion on economic development in Sunland Park.

**Provide Land Use, Zoning, and Development Regulation Recommendations:** The project team developed a Land Use Plan specifically calibrated to the desires of the community and the reality of the economic and market potential. The resulting Land Use Plan will be grounded in a firm understanding of the culture and expectations of Sunland Park residents, business owners, and elected officials. Additionally, the Land Use Plan will be based on analysis and forecasting of demographic, employment, and housing trends to provide strategic and long-range direction for the City. The Land Use Plan is enforced by refined zoning and development regulations.

**Provide Transportation and Infrastructure Recommendations:** Transportation and infrastructure expansions and system needs were identified as part of this planning process. See Section 5 for a discussion on transportation issues and opportunities in Sunland Park.

**Identify Priority Projects:** Priority projects were based on need, public support, project feasibility, cost, project significance, and other factors deemed appropriate by the Steering Committee and Consultant team. See Section 8 for a discussion of project prioritization and implementation strategies.



## Plan Development

*Sunland Park 2040* was developed in accordance with New Mexico state law and strongly emphasized public engagement through multiple avenues. Development of the Plan consisted of the seven phases illustrated to the right. The seven phases consisted of developing a work plan, existing conditions analysis, community visioning, developing and evaluating various alternatives, selecting a preferred alternative, and the creation and adoption of the final Plan. During this process, the existing ordinances and zoning regulations were updated.

## Legal Purpose of the Plan

*Sunland Park 2040* was prepared in compliance with the New Mexico Statutes Annotated (NMSA 3-19), which guide comprehensive city planning within the state of New Mexico. Per Section 3-19-9 of the NMSA, the Plan was created “with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the municipality which will, in accordance with existing and future needs, best promote health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity or the general welfare as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development.”





## Public Engagement

The following public and stakeholder outreach activities occurred at strategic times during the project process:



**Steering Committee:** Appointed by City Staff and the City Council, the Steering Committee included a combination of residents, business owners, and decision-making organizations. The Steering Committee met periodically throughout the planning process and helped guide the planning process.

**Community Involvement:** The community was engaged throughout the planning process, which included three public meetings/open houses scheduled at strategic intervals as well as a community survey and special event booths.

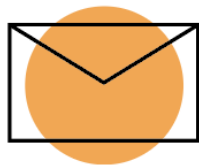
**Stakeholder Interviews & Meetings:** Key stakeholders representing development, transportation, infrastructure, and other subject matter were engaged in one-on-one meetings to help inform the planning process.

**Project Flyer:** Project flyers were posted throughout the planning process to inform the community of the community survey, public meetings, and other milestones in the planning process.

**Website/Social Media/Newsletters/Email Blasts:** These communication methods were utilized to advertise and update constituents during the planning process.

**Spanish-Speaking Stakeholders:** Translation services were provided for public meetings, bilingual print materials of community meeting displays, postcards, newsletters, and flyers.

**Adoption Hearings:** Throughout the planning process City Staff provided periodic updates to City Council. At the conclusion of the planning process, a separate formal adoption hearing will be held for the Comprehensive Plan and for the Development Regulations.



## Sunland Park 2018

The City of Sunland Park is roughly eleven square miles in size and home to approximately 16,000 residents located in south central New Mexico in Doña Ana County. Sunland Park is the southernmost city of Doña Ana County, New Mexico, and is bordered by Texas on the east and the United States-Mexico international boundary to the south. The southern portion of the City is

# Executive Summary



comprised of older establishments and entertainment activities iconic to Sunland Park whereas newer development expands northward along McNutt Road. The majority of Sunland Park is private, undeveloped land. Additionally, the area to the west of the City is regulated by the Camino Real Regional Utility Authority (CRRUA). The City of Sunland Park is linear in nature because of the geographical boundaries surrounding the City, which includes the Rio Grande, Mt. Cristo Rey, the Mesa, and the Texas and Mexico borders. Due to the physical geography, international and state borders, and transportation features, connections across these edges are crucial for Sunland Park.

The City of Sunland Park was formed in 1983 when the nearby unincorporated communities of Anapra and Meadow Vista joined with Sunland Park to incorporate the three communities as one. Since 1990, Sunland Park experienced significant population growth as young and early middle aged families moved to city in large numbers; however, currently only a small percentage of Sunland Park workers live and work within the city. Currently, the workforce is primarily experienced in low-paying service sector occupations outside of New Mexico; however, nearly all of Sunland Park's housing units are owner-occupied with very little vacancy. A few anchor entertainment and recreation businesses exist within the City that attract visitors to the region. Water and stormwater infrastructure within the City is in need of maintenance and/or repair. Specifically, culverts have begun to erode causing exposure to active gas lines and fiber optic lines. In addition, erosion is occurring above a number of culverts, causing a decline in the integrity of the roadway. Maintenance of existing infrastructure is essential to sustainability and growth of the City.

# Executive Summary



Previous plans encouraged 70% of the population growth to occur within Sunland Park and the remaining 30% to occur within unincorporated portions of Doña Ana County. New development has occurred near Country Club and McNutt Road. Redevelopment within Sunland Park is currently expected to use financing supported by incremental taxes collected within the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) over the next 20 years. Many of the projects under consideration are part of the City's Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) with the expectation to be funded from the City's operating revenues.

Mobility within the City is heavily reliant on the automobile. Primary access to and from the City occurs on McNutt Road, Sunland Park Drive, Country Club Drive, and Artcraft Road/NM 136. Transit service is provided by South Central Regional Transit (SCRTD) and Sun Metro; however, service does not cross the Texas/New Mexico state line in the northern portion of the City. The Purple Line extension helps bridge this east-west service gap by providing a direct connection between the Westside Transfer Center in El Paso, Texas, and southern Sunland Park. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is present; however, gaps exist in the network. While McNutt Road is a primary route for pedestrian travel, pedestrian crossings and recreational amenities are limited. Neighborhood pocket parks are scattered throughout the community. With the exception of the schools, the Sunland Park Sports Complex provides the only formalized recreational gathering space in the City.

## The Future of Sunland Park

The Comprehensive Plan provides a framework of recommendations for the City of Sunland Park over the next 20 years. The Plan provides an introduction to the City of Sunland Park and an overview of the community vision, leading to recommendations relating to the following topics, which form the sections of this Plan:

- Community Vision & Guiding Principles;
- Land Use;
- Housing;
- Transportation;
- Community Facilities and Infrastructure;
- Economic Development; and
- Natural Resources

An implementation matrix is provided in Section 9 to guide city staff in bringing about the recommended changes.



## Community Vision & Guiding Principles

The vision supports the community’s strengths, needs, and desires, while promoting responsible growth opportunities that will enhance local pride, public involvement, and the local economy. Various public involvement activities helped produce a consistent vision for Sunland Park: to become the “biggest border city in New Mexico...the Gateway City”. The overarching goal for Sunland Park is to attract more people and create a unified city with an attractive economy that fosters a livable community. Twelve guiding principles were developed to achieve a healthy and resilient community. The principles include: accessibility, socio-cultural features, safety, public health, natural resources, mobility, land use, housing, economic viability, community engagement, community amenities, and aesthetics. These principles shaped the recommendations throughout the entire Plan.

## Land Use

Sunland Park supports infill development and a growth strategy to annex land to include Doña Ana County International Jetport at Santa Teresa Airport and the area west of the established city limits to NM-136. A LPOE within the City of Sunland Park, separate from the existing Santa Teresa POE, is preferred. Development occurs in defined districts for entertainment, education, shopping, employment, and civic activities throughout the community. Sunland Park’s land use goals and policies envision a well-rounded, balanced community. As growth occurs, the policies emphasize the importance of building upon existing characteristics that make Sunland Park unique. The City’s image as an attractive, livable community is promoted through diverse development patterns reinforcing Sunland Park as the gateway city.

## Housing & Neighborhoods

Sunland Park should promote housing choices and support a variety of housing types that sustain a mixed-income community. Sunland Park needs to grow its housing supply, with a range of housing types, in master planned developments within the existing municipal limits and within the future growth area. Master Planned Neighborhoods should incorporate open space and recreational amenities, multi-modal transportation connections, architectural and landscaping standards, and buffering between incompatible land uses. Existing and new housing should meet the socioeconomic needs of Sunland Park residents. Additionally, Sunland Park should develop and adopt an Affordable Housing Plan, per New Mexico state regulations, that will permit the City to support and fund affordable housing projects.

# Executive Summary



## Transportation

The city should encourage multiple transportation modes to connect desirable locations. Transit connections should be enhanced or provided to the Westside Transfer Center in El Paso, the airport, intermodal facility, Santa Teresa LPOE, and new Sunland Park POE. Existing and new bus stop should incorporate the following elements: lighting, information signage, wayfinding, seating, shelter, landscaping shading, adjacent land use, and bicycle & pedestrian accessibility. Several opportunities exist to improve the overall bicycling and pedestrian network in and around Sunland Park. A Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan should be developed to determine the feasibility of the recommendations in this Plan. Additionally, improvements should target closing gaps in the sidewalk network while improving the crossings and intersections along McNutt Road. A Safe Routes to School program should be developed to safely connect schools throughout the city. Conversations should be pursued with the Airport Advisory Board and Board of County Commissioners regarding annexation of the airport. As the Intermodal facility continues to grow, the surrounding transportation system will need to be upgraded in order to handle the overweight truck volumes. Maintenance and repair of transportation infrastructure must be considered as well as the construction of new roadway facilities.

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure

Sunland Park should enhance growth and build upon the quality and sustainability of the community's infrastructure, facilities, and services. Sunland Park should encourage strategic health care development to address gaps in existing services as well as distribute information to the community regarding available health services. The City should adopt and implement recommendations from the 2017 Police Audit and conduct an inventory of the existing fire and police stations with the goal to develop a safety station location plan. In order to provide access to quality education, the City should work with Gadsden Independent School District (GISD) during the five-year facilities plan update and assist in the implementation of the recommendations. Furthermore, Sunland Park ought to continue coordination with CRRUA.

## Economic Development

Sunland Park needs to encourage fiscal stability that is attractive to businesses and residents and that fosters entrepreneurship and job creation. Today, Sunland Park is in a favorable position to improve its economic situation by utilizing its existing strengths, including its location between two economically dynamic areas, hard-working residents, a base of entrepreneurial skill

# Executive Summary



and experience, and a desire to improve the local economy. Carefully building on this foundation should improve socioeconomic conditions for Sunland Park’s residents and prepare the city for an improved greater connection to the region, including Mexico, in the future.

## **Natural Resources**

Sunland Park citizens support increased recreational amenities throughout the City and an environment that prioritizes open space, preservation of natural habitat, and resource protection. The City’s natural resources goals, policies, and implementation strategies encourage a well-connected, healthy, and active community. As growth occurs, Sunland Park should emphasize the importance of natural resources by requiring an allotment of parkland per dwelling unit. The City’s image as an attractive, livable community is promoted through diverse natural features, reinforcing Sunland Park as a recreational hub within the region.





1

introduction

# 1

## Introduction

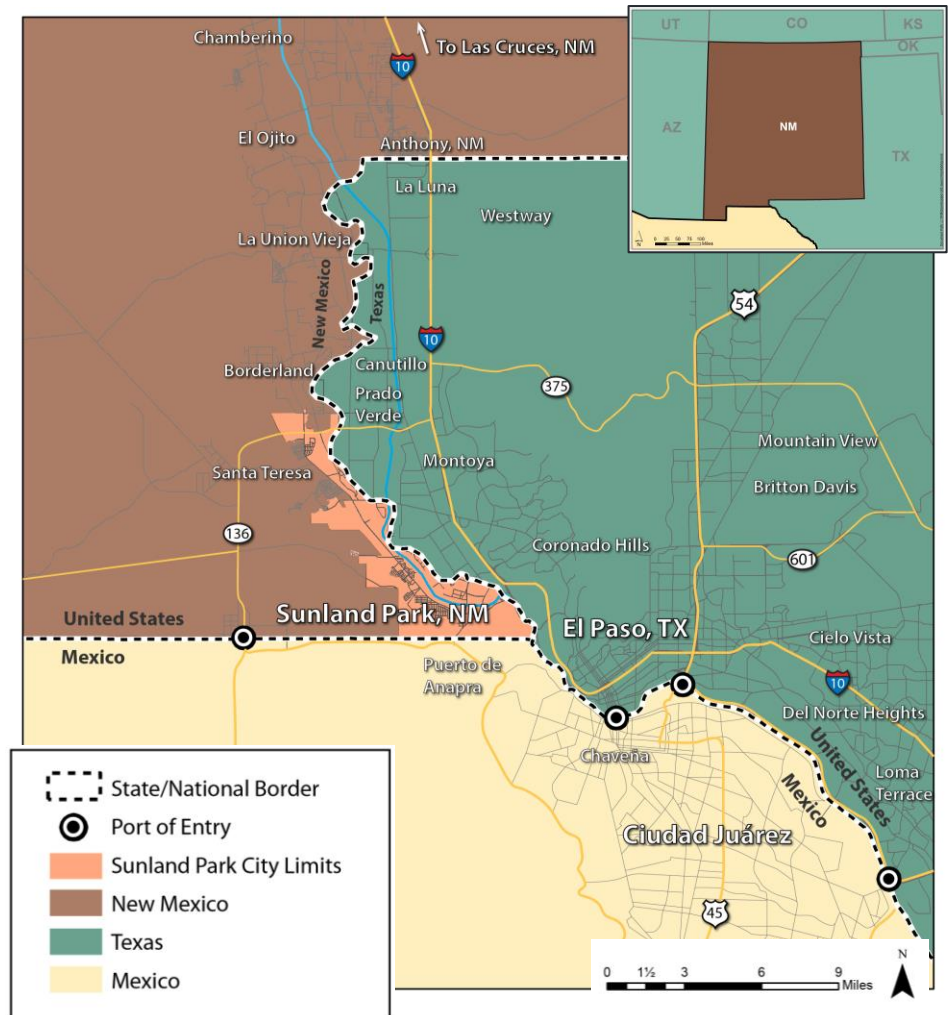


### 1.0 | Introduction

The City of Sunland Park is roughly eleven square miles in size and home to approximately 16,000 residents located in south central New Mexico in Doña Ana County. Sunland Park is the southernmost city of Doña Ana County, New Mexico, and is bordered by Texas on the east and the United States-Mexico international boundary to the south (Figure 1-1). Except for the Santa Teresa land port of entry (LPOE) with Mexico, the Santa Teresa industrial park, and Santa Teresa Census Defined Place (CDP), the land to the north and west of Sunland Park generally consists of open desert landscapes dotted with lava beds from long-extinct volcanos. Thus, Sunland Park’s residents find themselves bounded by Mexico, the wild (and arid) west, and a major population center. Although Sunland Park is within the El Paso, Texas Metropolitan Region, the City is within Doña Ana County, which makes it part of the Las Cruces Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), despite Las Cruces being located 42 miles to the north.

Sunland Park’s proximity to El Paso, TX, Las Cruces, NM, and Juárez, Mexico provides the City with immediate access to dense urban population and employment centers and diverse transportation networks, creating opportunities for economic growth. In 2015, the combined regional population of Doña Ana County, El Paso County, and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua Borderplex approached 2.5 million.

Figure 1-1 | Project Vicinity



# 1

## Introduction



In 2009, the City of Sunland Park, NM and the County of Doña Ana, NM entered into a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) to share control over a 55-square mile section of land where future growth is anticipated (Figure 1-2). The purpose of the JPA was to create, establish and empower an independent Water and Wastewater Utility Authority to provide municipal water and wastewater utility services to present and future development, and to establish a joint Subdivision, Zoning, Planning and Platting authority (SZPP). This led to the creation of the Camino Real Regional Utility, or CRRUA. The CRRUA oversees an Extra-Territorial Planning & Zoning Commission, which oversees subdivision and zoning approvals within the CRRUA area. This structure enables better planning and zoning coordination between developers, utilities, the City, and the County for future expansion efforts.

The JPA dictates that CRRUA is governed by a board of two elected Sunland Park officials, two Doña Ana County commissioners, one New Mexico State Senator and one New Mexico state representative. These members then select members of the Extra-Territorial Planning & Zoning Commission. County staff support the Planning & Zoning Commission.

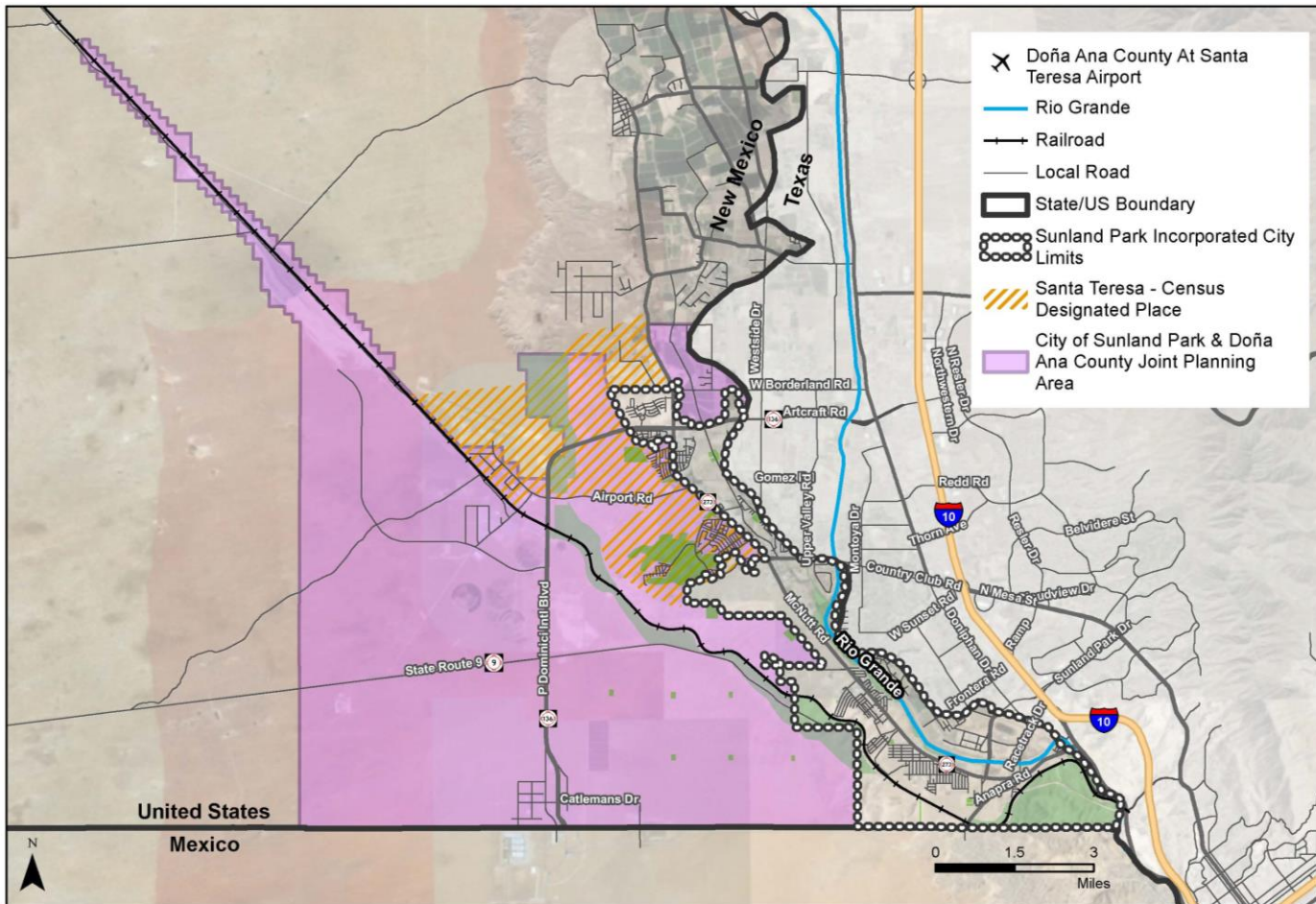


# 1

## Introduction



Figure 1-2 | Joint Planning Area



Joint Subdivision, Zoning, Planning & Platting Authority  
Sunland Park Comprehensive Plan

**WILSON**  
& COMPANY

# 1

## Introduction



### 1.1 | Community History

The history of Sunland Park originates back to Native American settlements in the Keystone Heritage Park (near the intersection of Doniphan Road and Frontera Road in El Paso, Texas) on the east bank of the Rio Grande. The remaining ruins within the archeological site indicate some are over 4,000 years old and are believed to be the location of one of the largest and oldest villages in the present-day United States. The early Spanish conquistadors began to colonize the area when they crossed the Rio Grande to develop the El Camino Real Trail, which was the principal trade route between New Mexico and regions of New Spain located to the south.

#### 1.1.1 | Formation & Settlement

The City of Sunland Park was formed in 1983 when the nearby unincorporated communities of Anapra and Meadow Vista joined with Sunland Park to incorporate the three communities as one, now the City of Sunland Park. The area had not had much population until the town of Anapra was established by the Southern Pacific Rail Road when they purchased the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad in 1924. At that time, the railroad stopped running its westward route at Anapra. Many employees and their families decided to establish themselves long term in the Anapra area.

In October of 1939, the monumental statue of Cristo Rey (Christ the King) was built on top of the northernmost peak of the Juárez Mountains which is now called Mount Cristo Rey, or Sierra de Cristo Rey in Spanish. The iconic hand-sculpted limestone statue is visible from miles away in all directions sitting at 4,675 feet above sea level looking over Sunland Park, NM, El Paso, TX, and the state of Chihuahua, MX. The statue was erected on a site of Roman Catholic pilgrimage, and to this day, thousands of people climb the mountain every October to celebrate the anniversary of the statue (Figure 1-3).

**Figure 1-3 | Annual Celebration on Mt. Cristo Rey**



Source: <http://www.mtcristorev.com/events>

# 1

## Introduction



### 1.1.2 | Attractions & Tourism

Key destination in Sunland Park includes the Sunland Park Racetrack and Casino, a thoroughbred racetrack that opened in 1959 and was a major attraction because, at the time, Sunland Park was the only legal gambling venue in the region. Hundreds of horseraces are held each year at the track. To combat a decline in popularity of casinos, in 1999 New Mexico legislators allowed slot machines at the track. Today, the Sunland Park Racetrack and Casino is one of the major attractions for tourists and residents in the region.



Another key destination in Sunland Park is the 30-acre amusement park known as the Western Playland, located near the Sunland Park Racetrack and Casino. The park has around 30 diverse rides and rollercoasters that act as a key destination to the people and tourists of Sunland Park and the surrounding area.



Mount Cristo Rey is a 4,675-foot mountain that stands on the southern limits of Sunland Park, just north of the international border. A number of factors make the mountain a regional attraction. It is a major landmark in the El Paso region, thanks in part to a 29-foot stone cross built in 1939 at the top of the mountain, which is visible from much of the surrounding area and has made the site a pilgrimage destination for Catholics.

Nearly 200 acres of accessible dinosaur tracks exist near the northern base of the mountain. Scientists and geologists from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) often study and uncover prehistoric tracks; including the 97-million-year-old tracks found at the bottom of Mt. Cristo Rey by a UTEP geology student. Nature trails have been recently developed for the

# 1

## Introduction



dinosaur tracks, and signs are being constructed and installed by volunteers from UTEP Geological Sciences. The tracks are currently unprotected from the public and can be seen anytime. However, this also leads to the possibility of accidental/non-accidental vandalism to the sites. The State Parks Division of New Mexico's Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department intends to facilitate discussions about the dinosaur tracks property, involving key stakeholders to the discussion such as the Roman Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces, which owns Mt. Cristo Rey.



Located in southern Sunland Park, the Ardivino's Desert Crossing (Ardivino's) restaurant and farmers' market offers fine dining and exceptional views. Ardivino's has a banquet hall that is located on site and can host events. Patrons from Sunland Park and surrounding cities come to enjoy the food and ambiance of one of southern Doña Ana County's finest restaurants.



The Rio Grande begins in south-central Colorado and flows south to the Gulf of Mexico. With a total length of 1,896 miles, it is the fourth largest river system in North America. Since 1848, the Rio Grande has marked the boundary of the Texas and Mexico territories. Nearly 6 miles of the Rio Grande run along the eastern edge of Sunland Park.

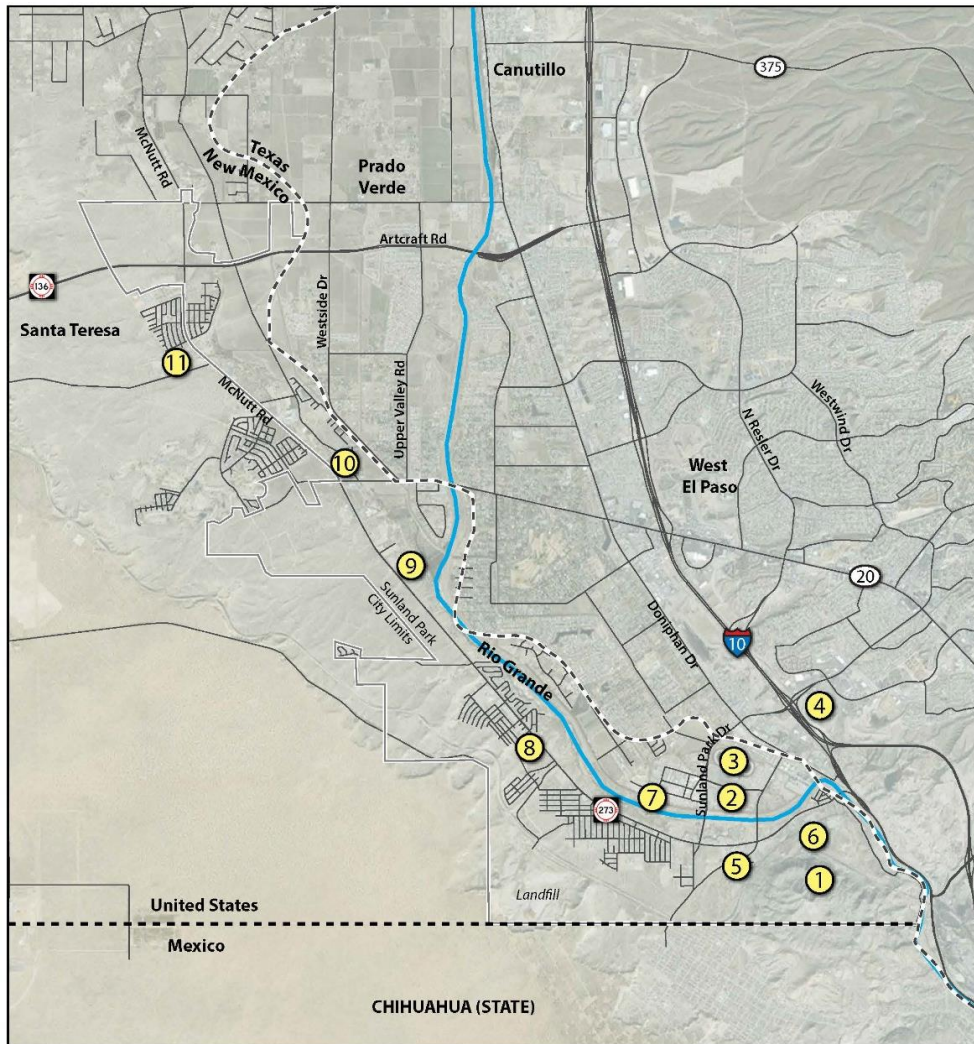
Figure 1-4 illustrates key destinations within Sunland Park. Other destinations in the City consist of the Doña Ana County Community College, the University of Phoenix-Santa Teresa Learning Center, and the Sunland Park Sports Complex.

# 1

## Introduction



Figure 1-4 | Key Destinations in Sunland Park, NM



### Key Destinations

#### Legend

- ① Mt. Cristo Rey
- ② Western Playland
- ③ Sunland Park Racetrack & Casino
- ④ Sunland Park Mall
- ⑤ Ardvin's Desert Crossing
- ⑥ Dinosaur Tracks
- ⑦ Rio Grande Trail
- ⑧ Doña Ana Community College
- ⑨ Sunland Park Sports Complex
- ⑩ University of Phoenix-Santa Teresa Learning Center
- ⑪ Santa Teresa High School





# 1

## Introduction



### 1.1.3 | Demographic Trends

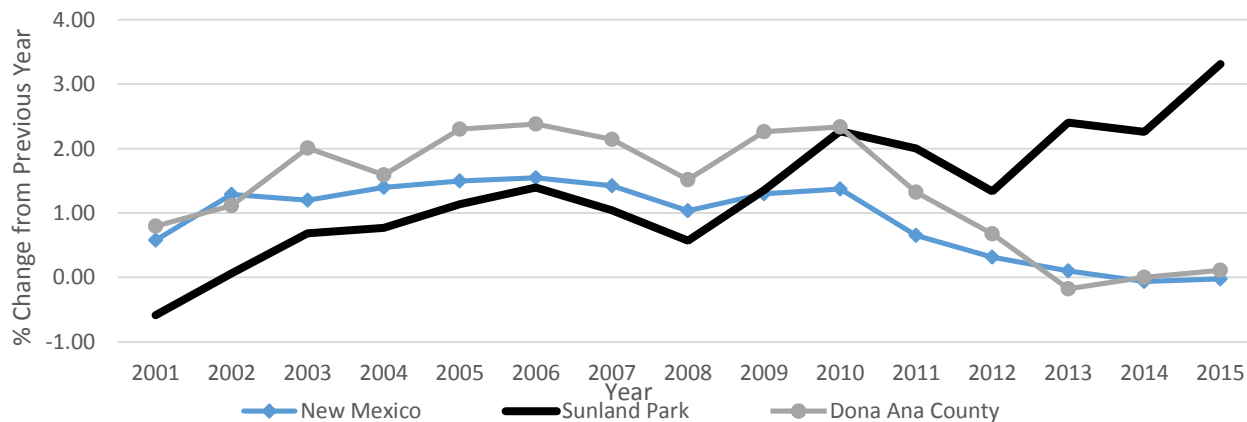
A statistical profile of Sunland Park's population and economy was developed to aid in understanding the City's resource base and role in the regional economy. Additional assessments were conducted to understand the extent of which the City is positioned to benefit and contribute to future regional economic development, the full analysis can be found in Appendix A.

#### Population Growth

Sunland Park experienced significant population growth over the past two decades. From 1990 to 2000 Sunland Park's population grew by nearly 70% (2000 Census redistricting data), from 8,179 to 13,309 residents. During that decade, young and early middle aged families moved to Sunland Park in large numbers. In 2000, 22% of the residents lived outside of Sunland Park in 1995, including 5% of the population who came to the city from outside the United States.

From 2000 to 2015, the population of Sunland Park increased by another 20%, from 13,309 to 15,940 residents. When measured over the same period of time, a similar increase in population occurred in Doña Ana County and across New Mexico. Not only did the population increase between 2000 and 2015, so did the city's growth rate (Figure 1-5).

**Figure 1-5 | Population Growth in New Mexico, Sunland Park, and Doña Ana County, NM**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census annual population estimates as of July 1 each year. Changes calculated.

# 1

## Introduction



Across the El Paso region, the working age (15-64 year old) population is younger than both New Mexico and the national average. Sunland Park has the largest pre-working-age cohort (less than 14 years of age) and the smallest post-working-age cohort (64+) of any of the compared regions. These factors contribute to the city's low median age of 28.6 years, compared to 32.4 across Doña Ana County or 37.6 nationally. The relatively small size of the youngest two cohorts in 2010 and 2015 hints that without migration into Sunland Park, future gaps in the working age cohorts could exist (in 10 years or so).

Similar to the El Paso region, Sunland Park's population is distinctly young and Hispanic. In fact, out of several geographies compared, Sunland Park had the youngest residents and greatest share of Hispanic residents, including a substantial number who do not speak English well. At 95.5% Hispanic (any race), Sunland Park is the most Hispanic of the sub regions analyzed. In fact, 37.3% of the population older than five years speaks English "less than well," job prospecting could be hindered; however, many Sunland Park residents are bilingual, which could be attractive to businesses needing a bilingual, Spanish/English workforce.

Some 36.5% of Sunland Park residents are foreign born, and of the foreign born, 66.9% are not U.S. citizens, potentially affecting these residents' eligibility for employment.

### Net Migration

The net migration of people moving into Doña Ana County is an indicator of economic vitality. From 2011-2015, Doña Ana County gained the most residents from along the southern border of New Mexico and Arizona as well as the cities of Los Angeles, California and Phoenix, Arizona. Doña Ana County lost the most residents in the areas around San Diego, California, Albuquerque and Clovis, New Mexico, as well as Pueblo and Colorado Springs, Colorado.

### Economic Vitality

Educational attainment, the extent of formal education received, is the most common measure of human capital. Figure 1-7 portrays the current educational attainment for Sunland Park residents in comparison to surrounding regions. Nearly 50% of Sunland Park residents over the age of 25 have not finished high school. Of the college graduates in Sunland Park, relatively few have degrees in science, engineering, or related fields. In contrast, Sunland Park has the highest share of business graduates in

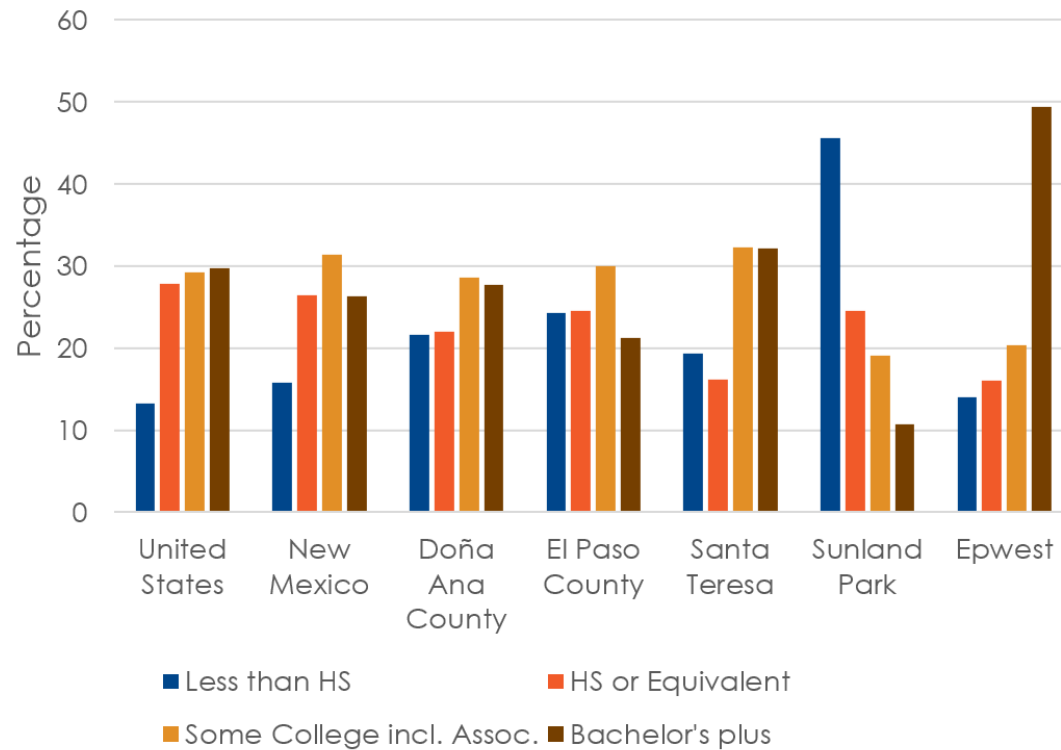
# 1

## Introduction



the region, with nearly 35% identifying business as their first major. Table 1-1 identifies the strong presence of business majors across age cohorts. Additionally, in 2015 36% of families in Sunland Park were in poverty compared to 22% in Doña Ana County, 15.9% in the State of New Mexico, and 11.3% in the United States. More information can be found in Appendix A.

**Figure 1-6 | Educational Attainment for Residents 25 Years and Older**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey (ACS), 5-year Estimates 2011-15.

**Table 1-1: Residents 25 Years and Older with Bachelor's Degree, 2015**

Age Group	25 to 39 years	40 to 64 years	65 years and over
Science and Engineering	18.6	29.1	0.0
Science and Engineering Related Fields	5.2	3.3	0.0
Business	39.9	31.1	25.6
Education	10.9	13.8	73.2
Arts, Humanities, and Others	25.5	22.8	1.2

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey (ACS), 5-year Estimates 2011-15.*

### Commute Inflow/ Outflow

One of the ways a city's labor market efficiency can be measured is by the inflow versus outflow of jobs. In 2015, the amount of residents in Sunland Park with jobs was 5,291 however there were only 2,446 jobs in Sunland Park. When compared, only 8% (437 of the 5,291) of Sunland Park workers lived *and* worked in the city.

This discrepancy can be visualized in Figure 1-8, where ten times as many Sunland Park residents commute outside the city for work when compared those who both work and live within it. In addition, four times as many non-residents have jobs in Sunland Park than residents who live within it. While a local economy can benefit from cross-pollination of jobs, the City of Sunland Park has a job deficit which could benefit from new types of businesses and a labor deficit which could benefit from increased laborer skills.

**Figure 1-8: Commute Inflow/Outflow Diagram**



# 1

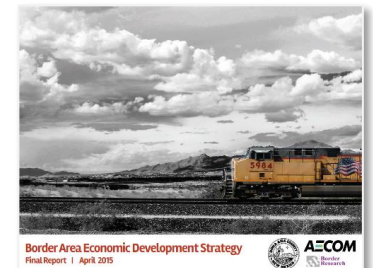
## Introduction



### 1.1.4 | Previous Planning Efforts

Prior to this planning effort, different studies, plans, and policies have been developed in response to community needs. The plans, studies, and reports developed are comprised of master plans, rail plans, freight plans, comprehensive plans, and economic development plans. The following plans were reviewed to identify the relevant projects, policies, and themes to be considered when developing strategic solutions. Details about the plans are located in Appendix A.

- *Destino 2040: El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization Metropolitan Transportation Plan – Ongoing*
- *Doña Ana County International Jetport Master Plan – 2018*
- *Santa Teresa International Rail Bypass Study – 2016*
- *Texas Rail Plan – 2016*
- *Santa Teresa Border Area Transportation Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan (STBAT) – 2016*
- *Border Area Economic Development Strategy, Final Report – 2015*
- *Doña Ana County Affordable Housing Plan – 2015*
- *Southern New Mexico-El Paso Joint Land Use Study – 2015*
- *New Mexico-Chihuahua Border Master Plan – 2015*
- *Plan 2040, Comprehensive Plan, Doña County, New Mexico – 2015*
- *New Mexico Freight Plan – 2015*
- *New Mexico Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State’s Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility – 2014*
- *New Mexico State Rail Plan – 2014*
- *Texas-Chihuahua-New Mexico: Three States, Two Nations, One Economy – 2014*
- *El Paso/Santa Teresa-Chihuahua Border Master Plan – 2013*
- *Doña Ana Regional Plan One Valley One Vision 2040 – 2012*
- *Mesilla Valley MPO Safe Routes to School Action Plan – 2012*
- *New Mexico Economic and Fiscal Impact of Union Pacific Santa Teresa Rail Facility, Doña Ana County, New Mexico – 2011*
- *Downtown District, McNutt Corridor and Border Crossing Master Plan – 2007*
- *City of Sunland Park Master Plan – 2004*



(This page intentionally left blank)



2

community vision  
& guiding principles

## 2.0 | Community Vision & Guiding Principles

The *Sunland Park 2040 Community Master Plan* included a community visioning process. A community vision embodies the culture, traditions, values, and future the community desires. The vision was formed from a series of public, stakeholder, and steering committee meetings where extensive discussions and exercises helped shape the ideal future for Sunland Park. Additionally, a community survey was conducted to capture opinions from those who did not participate in the meetings (see Appendix D).

The Community Vision supports the community's strengths, needs, and desires, while promoting responsible growth opportunities that will enhance pride, public involvement, and the local economy.

### 2.1 | The Vision

Sunland Park is comprised of people who are passionate about improving the city. The Mayor, City Staff, City Councilors, Steering Committee, stakeholder groups, and members of the public worked together to craft a plan to create community pride and grow responsibly, with the understanding that this Plan is a multi-level effort requiring many phases, starting from the ground-up.



Sunland Park's current mission statement is,

*“The mission of the city is to provide a superior quality of life for the citizens of Sunland Park through the development of our natural, economic, and cultural resources, with a more accountable, transparent, efficient and effective government that encourages the involvement of its citizens.”*

The City's mission statement is future-focused and desires to better capitalize on its resources. Furthermore, the proximity to the border and surrounding established municipalities affords Sunland Park a unique opportunity to capitalize on that vision and to become a gateway community.



# 2

## Community Vision & Guiding Principles



Reoccurring ideas discussed at the various meetings revolved around one theme: to become the “biggest border city in New Mexico...the Gateway City”. The overarching goal for the future of the community is to attract more people to Sunland Park. Participants expressed that in becoming the Gateway City, Sunland Park they want people to visit, shop, recreate and live in the community and to draw people from the surrounding communities of El Paso, TX, Las Cruces, NM, Ciudad Juarez, MX, and beyond.

The core components of the vision of Sunland Park is a unified city with an attractive economy that fosters a livable community. A unified city cultivates a community by fostering partnerships to further local, regional, and national goals and encourages active citizen engagement. An attractive economy with stable businesses and employment opportunities generates growth within the city and surrounding region. All of which promotes a livable community where citizens can live, work, and socialize in a safe, attractive and healthy environment.

The Community Vision is summarized to the right. This vision is a culmination of all the public input heard throughout the visioning process. Appendix B provides the full community vision report.

*In 2040 Sunland Park is a community that has overcome negative stigmas and is thriving economically. It is the largest City on the New Mexico border and is the gateway city for people traveling between Mexico and New Mexico and beyond. The residents are unified, proud of their community, and actively involved in decision-making. Beautification efforts have helped the visual landscape become more desirable for residents and visitors; while improved lighting, roadways and paths helped increase pedestrian, bicycle, and transit use promoting health, access to work and shopping, and establish community pride. Improved roadways and truck routing guides big trucks to stay off of the main “community” corridors and allows for better vehicle fluidity throughout the city while also making it safer to walk or bike in town. Signage and public art pieces help create a sense-of-place, while the addition of community gathering places helps unite the people of Sunland Park.*

*Improved construction and development codes have improved the condition of existing facilities and spurred new developments in vacant areas. The improved city image attracts investors and developers to select Sunland Park as the destination for their project or company. New businesses in Sunland Park are creating new jobs and the technical training at surrounding colleges helps residents develop the skills needed to establish careers.*

*The geographic location of Sunland Park, has allowed the City to capitalize on its unique and prime location, leveraging growth that has made Sunland Park the largest city in Southern, New Mexico. With the leadership of the Mayor, diligent work from the City Staff, guidance from City Councilors, and active participation from the residents of the community, the City of Sunland Park accomplished tremendous success by 2040. **Sunland Park, the gateway city.***

# 2

## Community Vision & Guiding Principles



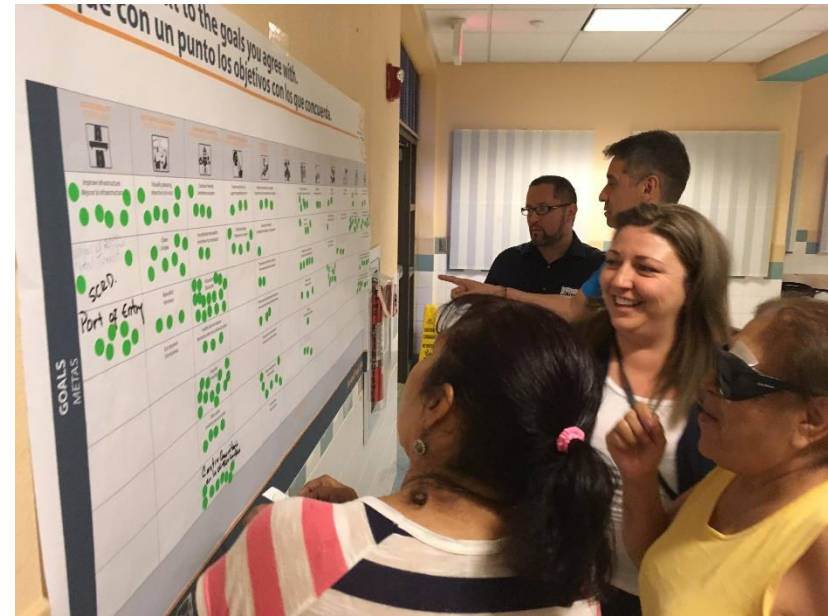
### 2.2 | Community Values

Embedded within *Sunland Park 2040* are inherent community values that have shaped Sunland Park and will provide important guidance to the implementation of the community vision for the future. These values provide a foundation for all policies, strategies and actions identified in this plan. To ensure growth aligns with community goals, a set of Community Values provides a gut check for decision-makers as the area continues to grow and develop. The citizens of Sunland Park, value:

- People;
- Diversity;
- Mobility;
- Natural environment;
- Community character; and
- History.

#### 2.2.1 | People

The residents of Sunland Park are actively engaged and the Sunland Park City government is engaged, active, transparent and responsible, implementing outreach programs and recreational events to improve the quality of life, while providing opportunities for the public to gather and further improve the image of the City.



#### 2.2.2 | Diversity

Sunland Park values a balance of residential and commercial uses that tie-in with the existing fabric of the area while evolving as a desirable place to live, work, and recreate.

#### 2.2.3 | Mobility

Due to its prime geographic location, Sunland Park values the surrounding destinations and highways to capture more visitors to both increase and diversify the local economy.

# 2

## Community Vision & Guiding Principles



### 2.2.4 | Natural Environment

Sunland Park values the geographic terrain of the Mesa, the flowing water of the Rio Grande, the views to and from Mt. Cristo Rey, and the prehistoric dinosaur tracks at the base of Mount Cristo Rey because they make Sunland Park a truly unique natural environment in the greater El Paso region.

### 2.2.5 | Community Character

Sunland Park values sustainable growth that promotes health, safety, history, culture, prosperity, and a sense-of-place within the city. Furthermore, the community values development of a new Land Port of Entry (LPOE) and the opportunity to create a destination, while accomplishing place making goals and preserving community character.

### 2.2.6 | History

Sunland Park values its unique heritage and development that coincides with the beautification and design efforts manifesting from the existing neighborhoods. With improved transportation options, connections to surrounding cities, and unique destinations like the historic Rio Grande, dinosaur tracks, the Mt. Cristo Rey landmark, and a future LPOE, Sunland Park will become a community that is proud of its heritage, and excited for future growth and opportunities.

### 2.3 | Guiding Principles

#### 12 Elements of a Healthy & Resilient Community

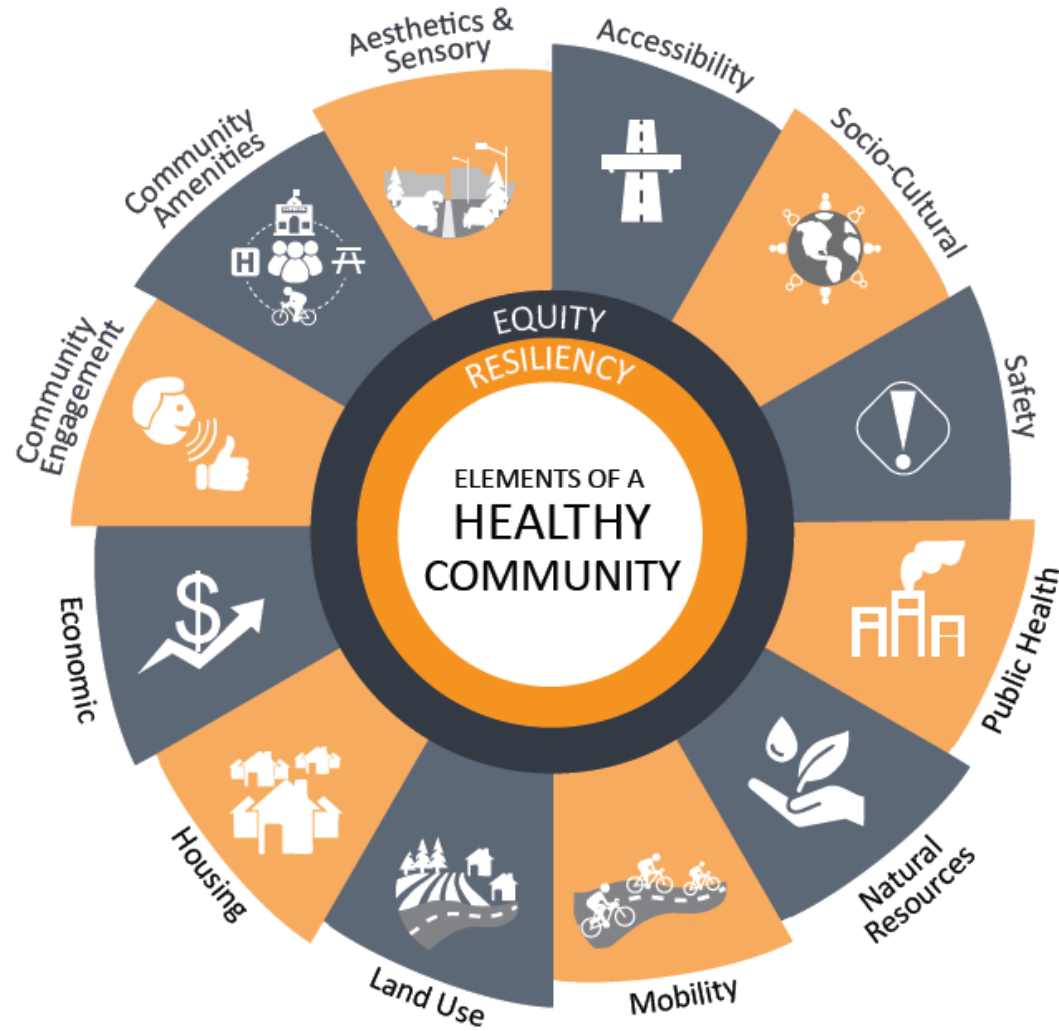
Twelve guiding principles were created by combining statements from the *2003 Master Plan* and the *2015 Visioning Exercise Report*. Each of these guiding principles, although broad in nature, help to form a healthy and resilient city (Figure 2-1 and 2-2). Additionally, these guiding principles were ranked by the public during the Public Meetings. The *Sunland Park 2040 Community Master Plan* will be crafted based on the following guiding principles.

# 2

## Community Vision & Guiding Principles



Figure 2-1: 12 Elements of a Healthy & Resilient Community



# 2

## Community Vision & Guiding Principles



Figure 2-2 | Sunland Park Guiding Principles

	<b>Community Amenities</b>	Enhance growth and build upon the quality and sustainability of our community infrastructure, facilities, and services.		<b>Accessibility</b>	Provide the ability to safely utilize multiple transportation modes to efficiently arrive at desired destinations.
	<b>Socio-Cultural</b>	Showcase the rich history of Sunland Park and take pride in expressing our cultural heritage throughout the community.		<b>Aesthetics and Sensory</b>	Promote the visual and scenic elements of our community, providing a sense of pride and community gathering areas.
	<b>Economic</b>	Increase the potential for a prosperous community that is financially stable, attractive to businesses and residents, and cultivates employment opportunities. Diversify the local economy by increasing industrial and commercial developments as well as unique destinations.		<b>Safety</b>	Maintain community safety for all citizens. Address any real or perceived issues of safety.
	<b>Land Use</b>	Encourage diverse development patterns that create a livable community where citizens can live, work, play, and socialize all within one community.		<b>Community Engagement</b>	Become a community where citizens are actively engaged in all aspects of community life and public decision-making.
	<b>Natural Resources</b>	Leverage an environment that prioritizes open space, air and water quality, preservation of natural habitat, and resource protection to create a truly unique city on the border.		<b>Mobility</b>	Increase the quality of the experience when moving from place to place by various transportation modes.
				<b>Public Health</b>	Ensure a healthy community and understand that physical activity, access to healthy foods, and social well-being are key to our success.
				<b>Housing</b>	Promote housing choices and support a variety of housing types to support our mixed-income community.

(This page intentionally left blank)

SUNLAND PARK CENTER

3

land use



FIRE LANE

FIRE LANE

# 3

## Land Use



**Land use policies affect the built environment, transportation infrastructure needs, and overall livability of a city. Sunland Park encourages diverse development patterns that create a livable community where citizens can live, work, and socialize within Sunland Park.**

### 3.0 | Land Use

Land use describes the activity or purpose of land within a city. How a piece of land is used today can impact how the land – along with surrounding vacant land – can be used in the future. Developing a vision for how land will be used in the future is an important process for every community and is a key focus of this Plan. The vision, which is captured in the Future Land Use map, guides a wide range of decisions. These decisions can include how Sunland Park dedicates resources and how developers and other stakeholders direct their investment. A Future Land Use map is translated into zoning and development regulations, which direct future land use decisions and approvals.

Land use in Sunland Park is examined in the following ways within this section:

- Existing Land Use;
- Existing Community Character (Urban Design);
- Current Zoning & Development Regulations;
- Issues & Opportunities;
- Recommendations (including Future Land Use); and
- Goals and Policies.



# 3

## Land Use



Today, the City of Sunland Park is characterized by a very linear development pattern along NM-273 (McNutt Rd), with constrained on several sides by Mt. Cristo Rey, the BNSF railroad, the New Mexico-Texas border, and US-Mexico border. With the majority of land within the city undeveloped, opportunity for growth exists. The community voiced support for a coordinated strategy for residential development, district-style development, a Sunland Park port-of-entry (POE), additional recreational amenities, and a solution to the future of the Anapra area. Both infill development within existing city limits, and coordinated growth into future growth areas of undeveloped land was supported.

### 3.1 | Existing Land Use

Figure 3-1 illustrates the existing land use within the City of Sunland Park and Table 3-1 shows the thirteen land use categories with approximate acreage for each use. The land use categories include the following:

- Residential Land – Refers to residential land that is comprised of single family homes.
- Mobile Home Park – Refers to residential land that is comprised of mobile homes.
- Multifamily Residential – Refers to residential land that is comprised of apartment complexes, duplexes, and townhomes that are home to multiple residences.
- Commercial – Refers to smaller commercial land/lots and can include office or retail space.
- Commercial Acreage – Refers to large pieces of land that are used for commercial use.
- Dairy – Refers to land that is used for dairy cattle and agricultural use.
- Grazing Land – Refers to land that is used for livestock apart from dairy cattle.
- Tillable Land – Refers to land that is used for agricultural, specifically classified for crops and/or orchards.
- Improvement Only – Refers to land where the building is assessed, not the land.
- Flat Value – Refers to land that cannot be improved upon (e.g. drainage ditches). Flat Value land can also be used for developer discounts if the developer has 50% of the lots remaining vacant.
- Vacant Land – Refers to large pieces of vacant land.
- Vacant Lot – Refers to smaller pieces of vacant land (e.g. subdivision lot with no residences or improvements).

# 3

## Land Use



The majority of land within Sunland Park’s city limits is predominately undeveloped. Nearly 60% (4,996 acres) of land within the City is classified as vacant. Figure 3-1 illustrates the locations of the vacant land/lot and Figure 3-2 identifies the ownership of the vacant land/lot as public or private. Of the areas identified as vacant, a vast majority is privately owned. The publicly held land is owned by either the City of Sunland Park, Doña Ana County, the State of New Mexico, or the United States government (Figure 3-2). Table 3-1 identifies the acreage of each land use type within Sunland Park.

The second most dominant land type is residential, which makes up 17% (1,354 acres) of Sunland Park’s land area. There are several different types of residential land uses within the City, but a large percentage of the residential land (96%) is low-density residential. Commercial land is primarily situated along McNutt Road and concentrated around Sunland Park Drive and County Club Road. Approximately 14% (1,133 acres) of the land within the City is designated for commercial use. Agricultural land, which makes up approximately 7% (501+ acres) of land within Sunland Park includes dairy, grazing land, and tillable land. The calculation for dairy, grazing, and tillable land is approximate because the lot sizes are larger than an acre.

**Table 3-1: Existing Land Use**

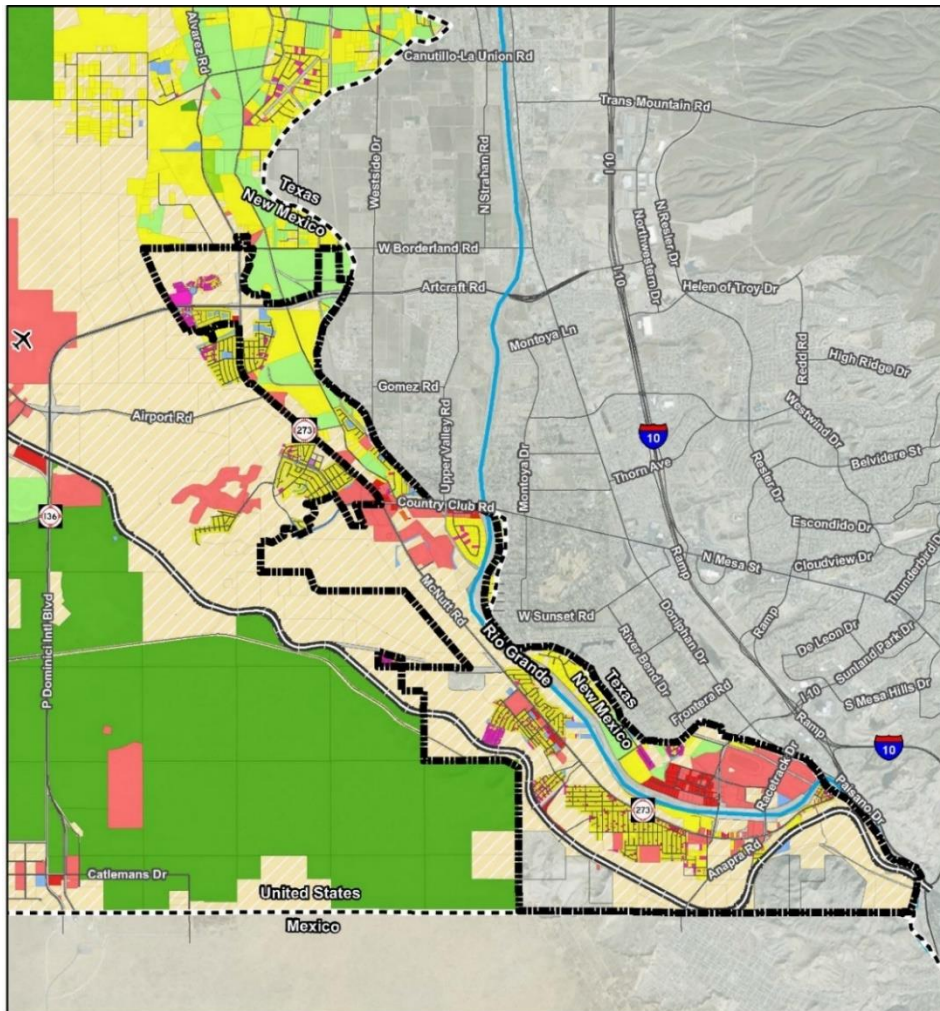
Land Use Type	Code	Acreage	%
<b>Residential Land</b>	R	1,354	17%
<b>Mobile Home Park</b>	MH	13	< 1%
<b>Multifamily</b>	M	4	< 1%
<b>Residential Common Area</b>	RCA	-	< 1%
<b>Commercial</b>	C	219	3%
<b>Commercial Acreage</b>	CM	914	11%
<b>Dairy</b>	D	-	< 1%
<b>Grazing Land</b>	GR	2	< 1%
<b>Tillable Land</b>	T	499	6%
<b>Improvement Only</b>	IO	0.25	< 1%
<b>Flat Value</b>	FV	140	2%
<b>Vacant Land*</b>	V	4,813	59%
<b>Vacant Lot</b>	VL	183	2%
<b>Total*</b>		<b>8,142</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Doña Ana County GIS \*Vacant Land (V) does not include Mt. Cristo Rey, cemetery, or landfill; therefore, total does not include Mt. Cristo Rey, cemetery, or landfill.*

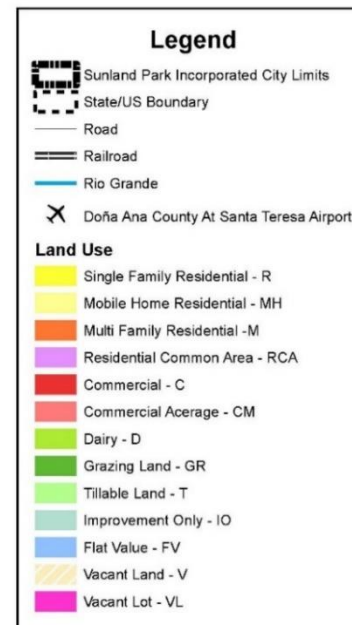
# 3 Land Use



Figure 3-1 | Existing Land Use



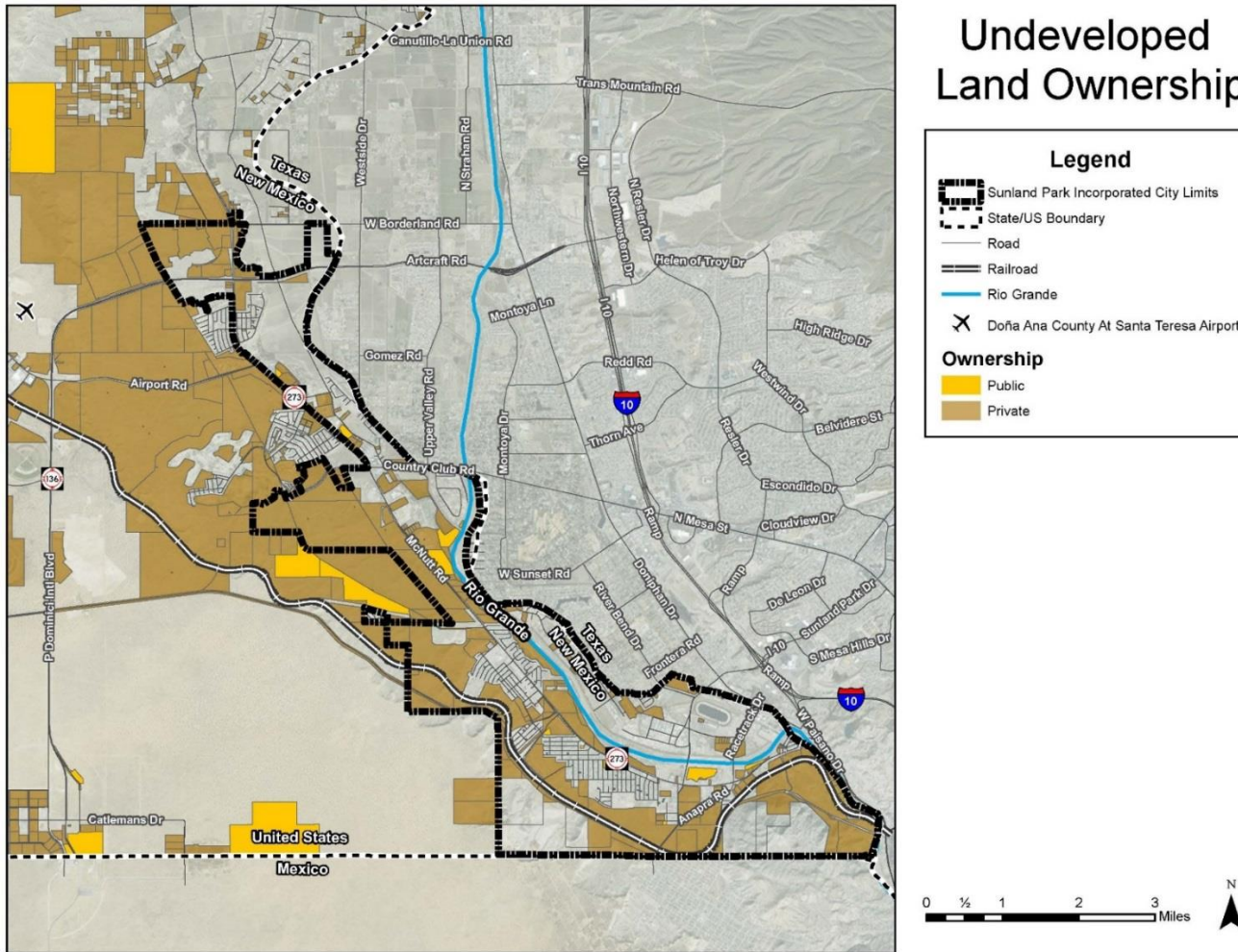
## Existing Land Use



# 3 Land Use



Figure 3-2 | Undeveloped Land Ownership





### 3.2 | Existing Community Character

The process of giving form, shape, and character to a city, neighborhood, or group of buildings is known as urban design. Urban design helps establish a framework to make connections between people and places, nature and the built environment. In order to understand the current urban design of Sunland Park, a visual analysis and building typology study was conducted. The full analysis can be found in Appendix A.

#### 3.2.1 | Urban Design

The physical layout of a city generates a perceived environment that varies from person to person. The perceived environment was analyzed to understand the physical layout of the city. Specific elements included: paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks or schools. Figure 3-3 depicts existing urban design of Sunland Park.

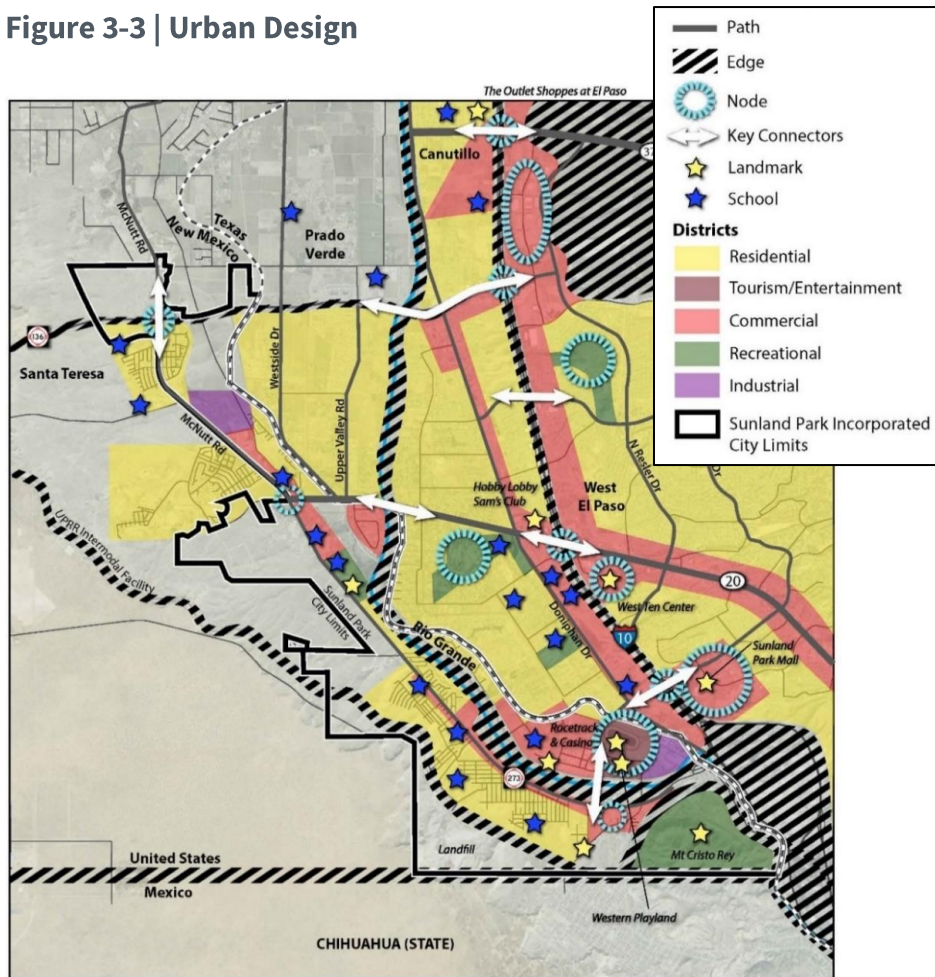
##### **Paths**

Paths are channels of movement within a city that can be comprised of streets, railroads, canals, etc. Some channels of movement within Sunland Park serve as both paths and edges. I-10, Union Pacific Railroad track, and the Rio Grande facilitate movement while also acting as boundaries. Streets are the primary path within the City and include NM-273 (McNutt Road), Country Club Drive, and NM-136 (Pete Domenici) among others.

# 3 Land Use



Figure 3-3 | Urban Design



## Edges

Edges are linear boundary elements such as rivers, topography changes, and highways. The entirety of Sunland Park is surrounded by both physical and perceived boundaries. The Rio Grande creates a linear edge on the east side of the City.

# 3

## Land Use



Similarly, the railroad and Mesa, which run parallel just west of the City act as a western barrier to growth and expansion. The United States/Mexico border to the south is another physical boundary. In addition, the Texas/New Mexico border and eventually I-10 creates another linear edge just east of the city limits. Due to the physical geography, international/state borders, and transportation features, creating connections across these edges is crucial to the success of Sunland Park.

### Districts

Districts are perceived areas with common characteristics. Sunland Park consists of residential, tourism/entertainment, commercial, recreational, and industrial districts.

- A residential district is comprised of residential land uses, which could be single family or multi-family. The majority of Sunland Park is comprised of single family residential housing units located throughout the City.
- A tourism/entertainment district consists of activities that attract residents and visitors for daytime and evening activities. This district encompasses the Sunland Park Racetrack and Casino.
- A commercial district facilitates business activities that are primarily retail, dining, or office-based. The commercial districts are situated around the intersection of Sunland Park Drive and McNutt Road and the intersection of McNutt Road and Country Club Drive.
- A recreational district includes outdoor recreational activities. Recreational districts are sparse within Sunland Park; however, the Sunland Park Sports Complex provides a gathering place for multiple outdoor activities in addition to Mt. Cristo Rey, which provides a geographic landmark and occasionally acts as a recreational amenity to visitors and residents of Sunland Park.
- An industrial district includes intensive business activities such as manufacturing and warehousing. The industrial districts within Sunland Park are concentrated near the southeast edge of the city and to the north, across McNutt Road from Santa Teresa High School.

# 3

## Land Use



### Nodes

Nodes are typically gathering places and represent a concentration of some type of characteristic. The tourism/entertainment district functions as a node, attracting people with its thriving outdoor amusement destinations, casino, and racetrack. Sunland Park's municipal buildings are also a node. The intersection of McNutt Road and Country Club Road is also a node for commercial, retail, and office development.

### Landmarks or Schools

A landmark is an easily recognizable place. Western Playland, Sunland Park Racetrack and Casino, Mt. Cristo Rey, Ardivino's Restaurant and Farmers Market, and the Sunland Park Sports Complex are all landmarks. Lesser known or overlooked landmarks include dinosaur tracks, archaeological sites, and the Rio Grande. Schools, which are easily recognizable locations within a community, include Santa Teresa Middle School, Riverside Elementary School, Desert View Elementary School, Sunland Park Elementary School, Doña Ana Community College, and the University of Phoenix-Santa Teresa Learning Center. The Gadsden Independent School District has a total of three facilities in the City of Sunland Park, and 21 facilities in southern Doña Ana County covering pre-kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

### 3.2.2 | Current Zoning

Zoning determines what can be built by regulating land use, lot size, building density and height. Sunland Park first enacted zoning regulations in 1985, shortly after incorporation, through a series of ordinances. The land use regulations were updated and codified in 2000 as Title 10 Zoning Regulations in the City's Code of Ordinances. The Code of Ordinances was last updated in 2007. The City also incorporated the New Urbanism District zoning for the Santa Teresa Village One development as Chapter 19 of the City's Zoning Code.

As in most municipalities, city planning and zoning staff review and enforce planning and zoning regulations. The Planning and Zoning Commission, made up of residents appointed by the City Council, reviews and makes recommendations on zoning, annexations, subdivisions and other land use issues to the City Council. The City Council, in turn, makes the final decision on all zoning and land use matters.



# 3

## Land Use



Currently, fifteen conventional zoning districts are outlined in the City zoning code. The basic uses allowed in these districts, either by right or conditionally, are outlined in Table 4-5 in Appendix A (page A40) and detail typical development standards and the maximum possible densities per zone. Figure 3-4 depicts the City of Sunland Park zoning and Figure 3-5 illustrates Doña Ana County zoning. In December 2016, Doña Ana County adopted its Unified Development Code (UDC) for unincorporated areas of Doña Ana County, affecting the zoning of areas beyond the limits of Sunland Park and the jurisdiction of CRRUA, which is discussed in section 3.2.4. More information can be found in Appendix A.

Three following three overarching zones regulate development in Sunland Park:

1. Residential Zones;
2. Commercial and Manufacturing Zones; and
3. Special Zones.

### **Residential Zones**

Three zones regulate single-family detached homes. These range from the largest lots in Agricultural Rural Estate (RE-1), which requires an acre for a site-built single-family dwelling of at least 1,700 square feet (SF) (no mobile homes), to the 6,000 SF lot size required per dwelling unit in Single Family Residential (R-1) or about seven (7) dwelling units per acre. The rural estate zones also allow limited agriculture and small farm animals or horses.

Three additional residential zones permit higher density housing while still allowing R-1 single family uses. The townhouse/condo (TC) zone regulates single-family attached townhouses and condominiums (Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.6) and the Multi-Family (MF) zone regulates apartments and duplexes (FAR of 0.6). The Mixed Residential (MR) zone permits single-family dwelling, modular and mobile homes, apartments and duplexes.

In addition, the MO-1 zone regulates subdivisions of mobile or manufactured homes. It permits one such home on an individually-owned lot of at least 4,000 SF, or up to eight (8) homes per gross acre. The zone also requires a 20-foot clearance between units both side-by-side and end-to-end.

# 3

## Land Use



Most of the residential zones allow churches, schools, hospitals or clinics, nonprofit recreational facilities, and potentially other compatible uses as conditional uses requiring a public hearing for approval. Off-street parking and signage are typically regulated in separate chapters.

### **Commercial and Manufacturing Zones**

The Light Commercial (C-1) zone permits limited residential and retail commercial uses on a minimum lot size of 5,000 SF, while the General Commercial zone (C-2) allows compatible activities serving the wider community on the same minimum lot size. Similarly, the Light Industrial zone (M-1), permits heavy commercial uses, light manufacturing and warehousing (no residential), while the Heavy Industrial zone (M-2) allows such uses as manufacturing of chemicals, gases and plastics, as well as additional conditional uses.

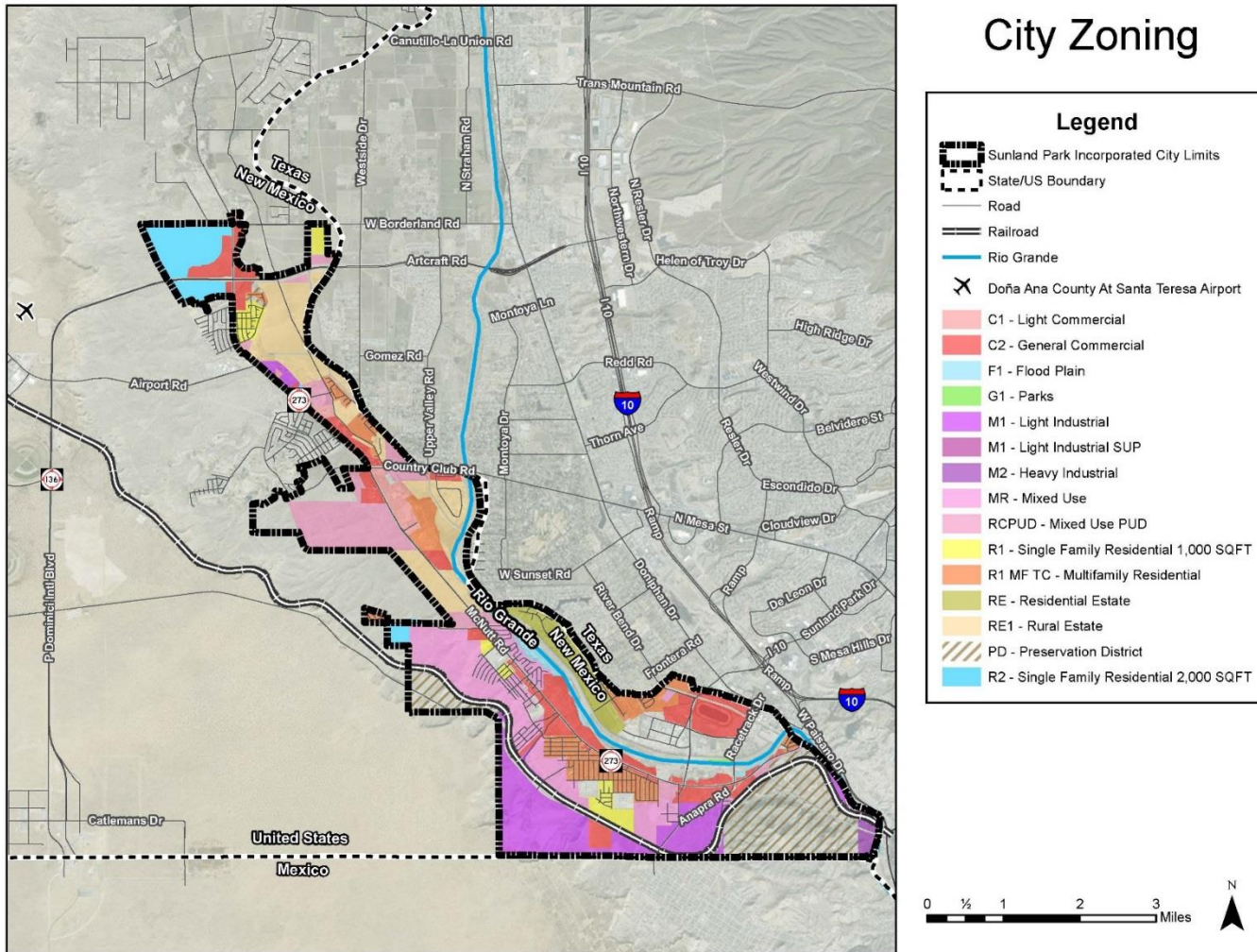
### **Special Zones**

The Sunland Park zoning code also maps a Preservation District (PD) that permits agriculture and very low residential uses (one dwelling unit per 40 acres). The RCPUD zone provides for a mix of residential and commercial uses (but not industrial) in a planned unit development. This zone promotes development of planned communities with an average of four units per gross acre that are “friendly to the environment” by using modern techniques to reduce air, water, ground and scenic contamination. Density may be increased up to eight (8) units per gross acre if a large amount of passive or active open space is proposed (a minimum of one acre per 20 residential units). In addition, the code provides for such special uses as accessory dwelling units, mobile home parks, cemeteries, drive-in banks, gas pumps, nursing homes, RV parks, shopping centers, and other uses to be allowed under a special use permit after approval by the Zoning Commission.

# 3 Land Use



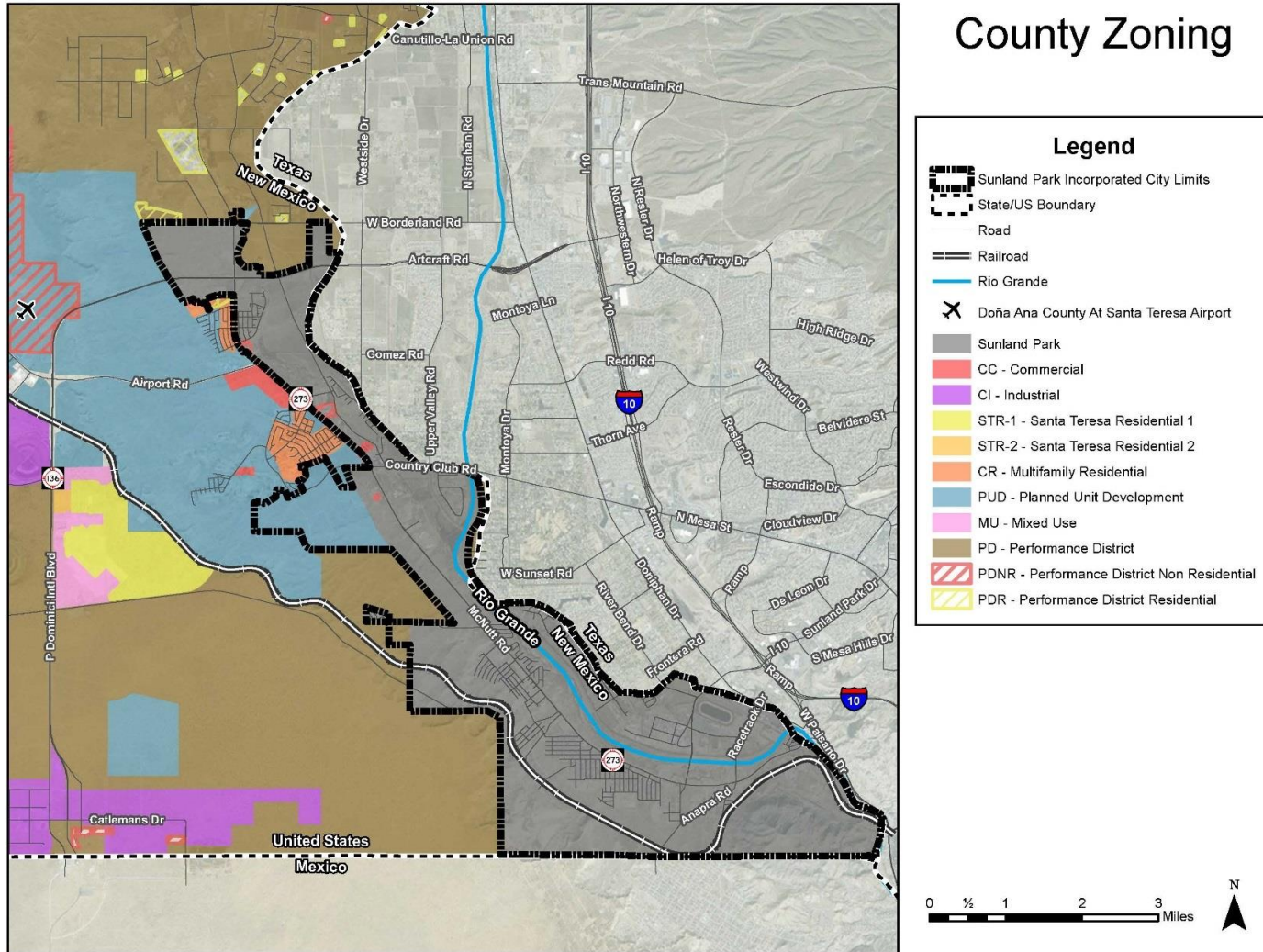
Figure 3-4 | Existing Zoning



# 3 Land Use



Figure 3-5 | Doña Ana County Zoning



Source: Doña Ana County

### 3.2.3 | Other Land Use Regulations

#### **Additional Zoning Regulations**

Supplementary regulations under Title 10 regulate fences, walls and hedges; dog kennel prohibited materials, water and sewer connections and nuisance conditions among other uses. Chapter 12 establishes rules for non-conforming uses, while Chapters 13 and 14, respectively, regulate off-street parking, loading and signs. Chapter 15 reiterates the development standards in all zones (height, setbacks, and minimum lot sizes) and regulates television and radio towers. Chapter 16 is devoted to mining and reclamation standards. Chapter 18 contains the City's Wireless Telecommunications Facilities ordinance (2005).

#### **Metropolitan Redevelopment Area**

In 2012 Sunland Park designated a variety of blighted areas of the city considered to be limited in their growth potential due to lack of adequate municipal infrastructure as a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA). New Mexico state law allows such designations to provide cities with legal and financial tools to help revitalize such areas. While the entire City of Sunland Park could have qualified as an MRA under state criteria, leaders decided to limit the boundaries to areas having the greatest potential to be near-term catalysts of a broader tax base, providing the very basics of infrastructure necessary for healthy development of the entire community.

MRA designations are accompanied by plans describing how a city intends to use various tools to revitalize the area, selecting and funding projects that are most likely to become a catalyst for future development. Such tools include land acquisition, demolition, zoning and land uses, traffic controls, and tax incentives and revenue bonds, and State and Federal funding. Sunland Park is expecting to use financing supported by incremental taxes collected within the MRA as it redevelops over the next 20 years. Initial projects under consideration included support for the Waste Water Treatment Plant, flood prevention, purchase of a fire truck and public works maintenance equipment, an animal shelter, electrical generating capacity, transit and mobility planning, increased website and computer capacity to manage the MRA as well as new zoning and subdivision codes. Many of these projects are part of the City's Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) and some were expected to be funded out of the City's operating revenues. The ICIP also sets forth a process for City leaders to establish priorities and select projects to fund, including criteria for project selection and strategies for implementation. Some projects could be eligible for MRA funding, as available, and be instrumental in future development.

#### **Extraterritorial Planning, Platting, and Zoning**

Municipalities typically designate a one-to-five mile area immediately outside their municipal boundaries in which

# 3

## Land Use



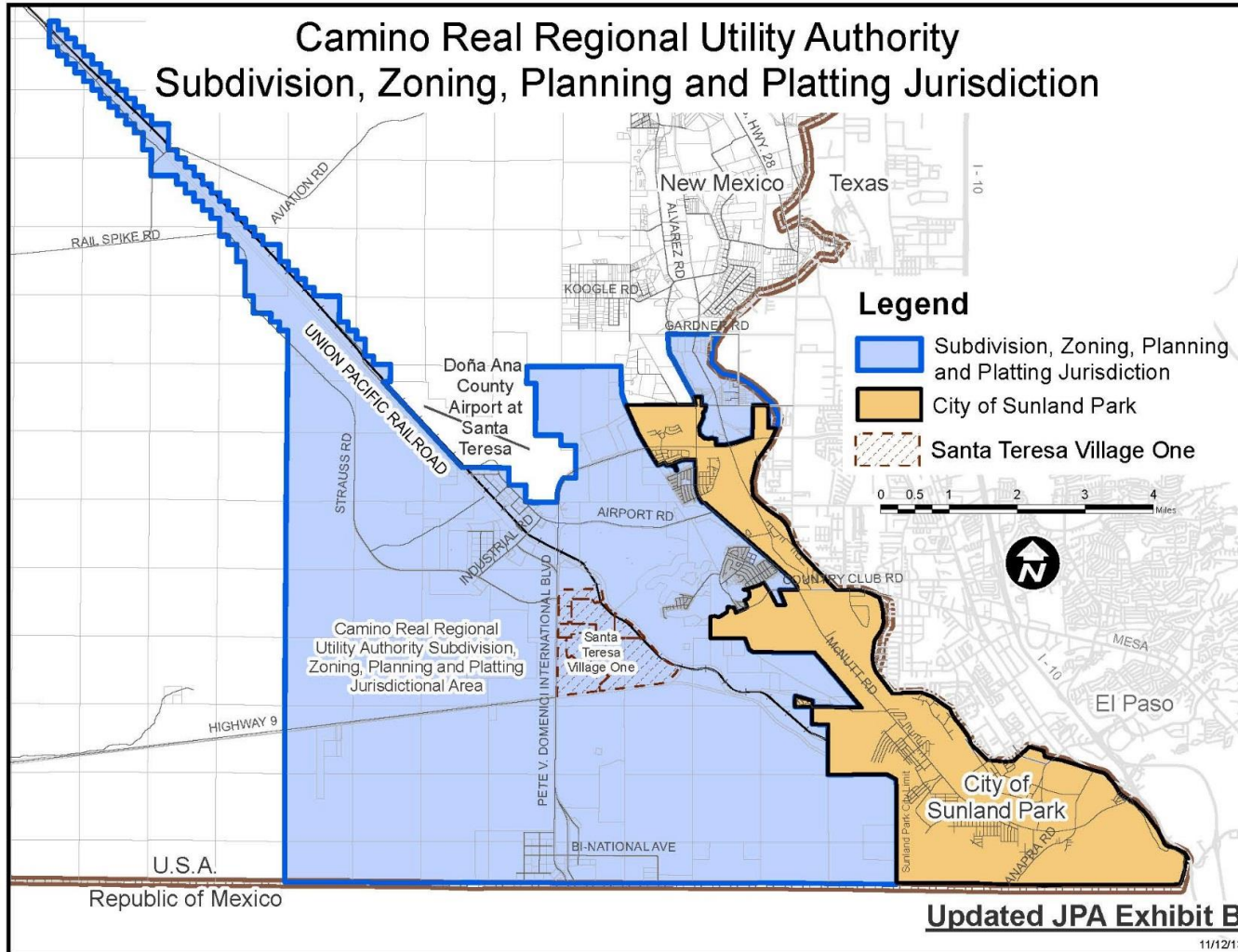
they share jurisdiction for planning, platting and sometimes zoning with the County. Sunland Park and Doña Ana County took a step further and in 2009, through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), established an independent joint authority—the Camino Real Regional Utility Authority (CRRUA)—to both own and operate water and sewer utilities, as well as adopt and administer subdivision, zoning, planning and platting rules and regulations within a 56-square-mile extraterritorial zone within the County (Figure 3-6).

Known as the Subdivision, Zoning, Planning and Platting Service Area or SZPP Service Area, Sunland Park’s extraterritorial zone comprises the water and wastewater service area except for areas within the City limits, which could change over time through annexation, and excluding Doña Ana County Airport. It is administered by the CRRUA, acting as the extraterritorial zoning authority, with the aid of an appointed extraterritorial zoning commission. The CRRUA is made up of two elected officials from Sunland Park, two County Commissioners, the State senator and representative whose districts include the Sunland Park/Santa Teresa area, and a professional with relevant expertise chosen by a majority of the joint authority. The CRRUA oversees the area foreseen as Sunland Park’s growth area in the city’s latest future land use map.

# 3 Land Use



Figure 3-6 | Joint Authority Jurisdictional Areas (CRRUA)



Source: Doña Ana County

## 3.2.4 | Existing Annexation Criteria

Annexation is the main way for cities to extend their boundaries and acquire new lands to govern. It is a process in which land is transferred from one government to another. Generally, areas targeted for annexation are either undergoing rapid growth or have an anticipated growth potential.

According to Section 3, Article 7<sup>2</sup> of the New Mexico State Statutes, there are three methods of annexation.

- Arbitration Method (Sections 3-7-5 through 3-7-10 NMSA 1978);
- Boundary Commission Method (Sections 3-7-11 through 3-7-16 NMSA 1978); and
- Petition Method (Section 3-7-17 NMSA 1978).

Laws which govern annexation powers vary by state. Most states require a majority of landowners or residents in the proposed area to consent to the annexation. In addition, the majority of states require annexation areas to be adjoining with the existing city boundary. Some states permit the annexation of areas well within other municipalities' bounds. In New Mexico this action is illegal, but land islands may be annexed from unincorporated county lands after a petition is

filed by the interested city or property owners, which then moves to the local or state board.

Currently, the city's code states, "The land area within the boundaries of the City of Sunland Park, New Mexico, as may be extended by future annexations from time to time, including privately owned land and city, state, and federal owned land." The code also states that land annexed by the city will retain the existing zoning and restrictions that were in place prior to annexation; however, if the land was not subject to zoning or restrictions, the city council shall zone the land. Additionally, the codes requires a public hearing for all requests for annexation.

The land subdivision regulations of Sunland Park are applicable to the CRRUA area. The existing code states "The land subdivision regulations shall be applicable to all territory within three miles of the municipal boundary...if annexation of land to the city should occur, these regulations automatically apply to the annexed land and that land lying up to three miles therefrom."

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://law.justia.com/codes/new-mexico/2013/chapter-3/article-7/section-3-7-1/>

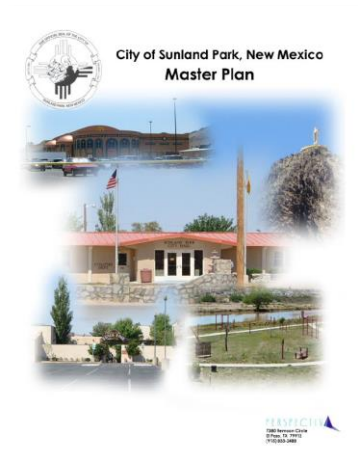


# 3

## Land Use

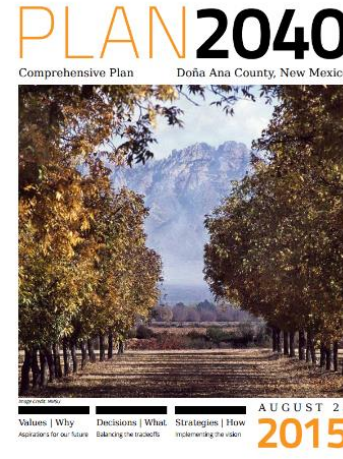


### 3.2.5 | Previous Plans



Previous land use planning occurred at the city level with the City of Sunland Park Master Plan (2004) and at the regional level *One Valley, One Vision* (2012), and at the county level with *Plan 2040* (2015). Each planning process produced a future land use map to guide development.

In 2004, Sunland Park developed the City of Sunland Park Master Plan to guide growth and help guide land use within the City. The goals of the Master Plan included improving the overall natural environment, promoting existing and new cultural features/events, enhancing the historical/religious elements of Sunland Park, growing a progressive image, and promoting tourism. Within the 2004 Master Plan, Figure 3-7 was the future land use map, which anticipated westward residential growth to NM-136. Commercial growth, as depicted in Figure 3-7 was planned to occur in and around future intersections. In addition, the Sunland Park/Anapra Port of Entry was proposed just west of Mt. Cristo Rey, providing an entry directly into Sunland Park separate from the Santa Teresa Port of Entry.



The Doña Ana County *Plan 2040*, adopted in 2015, identified the unincorporated portions of the County as undeveloped desert and mountains that residents value for beauty, recreation, and ranching activities. The Plan also identified the Santa Teresa Port of Entry, Doña Ana County airport, and the intermodal Union Pacific rail yard – all located within

unincorporated portions of the County – as growing hubs for transportation and industrial activity. Vision 2040 outlined three growth strategies for the County, which included:

- Trend Growth Strategy – 54% growth in the municipalities and 46% growth in the unincorporated Doña Ana County;
- Satellite Growth Strategy – 20% growth in the municipalities and 80% growth in the unincorporated Doña Ana County; and
- Compact Growth Strategy – 80% growth in the municipalities and 20% growth in the unincorporated Doña Ana County.

# 3

## Land Use



These three growth strategies were then combined into a Consensus Growth Strategy, which encouraged 70% of new population growth to occur within existing municipalities and the remaining 30% of new population distribution to occur within the unincorporated portions of Doña Ana County. In addition, as part of the Regional Action Plan of Vision 2040, regulations that require the development or contribution of parks for new development within unincorporated Doña Ana County were identified for modification. Figure 3-8 portrays the future land use plan for the County.

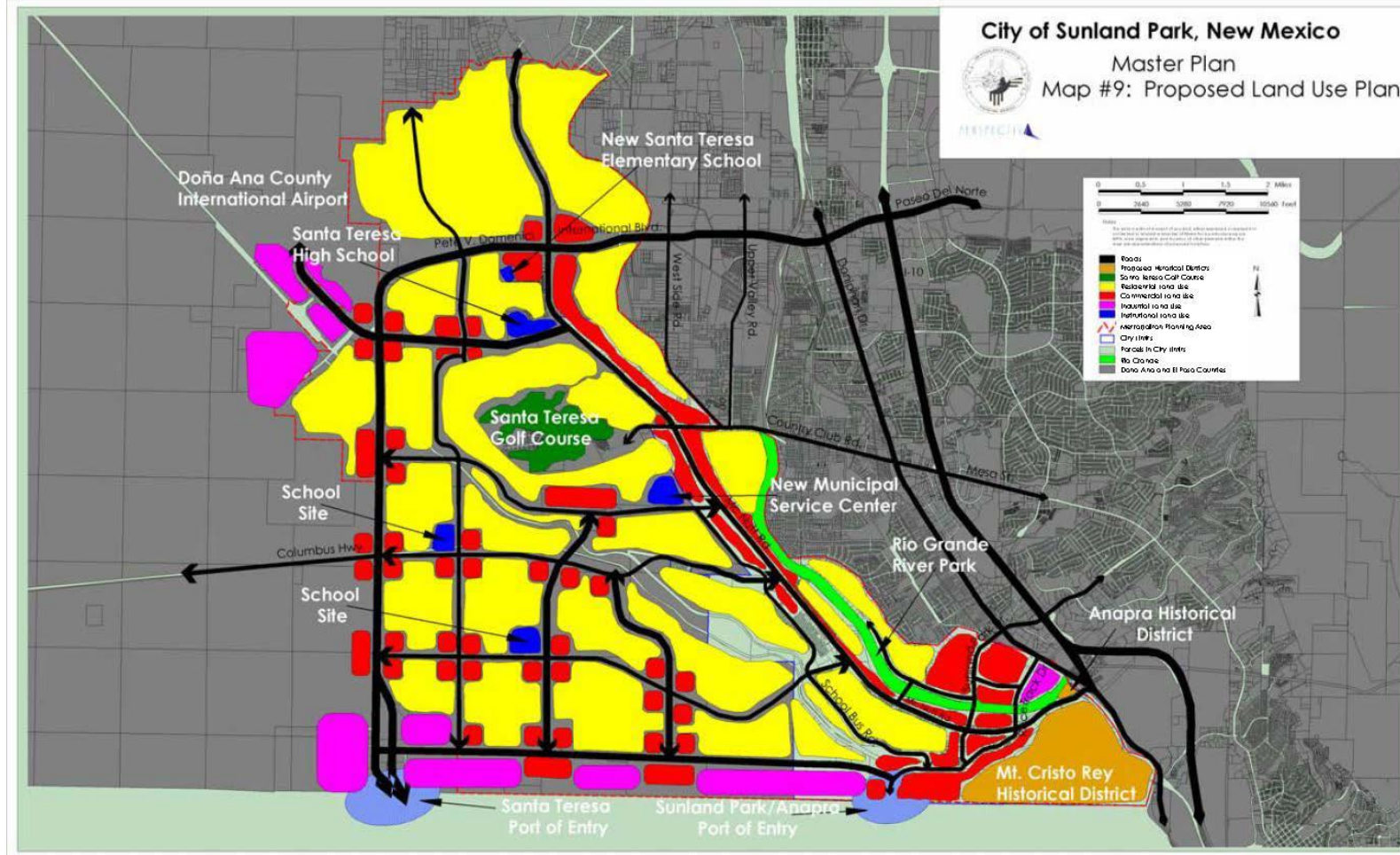
In 2009, Doña Ana County and Sunland Park created the foundation for an Extra Territorial Zone (ETZ) on approximately eight-miles west of Sunland Park. This ETZ has a separate service area for water and wastewater, which is overseen by the CRRUA. Existing plans, ordinances, and processes are in place for the ETZ until the CRRUA develops its own.

# 3

## Land Use



Figure 3-7 | City of Sunland Park 2004 Master Plan – Proposed Land Use

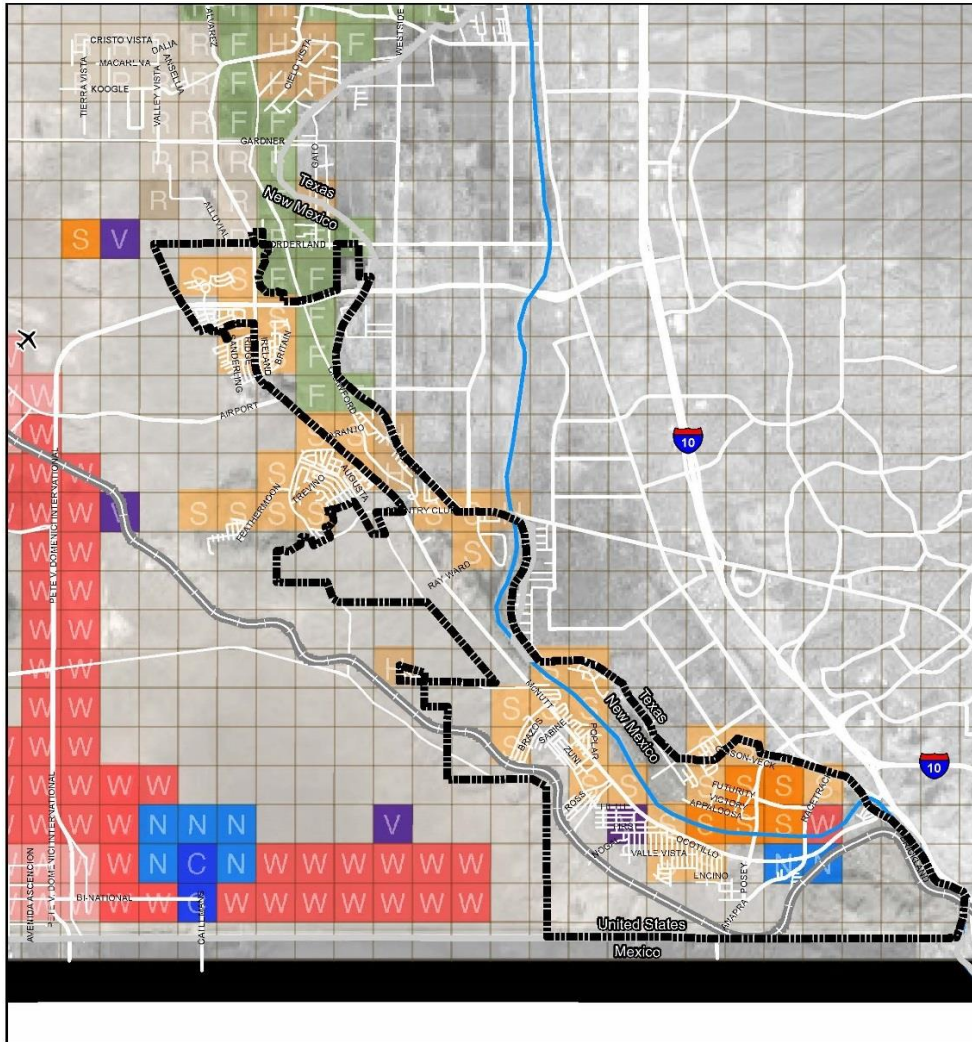


Source: City of Sunland Park 2004 Master Plan – Proposed Land Use

# 3 Land Use



Figure 3-8 | Doña Ana County Future Land Use



## Future Land Use

**Legend**

- Sunland Park Incorporated City Limits
- Rio Grande
- Railroad
- Doña Ana County At Santa Teresa Airport

C	City Center
N	City Neighborhood
V	Village
W	Workplace
R	Rural Subdivision
H	Homestead
S	Suburban
S	Suburban
F	Farm



Source: Doña Ana County

### 3.3 | Issues & Opportunities

Throughout the planning process, various issues and opportunities emerged related to land use. They included:

- A need for a “town center” and community gathering spaces.
- The ability for Sunland Park to attract residents and visitors from the entire region.
- Establishing Sunland Park as the gateway city of New Mexico by creating a Land Port of Entry (LPOE) for Sunland Park separate from the Santa Teresa LPOE.
- Annexation of the area west of the city’s municipal limits.
- A need for a residential growth plan and strategy for development as the population continues to grow.
- Disinvestment in the Anapra area and the constant threat of flooding.
- Creating more parks and recreational amenities within Sunland Park.
- A need for transition areas through aesthetics and landscaping between incompatible land uses.
- Need to identify the identity City of Sunland Park.

### 3.4 | Future Land Use Recommendations

The future land use plan incorporates previous planning efforts as well as the issues and opportunities voiced during

the extensive public engagement process. The recommendations within this section address the following:

- Future land use plan;
- Future growth area;
- Future border crossing; and
- Identity.

#### 3.4.1 | Future Land Use Plan

By 2040, citizens want infill development within the current city limits and, reflecting the future land use recommendations from the City’s 2004 plan, future development beyond the city limits towards Doña Ana County Airport and US-Mexico border. By focusing on stabilizing and strengthening both the economy and livelihood of businesses and residents within the current city limits, the City of Sunland Park establishes a foundation for future development in the years to come.

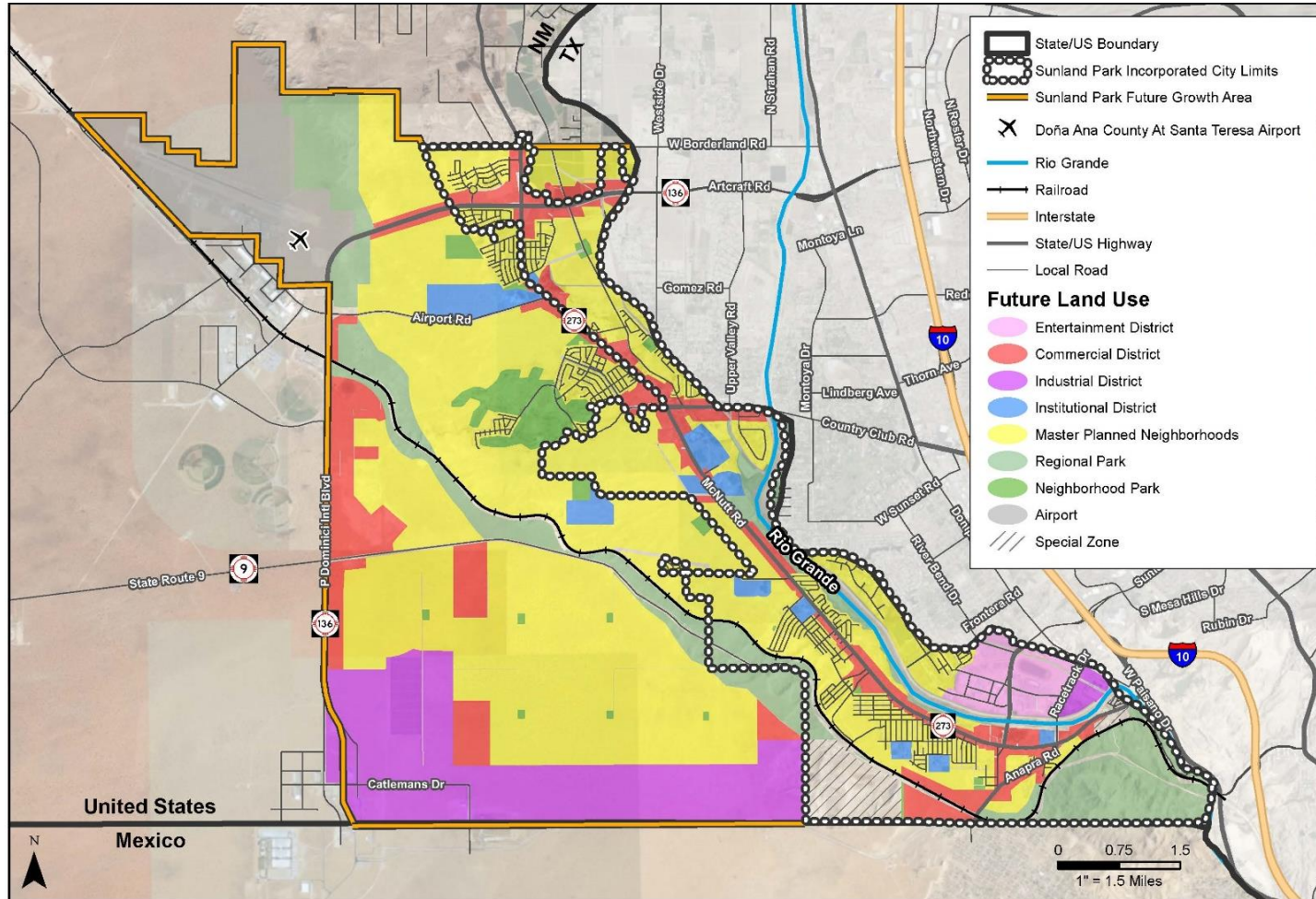
The future land use map, illustrated in Figure 3-9, depicts a “district-style” development pattern. District development aggregates similar land uses within a concentrated area. For Sunland Park, four districts are identified:

- A defined entertainment district;
- Recognizable civic districts;
- Commercial districts; and
- Industrial districts.

# 3 Land Use



Figure 3-9 | Future Land Use Plan



**Future Land Use**  
Sunland Park Comprehensive Plan

**WILSON**  
& COMPANY

# 3

## Land Use



Districts help residents and visitors navigate the city, which in turn fosters economic development.

### **Entertainment District**

The economic engine of Sunland Park will be driven by this area, which includes the Racetrack & Casino, the hotel, and Western Playland. The vision for this area includes signature shopping, employment, dining, entertainment, and recreation within a dense walkable environment. The entertainment district offers both daytime and evening activities intending to attract residents and visitors from across the metropolitan region. Potential developments that could continue to drive this area include:

- A convention center; and
- Entertainment venues.

Land uses allowed within the entertainment district include retail stores, grocery stores, restaurants, coffee shops, bars, casino, racetrack, hotel, and residential establishments.

### **Institutional District**

The institutional district includes governmental or public services such as schools, libraries, post offices, public safety facilities, hospitals, and civic facilities associated with utilities. As needed, these types of uses should be incorporated into the master planned development.

Sunland Park should enhance the city's civic campuses, develop a new Health and Community College Campus, create a new high school and workforce training campus, and expand the Gadsden School District campus.

### **Commercial District**

Commercial land uses include business activities that are primarily retail, dining, or office-based. This land use can include establishments such as retail stores for sale of merchandise, grocery stores, restaurants, coffee shops, bars, offices providing professional services such as accounting or engineering or direct services such as insurance agencies or banks, and establishments providing personal services such as salons or dry cleaning pick-up. Commercial activities are usually compatible with adjacent residential development. Lodging establishments such as hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts are included within the commercial district. Light industrial activities, such as media production or workshops, can be designated as "heavy" commercial.

### **Industrial District**

The industrial district includes intensive business activities such as manufacturing and warehousing. This land use can be divided into two categories: 1) light industrial, which includes activities like warehousing and storage, artisanal workshops, laboratories, and media production, including commercial printing operations and recording studios; and 2) heavy

# 3

## Land Use



industrial, which includes more intensive activities likely to generate pollution, such as manufacturing plants, chemical-related facilities, large scale outdoor storage, and junk yards. Light industrial may be classified as heavy commercial and is compatible with less intensive adjacent commercial uses. Heavy industrial is not compatible with adjacent commercial or residential development. Industrial uses are usually housed in one-story buildings on medium- to large-sized lots, and require access to transportation facilities. As outlined in the zoning ordinance aesthetics and landscaping elements are required as a transition area between industrial uses and non-industrial uses.

### **Residential Development**

Master planned residential development was the preferred development pattern for residential development. Master planned neighborhoods include a variety of housing types from single-family to multi-family units, in addition to mixed-use development. Master Planned Neighborhoods typically have high quality design standards that create walkable neighborhoods that are aesthetically pleasing and foster a sense of community. Parks and open space are required as part of this development to serve residents of the surrounding neighborhood, enhancing recreational amenities within Sunland Park.

Master Planned Neighborhoods can include limited commercial uses primarily intended to serve local residents. This can include small-scale retail stores, dining establishments, direct services or personal services that do not generate large volumes of automobile traffic. Institutional services, such as schools, would be permitted within the Master Planned Neighborhoods. Big-box commercial retail, for instance, is not allowed in Master Planned Neighborhoods.

### **3.4.2 | Future Growth Area**

The future growth area, identified in Figure 3-9 extends out from the corporate limits of the City Sunland Park to Pete Domenici (NM-136) and includes Doña Ana County International Jetport at Santa Teresa Airport. Residential development is encouraged, with strategic areas of commercial and industrial development, due to the probability of annexation by Sunland Park.

Annexation of the Future Growth Area will likely occur over time, as development occurs. Annexation should only occur after the City has completed a cost/benefit analysis for the proposed annexation area as well as made a commitment to provide necessary public infrastructure and services within a reasonable time frame.



### 3.4.3 | Border Crossing

Throughout the planning process, the public expressed unanimous support of a LPOE within Sunland Park, separate from the Santa Teresa LPOE. Gaining a LPOE facilitates the vision of Sunland Park as the gateway city to New Mexico, Mexico, and beyond; therefore, this Plan recommends examining the potential creation of a LPOE in Sunland Park. During this planning process, two locations emerged as preferred areas for a new LPOE in Sunland Park: directly east of the landfill and directly west of the landfill. Pros and cons were discussed for each location and the City of Sunland Park is underway with analyzing the feasibility of the LPOE east of the landfill. Once LPOE has been identified, the City of Sunland Park needs to identify specific ways to integrate the LPOE into the community. Figure 3-10 identifies the proposed project area for the LPOE.

### 3.4.4 | Anapra Area

For decades, the Community of Anapra, located in the southern most area of the City, has been prone to flooding. In 2006, Anapra and the entire state of New Mexico, experienced significant flooding, causing many residents in Anapra to temporarily evacuate. In 2016, the City of Sunland Park charged Staff and Wilson & Company to research, apply, and secure design and construction funding for the short-term flooding mitigation. Long-term, the City has charged Staff

and Wilson & Company to develop a permanent solution for the Community. This Comprehensive Master Plan identifies the short-term land use only, which is residential.

### 3.4.5 | Identity

To reinforce the identity of the City, Sunland Park should utilize community gateways and district gateways. Community gateways should be strategically located at entrances throughout the city. Figure 3-8 identifies community gateways at the following locations:

- Country Club Road just west of the New Mexico/Texas border;
- Sunland Park Drive just west of the New Mexico/Texas border;
- NM-136 just west of the New Mexico/Texas border and north of Airport Road;
- Airport Road just east of NM 136;
- NM 9 just east of NM 136; and
- At the new Port of Entry on the Sunland Park side.

As the city expands into the future growth area a community gateway should be located at the Santa Teresa Port of entry. Community gateways should utilize similar materials to reinforce a consistent identity. Figure 3-11 portrays community gateway signage examples.

# 3

## Land Use

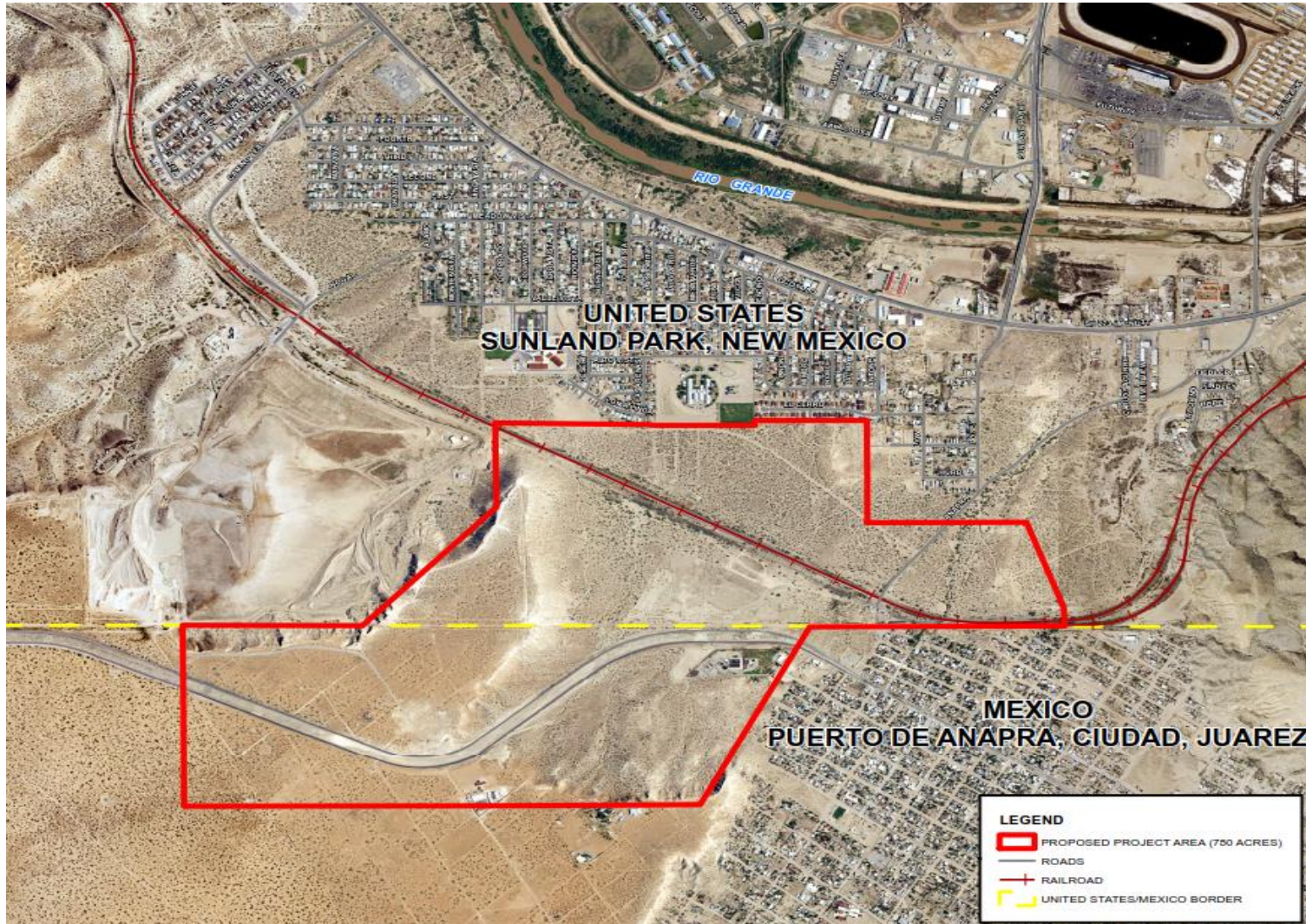


District gateways should be purposefully placed throughout the community districts. The district gateways should establish a brand and identity for the various areas throughout Sunland Park. Figure 3-12 illustrates district gateway examples.

# 3 Land Use



Figure 3-10 | Proposed Port of Entry Study Area in Sunland Park, NM



# 3

## Land Use

Figure 3-11 | Community Gateway Signage



# 3

## Land Use

Figure 3-12 | District Gateway Signage





### 3.5 | Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies

Sunland Park citizens support infill development in addition to a growth strategy that includes Doña Ana County International Jetport at Santa Teresa Airport and the area west of the established city limits to NM 136. A LPOE within the City of Sunland Park, separate from the existing Santa Teresa POE, is preferred. Development occurs in defined districts for entertainment, education, shopping, employment, and civic activities throughout the community.

Sunland Park's land use goals and policies envision a well-rounded, balanced community. As growth occurs, they emphasize the importance of building upon the existing characteristics that make Sunland Park unique. The City's image as an attractive, livable community is promoted through diverse development patterns reinforcing Sunland Park as the gateway city.

**Land Use (LU) Goal 1 | Development in Sunland Park is guided by strategic growth management.**

**Objective LU 1 – A** The City should encourage commercial, residential, institutional, and industrial infill

development within the established city limits.

**Objective LU 1 – B** The City should maintain the existing infrastructure system by prioritizing infrastructure maintenance and improvements within the established portions of the community before investing in new infrastructure to support future growth areas.

**Objective LU 1 – C** The City should coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions to bolster compatible land use and establish a rational planning process of urbanization that maximizes the use of public investment.

**Objective LU 1 – D** The City should identify place-making strategies in order to enhance distinctive qualities of each district.

**Objective LU 1 – E** The City should encourage the use of plans, agreements, and incentives to promote equitable development.

# 3

## Land Use



**LU 1 Implementation Strategy 1.1:** Provide incentives for high-quality infill development, reducing the burden on the City for providing services and maintaining infrastructure (compared with development in new areas). Incentives can include expedited development review by staff and expedited rezoning and variance approval through the Planning and Zoning Commission. The feasibility of financial incentives should also be investigated.

**LU 1 Implementation Strategy 1.2:** The City should coordinate with the County, CRRUA, and other relevant bodies to ensure that development adjacent to the existing city limits or within the Future Growth Area is high quality and implemented in a way that enhances, rather than limits, Sunland Park’s growth and prosperity.

**LU 1 Implementation Strategy 1.3:** The City should develop an official policy permitting the creation of development agreements that support the vision and land use goals of this plan.

**LU 1 Implementation Strategy 1.4:** The City should continue its involvement with the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization towards an end of supporting transportation projects that fulfill the vision and development goals of Sunland Park.

**LU 1 Implementation Strategy 1.5:** The City should prepare and adopt plans for the destination, institutional, commercial, and industrial districts, especially within identified activity centers. These plans should establish place-making strategies, helping to marshal resources and stakeholders to develop quality places to live, work and play. Form-based codes defined in conjunction with these new plans can enhance distinctive qualities of each district through the built environment.

**LU 1 Implementation Strategy 1.6:** Encourage development and redevelopment projects within the Entertainment District as identified in the 2007 Downtown Master Plan.

### Land Use (LU) Goal 2 | The City of Sunland Park promotes a balanced mix of land uses.

- Objective LU 2 – A** The City should support a diverse mix of residential, commercial, employment, parks, and green space throughout the community.
- Objective LU 2 – B** The City should encourage a diversity of land uses within each district across the community.

# 3

## Land Use



**Objective LU 2 – C** The City should balance the need for new growth with opportunities for infill development and revitalization.

**LU 2 Implementation Strategy 2.1:** Through its development review, rezoning, and variance approval processes, the City should support development proposals that contain or foster a diverse mix of uses. This may mean supporting Master Planned Communities that include a mix of uses within a single development, or backing single-use developments that support rather than exclude different adjacent land uses.

**LU 2 Implementation Strategy 2.2:** Establish a policy for supporting high-quality infill development adjacent to existing neighborhoods and principal corridors through expedited development review, financial incentives, land assembly, and/or direct funding of elements of a development, such as affordable housing or infrastructure improvements.

**LU 2 Implementation Strategy 2.3:** The City should enforce new standards for park or open space dedication, as defined in the zoning code, and dedicate sufficient resources for the maintenance of existing and newly dedicated parks.

**LU 2 Implementation Strategy 2.4:** The City should be flexible when applying Future Land Use designations and allow interpretation by decision makers when the Future Land Use map does not perfectly align with parcels of land.

### Land Use (LU) Goal 3 | Transition areas exist between incompatible land uses within Sunland Park.

**Objective LU 3 – A** The City should incorporate design buffers and/or physical transitions between conflicting uses.

**Objective LU 3 – B** The City should provide sufficient buffers between residential and non-residential uses, except when residential is part of a mixed-use development.

**Objective LU 3 – C** The City should account for the spatial relationship of air, sound, and other environmental effects from industrial and transportation areas as they relate to planned or existing residential areas.



# 3

## Land Use



**LU 3 Implementation Strategy 3.1:** Through the development review process, the City should work with developers to establish sufficient open space or vegetation buffers or construct other nuisance-mitigation elements. Elements should be built to standards defined in the zoning and development ordinance.

**LU 3 Implementation Strategy 3.2:** The City should enforce lighting standards for new development, especially within and adjacent to residential development.

**LU 3 Implementation Strategy 3.3:** The City should work through existing channels or establish new relationships with representatives of the Doña Ana County International Jetport at Santa Teresa and the Union Pacific Railroad to ensure that new expansion of important air and rail transportation infrastructure does not impose an undue nuisance burden on the residents or business owners of Sunland Park, current or future.

**Land Use (LU) Goal 4 | Land use within Sunland Park connects existing and future transportation systems.**

**Objective LU 4 – A** The City should require that new development connect into existing sidewalks and/or bicycle facilities.

**Objective LU 4 – B** The City should encourage alternative transportation modes within and between neighborhoods, districts, and the region for people of all ages and abilities.

**Objective LU 4 – C** The City should require new development, along high capacity corridors, to provide and maintain adequate pedestrian facilities.

**LU 4 Implementation Strategy 4.1:** Work with developers to ensure safe, comfortable pedestrian connections on development sites, such as through parking lots, and adequate connections between adjacent development sites, such as with off-street paths.

**LU 4 Implementation Strategy 4.2:** With new development sidewalks and paths should adhere to Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards, including adequate curb ramps and sufficient width, in order to accommodate those with limited mobility, including those with disabilities and users who are younger or older.

**LU 4 Implementation Strategy 4.3:** Especially as major development proposals occur, City staff should work with local transit agencies to examine the effects of the

# 3

## Land Use



development on transit services, as well as the potential opportunities to provide enhanced service for residents and workers.

**LU 4 Implementation Strategy 4.4:** Conduct corridor studies along major arterials within Sunland Park to identify potential improvements to city services and important bicycle, pedestrian, or transit connections.

**Land Use (LU) Goal 5 | The built environment within Sunland Park is attractive and fosters pride in the community.**

- Objective LU 5 – A** Create a more welcoming arrival into the City of Sunland Park, enhancing the sense of place.
- Objective LU 5 – B** The City should promote the identities of each district by retaining their established character and enhancing distinctive qualities, especially in areas experiencing significant development.
- Objective LU 5 – C** Remove or improve nuisance properties.

**LU 5 Implementation Strategy 5.1:** Design and construct entry signage at the major gateways into Sunland Park as well as at the entrances to community districts.

**LU 5 Implementation Strategy 5.2:** The City should prepare and adopt plans for the destination, institutional, commercial, and industrial districts, especially in identified activity centers. These plans establish place-making strategies, helping to marshal resources and stakeholders to develop quality places to live, work and play. Form-based codes defined in conjunction with these new plans can enhance distinctive qualities of each district through the built environment.

**LU 5 Implementation Strategy 5.3:** The City should provide adequate code enforcement staff to administer the existing codes on property maintenance.

**LU 5 Implementation Strategy 5.4:** The City should undertake an awareness campaign – including with social media, mailers, billboards, or other methods – to publicize among residents common code violations and how to avoid penalties for them.

# 3

## Land Use



**Growth Area (GA) Goal 1 | Sunland Park encourages future growth toward the Mexico/United States international boundary and Doña Ana County International Jetport at Santa Teresa Airport through targeted annexations and efficient provision of infrastructure.**

Teresa stakeholders to discuss growth and development issues.

**Objective GA 1 – A** The City should coordinate with the county, neighboring jurisdictions, and other special districts regarding annexation strategies.

**Objective GA 1 – B** The City should require annexation of unincorporated areas as a prerequisite to receive city services.

**GA 1 Implementation Strategy 1.1:** Develop a process for evaluating proposed annexation areas that is tied to the existing infrastructure capacity, cost of extending the infrastructure network, and the City’s ability to provide municipal services.

**GA 1 Implementation Strategy 1.2:** Prioritize annexation of areas that support industrial and commercial growth that can be supported by infrastructure.

**GA 1 Implementation Strategy 1.3:** Initiate and participate in discussions with CRRUA, Doña Ana County, and Santa

(This page intentionally left blank)



4

housing &  
neighborhoods

# 4

## Housing & Neighborhoods



### The City of Sunland Park promotes housing choices and supports a variety of housing types to support our mixed-income community.

#### 4.0 | Housing & Neighborhoods

Many things point to Sunland Park as a growing community. Housing data paints Sunland Park as a growing community, and one that is particularly attractive to families and those seeking a less expensive place to live in the El Paso region. In fact, figures show that the city's housing market is struggling to meet demand, with consistently low residential vacancy rates and rising housing costs.

Sunland Park faces challenges in meeting its housing need. The City does not have a residential growth plan or strategy to help with responsible development. With no growth plan and a historical lack of code enforcement, issues within the mobile home developments have become a concern. Unsafe and unsightly mobile homes are continuing to be a nuisance for neighboring homes and neighborhoods. Likewise, low residential vacancy and high population growth means Sunland Park needs to proactively plan for a diverse housing stock.

This plan recommends a number of strategies to help increase the housing supply, improve housing affordability, and tie residential development into wider land use and economic development goals.



# 4

## Housing & Neighborhoods



### 4.1 | Housing Characteristics

According to 2016 Census Bureau estimates, there were 4,476 housing units in Sunland Park (Table 4-1), up from 4,060 units in 2010. This is an increase of 10%, mirroring a similar increase in the adjacent El Paso area and slightly higher than the Las Cruces area. The number of housing units nationally increased just 3% over the same time period. The increase in population and housing units, and the low vacancy rate, point to healthy demand for relocation to Sunland Park. The city’s lower housing costs could be attractive to many – costs are approximately 20% lower in Sunland Park than the El Paso MSA and even lower than the Las Cruces MSA.

**Table 4-1: 2016 Housing Occupancy**

Subject	Number	Percent	Percent, Las Cruces MSA	Percent, El Paso MSA
<b>OCCUPANCY STATUS</b>				
<b>Total housing units</b>	4,476	100.0	--	--
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	4,115	91.9	91.2	89.1
<b>Vacant housing units</b>	361	8.1	8.8	10.9

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census – Housing Occupancy: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate*

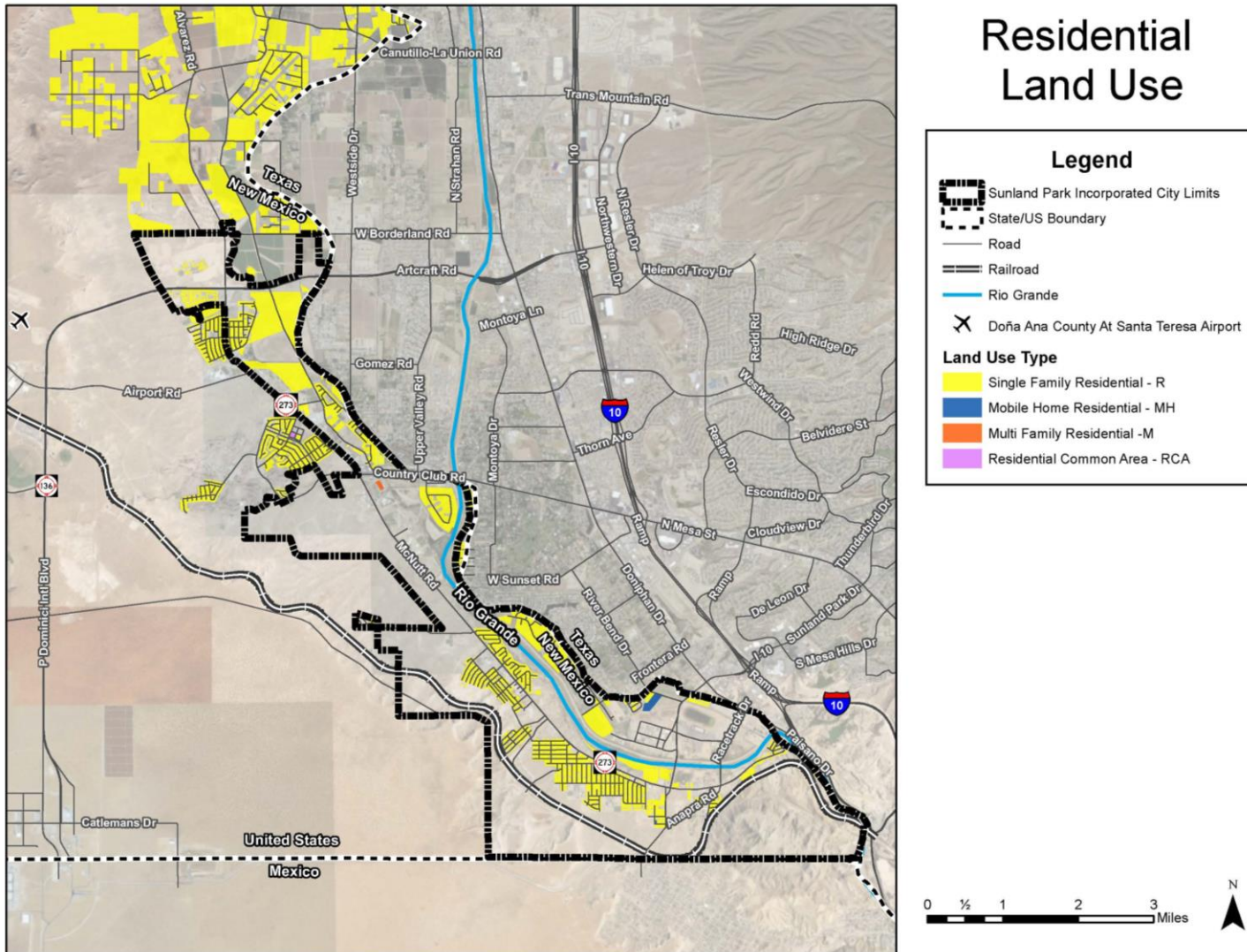
The majority of housing units are located in the southern portion of the City along McNutt Road; however, newer development is located near and around the northern limits of Sunland Park at the intersection of Pete Domenici Boulevard and McNutt Road. Figure 4-1 illustrates the location of residential land use within Sunland Park, which consists of single family residential, mobile home residential, multi-family residential, and residential common areas.

# 4

## Housing & Neighborhoods



Figure 4-1 | Residential Land Use in Sunland Park





# 4

## Housing & Neighborhoods



### 4.2 | Tenure and Vacancy

The ratio of owner-occupied units to renter-occupied is higher in Sunland Park than in the surrounding metropolitan areas. The average size of both owner- and renter-occupied units is 3.72, higher than in El Paso or Las Cruces (Table 4-2). Figure 4-2 depicts the percent of owner occupied housing units by block group. Most housing units in Sunland Park are single-family detached (62.1%) or mobile homes (21.6%) (Table 4-3). Figure 4-3 illustrates number of housing units in structures by block group. Sunland Park has a significantly higher share of family households, compared to El Paso MSA or Las Cruces MSA. Nearly 90% of households are family households. The city has more slightly greater percentage of married-couple family households than surrounding areas but also has more female-headed (no husband present) households (Table 4-4).

**Table 4-2: 2016 Tenure and Household Size**

	Sunland Park	El Paso MSA	Las Cruces MSA
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	<b>4,115</b>	<b>262,355</b>	<b>74,989</b>
<b>Owner-occupied</b>	<b>66.10%</b>	<b>61.40%</b>	<b>63.20%</b>
<b>Renter-occupied</b>	<b>33.90%</b>	<b>38.60%</b>	<b>36.80%</b>
<b>Average household size of owner-occupied unit</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>3.28</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>Average household size of renter-occupied unit</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>2.76</b>
<b>Overall average household size</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>2.78</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census – Tenure: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

**Table 4-3: Housing by Units in Structure – Sunland Park, NM**

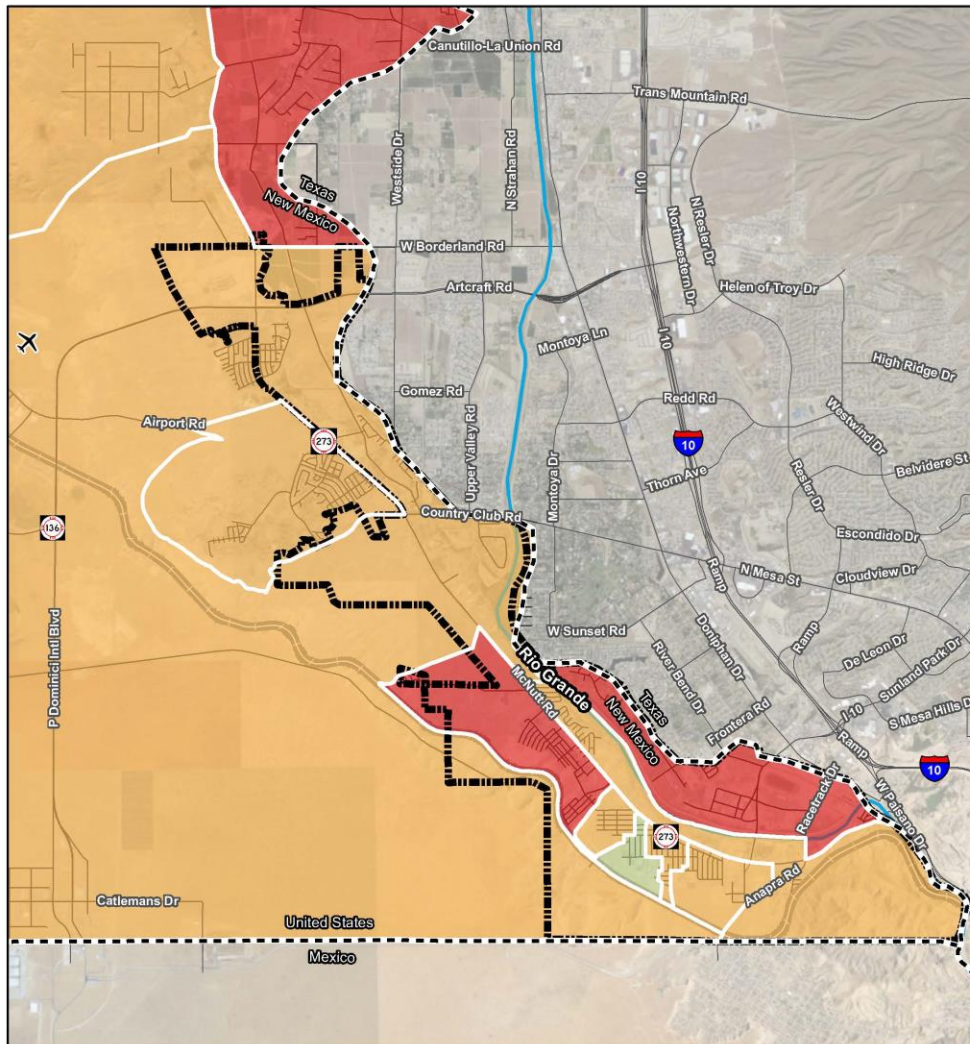
Occupied housing units	4,115
<b>UNITS IN STRUCTURE</b>	
<b>1, detached</b>	63.8%
<b>1, attached</b>	2.8%
<b>2 apartments</b>	2.6%
<b>3 or 4 apartments</b>	3.5%
<b>5 to 9 apartments</b>	2.1%
<b>10 or more apartments</b>	3.6%
<b>Mobile home or other type of housing</b>	21.6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census – Units in Structure: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

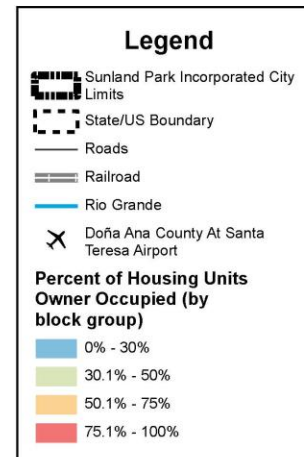
# 4 Housing & Neighborhoods



Figure 4-2 | Housing Tenure



## Housing Tenure

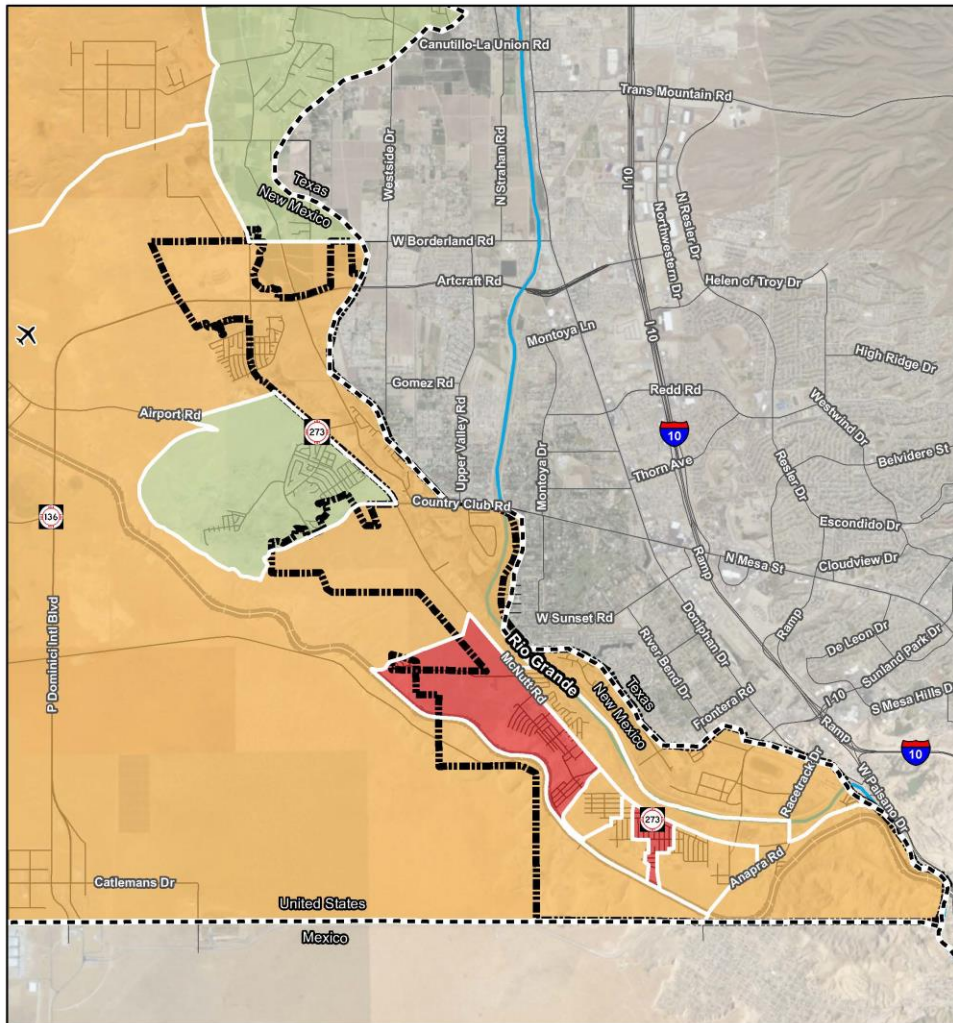


# 4

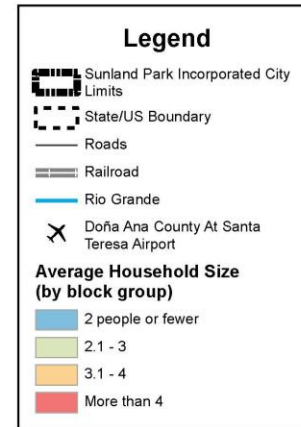
## Housing & Neighborhoods



Figure 4-3 | Household Size



### Household Size



# 4

## Housing & Neighborhoods



**Table 4-4: 2016 Household Type**

	Sunland Park, NM		El Paso, TX MSA		Las Cruces, NM MSA	
	% of total		% of total		% of total	
<b>Total:</b>	4,115		262,355		74,989	
<b>Family households:</b>	<b>3,543</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>196,434</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>51,818</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>Married-couple family</b>	2,230	54%	131,649	50%	36,317	48%
<b>Other family:</b>	1,313	32%	64,785	25%	15,501	21%
<b>Male householder, no wife present</b>	240	6%	14,490	6%	3,721	5%
<b>Female householder, no husband present</b>	1,073	26%	50,295	19%	11,780	16%
<b>Nonfamily households:</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>65,921</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>23,171</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Householder living alone</b>	494	12%	57,764	22%	18,306	24%
<b>Householder not living alone</b>	78	2%	8,157	3%	4,865	6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census – Vacancy Status: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

### 4.2.1 | Vacancy

Sunland Park had an overall vacancy rate of 8.8%, similar to El Paso MSA (at 8.8%) and slightly lower than the rate across the Las Cruces MSA (10.9%). The overall rate alone, however, is not a clear indicator of the state of a place’s housing market. This is because housing units might be vacant for a number of reasons. They might be up for sale or for rent or be used on only a seasonal basis for recreation or by migrant workers. Units that are categorized by the Census Bureau as “Vacant for sale” or “Vacant for rent” contribute to a city’s “homeowner vacancy rate” or a “rental vacancy rate”. The lower these rates are, the more demand there is for housing in a community (see Table 4-5).

In Sunland Park, both of these are very low. In fact, the homeowner and rental vacancy rate in Sunland Park is below the rates for the Las Cruces and El Paso MSA’s, suggesting that within the wider region, housing in Sunland Park is in especially in demand.

# 4

## Housing & Neighborhoods



**Table 4-4: Housing Occupancy, 2016 and 2011**

	Sunland Park, NM		El Paso, TX Metro Area		Las Cruces, NM Metro Area	
	2016	2011	2016	2011	2016	2011
<b>HOUSING OCCUPANCY</b>						
<b>Total housing units</b>	4,476	4,012	287,792	267,068	84,121	80,715
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	91.90%	94.90%	91.20%	92.60%	89.10%	90.10%
<b>Vacant housing units</b>	8.10%	5.10%	8.80%	7.40%	10.90%	9.90%
<b>Homeowner vacancy rate</b>	0	0	1.9	2.2	2.8	1.4
<b>Rental vacancy rate</b>	2.9	2.7	9.1	7.4	8	8

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census – Housing Occupancy: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

### 4.3 | Affordability

The relatively low supply could be affecting housing affordability. In the 2016 Census, nearly 58% of renters and 35% of homeowners with a mortgage paid more than 30% of household income to housing costs. Housing is considered affordable if 30% or less of household income is paid for housing – though 51% of renters and 30% of homeowners nationally pay more than that, and this is the case across the Las Cruces and El Paso MSAs, as well. In Sunland Park, 58% of renters and 35% of homeowners pay more than 30% of household income towards housing, higher than the regional and national averages. Across these geographies, the share of residents paying more than 30% of HHI has decreased since 2011 but has remained consistently higher in Sunland Park (see Table 4-5).

A need for more affordable housing units in Sunland Park was highlighted in the 2015 Doña Ana County plan. The county plan focuses on areas of the county outside of cities of Las Cruces and Mesilla, which have their own plans. The plan documented the existing stock of affordable housing (see Table 4-6) and the demand for housing, showing that waiting lists had twice as many applicants as there were units in the county. This translated to a deficit of thousands of units across the county. The plan also showed the need for rehabilitation of over 400 units of housing in Sunland Park (about 10% or the city’s housing stock), mostly

# 4

## Housing & Neighborhoods



single family and mobile home units. According to the 2015 U.S Census, 36% of families in Sunland Park were in poverty compared to 22% in Doña Ana County, 15.9% in the State of New Mexico, and 11.3% in the United States. More detailed information can be found in Appendix A.

The *Doña Ana County Affordable Housing Plan*, adopted in 2014, made a number of recommendations, which included support of affordable housing in Sunland Park through investment, incentives, and changes to the county zoning and development process. The plan was an important step in the County’s efforts to address affordable housing issues. Besides documenting the existing conditions and needs across the county, the plan also fulfilled a state requirement that local governments adopt an affordable housing plan and affordable housing ordinance before funding new affordable housing projects in their jurisdictions. A similar document could lay an important baseline for affordable housing initiatives in Sunland Park.

**Table 4-5: Households Paying More Than 30% of Income Towards Housing**

	Sunland Park, NM		Las Cruces, NM Metro Area		El Paso, TX Metro Area	
	2016	2011	2016	2011	2016	2011
<b>HOMEOWNERS (WITH A MORTGAGE) PAYING MORE THAN 30% OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR HOUSING</b>						
<b>30.0 to 34.9 percent</b>	5.70%	12.00%	8.80%	7.60%	7.60%	9.80%
<b>35.0 percent or more</b>	29.90%	44.30%	22.20%	27.70%	24.10%	27.30%
<b>Overall percent of homeowner households paying more than 30%</b>	35.60%	56.30%	31.00%	35.30%	31.70%	37.10%
<b>OCCUPIED UNITS PAYING RENT PAYING MORE THAN 30% OF INCOME FOR HOUSING</b>						
<b>30.0 to 34.9 percent</b>	12.90%	15.70%	10.00%	10.80%	8.40%	9.70%
<b>35.0 percent or more</b>	45.30%	46.50%	39.00%	41.40%	44.70%	47.40%
<b>Overall percent of renter households paying more than 30%</b>	58.20%	62%	49.00%	52.20%	53.10%	57.10%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census – Housing Occupancy: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

# 4

## Housing & Neighborhoods



**Table 4-6: Affordable Housing Units in Sunland Park**

Housing Type	Location	Total Units	Studio/1-BR	2BR	3+ BR	Population served	Income Eligibility
<b>PUBLIC HOUSING</b>							
Sunland Park PHA units	Sunland Park	40	5	5	30	1-BR are elderly; rest are family	50% or below
<b>SUBSIDIZED RENTAL</b>							
Meadow Vista II	Sunland Park	16	0	8	8	Family	n/a
Playa II	Sunland Park	44	12	14	18	Family	n/a
Vista del Rey	Sunland Park	42	0	26	16	Family	n/a
Meadow Vista Homes	Sunland Park	26	0	2	24	Family	n/a
Playa Apartments	Sunland Park	36	0	18	18	Family	n/a
<b>SPECIAL NEEDS/ ELDERLY/DISABLED/SUPPORTIVE HOUSING</b>							
Villa del Sol Senior Housing	Sunland Park	30	30	0	0	Elderly	50% or below
<b>TOTAL UNITS</b>		<b>234</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>114</b>		

Source: Doña Ana County Affordable Housing Plan

### 4.4 | Housing Opportunities

A number of other housing opportunities were raised during the planning process. There is a high rate of turnover of residents, abandonment, and blight in mobile home communities. Many tenants are not aware of city requirements for improvements to mobile home sites and of applicable city, utility, and state fees, ultimately leading to many tenants abandoning their home or site because costs are too high. Several residential units are out of compliance with building codes or zoning regulations, making it difficult for the units to be sold or for building permits to be issued for improvements to the unit. Additionally, many homes are abandoned and not maintained. Lastly, several of these properties' owners are out of state, hampering the City's efforts to enforce code violations or to begin legal proceedings to condemn the property.

# 4

## Housing & Neighborhoods



### 4.5 | Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies

The goals, objectives, and implementation strategies detailed below are intended to address the city’s key housing issues. The goals envision a community with a housing supply that serves a growing population with a range of housing types that are affordable for Sunland Park’s mix of incomes. The plan envisions achieving many of these goals through development of Master Planned Neighborhoods, which involve developers and the City working closely together to create quality designs for neighborhoods. The housing goals here support the city’s wider land use and economic development goals.

**Housing (H) Goal 1 | Sunland Park has an expanded housing supply, with a range of housing types, in master planned developments in existing and new areas of the city.**

**Objective H 1 – A** The City shall promote master planned neighborhoods that provide a range of housing options.

**Objective H 1 – B** The City should support construction of new housing units to be available for sale or rent.

**Objective H 1 – C** The City should encourage a balance of single family and multifamily housing options.

**Objective H 1 – D** Sunland Park should continue to provide housing that supports the El Paso Metropolitan region.

**Objective H 1 – E** Rehabilitation of existing housing that is in poor condition.

**H 1 Implementation Strategy 1.1:** Working with CRRUA and relevant City departments, create a streamlined and well-defined development review process for Master Planned Neighborhood proposals that seeks to reduce the length of review and uncertainty for developers.

**H 1 Implementation Strategy 1.2:** During the development review process for Master Planned Neighborhoods, the City should permit or encourage inclusion of higher-density residential development, including townhomes and apartments.

**H 1 Implementation Strategy 1.3:** Partner with regional organizations to rehabilitate or replace existing residential structures that are in poor condition.



# 4

## Housing & Neighborhoods



### **Housing (H) Goal 2 | Existing and new housing meets the socioeconomic needs of Sunland Park residents.**

- Objective H 2 – A** Reduce the number of residents paying more than 30% of their household income towards housing costs.
- Objective H 2 – B** Encourage development of housing choice for every age of life.
- Objective H 2 – C** Reduce the cost of utilities and other housing costs.

**H 2 Implementation Strategy 2.1:** Develop and adopt an Affordable Housing Plan, per New Mexico state regulations, that will permit the City to support and fund affordable housing projects.

**H 2 Implementation Strategy 2.2:** Develop a policy to incentivize development projects that include affordable or subsidized housing units through waiving of development review fees, City funding of new infrastructure or utilities, or partnerships for Federal funding programs, such as CDBG, that can support private development that meet certain community benefit criteria.

**H 2 Implementation Strategy 2.3:** The City should partner with the Sunland Park Public Housing Authority and other

potential partners to fund and construct new affordable housing units, per target number of units defined in a new affordable housing plan.

**H 2 Implementation Strategy 2.4:** The City should work through its representation on the CRRUA board to keep utility rate increases to a minimum.

**H 2 Implementation Strategy 2.5:** The City should work with CRRUA and other potential partners to create a program that incentivizes energy and water conservation by residents, such as through rebate programs that refund part of the cost of energy-efficient appliances, light bulbs, insulation or other equipment.

### **Housing (H) Goal 3 | Residential development supports the land use and development goals of Sunland Park.**

- Objective H 3 – A** Residential development occurs in line with city’s growth strategy, being prioritized in infill locations within the city limits, and in locations where infrastructure already exists.
- Objective H 3 – B** Residential development should occur in conjunction with destination, institutional,

# 4

## Housing & Neighborhoods



and commercial development to take advantage of efficiencies and synergies.

**Objective H 3 – C** Creation of Master Planned Neighborhoods that have a balance of residential development, parks, open space, and, where advisable, local-serving commercial uses.

**Objective H 3 – D** Residential development should be adequately buffered from adjacent incompatible land uses.

**Objective H 3 – E** New residential development should connect to existing and future transportation system, including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks.

**Objective H 3 – F** Sunland Park contains quality housing that integrates with and enhance the City’s image.

**H 3 Implementation Strategy 3.1:** The city should work with interested private and nonprofit sector partners to

assemble infill parcels for development/redevelopment, especially where properties are blighted.

**H 3 Implementation Strategy 3.2:** Encourage development and redevelopment projects where other economic development investment is occurring, including within the Entertainment District as identified in the Downtown Master Plan.

**H 3 Implementation Strategy 3.3:** Adopt and maintain new zoning and development standards that require open space and recreational amenities as part of new residential development.

**H 3 Implementation Strategy 3.4:** The City should work with developers to define standards for specific Master Planned Neighborhoods proposals prior to development approval, as the City deems appropriate. Standards should address and provide for sufficient:

- Open space and recreational amenities;
- Buffering between incompatible land uses;
- Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections; and
- Quality architectural and landscaping standards.



5

transportation

# 5 Transportation



**Transportation is how people and goods move, and is a vital component of a vibrant community. Sunland Park safely utilizes multiple transportation modes to efficiently connect destinations.**

## 5.0 | Transportation

Understanding how and where people walk, drive, bike, or ride transit within Sunland Park is important to identify how the community operates. Transportation in Sunland Park is discussed in the following ways in this section:

- Existing and Planned Infrastructure (including roadway, multimodal, aviation, and rail transportation);
- Issues & Opportunities;
- Recommendations; and
- Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies.

### 5.1 | Existing and Planned Transportation Infrastructure

The primary form of transportation is by automobile within Sunland Park; therefore, the road network is a key component of the transportation system, playing a major role in shaping the geography of the city. Today, the major roads in Sunland Park include NM-273 (McNutt Road), NM-136 (Pete V. Domenici Road/Artcraft Road), and Country Club Road. A few transit routes exist serving Sunland Park and connecting northward to Las Cruces and the Westside Transfer Center in El Paso, TX. Additional multimodal infrastructure consists of shared-use paths, bike lanes, sharrows, and sidewalks. Other transportation infrastructure around Sunland Park includes the Doña Ana County International Jetport at Santa Teresa and the Intermodal Ramp and fueling station of Santa Teresa.

# 5 Transportation



## 5.1.1 | Existing Roadway Network

Table 5-1 and Figure 5-1 illustrates the roadway facility type, which captures the roadway’s operational characteristics, such as speed limit, traffic control, and access control and “functional classification,” which identifies how a particular street serves the mobility and accessibility needs of the community.

Of the facilities characterized as Principal Arterials by facility type, NM-136/ Pete Domenici Boulevard and NM-273/McNutt Road experience the majority of traffic because McNutt Road provides access to the majority of existing development within Sunland Park, and Pete Domenici Boulevard is the primary route to and from the Santa Teresa POE. NM-136 is part of the National Highway System, making it eligible for a wide range of federal funding programs. Sunland Park’s close proximity to the POE attracts a high amount of freight traffic. There are five signalized intersections in Sunland Park and all of them are on McNutt Road at Pete Domenici Boulevard, Country Club Road, Riverside Drive, Sunland Park Drive, and Racetrack Drive. In addition to these routes, Doniphan Drive, US-85, and I-10 are major corridors in Texas that provide access for residents and visitors of Sunland Park (see Figure 5-1).

Roads designated as New Mexico State Highways are funded and maintained by the New Mexico Department of the Transportation (NMDOT), using funding from the state gas tax, other state programs, and federal grants. Construction and maintenance of local roads is generally supported by municipal or county funding, though construction or upgrades can be funded, in some cases, by state or federal programs, especially if the road is an arterial or is important in facilitating regional mobility.

**Table 5-1 | Roadway Adopted Functional Classification**

Roadway Segment	Location	Facility Type	Adopted Functional Classification
<b>NM-136; Pete Domenici Boulevard</b>	Mexico Border to Texas Border	Principal Arterial	Principal Arterial
<b>NM-273; McNutt Road</b>	NM-136 to Texas Border	Principal Arterial	Minor Arterial
<b>Sunland Park Drive</b>	McNutt Road to Texas Border	Major Collector/Minor Arterial	Minor Arterial

# 5 Transportation

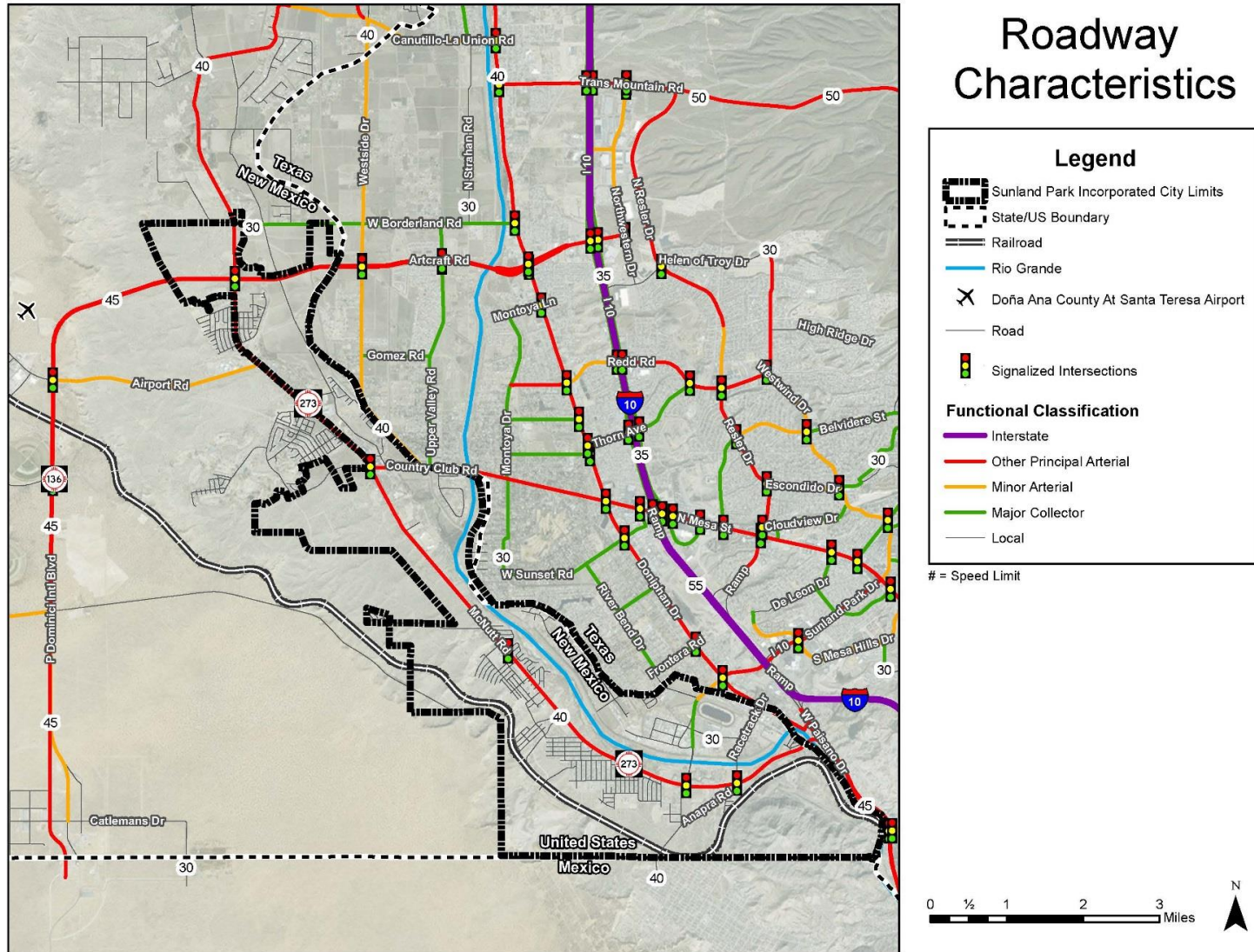


<b>Borderland Road</b>	McNutt Road to Texas Border	Major Collector	Major Collector
<b>Naranjo Road</b>	McNutt Road to Crawford Road	Local	Minor Collector
<b>Racetrack Drive</b>	McNutt Road to Texas Border	Local	Minor Arterial
<b>Crawford Road</b>	Naranjo Road to Country Club Road	Local	Minor Collector
<b>Country Club Road</b>	McNutt Road to Texas Border	Principal Arterial	Minor Arterial
<b>Airport Road</b>	McNutt Road to the airport	Minor Arterial	Major Collector
<b>McNutt Road</b>	NM-136 to Westside Drive	Principal Arterial/Minor Arterial	Major Collector
<b>Westside Drive</b>	NM-28 to Texas Border	Minor Arterial	Minor Collector

# 5 Transportation



Figure 5-1 | Roadway Characteristics



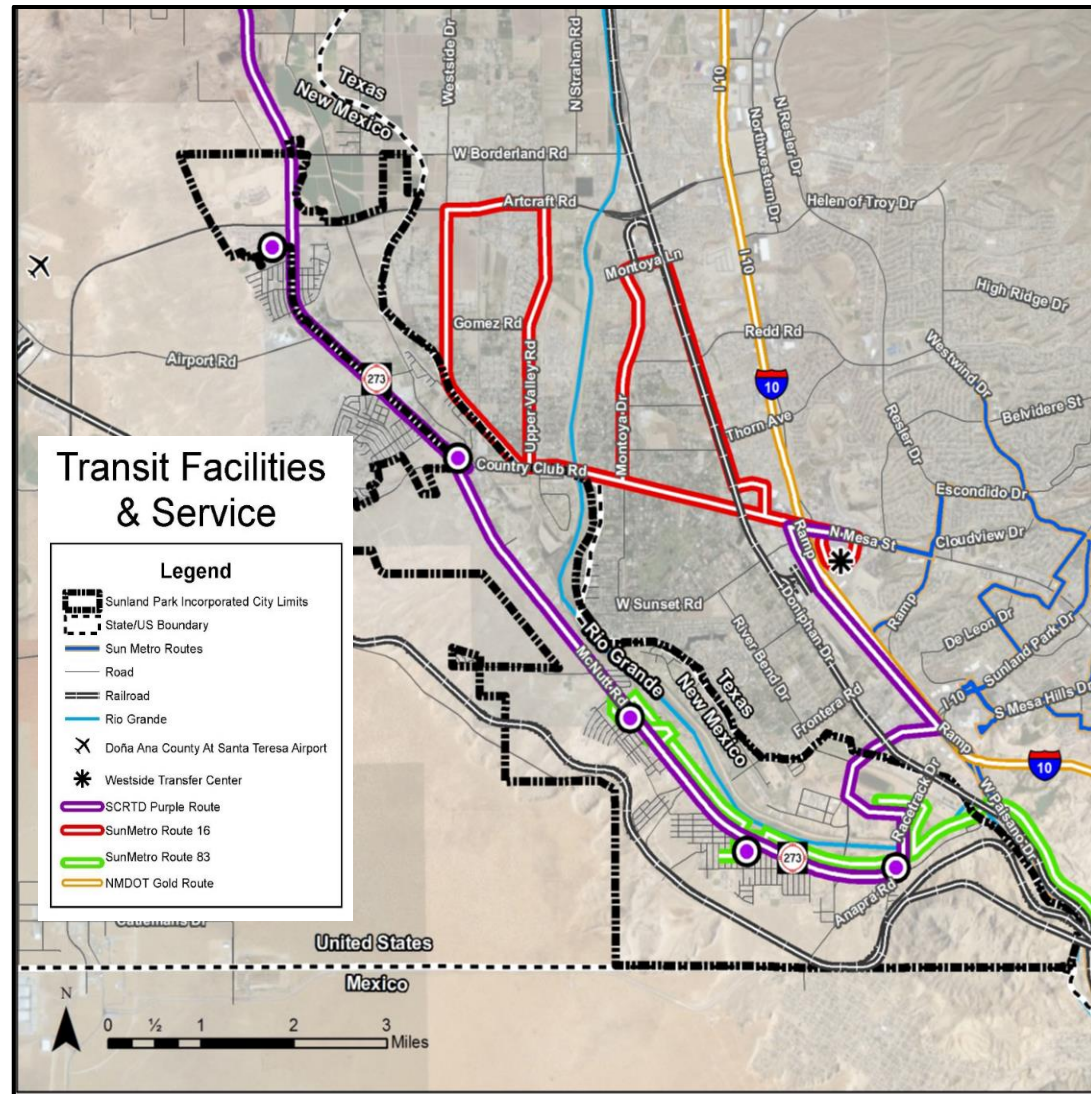
# 5 Transportation



## 5.1.2 | Existing Transit Service

Sunland Park is connected to several public transit networks serving the El Paso region and south-central New Mexico. Sun Metro Transit is the transit authority serving greater El Paso, with 59 fixed routes. South Central Regional Transit District (SCRTD) operates four routes between communities in Doña Ana, Sierra, and Otero counties. Two fixed bus routes – Sun Metro Route 83 and SCRTD Purple Route – directly serve Sunland Park connecting the city to the City of El Paso and the wider Sun Metro system. Another Sun Metro route serving Westside El Paso (Route 16) has stops along Westside Drive to the north of Country Club Drive, just beyond Sunland Park’s city limits. Additionally, NMDOT operates an express route (Gold Route) from Las Cruces to El Paso, with stops in Anthony, NM, and the Westside Transfer Center in El Paso. Table 5-2 provides a description of the various routes serving Sunland Park while Figure 5-2 illustrates the existing routes in and around the city.

Figure 5-2 | Existing Transit Service in Sunland Park









# 5 Transportation



**Table 5-2 | Existing Transit Facilities**

Agency	Route Name	Description
<b>South Central Regional Transit District</b>	Purple Route 	Express bus service connecting the Westside Transfer in El Paso to Anthony via NM-273/McNutt Road through Sunland Park. Five buses a day provide service between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. Standard one-way fare is \$1.
<b>Sun Metro</b>	Route 16 – Upper Valley Circulator 	Route 16 offers daily service within Westside El Paso between the Westside Transfer Center and Westside Drive and Artcraft Road. Buses run every 80 minutes between 6:20 a.m. and 9 p.m. Standard one-way fare is \$1.50.
<b>Sun Metro</b>	Route 83 – NM Sunland Park / McNutt Rd. 	Daily service from the Downtown Transfer Center in El Paso to McNutt at Riverside in Sunland Park via Paisano Road and McNutt Road. Buses run every 90 minutes between 5:45 a.m. and 8:45 p.m. Standard one-way fare is \$1.50.
<b>NMDOT</b>	Gold Route 	Express route along I-10 between Las Cruces and Downtown El Paso, with stops in Anthony, NM, and at the Westside Transfer Center. Buses run between approximately 5 a.m. and 8 p.m. Standard one-way fare is \$3.

Sunland Park facilitates Sun Metro service through an intergovernmental agreement with the City of El Paso, which operates Sun Metro. The agreement sets out the route alignment, fares, and cost to the City for the route. The City of Sunland Park receives a grant from the New Mexico Department of Transportation to fund the service. The City can modify the route by coordinating with Sun Metro. Under the current agreement, planning and installation of bus stops and associated amenities (such as shelters) are the responsibility of the City. Funding for the SCRTD Purple Route comes from Doña Ana County and from City in the form of dues the City pays for being a member community of SCRTD.

# 5 Transportation



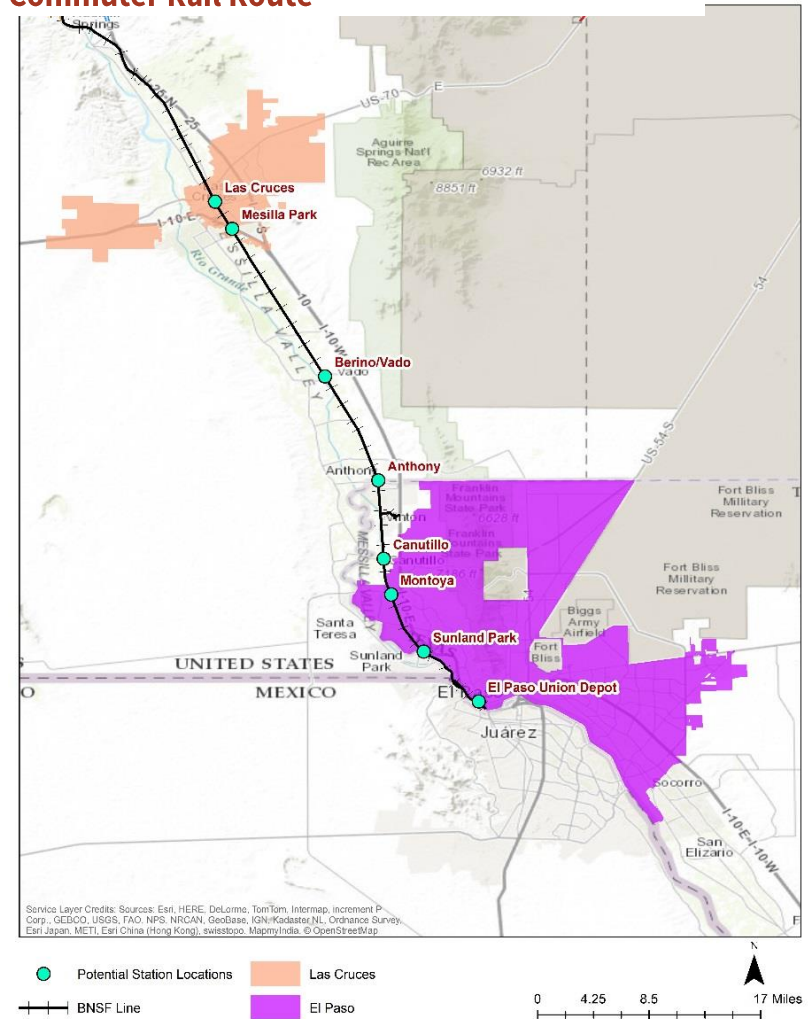
The county's *Plan 2040* comprehensive plan concluded that more transit service was needed across the county in order to better link residents to opportunities and services. However, the plan also noted the challenges of operating transit service in a county with a largely rural character and dispersed development patterns even in more urbanized areas. Land use and development strategies were put forward as a way to support make transit more feasible: more condensed development would support more efficient transit service.

The STBAT plan notes several transit service gaps in Sunland Park, including poor scheduling coordination between SCRTD and Sun Metro service, as well as the lack of a direct transit connection from Sunland Park to Westside El Paso.

## Future Transit Service

Several proposals exist for expanded transit service in Sunland Park and surrounding border area. In June 2017, SCRTD released a feasibility study for a commuter rail line between Las Cruces and El Paso. The 43-mile line would have 8 stations between downtown Las Cruces and the El Paso Union Depot, including a "Sunland Park" station (Figure 5-3). The Sunland Park proposed station is identified just outside of Sunland Park at the intersection of Sunland Park Drive and Doniphan Drive. Another station is proposed near Artcraft Road and Montoya Lane, to the northeast of Sunland Park. The 2017 feasibility study found low transit ridership but favorable projected ridership, population, and economic growth. The commuter rail line is

**Figure 5-3 | Proposed Las Cruces-El Paso Commuter Rail Route**



Source: 2017 SCRTD Feasibility Study

# 5 Transportation



proposed to use existing track owned by BNSF, requiring purchasing or leasing rights to it.

## **Bus Stop Amenities**

Currently, the bus stops within Sunland Park are signed with a few stops that have either a bus shelter or in some cases a bench. Figure 5-4 illustrates existing stop amenities within Sunland Park.

# 5 Transportation

Figure 5-4 | Existing Bus Stop Amenities



# 5 Transportation



## 5.1.3 | Existing Bicycle Infrastructure

Bicycle facilities are intended to provide safe travel by bicycle on or adjacent to city streets. Bicycle infrastructure provides varying levels of protection for cyclists depending upon facility type (Figure 5-5). Three bicycle facility types currently exist in Sunland Park:

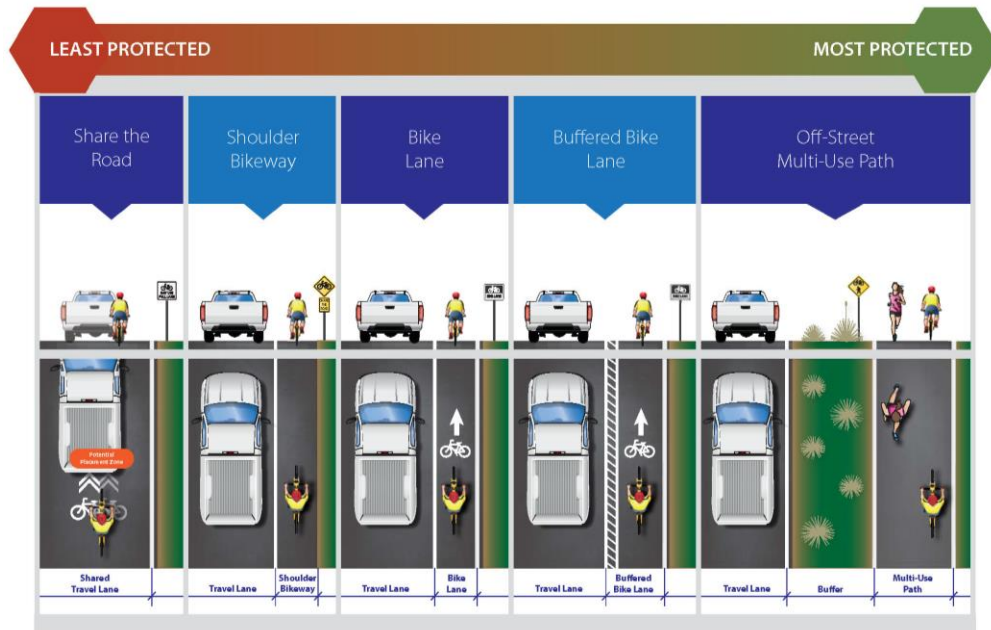
- Sharrow or Share the Road;
- Bike Lane; and
- Off-Street Path.

A sharrow bike facility indicates with signage or pavement marking that cyclists can share a travel lane with motorists. Bike lanes provide an additional, separate lane on a road facility for cyclists. Off-street paths are paved surfaces physically separated from the roadway and exclusively dedicated for use by cyclists and pedestrians.

Sunland Park Drive from McNutt Road to the Texas-New Mexico state line is the only on-street bike facility within Sunland Park. Bike lanes are present in both directions from the Texas-New Mexico border to the Rio Grande (Figure 5-6). Sharrows continue from the Rio Grande to McNutt Road. The bike lanes vary in width from four to eight feet, but are predominantly over six feet wide. Dirt and sand frequently cover the bike lane area; impeding bicycle use.

An off-street path parallels McNutt Road for approximately seven miles along the east side of McNutt Road starting near the power substation at 3005 McNutt Road extending north to Country Club Road (Figure 5-6). At Country Club Road the path switches to the west side of the road and continues north to NM-136. The path is 6 feet wide for about three miles, until it widens

Figure 5-5 | Bicycle Facilities



# 5 Transportation



to 8 feet. Some erosion damage has occurred to the path. The State of New Mexico owns McNutt Road and are currently responsible for the maintenance and construction of infrastructure. Additionally, an off-street path exists along the south side of NM-136 from Texas just east of the existing Sunland Park city limits.

A 1.3-mile segment of off-street path exists along the east bank of the Rio Grande, extending west from Racetrack Drive and under the Sunland Park Drive bridge. The path is considered part of the planned Rio Grande Trail, a 500-mile statewide trail along the Rio Grande River. There is a roughly four-mile gap between this existing segment and a riverfront path that begins after the Rio Grande re-enters El Paso to the north, and extends 7.5 miles along the river to Vinton, TX.

Figure 5-7 illustrates the existing and proposed bicycle infrastructure within Sunland Park and neighboring El Paso, TX

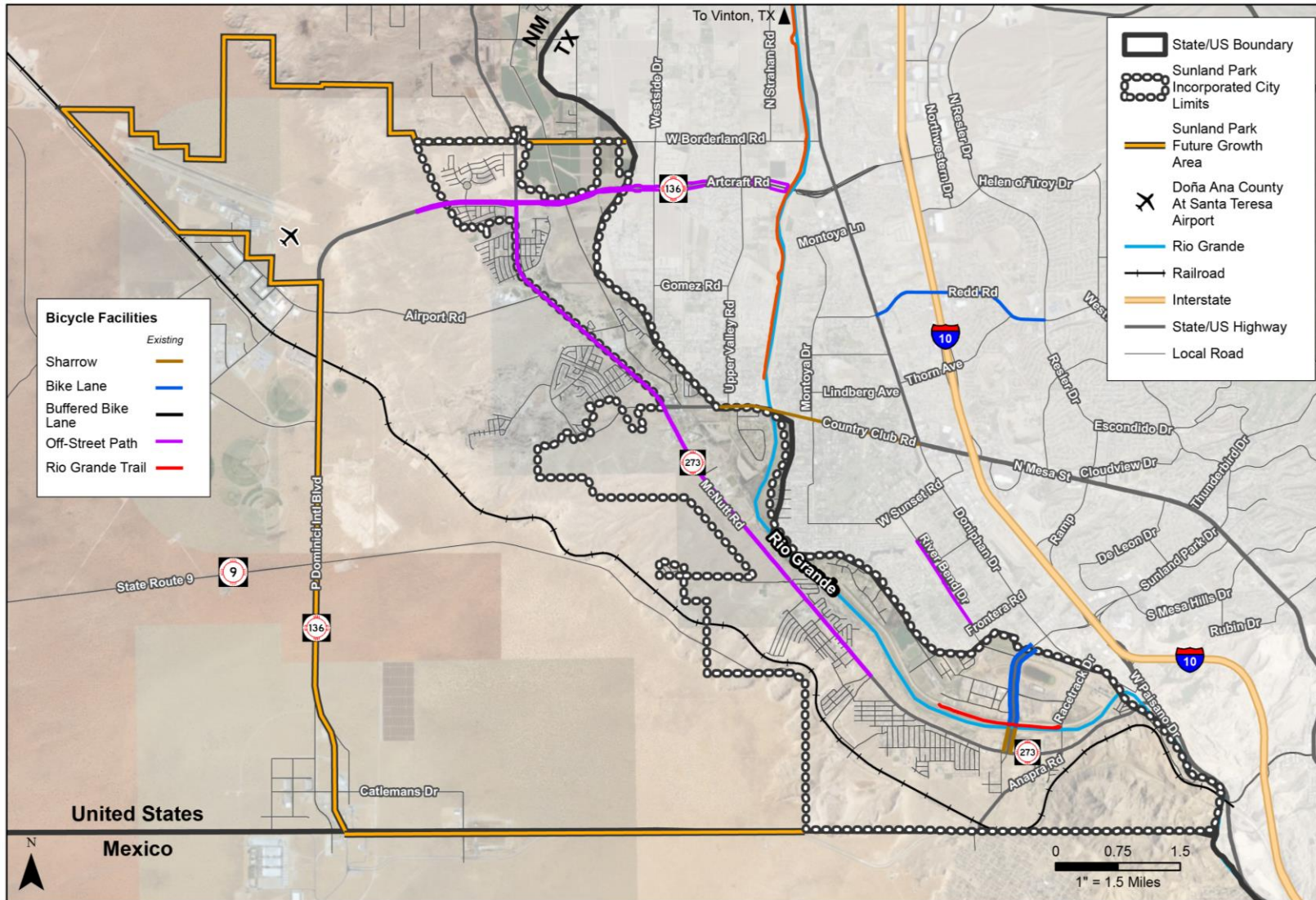
**Figure 5-6 | Existing Bike Lane and Off-Street Path**



# 5 Transportation



Figure 5-7 | Existing Bicycle Facilities, Sunland Park and El Paso



# 5 Transportation



## 5.1.4 | Existing Pedestrian Infrastructure

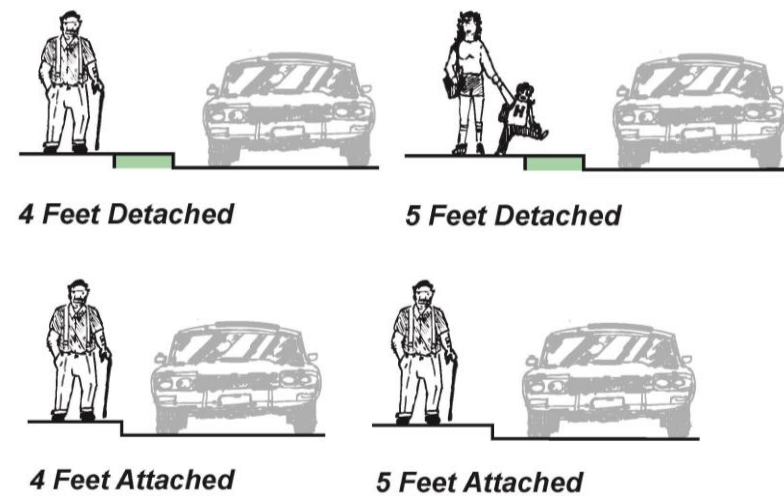
Pedestrian infrastructure in Sunland Park consists of sidewalks, crosswalks, and the McNutt Road shared-use path. Sidewalks are located throughout Sunland Park; however, there are occasional gaps and marked crosswalks are limited. Most residential neighborhoods have sidewalks on both sides of the street. Additionally, sidewalks are built attached to the curb or detached and buffered from the curb (Figure 5-8 and 5-9). Detached sidewalks are sidewalks that incorporate a buffer between the traffic lane and the pedestrian zone. These buffers can be merely concrete extensions of the sidewalk or they can be landscaped with bollards, planters, grass, textured surfaces, or trees. Attached sidewalks are not separated or protected from the curb. While attached sidewalks are often more space-efficient, detached sidewalks provide more comfortable conditions by being located farther from the roadway. Both sidewalk types exist within Sunland Park.

Currently, the existing sidewalks connect to most schools with crosswalks providing connections to the school property; however, Santa Teresa High School lacks sidewalk connections to the surrounding areas. McNutt Road is the only continuous road through the city; therefore, it is also the only through connection for pedestrians. An attached sidewalk exists south of Memorial Pines Cemetery on the west side of McNutt Road to the bridge over the Rio Grande, east of Anapra. An attached sidewalk also exists on the east side of McNutt Road from El Paso County Sheriff's Posse (1800-1

**Figure 5-8 | Detached (Left) and Attached (Right) Sidewalk Example**



**Figure 5-9 | Attached vs Detached Sidewalk**





# 5 Transportation



McNutt Road) to the bridge over the Rio Grande, east of Anapra. An off-street shared-use path exists along the east side of McNutt Road starting near the power substation at 3005 McNutt Road extending north to Country Club Road. At Country Club Road the path switches to the west side of the road and continues north to NM-136. The path is 6 feet wide for about three miles, until it widens to 8 feet. Occasional gaps exist within the sidewalk transportation network, especially along undeveloped land. Other gaps exist near key destinations, such as schools and bus stops (Figure 5-10).

Marked crosswalks are limited within the city except near schools. With limited crossing locations and high speeds on McNutt Road, few opportunities are present for pedestrians to safely cross the road. Marked crosswalks only exist along McNutt Road at Sunland Park Drive, in front of Riverside Elementary School and at Country Club Road. Most residents – living on the west side of McNutt Road – are not able to safely cross the road in order to access the shared-use path on the east side of McNutt Road. Additionally, the lack of striped crossings limit residents’ ability to safely access bus stops located on the other side of McNutt Road. Apart from the availability of infrastructure, the city’s dispersed development pattern make it difficult for residents to travel by foot between key destinations or to access transit. Additional issues for pedestrians include:

- In residential areas, residents frequently park cars on the sidewalk, blocking the sidewalk.
- Along McNutt Road, there are a large number of curb cuts for business access creating “ocean” driveways (an entire property’s street frontage is a curb cut), which creates uncomfortable and unsafe environments for pedestrians.

**Figure 5-10 | Sidewalk Gaps within Sunland Park**



# 5 Transportation



## 5.1.5 | Existing Aviation Infrastructure

Just west of the City is Doña Ana County International Jetport at Santa Teresa. The airport is a full-service airport with one runway and a crosswind runway supporting corporate jets, cargo planes, and private aircraft. Owned by the County, the airport is a practice field for helicopters and local law enforcement. Additionally, the airport operates as an aircraft port of entry. According to the 2009 New Mexico Airport System Plan Update, the airport employed 234 people with a payroll of \$7,511,400. The output or economic activity was \$17,960,300. The system plan is displayed in Figure 5-11.

The airport is governed by an Airport Advisory Board made up of seven members with three-year terms. The Advisory Board meets monthly to discuss safety, growth, development, and administration. The Board works closely with the airport manager, county engineer, planning director, and a representative from the county's attorney office. The Board periodically reports to the Board of County Commissioners about concerns and recommendations regarding future operations of the airport.



Source: War Eagles Air Museum Website

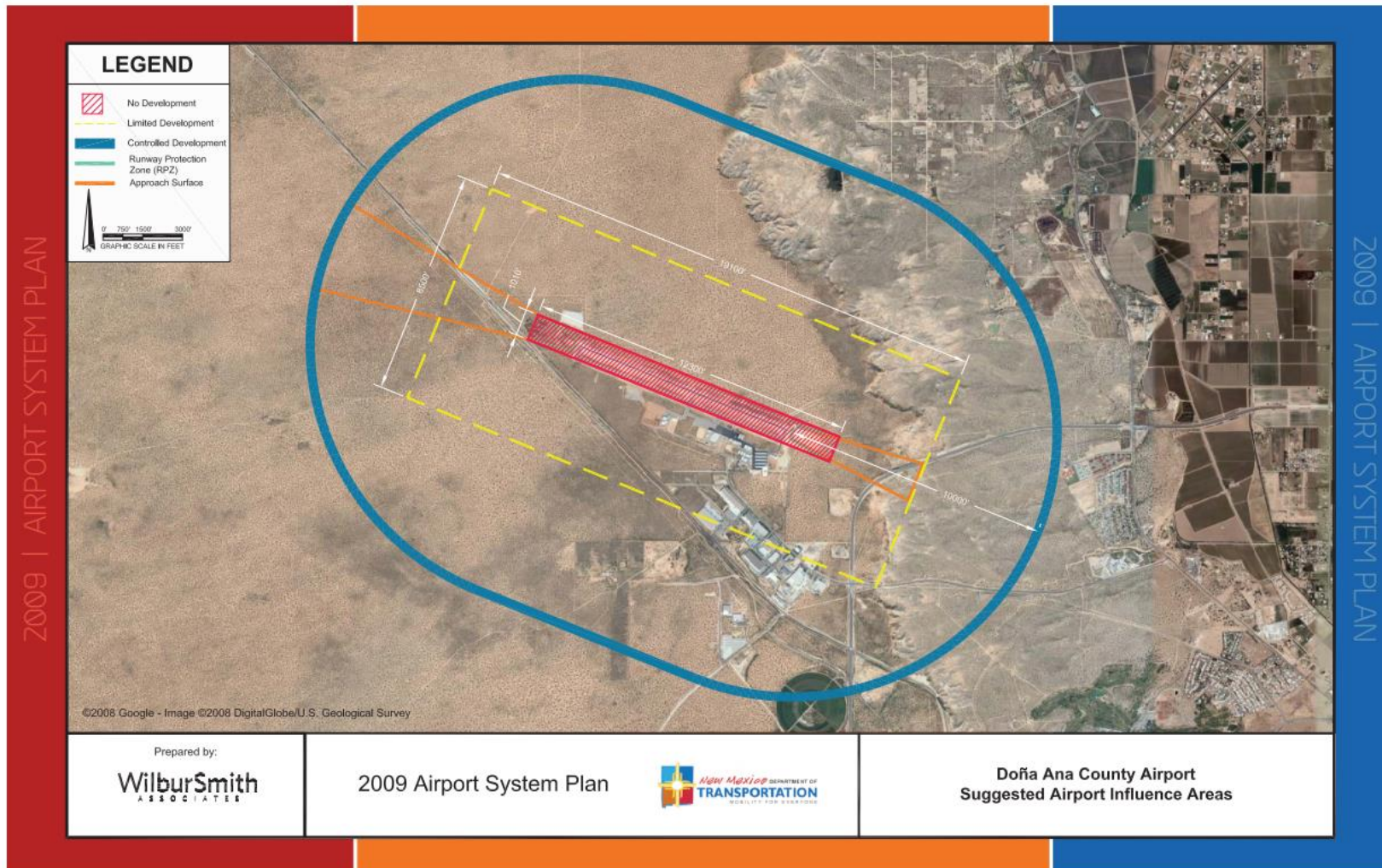
Additionally, the War Eagles Air Museum is located at the Doña Ana County Airport. This museum collects, restores, and displays historic aircraft from World War II and the Korean War. The Museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10:00am – 4:00pm. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors/military, and free for children and students.

In 2016, the airport installed Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS) providing certified weather conditions for pilots on the ground and in the air. These improvements allow the airport to accommodate large passenger and cargo jets, including Boeing 737 aircraft.

# 5 Transportation



Figure 5-11| Doña Ana County Airport System Plan



Source: Doña Ana County International Jetport at Santa Teresa – New Mexico Airport System Plan Update 2009

# 5 Transportation



## 5.1.6 | Existing Freight Infrastructure

Just west of Sunland Park is a \$400 million state-of-the-art Union Pacific intermodal ramp and fueling station that was constructed in 2014 (Figure 5-12). This facility has become the focal point of rail shipments in the southwestern United States. In 2014, the 2,200-acre facility featured the following<sup>3</sup>:

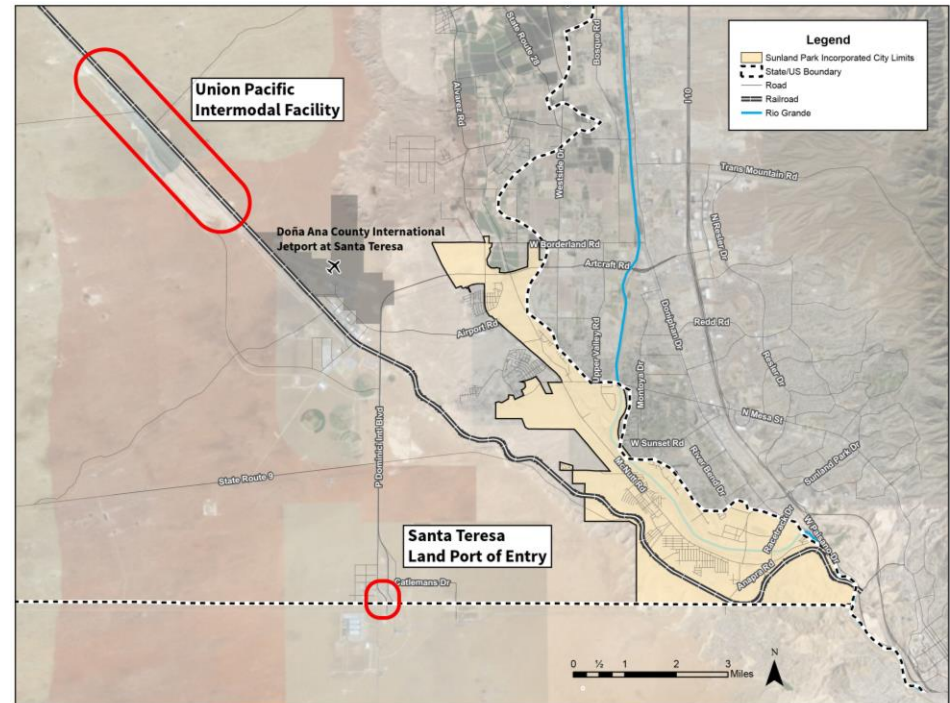
- An intermodal ramp;
- Eight lane Automated Gate System (AGS);
- Refrigerated container and trailer refueling;
- 1,266 container and trailer parking stalls;
- 74,000 feet of rail track;
- Intermodal block swap/switching yard; and
- Locomotive fueling facilities.

This intermodal facility has the ability to expand its annual lift capacity to 700,000 (currently 225,000), automated gates to 12, feet of track to 145,000, and parking stalls to 4,380.

## 5.1.7 | Existing Port of Entry

Santa Teresa POE is the closest POE to Sunland Park in New Mexico (Figure 5-12). The port opened in 1992 to alleviate congestion at border crossings in El Paso, and it was upgraded to its present capacity in 1997. It serves pedestrian, non-commercial vehicle, and commercial vehicle traffic, and has US and Mexican immigration services. In order to access the port, travelers must utilize

**Figure 5-12 | Union Pacific Intermodal Facility and Santa Teresa POE**



<sup>3</sup> Information from [https://www.up.com/cs/groups/public/@uprr/@customers/documents/up\\_pdf\\_nativedocs/pdf\\_up\\_santa\\_teresa\\_brochure.pdf](https://www.up.com/cs/groups/public/@uprr/@customers/documents/up_pdf_nativedocs/pdf_up_santa_teresa_brochure.pdf)

# 5 Transportation



NM-136 (Pete Domenici Highway), which was constructed to connect to the LPOE. Though the crossing is located about 6 miles west of Sunland Park City Hall as the crow flies, the lack of another roadway connection means that the driving distance is 14 miles. Though it has a pedestrian crossing, no dedicated transit service to the port exists on either side, and there are no pedestrian facilities connecting to the facility.

## 5.2 | Issues & Opportunities

Connections to and from the Sunland Park proposed Port of Entry, to NM-136 from McNutt Road, and eastward connections into Texas were the main transportation topics at many meetings. McNutt Road carries significant truck traffic within the city and many large trucks travel this route, including landfill trucks from El Paso. As the city's population continues to grow, as industrial development prospers, and the proposed Port of Entry comes to fruition, the community of Sunland Park will witness increased vehicular, truck, and pedestrian traffic.

To accommodate this growth, connections west along NM-9 and east along Airport Road into Texas were presented as opportunities to relieve current traffic issues along McNutt Road. Furthermore, a parallel facility to McNutt Road was offered as a way to alleviate future traffic along McNutt Road. Proposed routes could conflict with existing and future neighborhoods if not properly planned and vetted by the community and surrounding communities. Additionally, the lack of non-vehicular transportation options were presented as an opportunity for Sunland Park to create a well-connected multi-modal transportation network.

Increasing traffic related to the Santa Teresa LPOE prompted the creation of the Santa Teresa Border Area Transportation Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan (STBAT) in 2016. The plan analyzed the impact on the transportation system of full build out of industrial and other facilities planned near the LPOE. Continued growth of Sunland Park in line with the Future Land Use Map (see Chapter 3) will require that capacity improvements listed in the plan will need to be implemented and the need for additional new improvements will need to be evaluated as the City grows.

# 5 Transportation



## 5.3 | Recommendations

*Sunland Park 2040* incorporates previous planning efforts as well as the issues and opportunities voiced during the extensive public engagement process. The recommendations within this section address the future roadway network, transit service, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and aviation and freight facilities.

### 5.3.1 | Future Roadway Network

To adequately plan for the anticipated growth associated with the buildout of land uses in the City, there are several recommended roadway improvements projects and policies that should be implemented. These projects and policies will ensure safe and efficient travel within the City, as well as provide connectivity to neighboring communities, the wider region, and internationally.

#### **Recommended Roadway Improvement Projects**

The 2016 Santa Teresa Border Area Transportation Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan (STBAT) identified transportation infrastructure investment projects that would facilitate growth in the region surrounding Santa Teresa. The STBAT combined and refined the recommendations of several previous planning efforts into one plan, detailing suggested infrastructure and programmatic investments by a number of agencies, including NMDOT, New Mexico Border Authority, El Paso MPO, Doña Ana County, and the City of Sunland Park. The STBAT included specific roadway improvements in and around Sunland Park. These improvements will need to be implemented as Sunland Park continues to grow:

- Preserve pavement on McNutt Road north of NM-136;
- Address safety deficiencies such as lack of a roadway shoulder, pavement drop-off, limited space between roadway and multi-use path at the following locations:
  - Sunland Park Drive: NM-273 to State Line;
  - Racetrack Drive & Futurity Drive;
  - NM-273: North of Memorial Pines Intersection;
  - NM-273 & Airport Road; and
  - Country Club Road: Teresa Paseo Drive to State Line.

# 5 Transportation



- Widen McNutt Road from 5 to 6 lanes north of Sunland Park Drive;
- Install signals when warranted at the following locations:
  - Gibson Veck & Sunland Park Drive;
  - NM-273 & Airport Road; and
  - Sunland Park Drive & Futurity Drive.
- Conduct “overweight zone” cost-benefit analysis; and
- Sunland Park LPOE/Sunland Park Drive – construct a 4 lane divided principal arterial with grade separation at UPRR to connect to the new Sunland Park LPOE.

An updated travel demand model based on the El Paso MPO *Horizon 2040* model was developed for *Sunland Park 2040* to reflect the preferred development scenario in the Future Land Use map (see Chapter 3). Based on the updated buildout model runs associated with the approved land use alternative, the following are identified deficiencies, and associated recommendations:

- Widening of Sunland Park Drive to 6 lanes from McNutt Road to I-10 and extension of the roadway with 4 lanes from McNutt Road to the new LPOE
- Widening of Country Club Road to 4 lanes from McNutt Road to the Texas state line.
- McNutt Road – Widening of McNutt Road to provide 6 lanes from Pete Domenici to Doniphan Road
- Construction of a new 4-lane north-south roadway parallel to and west of McNutt Road connecting to McNutt Road

The EPMPO 2040 Horizon model assumes the following improvements are already in place:

- Extension of NM-9 from Pete Domenici to McNutt Road as a 2-lane roadway.
- Widening of Airport Road to 4 lanes between Pete Domenici and McNutt Road.

Two other routes not expressly identified by the EPMPO model but considered Facilities of Regional Importance include construction of a St. Francis Road between Pete Domenici Blvd and the proposed POE and a similar extension of Cattleman’s Drive from near the Santa Teresa POE to the proposed POE. These routes would facilitate easier access to the border crossings and to potential industrial development near the border.

# 5 Transportation



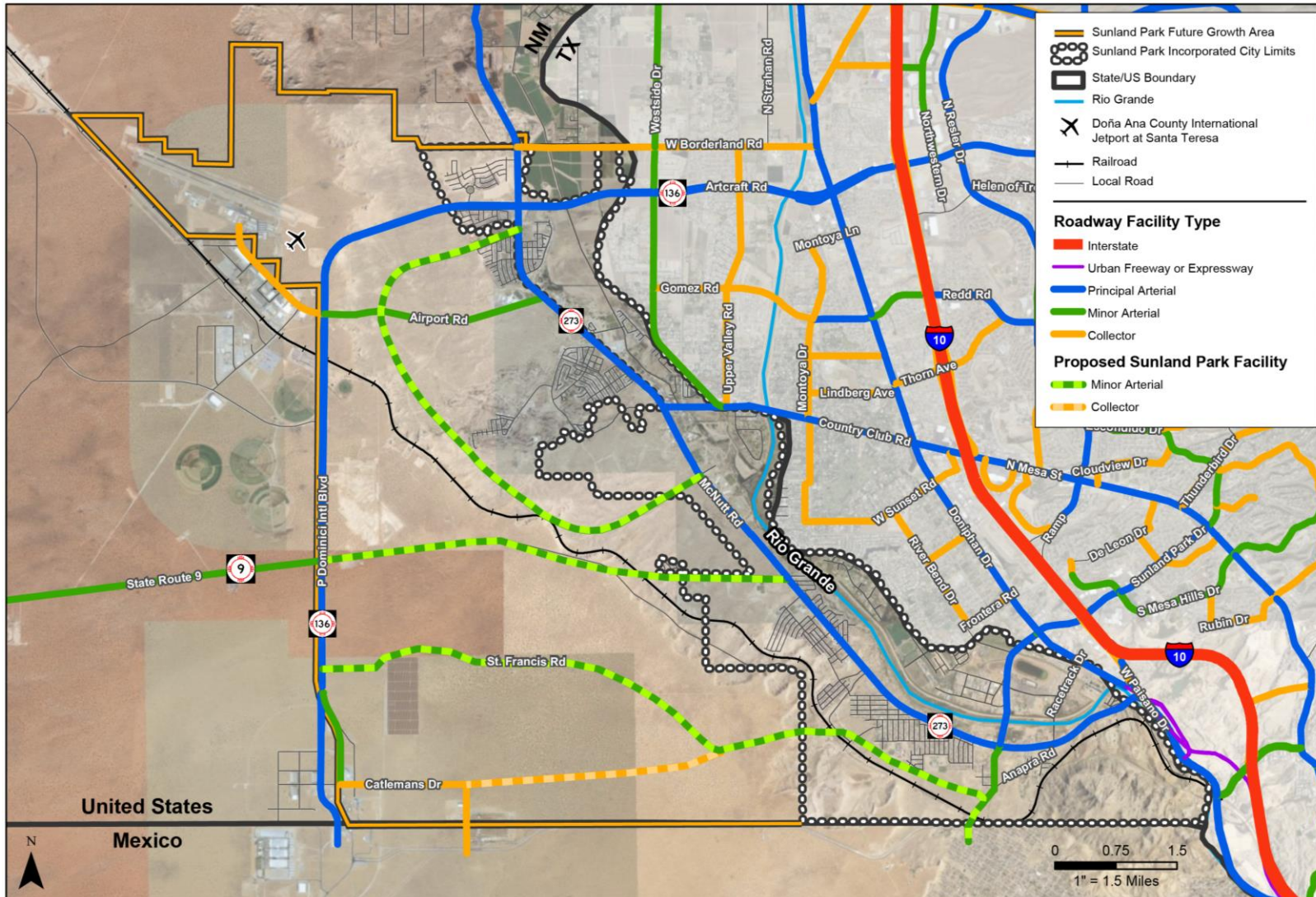
Figure 5-12 depicts the recommended future roadway network by facility type, and constitutes the recommended Thoroughfare Plan. The facility types presented in the Thoroughfare Plan vary based on the types and volumes of vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic the roads are anticipated to serve. The plan provides guidance for City staff and developers to assure that the necessary right-of-way and associated roadway cross-sections (discussed below) are provided as future roadway widening and new roadway construction occurs. There are three proposed typical major roads recommended for the future roadway network in Sunland Park: Principal Arterial, Minor Arterial, and Collector.



# 5 Transportation



Figure 5-13 | Thoroughfare Plan



# 5 Transportation



## Recommended Roadway Cross-Sections

Each facility type detailed in the Thoroughfare Map corresponds to a proposed typical cross-section. While the Thoroughfare Map describes the location and role of each facility within the future roadway network, the cross-sections illustrate how each facility type will generally need to be designed to fulfill its role in the network, supporting safe and efficient multimodal travel within Sunland Park. These sections are the standards for major Sunland Park roadways during future construction, redevelopment, or restriping projects.

Figure 5-13 illustrates both the Principal Arterial and Minor Arterial cross-sections. The Principal Arterial provides three travel lanes in each direction, with a raised median that provides available right-of-way conversion to a left-turn lane at major intersections. There are on-street bike lanes in each direction with a pavement buffer provided between travel lanes. The Principal Arterial also provides a 5-foot wide pedestrian sidewalk on one side, and an 8-foot wide multi-use path on the other. The Minor Arterial is similar to that of the Principal Arterial, except there are only two travel lanes in each direction.

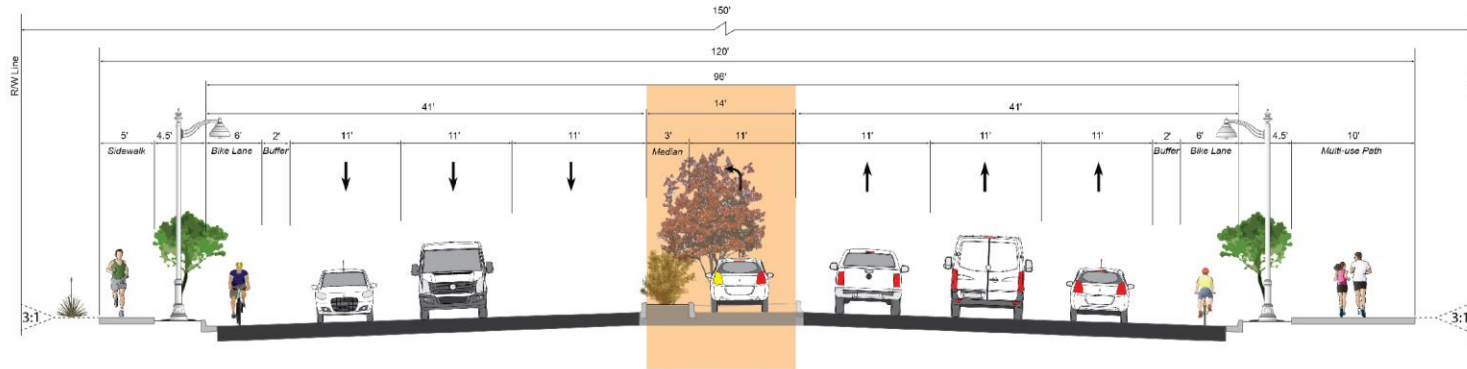
Figure 5-14 displays the recommended Collector cross-section which contains one travel lane in each direction and a continuous two-way left turn lane. There are also buffered bike lanes present in each travel direction, and pedestrian sidewalks on each side.

# 5 Transportation

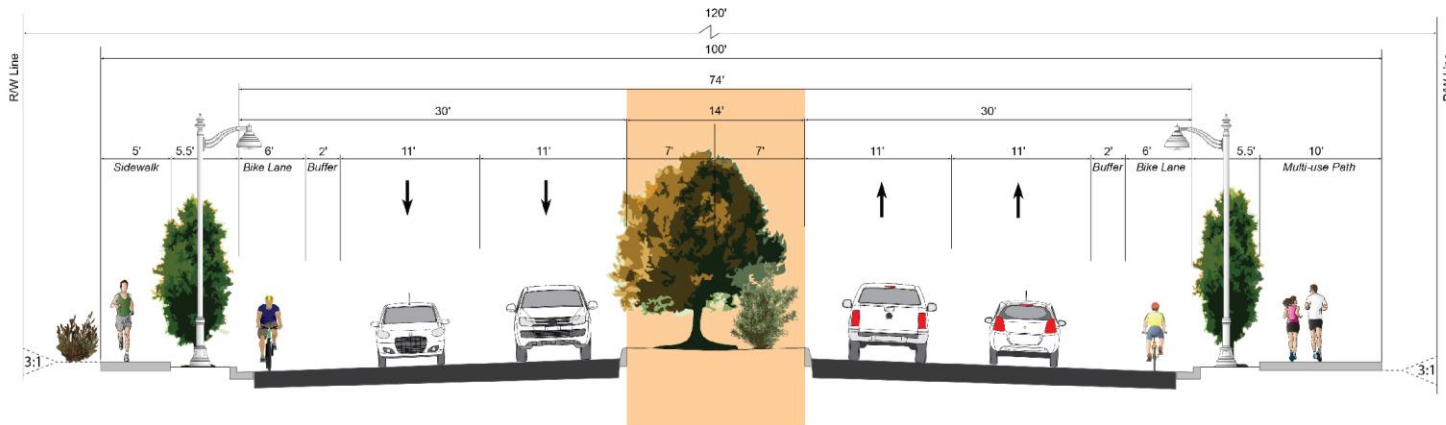


Figure 5-14 | Proposed Typical Sections, Principal and Minor Arterials

## Proposed Principal Arterial Section (Single Left Turn)



## Proposed Minor Arterial Section

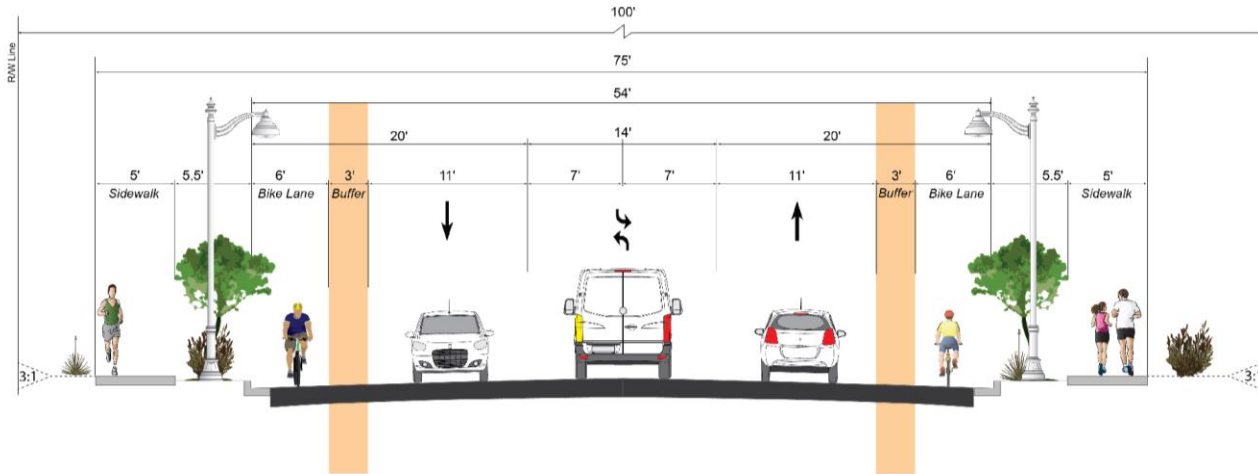


# 5 Transportation



Figure 5-15 | Proposed Typical Section, Collector

## Proposed Collector Section



# 5 Transportation



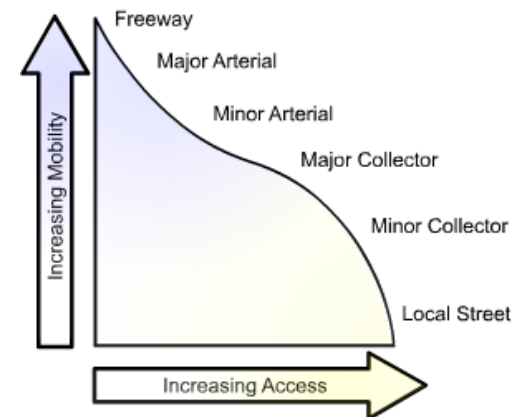
## Access Management

Access Management focuses on regulating and managing vehicular ingress and egress to land parcels adjacent to roadways. It generally is accepted by highway and transportation planning officials that good Access Management promotes safe and efficient use of the overall roadway network. As such, Access Management supplies the concepts and tools important to maintaining mobility. Efficient and effective spacing and design of ingress and egress points preserves the functional integrity of the roadway.

The figure at right shows how Access Management is related to varying roadway facility types. Increasing mobility is associated with increasing capacity, usually associated with Arterial roadways and high-capacity freeways or expressways. By contrast, increasing access is associated with Minor Collectors and Local Streets that have significantly less capacity for traffic movements. An important tenet of Access Management is the adoption of policies and standards that maintain the capability of those facilities with higher capacities to accommodate higher speeds and higher traffic volumes. If access is not controlled, traffic flows can be impeded, likely resulting in congestion and less safe traffic movements.

Access Management is achieved through a combination of planning, regulatory, and design strategies. It is necessary to evaluate and consider the full potential effects of introducing driveways or minor streets to the backbone roadway network of Arterials. Beyond the direct effect on traffic progression and safety is the necessity of evaluating and considering potential economic damage to adjoining and nearby parcels.

Nevertheless, studies and experience show that a well-designed Access Management Plan, especially for facilities critical to regional connectivity, supports property values and promotes safe and efficient transportation for the traveling public. It is recommended that the City develop and adopt basic guidelines relating to Access Management to ensure safe and efficient travel on the recommended roadway network.



Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Office of Operations, Access Management Program Plan, at [http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/access\\_mgmt/progplan.htm](http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/access_mgmt/progplan.htm).

# 5 Transportation



## Traffic Impact Studies

To assure that adequate roadway geometry and traffic control are constructed in conjunction with future development, it is recommended that the City develop guidelines to appropriately assess the anticipated impacts of new developments. Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) Guidelines will enable City staff to provide consistency in reviewing new development proposals and defining the necessary improvements to the roadway network that must be constructed to accommodate new traffic generated by the proposed development

TIA Guidelines should be developed to define the degree of detailed study required by a specific development. This is generally based on the overall land use type and size of the development and the associated number of vehicle trips it is anticipated to add to the adjacent roadway network. For developments anticipated to generate a relatively small number of new trips, (typically fewer than 100 trips during the AM or PM peak hour of travel), a memorandum or letter documenting the overall trip activity and proposed access conditions may suffice. For larger developments (typically those anticipated to generate over 100 trips during the AM or PM peak hour of travel), a more robust Traffic Impact Study may be required. Typical elements addressed in a Traffic Impact Study may include:

- A description of the proposed development, including site plan and identification of anticipated opening year and phasing of the development
- Definition of the study area and surrounding intersections that could potentially be impacted by new traffic associated with the development
- Analysis of existing study area traffic conditions
- Future traffic forecasts, both without and with the proposed development
- An analysis of future traffic operations to identify anticipated deficiencies and necessary improvements to address those deficiencies

# 5 Transportation



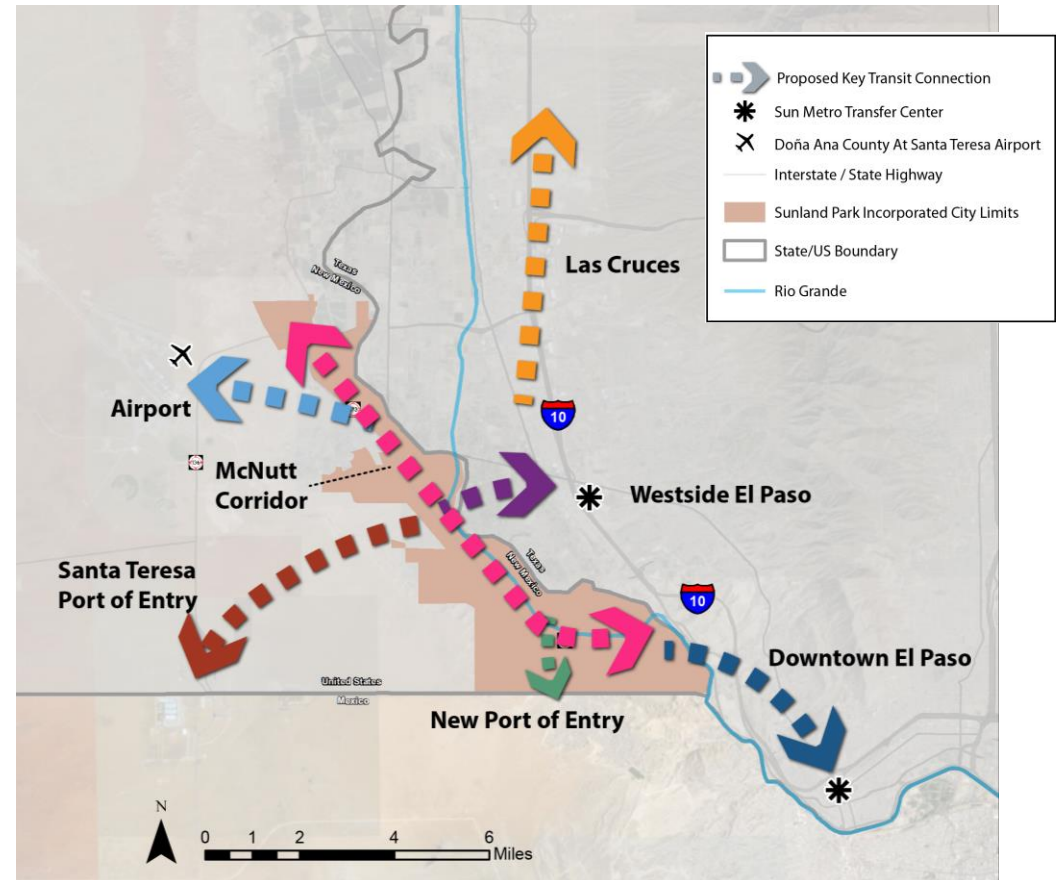
## 5.3.2 | Future Transit Service

Improving transit service in Sunland Park will help connect residents to expanding opportunities in Sunland Park, the El Paso region, and Las Cruces. Currently, bus service connects Sunland Park to these areas, but service is infrequent. Service should be enhanced or added between several key destinations and along certain key corridors. Figure 5-17 illustrates these transit connections.

Specifically, transit connections should be provided from McNutt Road along Country Club Road to the Westside Transfer Center in El Paso. This will provide a vital connection for Sunland Park residents to access the entire El Paso metropolitan region. Transit connections to the Doña Ana County airport and Union Pacific intermodal facility as well as the Santa Teresa Port of Entry should be studied as the region continues to grow. Furthermore, transit connections south to the proposed Port of Entry within Sunland Park should be vetted. All current and future routes should either be enhanced or designed in the way that maximizes frequency and efficiency.

Transit service improvements should coincide with land use policy changes. Today, providing bus service to Sunland Park is inefficient because of the city's low-density and dispersed pattern of development. The City should encourage developers to build near key districts that can be efficiently served by transit. These districts would include areas designated in the Future Land

Figure 5-16 | Proposed Bus/Transit Connections



# 5 Transportation



Use Map as having mixes of commercial, civic, and residential development. Meanwhile, transit connections to the planned port of entry (POE) may help spread the economic impact of the POE within Sunland Park by providing a way for visitors traveling without a car to access businesses and attractions throughout the city.

## Bus Stop Amenities



When creating a new bus stop or enhancing an existing stop, the following elements should be considered:

**Lighting:** Pedestrian-oriented street lighting is an important feature at bus stops and nearby locations for the safety and comfort of transit users. Adequate lighting promotes safety and security, increasing the quality of life. Lighting should be implemented around existing and future transit stops.

**Information Signage:** Information signage provides transit riders reliable and up-to-date information about the transit service being used. Existing and future transit stops should be consistent and include the following information:

- Bus Stop Number;
- Route(s) Number and Destinations;
- Transit System Schedule;
- Transit System Map;
- Transit System Provider’s Contact Information;
- Real-time Travel Information; and
- Park-and-Ride Location Information (when applicable).

**Wayfinding:** An important component to guiding bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users to surrounding destinations is wayfinding. Wayfinding is the visual and physical elements that orient people towards their destinations. Wayfinding at transit stops directs people to nearby destinations as well as the suitable pedestrian and bicycle routes to get there.



# 5 Transportation



**Seating:** Where a shelter is not provided at a bus stop, a bench with a shade tree is recommended to enhance the overall comfort of the bus stop. The following are factors that should be used in determining the installation of future bus stop seating: available space, stops with long headways, if the landowner/developer denied permission of shelter, a stop is frequently used by elderly and disabled, and occurrences of riders sitting on nearby land/structures. Benches should be located on non-slip surfaces that are properly drained and have a concrete pad. When appropriate seating should be incorporated as public art.

**Shelter:** Due to the climate within Sunland Park, strategically designed bus shelters should be pursued to provide protection from elements such as heat. Bus shelters should coordinate with landscaping to provide maximum protection. Future bus shelters should include: adequate ADA pedestrian access, visibility for vehicles and transit passengers, signage, trash receptacles, and landscaping.

**Landscaping Shading:** Adequate shading should be provided at bus stops to enhance the comfort ability of the environment. The movement of the sun should be analyzed and a site visit should be conducted prior to selecting a landscaping treatment.

**Adjacent Land Use:** Installing a future bus stop adjacent to land uses is important. Bus stops adjacent to land uses that generate the most activity, enhance personal safety of transit users, and provides an economic development return on the transit investment.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Accessibility:** Transit users are pedestrians at one point in their journey; therefore, bus stops should adequately accommodate pedestrian and bicycle activity. Existing and proposed bicycle facilities should provide wayfinding signage to nearby transit stops. Bike parking should be considered at all bus stop locations. Additionally, clearly signed crossings of major roadways to access the transit stop should be provided along with curb extensions and mid-block crossings when appropriate. Transit stops should at a minimum be accessible by sidewalk.

## 5.3.3 | Bicycle Infrastructure Recommendations

Expanding bicycle facilities in Sunland Park will be key to maintaining the community's attractiveness as a place to live and work as well as further enhancing the image of Sunland Park as a recreational hub. Bicycle facilities provide transportation options as well as opportunities for physical activity, which can help attract visitors interested in enjoying recreational facilities like the

# 5 Transportation



planned Rio Grande Trail. Within the city's current developed areas, several opportunities exist to improve the overall bicycling network in and around Sunland Park.

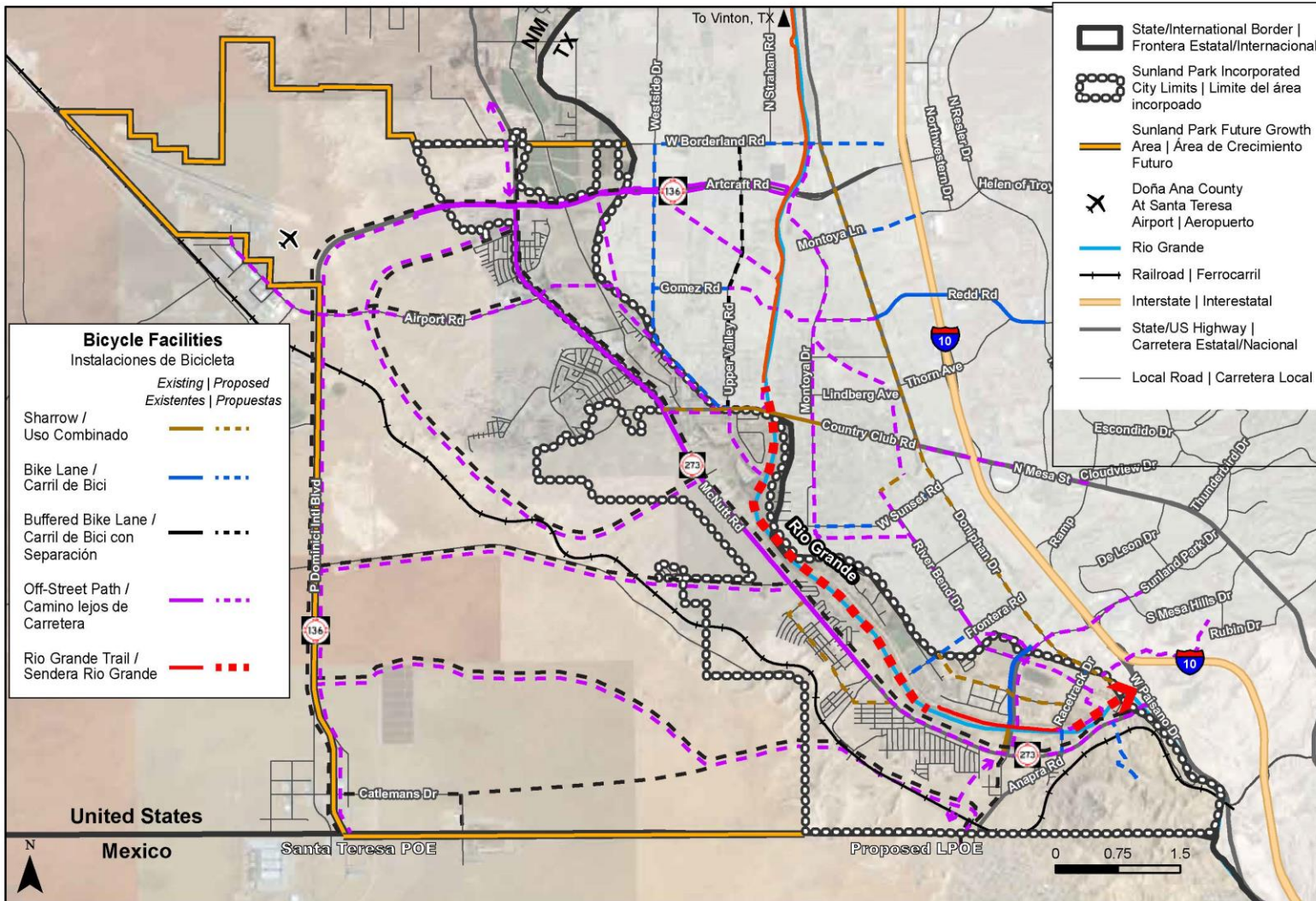
## **Connections within Sunland Park**

Dedicated bicycle facilities are proposed for the major roadways detailed in the major thoroughfare map in section 5.3. Principal and minor arterials would include 6' bicycle lanes in both directions, plus a 10' multiuse path. Full implementation of the proposed roadways would also mean an interconnected bicycle network, designed to accommodate cyclists seeking either transportation or recreation. Figure 5-19 illustrates the proposed bicycle facilities in Sunland Park and how they would connect to existing and proposed facilities in El Paso. A few off-street connections that would be built separate from the roadway network are described in the next subsection.

# 5 Transportation



Figure 5-18 | Proposed Bicycle Facilities



# 5 Transportation

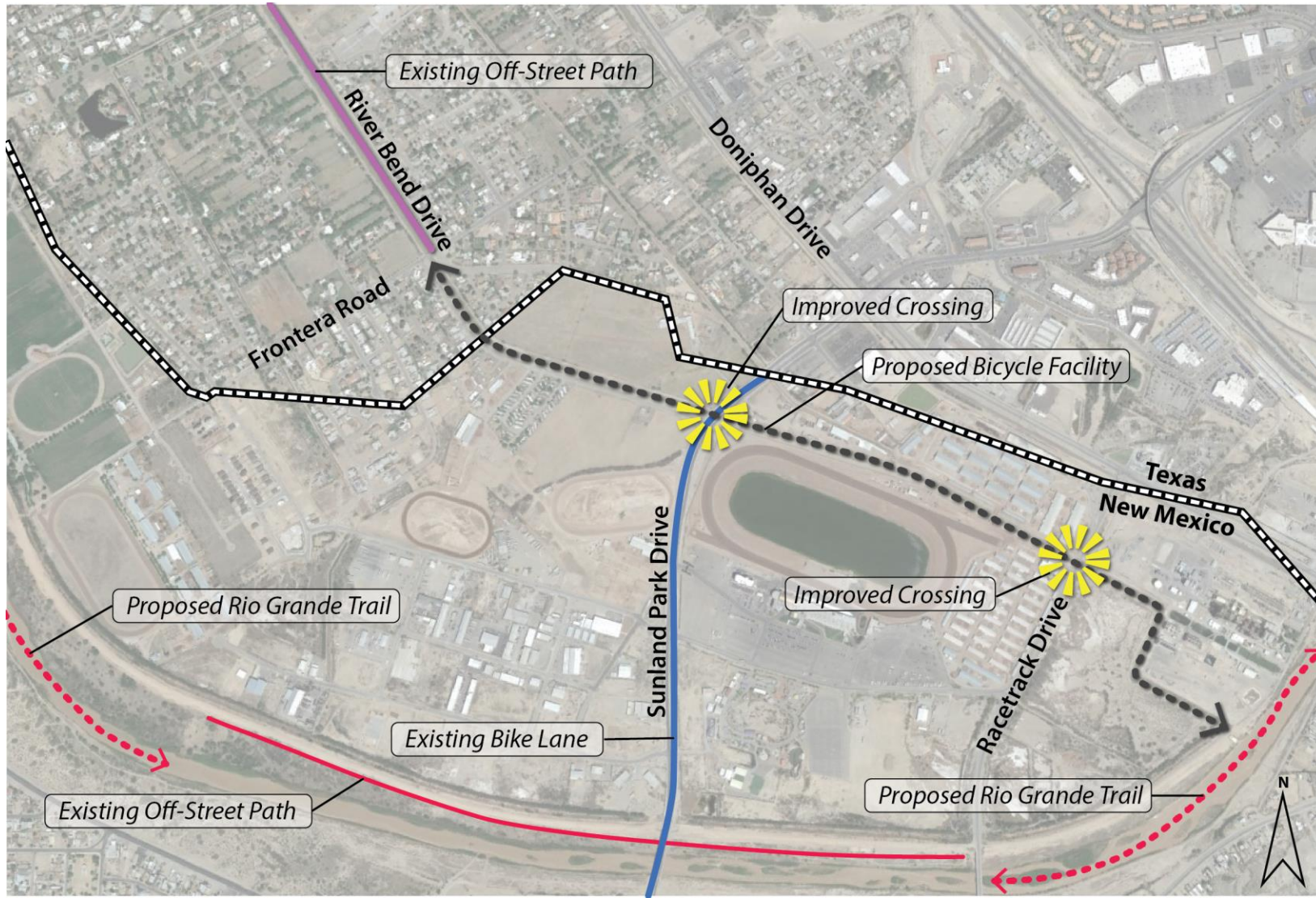


## Connections to El Paso

El Paso, Texas, currently utilizes the land adjacent to acequias – irrigation canals – for bicycle infrastructure and plans to develop more off-street paths along acequias just east of Sunland Park. Within Sunland Park, two acequias traverse the New Mexico/Texas border – one near the racetrack, and one generally parallel to McNutt Road with key portions within New Mexico just east of Airport Road. Figure 5-20 illustrates the proposed off-street path along the acequia near the racetrack in downtown Sunland Park. On the El Paso side, along River Bend Drive just north of Frontera Road, an existing acequia off-street path exists. This path extends north to Turnstone Drive with plans to continue northward to Artcraft Road. Figure 5-21 depicts the other acequia connection opportunity within Sunland Park, extending east into El Paso from where Airport Road meets McNutt Road. El Paso has identified an acequia along this alignment as an off-street path; therefore, conversations should be pursued to understand the viability of this off-street path.

# 5 Transportation

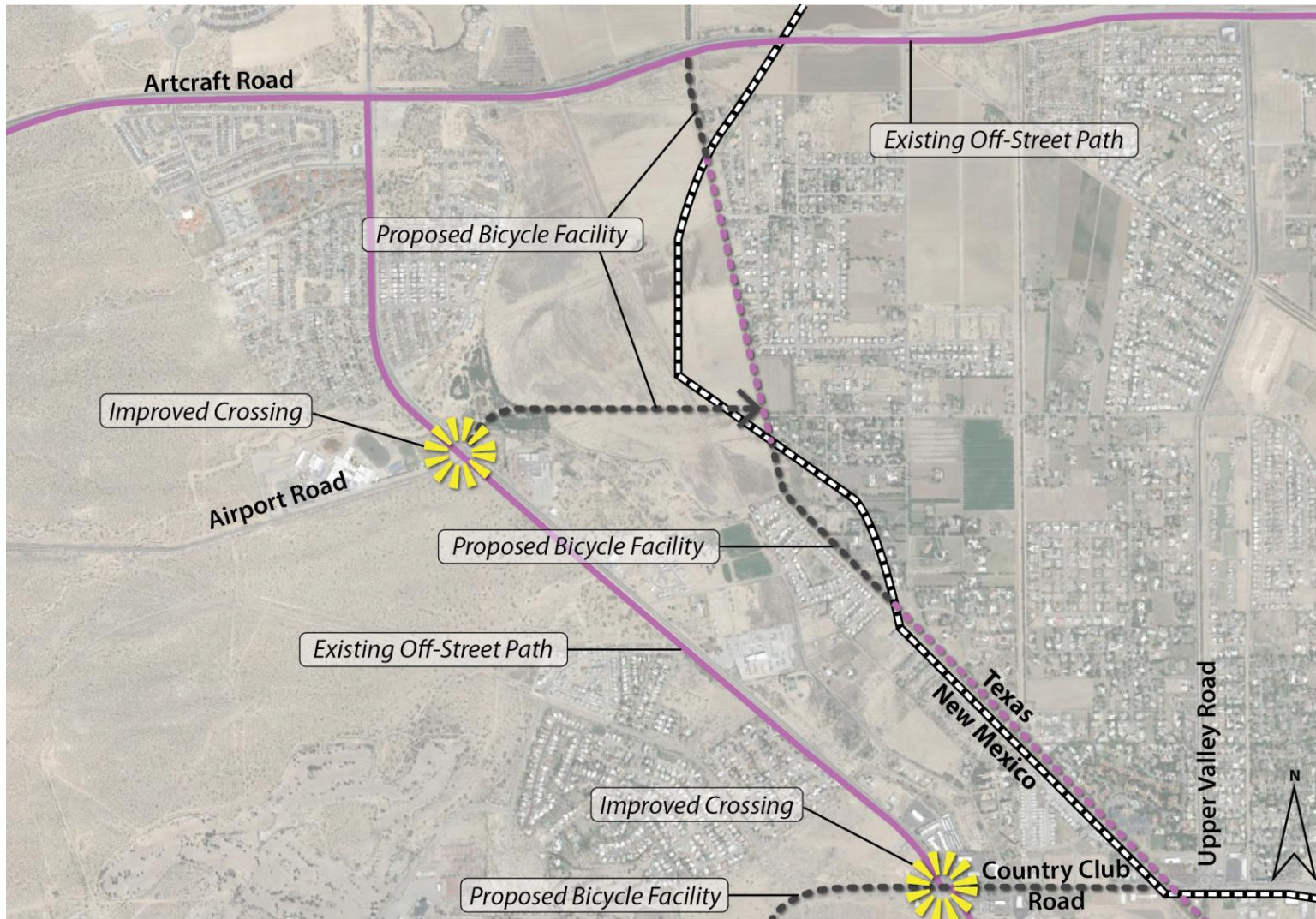
Figure 5-19 | Downtown Proposed Bicycle Facility



# 5 Transportation



Figure 5-20 | Proposed Bicycle Facility



# 5 Transportation



## 5.3.4 | Pedestrian Infrastructure Recommendations

Pedestrian facilities are an important part of a multimodal transportation network. Sidewalks, paths, and crossing facilities link residents to jobs, services, and activities in their communities and play a vital role in the multimodal transportation system by connecting residents to transit service. Well-designed pedestrian infrastructure supports Sunland Park’s vision of fostering vibrant neighborhoods by supporting streets as places not just to travel but to do business, gather, and be active.

Sunland Park’s pedestrian network covers much of the city. The city requires sidewalks be built adjacent to most new development. In the short term, investments should be targeted towards closing gaps in the network. This largely includes gaps in the sidewalk network near locations likely to have more foot traffic, including schools, apartment complexes, and transit stops. The City should adopt standards that require construction of detached buffered sidewalks, where feasible (see Figure 5-22 and discussion in section 5.1.4).

Street crossings should be improved in the same locations with marked crosswalks and signage. The City should work with the New Mexico Department of Transportation to improve crossings along McNutt, especially between Santo Demingo Drive and Rio Grande Drive, where there is development on both sides of the roadway but also few visible crossings.



*With quality pedestrian facilities, a street can become a more inviting place to do business, gather, or be active – helping create a vibrant neighborhood and community.*

**Figure 5-21 | Detached sidewalk along McNutt Rd**



*Detached sidewalk buffered from the curb can provide a more comfortable and safer experience for pedestrians*

# 5 Transportation



The City should evaluate the feasibility of "traffic calming" measures along the following roads. This might include hardscaping, such as medians or curb bump outs (Figure 5-22), speed humps, signage, or pavement markings:

- Mount Cristo Rey Boulevard;
- Parallel facilities to McNutt Road;
- Roads adjacent to schools.

As the community continues to develop, the City should consider development and implementation "Complete Streets" standards to ensure new roads are designed to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists seeking both transportation and recreation.

Additionally, the City can encourage development with more rectilinear street patterns, or where organic street layouts are strongly desired, require construction of off-street paths to help provide more direct pedestrian connections through the development. Suburban-style street patterns often force pedestrians to take longer, indirect paths to their destinations, compared to more rectilinear street grids.

## Safe Routes to School

Schools are a particular area of concern for addressing pedestrian and bicycle safety. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a type of program developed between schools, municipalities, and other stakeholders to improve students' ability to walk or bicycle school. The program – developed in line with national best practices – focuses on infrastructure and policy changes that make active transportation to school safe, comfortable, and enjoyable for students. Often, SRTS programs lead to improvements to the physical environment, such as better sidewalks or crosswalks. Schools will also organize "walk to school" or "bike to school" days to encourage these activities. The City of Las Cruces has, in previous years, organized a "Walk and Roll to School" day in

**Figure 5-22 | Traffic Calming Example**



*Curb extensions and other traffic calming measures can help reduce speeding and erratic driving along a road, enhancing safety for pedestrians and cyclists.*



# 5 Transportation



coordination with the local school district and the New Mexico Department of Transportation. The City of Sunland Park should work with the Gadsden Independent School District (GISD) to develop a Safe Routes to School strategic plan to guide development of SRTS improvements, policies and programming.

Local governments and organizations can receive federal funding for Safe Routes programs through a Transportation Alternatives set-aside through the US Department of Transportation. Applications for funding this require coordination with the local metropolitan planning organization (El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization). Many communities in New Mexico have implemented successful Safe Route programs without federal funding, but all programs require strong local partnerships between schools and local leaders.

## 5.3.5 | Aviation Recommendations

The Doña Ana County International Jetport is an asset to the region and will continue to grow since the airport can now accommodate large passenger planes and cargo jets. To capitalize on the current and future economic impacts of the airport, Sunland Park should pursue conversations with the Airport Advisory Board and Board of County Commissioners around airport-related investments. The Santa Teresa Border Area Needs Assessment (STBAT) identifies a number of infrastructure improvements, such as expansion of Airport Road, that support the both airport and the Sunland Park community. Meanwhile, working with airport authorities, the City should develop an understanding of how FAA regulations potentially affect how areas located near the airport and in the Future Growth Area can be developed. Additional recommendations include pursuing transit opportunities to and from the airport as well as marketing the War Eagles Museum as described in Section 5.4.1.

## 5.3.6 | Freight Recommendations

The Union Pacific's Strauss Intermodal facility continues to attract significant development activity, and as the yard continues to grow, the surrounding transportation system will need to be upgraded in order to handle the overweight truck volumes. Many of the roads supporting the Intermodal facility are owned by the county or state; however, as the City of Sunland Park expands its municipal boundaries, maintenance and repair of transportation infrastructure must be considered as well as the construction of new roadway facilities. The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) estimated a 45% growth in freight volumes by

# 5 Transportation



2045<sup>4</sup>. Sunland Park will see this growth and needs to plan for and strategically capture the economic impacts of this growth. Recommendations include:

- Implementation of improvements recommended in 2015 Santa Teresa Border Area Transportation Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan (STBAT)
- Coordination of economic development initiatives with transportation planning;
- Enhanced partnership with Doña Ana County and other local and regional government and nongovernmental organizations, including NMDOT, El Paso MPO, and New Mexico Border Authority, that are well positioned to support transportation and economic development-related investment
- Active protection of health due to the impact of potential increase in diesel emissions;
- Addition of a commercial weight and inspection station in Sunland Park.

---

<sup>4</sup> Border Area Economic Development Strategy, 2015

# 5 Transportation



## 5.4 | Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies

Sunland Park citizens support infill development in addition to a growth strategy that includes Doña Ana County International Jetport at Santa Teresa Airport and the area west of the established city limits to NM-136. A LPOE within the City of Sunland Park, separate from the existing Santa Teresa POE, is preferred. In order to accommodate this preferred growth, specific transportation infrastructure investments are needed.

Sunland Park’s transportation goals and policies envision a well-connected multi-modal network that supports Sunland Park as the gateway city. As growth occurs, they emphasize the importance of preserving the existing system and encouraging strategic connections in and around the City. The City’s image as an attractive, livable community is promoted through diverse transportation options.

**Transportation (T) Goal 1 | The 2040 transportation network supports Sunland Park’s vision as the “Gateway City”.**

**Objective T 1 – A** The City should improve connections to the surrounding El Paso and Las Cruces regions.

**Objective T 1 – B** The City should facilitate connections across the New Mexico/Mexico international border.

**T 1 Implementation Strategy 1.1:** The City should ensure adequate transportation connections across state line into the City of El Paso.

**T 1 Implementation Strategy 1.2:** The City should extend Sunland Park Drive to the proposed Sunland Park LPOE.

**T 1 Implementation Strategy 1.3:** The City should work with local transit agencies to improve transit service between Sunland Park, El Paso, Las Cruces, and understand the feasibility of transit service to the Sunland Park LPOE. Coordination should occur with transit agencies on the Chihuahua side of the international border to provide service between the LPOE and central Juárez.

**T 1 Implementation Strategy 1.5:** The City should encourage expansion of the Doña Ana County International Jetport at Santa Teresa Airport to support more air traffic and a wider range of aircraft types.

**T 1 Implementation Strategy 1.6:** The City should engage and advocate with the El Paso MPO for support of projects that benefit Sunland Park and the wider region.

# 5 Transportation



## **Transportation (T) Goal 2 | The 2040 transportation network supports the City’s vision as a “Unified City”.**

- Objective T 2 – A** The road network connects existing and future neighborhoods.
- Objective T 2 – B** Multi-modal transportation options provide connections to desirable destinations throughout Sunland Park and the surrounding region.
- Objective T 2 – C** Dedicated bicycle-pedestrian facilities link existing and future districts.
- Objective T 2 – D** The transportation network safely traverses the physical barriers such as the Rio Grande, UPRR, and the Mesa.

**T 2 Implementation Strategy 2.1:** As new development occurs within Sunland Park, the City should evaluate the capacity of its roadway network and, when warranted, strategically expand.

**T 2 Implementation Strategy 2.2:** With large development projects, the City should require completion of a traffic study

before development approval, per standards in the Updated Zoning and Development Ordinance.

**T 2 Implementation Strategy 2.3:** The City should coordinate with Sun Transit and/or SCRTRD to ensure adequate transit connections to destinations within Sunland Park are provided, especially as new development occurs.

**T 2 Implementation Strategy 2.4:** The City should implement recommendations in this plan for bicycle facilities and shared-use paths.

**T 2 Implementation Strategy 2.5:** The City should require construction of sidewalks and other pedestrian connections with new development, per standards in the Updated Zoning and Development Ordinance.

**T2 Implementation Strategy 2.6:** The City encourages the elimination of sidewalk gaps between development.

## **Transportation (T) Goal 3 | The 2040 transportation network supports efficient movement of people and goods via multiple modes.**

- Objective T 3 – A** The City should work with local and regional partners to coordinate planning and implementation of an efficient

# 5 Transportation



regional transportation network.

**Objective T 3 – B** The roadway network should safely and comfortably accommodate multiple modes, including private automobile, transit vehicle, commercial truck, bicycle and pedestrian.

**Objective T 3 – C** The City should ensure that its transportation network permits easy connections between alternative transportation modes.

**T 3 Implementation Strategy 3.1:** The City should support implementation of recent regional transportation plans, including the Santa Teresa Border Area Transportation Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan, Santa Teresa International Rail Study, and the New Mexico-Chihuahua Border Master Plan.

**T 3 Implementation Strategy 3.2:** The City should encourage construction of roadway facilities in line with the standard cross sections based on functional classification.

**T 3 Implementation Strategy 3.3:** The City should ensure that adequate connections to transit service exist with sufficient sidewalks, seating, and lighting.

**T 3 Implementation Strategy 3.4:** The City should accommodate freight while strategically preserving the existing and future transportation network.

**T 3 Implementation Strategy 3.5:** The City should develop an access management plan to ensure safe, efficient access to properties along major city streets, while maintaining smooth traffic flow

**T 3 Implementation Strategy 3.6:** The City should develop a policy for requiring Traffic Impact Studies be conducted prior to approval of new development in order to understand potential impacts of that development on operations of existing transportation infrastructure and to identify possible upgrades needed.

(This page intentionally left blank)



6

community facilities  
& infrastructure

# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



### Enhance growth and build upon the quality and sustainability of Sunland Park’s community infrastructure, facilities, and services.

#### 6.0 | Community Facilities & Infrastructure

Community facilities, utilities, and infrastructure are key to ensuring a good quality of life for a city’s residents. Community facilities include those housing municipal services (such as city hall, the police department, and fire stations), as well as public schools, libraries or institutions like churches that contribute to the civic or social life of residents. Utilities and infrastructure provide residents and businesses with water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, electricity, gas, and telecommunications service. Transportation infrastructure is discussed in Section 5.

Community facilities & infrastructure are examined in the following subsections:

- Existing community facilities (including municipal facilities, schools, public safety, and churches);
- Existing infrastructure (including water and sanitation, storm water management, power and fiber);
- Issues and opportunities;
- Recommendations; and
- Goals, objectives, and implementation strategies.





# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



### 6.1 | Existing Community Facilities

Community facilities in Sunland Park include municipal facilities, schools (public and private), public safety facilities (police and fire stations), and churches.

#### 6.1.1 | Community Facilities

Municipal services are provided by a city through taxing citizens and businesses. The municipal facilities within Sunland Park are primarily concentrated at the intersection of McNutt Road and Racetrack Drive. Table 6-1 details the various facilities.



#### Government

The City's municipal facilities consist of the Municipal Court, City Hall, and the Motor Vehicle Department (MVD). City Hall and the Courthouse are located on the same campus off of McNutt Road and Racetrack Drive. The MVD is located just across Racetrack Drive. The MVD provides licensing of commercial and non-commercial drivers, registration and titling of commercial vehicles, non-commercial vehicles, and boats.



#### Library

The Sunland Park Public Library is located at the City Hall campus. The Library is open Monday through Thursday 10:00am-6:00pm and Friday from 10:00am-5:00pm. The Library is closed on Saturday and Sunday. Services provided through the Library include: a library card, access to computer workstations, and year-round programs to promote reading.

# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



### Camino Real Regional Utility Authority Department (CRRUA)

CRRUA is responsible for the management and maintenance of the City of Sunland Park’s water and waste water system. They are located at the Gadsden Administrative Complex off of McNutt Road in Sunland Park.

**Table 6-1: Sunland Park Community Facilities**

Name	Location
Sunland Park Municipal Court	1000 McNutt Road
Sunland Park City Hall	1000 McNutt Road
Sunland Park Motor Vehicle Department	880 McNutt Road
Sunland Park Library	1000 McNutt Road
Camino Real Regional Utility Authority (CRRUA)	4950 McNutt Road

### 6.1.2 | Health Care

Various health care facilities are located around Sunland Park, especially on the Texas side; however, within Sunland Park there is a limited amount of health care facilities. Table 6-2 depicts the public and private health care services within Sunland Park.



*New Mexico Department of Health*

### Sunland Park Public Health Center

The New Mexico Department of Health’s mission is to promote health and wellness, improve health outcomes, and assure safety net services for all people in New Mexico. Within Sunland Park is a Public Health Center, which is open Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm. The Health Center offers breast and cervical cancer screenings, children’s medical services, family planning, harm reduction, counseling, testing, or immunization for hepatitis, counseling and testing for human immunodeficiency virus, immunizations for children, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, treatment for tuberculosis, and nutrition programs for women, infants, and children. The Public Health Center offers an array of services but is limited in services.

# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



### New Mexico Family Service

New Mexico Family Service (NMFS) is one of the primary healthcare providers for medical, behavior, life skills, adult day care, food pantries & meals, and volunteer programs in the southwestern New Mexico region. Senior services are also provided through NMFS. NMFS’s mission is to promote healthcare and improve wellness while assuring safety service for all patients in southwest New Mexico. NMFS offers comprehensive primary healthcare service and is open Monday through Friday from 9:00am-6:00pm and Saturday from 9:00am-1:00pm. Table 6-2 lists the various health services currently available in Sunland Park.

**Table 6-2 | Sunland Park Health Care Services**

Name	Location
Sunland Park Public Health Center	3807 McNutt Road
New Mexico Family Services	3465 McNutt Road
Peak Behavioral Health Hospital	5055 McNutt Road
Santa Teresa Children’s Night Clinic	1245 Country Club Road
La Clinica de Familia	2625 McNutt Road

### 6.1.3 | Education

Public schools within Sunland Park are within the Gadsden Independent School District (GISD). The GISD is a New Mexico school district serving Doña Ana County and southern Otero County with headquarters in Sunland Park. GISD covers an area of 1,226 square miles and maintains 28 facilities with three administrative support facilities. For 2015-2016 the district enrollment was 14,090 for students in Pre-K – 12<sup>5</sup>.

The High School which serves both unincorporated Doña Ana County and Sunland Park is located just outside of Sunland Park in Santa Teresa Census Designated Place (CDP) at the intersection of McNutt Road and Airport Road. In addition, the Doña Ana Community College and the University of Phoenix-Santa Teresa Learning Center is located within Sunland Park. Both provide an

<sup>5</sup> Gadsden Independent School District Facilities Master Plan 2016-2020

# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



opportunity for working individuals to obtain an undergraduate or graduate degree. In addition, a few private schools are located just east of Sunland Park city limits and include: Mountain West Montessori, St. Matthew Catholic School, St. Mark’s School, and Ibero Academy. Table 6-3 details the existing schools and enrollment within Sunland Park city limits.

**Table 6-3 | Sunland Park Schools**

Name	District	Grades	Type	Enrollment (2015-2016) <sup>6</sup>
<b>Santa Teresa On-Track Pre-K Center</b>	Gadsden	Pre-K	Public	180
<b>Riverside Elementary</b>	Gadsden	K-5	Public	607
<b>Desert View Elementary</b>	Gadsden	K-5	Public	488
<b>Sunland Park Elementary</b>	Gadsden	K-5	Public	324
<b>Santa Teresa Elementary</b>	Gadsden	K-5	Public	627
<b>Santa Teresa Middle School</b>	Gadsden	6 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup>	Public	721
<b>Santa Teresa High School</b>	Gadsden	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	Public	1,245
<b>Doña Ana Comm. College Sunland Park</b>	-	Community College	Public	-
<b>University of Phoenix – Santa Teresa Learning Center</b>	-	Undergraduate and Graduate	Private	-

### 6.1.4 | Public Safety

Public safety facilities oversee the safety and well-being of Sunland Park. Such public safety facilities include police stations, fire departments, ambulance, and animal control. Currently, Sunland Park’s police force includes nineteen officers. The jurisdiction for the Sunland Park police is within the city limits. The Sunland Park Fire Department (SPFD) has two stations within Sunland Park. Currently, the fire department consists of fourteen firefighters. In addition to typical duties, the SPFD oversees any forest fire issues within the City. The City’s ambulance service is provided by a private entity. The closest private ambulance service to the City of Sunland Park is American Medical Response (AMR) located in Santa Teresa. Animal control is provided by the City of

<sup>6</sup> Gadsden Independent School District Facilities Master Plan 2016-2020

# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



Sunland Park and is responsible for assuring that citizens are protected from native wildlife and relocate roaming domestic animals to the animal shelter. Table 6-4 identifies the various public safety facilities within Sunland Park.

**Table 6-4 | Sunland Park Public Safety Facilities**

Name	Location
Police Station	1000 McNutt Road
Fire Station #1	1000 McNutt Road
Fire Station #2	880 McNutt Road

### 6.1.5 | Churches

The City has several churches located within the city limits, along with many churches located east of the City, in El Paso, TX. The five churches within Sunland Park are listed in Table 6-5. The churches currently serve as community gathering spaces.

**Table 6-5 | Churches within Sunland Park**

Names	Location
Santa Teresa Presbyterian	5400 McNutt Road
San Martin de Porres	1885 McNutt Road
Healing Place Church-El Paso	5312 Rio Bravo Drive
Korean Church of Las Cruces	1074 Country Club Road
Santa Teresa Baptist Church	5750 McNutt Road



# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



### 6.2 | Existing Infrastructure

The service, location, and availability of a utility is influential in determining the location, type, and density of future development. Sunland Park residents and businesses have access to utility services such as water, sewer, gas, fiber optic, and electric.

#### 6.2.1 | Water & Sanitation

Since its founding in 1983 up until 2009, the City of Sunland Park provided water and wastewater services to their citizens. In February 2009, the Camino Real Regional Utility Authority (CRRUA) was established, after being approved by the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration State Board of Finance and federal funding agencies. CRRUA is a private company that services Sunland Park and surrounding areas within Doña Ana County. Figure 6-1 and 6-2 show the water and wastewater systems served by CRRUA water and sanitation district. CRRUA's main focus is to ensure reliable and sustainable water is supplied and collected within the City. The body also has a land use regulation function, overseeing zoning and subdivision approvals within its service.

Figure 6-2 depicts the existing pump stations. By pumping wastewater from a lower elevation to a higher one, pump stations become an essential tool for transporting wastewater sewage to wastewater treatment plants. Pump stations are necessary when the flow system begins to slope in the opposite direction of gravity causing the wastewater to flow backwards. To avoid reversed flows of wastewater, which could cause sewage backups, lift stations are used to continue the proper flow of the wastewater. The pump stations within Sunland Park are set to flow towards Sunland Park Wastewater Treatment Plant (SPWWP) and North Wastewater Treatment Plant (NWWP). Currently, the SPWWP collects all of the sanitary sewer for the City. NWWP is undergoing construction. Once construction is complete, the NWWP and SPWWP will divide the sanitary sewer collection.

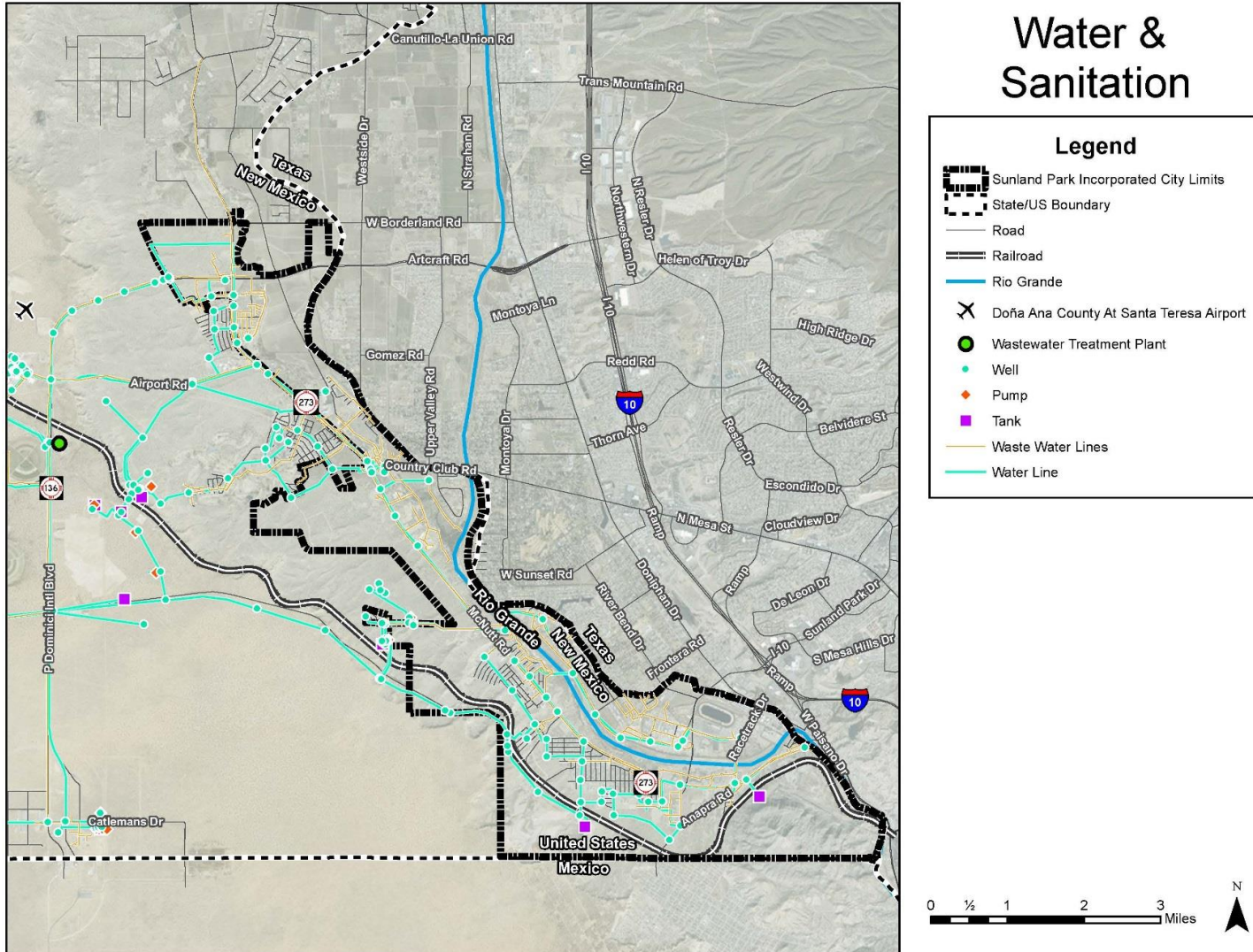
Figure 6-2 also shows the estimated location of sanitary sewer lines and manholes throughout the City. While the majority of the manholes are in good condition, some manholes are in poor condition and in need of rehabilitation. Some manholes are in fair condition and require minor maintenance. More detail on these facilities – including their condition – can be found in Appendix A, Chapter 7.

# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



Figure 6-1 | Sanitary Sewer & Water Infrastructure

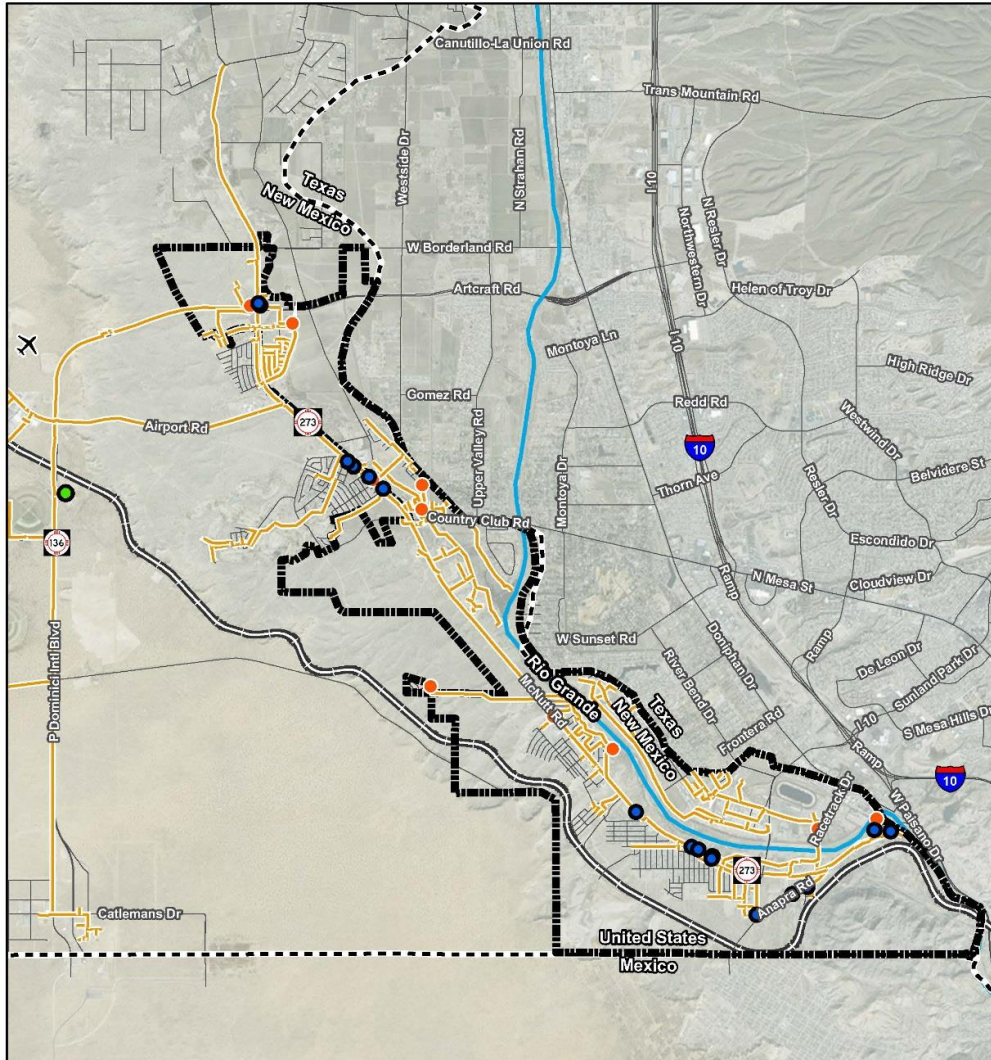


# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



Figure 6-2 | Wastewater Infrastructure



### Wastewater

**Legend**

- Sunland Park Incorporated City Limits
- State/US Boundary
- Road
- Railroad
- Rio Grande
- Doña Ana County At Santa Teresa Airport
- Wastewater Manhole
- Pump Station
- Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Wastewater Lines





# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



### 6.2.2 | Stormwater Management

Efficient stormwater infrastructure is important to alleviate concerns about safety and property damage. Figure 6-3 illustrates stormwater infrastructure in and around Sunland Park. Infrastructure includes pipes, culverts, inlets, canals, drains, bridges, dams, levees, and flood control structures and gates. Pipes and culverts are typically embedded structures that allow water to flow underneath barriers such as roads, railroads, trails, or similar water barriers. Channels are typically man-made pathways used to redirect water flow. The majority of this stormwater infrastructure is constructed within the City right-of-way limits. The majority of Sunland Park drains using inlets and crossing culverts as the main method for stormwater runoff. The Rio Grande operates as the primary collection of stormwater for the region. In areas with no access to the Rio Grande or culverts, the roadway is designed to carry water until it reaches a culvert that drains to the river or large undeveloped area.

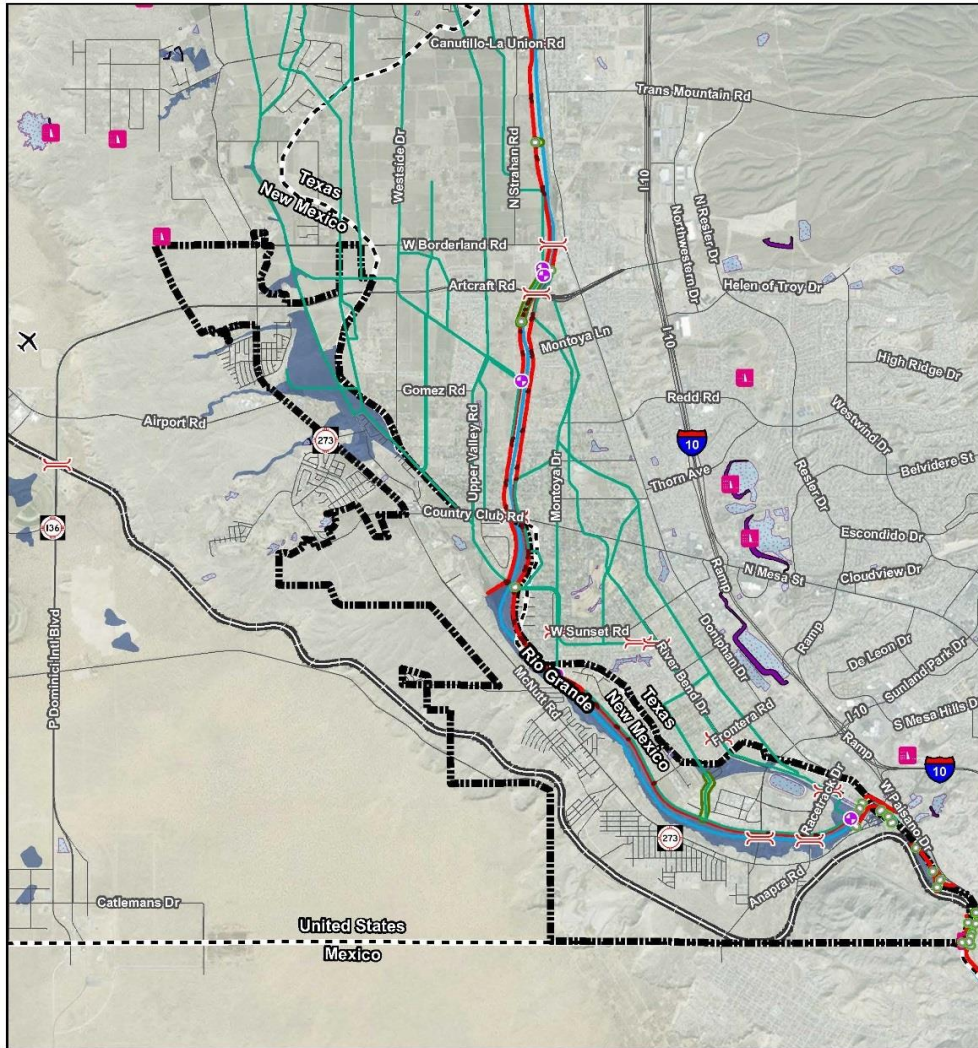
Due to recent high rain fall in Sunland Park certain culvert sections have begun to erode from underneath causing exposure to active gas lines and fiber optic lines. Erosion is also occurring above a number of structures, which is causing erosion towards the roadway. It is important that these structures be maintained in functional conditions to provide a proper and safe living environment to the citizens and businesses of Sunland Park. Figure 6-4 corresponds to Table 7-2 in Appendix A, Chapter 7.

# 6

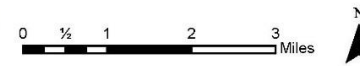
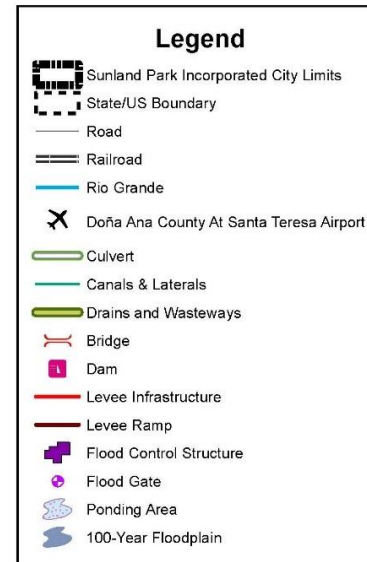
## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



Figure 6-3 | Stormwater Drainage



### Stormwater Drainage

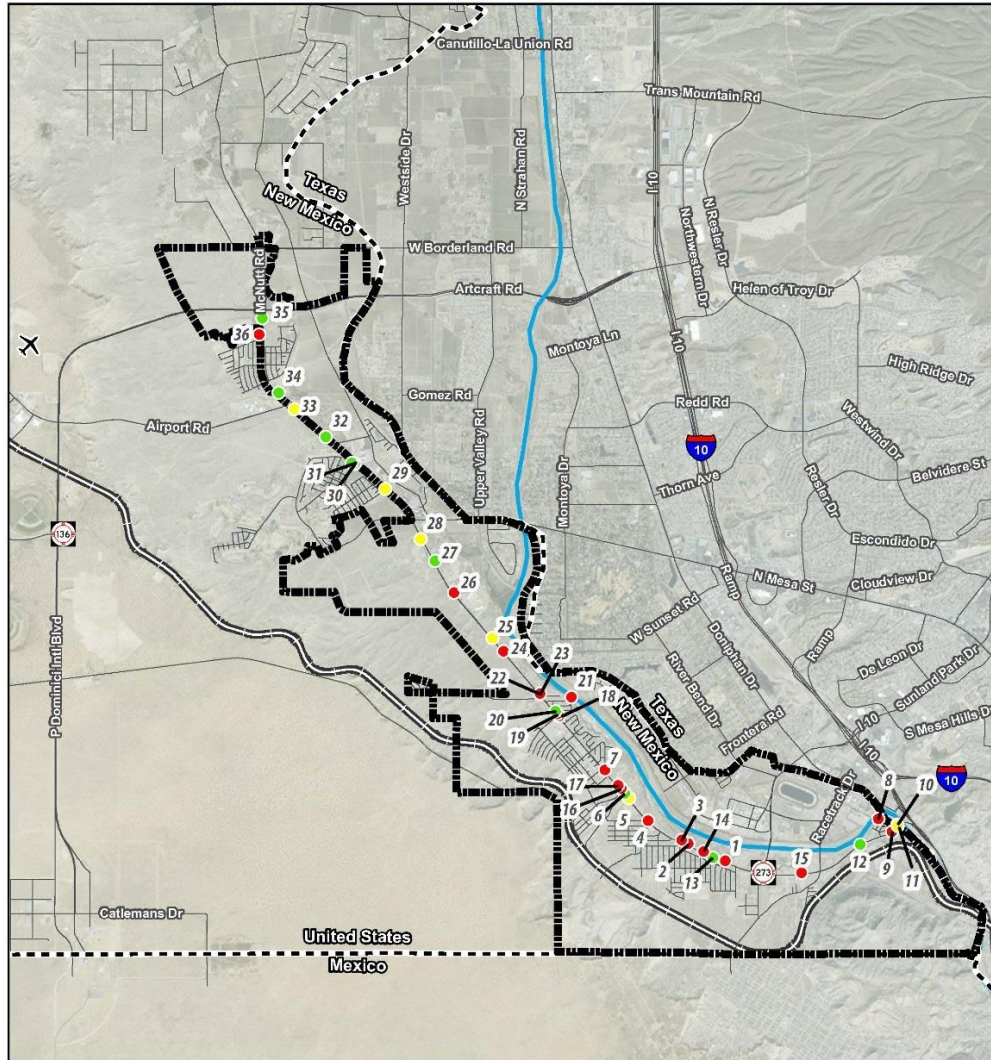


# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



Figure 6-4 | Existing Culvert Condition



### Culvert Condition

**Legend**

- Sunland Park Incorporated City Limits
- State/US Boundary
- Road
- Railroad
- Rio Grande
- Doña Ana County At Santa Teresa Airport

**Culvert**

- Fair
- Good
- Poor



# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



### 6.2.3 | Power & Fiber

The provision of power, including electric and gas power, is an essential component of 21<sup>st</sup> century communities. Much of the electrical grid is within road right-of-way. The New Mexico Gas Company (NMGC) governs permitting and regulation of the gas wells throughout the state. NMGC is the largest utility in the state of New Mexico. Overseeing approximately 6,501 square miles and operating in 23 out of 33 counties within New Mexico, and maintaining 12,000 miles of natural gas pipelines. Providing gas to over 513,000 residential, commercial, and transportation customers. Doña Ana County is one of the 23 counties NMGC oversees gas lines. NMGC ensures residents and commercial owners receive basic living essentials.

Many cable companies manage underground networks of cable and fiber infrastructure used to boost internet speeds for all residences and businesses. Due to the numerous operators of underground utilities and because of public safety concern with providing information publicly, there is no readily available data that can be easily mapped to determine locations of these infrastructure networks. Fiber optic service is currently not provided in the area. More information related to power & fiber can be found in Appendix A, Chapter 7.

### 6.3 | Issues & Opportunities

During the planning process, the community expressed concerns related to various community facilities and infrastructure. The community expressed concerns about the nuisance and odor caused by the City's water treatment plant, located directly behind City Hall. Residents expressed that the plant creates unpleasant odors in the center of the town. The community also called for a more defined "town center" to provide a community gathering place that could include a community center and fitness facilities. The community expressed the need for lighting to make the city feel safer, opportunities for youth after school programs, young technology initiatives, and civic organizations such as a Chamber of Commerce, Entrepreneurship Club, Keep Sunland Park Beautiful, Neighborhood Watch, and Habitat for Humanity. Additionally, community members voiced the need for additional health/urgent care locations. Annexation of new areas would impact the capacity of Sunland Park's facilities and infrastructure.

In 2003 the City of Sunland Park received a \$6M dollar grant to improve the SPWWP and the NWWP, near Crawford Road. Currently, the SPWWP collects all of the sanitary sewer for the City. NWWP is undergoing construction, which should be completed over the course of the next 18 months. Once construction is complete, the NWWP and SPWWP will divide the sanitary

# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



sewer collection. The re-opening of NWWP provides an opportunity for minor improvements to occur at SPWWP, but expansion could be deemed limited due to land development that has occurred near the plant.

The City continues to face significant localized flooding. In 2006, the City experienced severe monsoon flooding causing many residents in Anapra, Tierra Madre, and other areas to temporarily evacuate from their homes. The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) awarded two construction contracts for rehabilitation of the Rio Grande Flood Control Project in El Paso, Texas, and Doña Ana County, New Mexico, funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, as a result of the 2006 flooding. Today, the IBWC is unable to certify any new levee work that removes the old FEMA 100-year floodplain outside the levees because of unresolved interior drainage investigation.

### 6.4 | Recommendations

The Sunland Park Comprehensive Plan incorporates previous planning efforts as well as the issues and opportunities voiced during the extensive public engagement process. The recommendations within this section address community facilities and community infrastructure.

#### 6.4.1 | Community Facilities

##### Education

The New Mexico Department of Education requires school districts to maintain an up-to-date five-year facilities plan to support the various district's missions and meet state adequacy standards. The five-year facility master plan is a prerequisite for eligibility to receive state capital outlay assistance. GISD completed their five-year facilities plan in December 2015 for the period of 2016-2020. The 2015 GISD Facilities Master Plan outlined a low, mid, and high range enrollment projection based on various demographic and economic factors. The mid-range enrollment projections predicted an average annual increase of 0.1%, while the high-range enrollment projections predicted an average annual enrollment rate of 0.46%<sup>7</sup>. The GISD Facilities Master Plan established a goal of limiting enrollment at schools to a maximum of 550 students in elementary school, less than 1,000 students in middle school, and a maximum of 2,000 students at high school. Riverside Elementary School and Santa Teresa Elementary

---

<sup>7</sup> Gadsden Independent School District Facilities Master Plan 2016-2020

# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



School exceed capacity; therefore, the GISD Facilities Master Plan recommended a future new elementary school in Sunland Park. This new elementary school will help reduce school sizes and accommodate the projected growth. The middle school and high school within Sunland Park were determined as having the necessary capacity for future enrollment in the next ten years.

In order to support GISD the City should implement the following policies:

- Coordinate with GISD regarding new growth and development to guarantee existing and future schools accommodate the local demands;
- Work with GISD and local businesses to develop a curriculum that partners with local industries and employers;
- Work with GISD to develop materials that highlight improvements to attract new families to the community;

### Public Safety

A review and audit of the Sunland Park Police Department (SPPD) was conducted in March 2017. The process included a review of all SPPD policies and procedures, audit of evidence collection procedures, audit of internal affairs procedures, and interviews with SPPD personnel. The audit provided a final written evaluation of the findings along with recommendations of critical issues. The City of Sunland Park should adopt the recommendations from the Police Audit and periodically conduct SPPD reviews to ensure the SPPD is properly equipped to serve the City of Sunland Park.

As the City continues to grow, emergency response services must expand as well. In order to define the specific needs for additional fire safety capacity, an inventory of existing stations should be conducted to determine what can be retained, replaced, and added.



# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



The inventory should include:

- A review existing stations capabilities, equipment, and personnel safety and health;
- Coordination with neighboring departments;
- Consultation with handbooks, guides, and manuals<sup>8</sup>;
- Assessment and evaluation of risks; and
- Growth scenarios and recommendations.

Based on findings from the inventory, a location plan should be developed. Additionally, once the risks are identified, the type of control should be implemented and documented. Periodically, these controls should be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the control measure.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) response time standards<sup>9</sup>:

- Fire Suppression Incident: four minutes (240 seconds) or less for arrival of the first engine and/or eight minutes (480 seconds) or less for the deployment of a full-alarm assignment.
- Emergency Medical Incident: four minutes (240 seconds) or less for arrival of first unit with first responder. Eight minutes (480 seconds) or less for arrival of an advanced life support unit when service is provided by the fire department.

### Health Care

Sunland Park needs to encourage strategic health care services to locate within the City to address the existing gaps. While the Public Health Center, NMFS, Peak Behavioral Health Hospital, Santa Teresa Children’s Night Clinic, and La Clinica de Familia provide various services, as the community continues to grow additional services will be required. Coordination with the existing health care providers on branding, marketing, and distribution of information will be vital to ensure the community knows about the available health care resources. The city should devise a plan to recruit/retain health care providers to locate in Sunland Park

---

<sup>8</sup> Safety and Health Considerations for the Design of Fire and Emergency Medical Service Stations

<sup>9</sup> NFPA Standard 1710 – does not include dispatch and turn-out time (one minute allowed for dispatch and one minute for turn-out time).

# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



and work with Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in El Paso or the Burrell School of Osteopathic Medicine in Las Cruces.

Additionally, although the community of Sunland Park is primarily a young population with a median age of 28.6 years, in the coming years the population will continue to age and the City should strategically incorporate senior services.

### 6.4.2 | Future Community Infrastructure

#### **CRRUA**

In 2014, CRRUA conducted a Water Infrastructure Plan Update to evaluate the existing combined water system to meet existing and future demands. By 2034, the plan projected CRRUA's service area population to exceed 45,000 people<sup>10</sup>. The Plan suggests projects that CRRUA should take on to meet existing and future demands.

#### **Stormwater and Floodway**

The needs for adequate flood control infrastructure is much needed, but not thoroughly analyzed, vetted, and known. Therefore, as of the publishing date of the Sunland Park 2040 Comprehensive Master Plan, a recommendation to strongly pursue the needed \$1M to thoroughly study and develop a City-wide Drainage Master Plan (DMP) is wise and adoption of the DMP, once completed via resolution will ensure adherence by Planning and Zoning Staff and Developers alike.

---

<sup>10</sup> CRRUA Water Infrastructure Plan Update, 2014



# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



### 6.5 | Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies

The goals, objectives, and implementation strategies detailed below are intended to address the city's facilities and infrastructure. The goals aim to successfully accommodate growth while enhancing the quality and sustainability of the existing infrastructure, facilities, and services.

**Community Services (CS) Goal 1 | Provide valuable health care resources to all residents within Sunland Park.**

- Objective CS 1 – A** Support continued operation and expansion of the Public Health Center and New Mexico Family Services.
- Objective CS 1 – B** Promote the health care services provided within Sunland Park.
- Objective CS 1 – C** Improve the quality of life for seniors and people with disabilities.
- Objective CS 1 – D** Ensure residents have health care options within Sunland Park.

**CS 1 Implementation Strategy 1.1:** Coordinate with the Sunland Park Public Health Center and New Mexico Family Services on distributing information to the community regarding available health services.

**CS 1 Implementation Strategy 1.2:** Ensure that branding and marketing efforts for Sunland Park highlight the available health care resources.

**CS 1 Implementation Strategy 1.3:** Encourage strategic health care development to address gaps in existing services.

**Community Services (CS) Goal 2 | Sunland Park will sufficiently deliver fire, police, and emergency medical services to all residents.**

- Objective CS 2 – A** Ensure the Police Department and Fire Department are adequately equipped and receive proper trainings.
- Objective CS 2 – B** Plan for expanded Police and Fire Department services.
- Objective CS 2 – C** Evaluate fire facility needs when developing annexation strategies.

# 6

## Community Facilities & Infrastructure



**Objective CS 2 – D** Prioritize new facilities in areas of Sunland Park that need better response times.

**CS 2 Implementation Strategy 2.1:** Adopt and implement recommendations from the 2017 Police Audit.

**CS 2 Implementation Strategy 2.2:** Conduct an inventory of existing fire stations to develop a fire station location plan.

**Community Services (CS) Goal 3 | The City of Sunland Park provides access to quality education.**

**Objective CS 3 – A** Provide educational opportunities for residents of all ages.

**Objective CS 3 – B** Leverage educational opportunities into workforce trainings.

**Objective CS 3 – C** Work with Gadsden School District, Doña Ana Community College, and the University of Phoenix to address access to educational resources.

**Objective CS 3 – D** Attract families into Sunland Park.

**CS 3 Implementation Strategy 3.1:** Expand the Sunland Park Public Library, hire additional staff, and expand youth programming.

**CS 3 Implementation Strategy 3.2:** Work with the Gadsden Independent School District and New Mexico State University to offer technical training during non-school hours.

**CS 3 Implementation Strategy 3.3:** Coordinate with the Gadsden Independent School District (GISD) during the five-year facilities plan update (2020, 2025, 2030, 2035, and 2040). Provide planned development information.

**CS 3 Implementation Strategy 3.4:** Assist in the implementation of the recommendations within the GISD Facilities Master Plan.



7

economic  
development

# 7

## Economic Development



**Sunland Park is a prosperous community that is financially stable, attractive to businesses and residents, and cultivates employment opportunities. The City’s economy is diverse due to increasing industrial and commercial developments as well as unique destinations.**

### 7.0 | Economic Development

The City of Sunland Park is bounded by two economically vibrant areas in the U.S., northwest El Paso, Texas, and the industrial area associated with the Santa Teresa LPOE. Additionally, Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, offers the potential for further economic interaction. There are both advantages and disadvantages to Sunland Park’s physical and economic position in the broader market. The regional economy offers Sunland Park residents access to a wide array of goods and services, jobs, customers, employees, and investors; however, in order for Sunland Park to thrive, they must reap their share of economic benefits generated in the regional economy. Economically, Sunland Park must position itself to benefit from the advantages while minimizing the disadvantages in a competitive metropolitan region.

To capitalize on its opportunities, Sunland Park must take a realistic look at its current social and economic situation, recognize that Sunland Park is part of a larger, interconnected regional economy, and set goals for

integrating Sunland Park into the regional economy in ways that bring ongoing benefits to the city’s residents and help meet public needs.

Economic development goals differ from time-to-time, place-to-place, and person-to-person. To some families, economic development might mean a sufficient income to provide an improved standard of living, which includes high-quality schools and parks for their children, public safety, local amenities, or the promise of a better future for their children. To public officials, economic development might mean increasing the tax base to provide quality schools, parks, and amenities. For others, economic development might mean improved health care or greater variety in local shopping. In any case, economic development involves the allocation or reallocation of new or existing resources to achieve a goal or set of goals.

Sunland Park currently has an active local economy but tends to operate on the lower end of the economic spectrum where hard work or dedicated business efforts do not

# 7

## Economic Development



necessarily result in high levels of income and security. Improvements in technology, increases in the resource base, and enhancements in the quality of resources can drive economic development; however, these changes require time, patience, and a willingness to change.

In terms of total employment, the largest industries are arts and entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services, educational services, and health care and social assistance. Sunland Park tends to import its (higher wage) white collar workers (who make their homes elsewhere) and export its (lower wage) blue collar workers (who make their homes in Sunland Park). Although Sunland Park has high unemployment and low incomes, they are not significantly more dependent on social aid programs. Furthermore, Sunland Park has a high amount of self-employment income.

### 7.1 | Issues & Opportunities

Key issues and opportunities facing Sunland Park include:

- Learning to better serve and attract residents from El Paso and other adjacent communities can create additional economic benefits for the area.
- As part of its economic development efforts, Sunland Park can work to rebrand itself and build its regional reputation.
- In the near term, the city should enact programs to improve workforce readiness, which should help

residents move into higher-paying jobs. Short-term actions could be to create programs to develop high school equivalency and job skills while longer-term programs could be to encourage high school completion among current and future students.

- Encouraging entrepreneurship, and perhaps providing mentoring and training to fledgling entrepreneurs, could potentially transform current employees into business people and potential employers of Sunland Park residents.
- Need for a chamber of commerce or an economic development advocate at the City.

### 7.2 | Recommendations

Sunland Park is in a favorable position to improve its economic situation by exploiting its existing strengths, including its location between two economically dynamic areas, hard-working residents, a base of entrepreneurial skill and experience, and a desire to improve the local economy. Carefully building on this foundation should improve socioeconomic conditions for Sunland Park's residents and prepare the city for an improved greater connection to Mexico in the future. Specific economic development recommendations include:

- Strategically guide infill development, attracting residents to utilize city resources;

# 7

## Economic Development



- Serve and attract residents from adjacent communities into Sunland Park;
- Facilitate the new land Port of Entry within Sunland Park;
- Establish Sunland Park’s regional reputation;
- Foster an improved identity for Sunland Park; and
- Encourage education, skill development, and job readiness.

The purpose of the goals, objectives, and implementation strategies is to provide a foundation for continued and positive economic development in Sunland Park, complementing recommendations throughout the Comprehensive Plan. The goals, objectives, and strategies are based on analysis, economic development assessments completed by community leaders, and feedback received at several public meetings held in Sunland Park.

### 7.2.1 | Fiscal Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies

Many of the changes required to promote the development of Sunland Park require access to fiscal resources. The purpose of including the Fiscal component is to promote sound municipal finance and assure tax dollars and other funds are used effectively in the community.

**Fiscal (F) Goal 1 | The City of Sunland Park exercises fiscal responsibility and accountability in the implementation of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and economic development projects.**

- Objective F 1 – A** The CIP and economic development projects are implemented/completed in a timely fashion and on budget.
- Objective F 1 – B** The residents of Sunland Park recognize that a strong economy requires adequate public infrastructure and quality government services.
- Objective F 1 – C** Sunland Park has access to sufficient and sustainable funding sources to assure the implementation of the public aspects of its CIP and economic development plans.
- Objective F 1 – D** Transparency and accountability in the funding and implementation of the CIP and economic development plans.

# 7

## Economic Development



**F 1 Implementation Strategy 1.1:** Diligently comply with open meeting laws by conducting public business in full public view.

**F 1 Implementation Strategy 1.2:** Make every effort to inform Sunland Park residents of public meeting times, dates, and agenda items. Materials should be bi-lingual and utilize the following platforms: website, social media, posters in high traffic locations, signs at intersections. Assure that English/Spanish translation is available at public meetings.

**F 1 Implementation Strategy 1.3:** Maintain separate financial records for spending on CIP and economic development projects. In budgeting, account for project sequencing and assure correspondence of funding availability with spending needs.

**F 1 Implementation Strategy 1.4:** Engage/invite outside monitoring of records related to CIP and economic development spending (independent audits) and make reports publically available in full and summary form.

**F 1 Implementation Strategy 1.5:** Seek appropriate grants, matching funds, state incentives only to the extent that they support the CIP and/or economic development plan and assure that ongoing financial obligations related to grants and incentives can clearly be sustainably funded.

**F 1 Implementation Strategy 1.6:** Assign responsibility for each aspect of the CIP and economic development plan to a person, office, or entity and make the assignment of responsibility public (update regularly as personnel change).

**F 1 Implementation Strategy 1.7:** During every budget cycle, make necessary adjustments to spending, tax rates, and the tax base, to assure sound public finances are maintained.

**F 1 Implementation Strategy 1.8:** In all communications between the public sector and the general public, assure that both the costs and benefits of public activities are discussed.

### **Fiscal (F) Goal 2 | Entrepreneurs and businesses are supported by the local government.**

- |                          |                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Objective F 2 – A</b> | Information on zoning, permitting, and other regulatory processes is up-to-date, clearly communicated, and easily accessed by interested parties. |
| <b>Objective F 2 – B</b> | Decisions regarding zoning, permitting, and other regulatory processes are made                                                                   |

# 7

## Economic Development



as quickly as possible while still protecting the public interest.

### Objective F 2 – C

Local officials are aware of state, federal, and international regulations that have local impacts and can direct interested parties to reliable information on the regulations.

**F 2 Implementation Strategy 2.1:** Enhance “community services” page on the City of Sunland Park’s website making it as easy as possible for users to find information on zoning and related compliance/licensing issues.

**F 2 Implementation Strategy 2.2:** Continue efforts to update zoning and other regulations such as building codes, business licensing/registration.

**F 2 Implementation Strategy 2.3:** Develop and implement training plans to assure that a subset of local officials/offices are up to date on state, federal regulations that impact Sunland Park residents/businesses.

**F 2 Implementation Strategy 2.4:** Define clear and transparent processes and paths of responsibility for decision-making on zoning, permits, etc.

### 7.2.2 | Community and Economic Development Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies

Sunland Park City is bounded by two economically vibrant areas in the U.S., northwest El Paso Texas, and the industrial area associated with the Santa Teresa land port of entry. Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, offers the potential for further economic interaction, especially if access is improved but the development of a new port of entry. The purpose of the Community and Economic Development is to help Sunland Park systematically position itself to take advantage (capture a bigger share) of current and future regional economic activity.

#### Community and Economic Development (CED) Goal 1 | Sunland Park has an active and supportive business community.

**Objective CED 1 – A** Sunland Park businesses serve the needs of customers both in Sunland Park and the El Paso, Juarez region.

**Objective CED 1 – B** Potential customers in the region are aware of the goods and services available in Sunland Park and inclined to



# 7

## Economic Development



patronize Sunland Park businesses.

**Objective CED 1 – C** Local businesses consider local sources when purchasing resources for their businesses.

**CED 1 Implementation Strategy 1.1:** Conduct a local inventory business to identify cases where they are sourcing supplies, materials, etc. that could possibly be competitively provided by local businesses. The City should encourage a local business fair where each business has the opportunity to let the public (and other businesses) know what it has to offer.

**CED 1 Implementation Strategy 1.2:** Encourage local entrepreneurs to pursue business opportunities that can compete with similar businesses in the region. A newly formed Chamber of Commerce, perhaps in cooperation with Doña Ana Community College, could organize basic training in marketing to help local entrepreneurs expand their focus and present themselves in new markets.

**CED 1 Implementation Strategy 1.3:** Plan, zone, and permit infill development to help create continuity between separate neighborhoods within Sunland Park encouraging residents to utilize local businesses.

**CED 1 Implementation Strategy 1.4:** Work with the local business community to encourage improvements in the physical attractiveness of businesses, provision of customer-friendly service, and improvements in signage.

**CED 1 Implementation Strategy 1.5:** Encourage the creation of a Sunland Park Chamber of Commerce or similar business organization to lead and provide support to the business community.

**CED 1 Implementation Strategy 1.6:** Encourage local businesses to be specific about their location in Sunland Park, NM, in their advertising and other promotional materials, even if they are service providers who primarily serve non-Sunland Park customers.

**CED 1 Implementation Strategy 1.7:** Showcase local businesses when community events are held.

**CED 1 Implementation Strategy 1.8:** When zoning for residential development include commercial zoning for neighborhood commercial development.

**CED 1 Implementation Strategy 1.9:** Consider participation in New Mexico MainStreet Program. More information can be found here: <https://gonm.biz/community-development/mainstreet-program>

# 7

## Economic Development



**Community and Economic Development (CED) Goal 2 | Sunland Park has a clear geographic identity and a positive image in the region.**

- Objective CED 2 – A** Visitors to Sunland Park know when they have arrived in Sunland Park.
- Objective CED 2 – B** Sunland Park is viewed by regional residents as a community worth visiting.
- Objective CED 2 – C** Sunland Park is considered to be a viable and desirable choice for regional residents considering relocation.
- Objective CED 2 – D** Sunland Park residents are proud of their city.
- Objective CED 2 – E** High quality and accessible basic health services (medical, dental, pharmacy, and urgent care) are available in Sunland Park.

**CED 2 Implementation Strategy 2.1:** Improve signage at City boundaries so residents and visitors can clearly distinguish Sunland Park from Santa Teresa and Texas.

**CED 2 Implementation Strategy 2.2:** Encourage Sunland Park schools and businesses that claim a Santa Teresa name or address to rename or increase their identity within Sunland Park.

**CED 2 Implementation Strategy 2.3:** Plan both regular and special community events, including some events that specifically engage non-residents. Examples might be charity runs, bicycle rallies, Mt. Christo Rey related activities, motocross rallies, local markets, and equestrian oriented events. Aim for safe, well-run, and enjoyable events that will leave visitors and residents alike with positive thoughts about Sunland Park.

**CED 2 Implementation Strategy 2.4:** Seek to develop park or park-like facilities within the floodplain where community activities could be held.

**CED 2 Implementation Strategy 2.5:** Encourage community clean-up and beautification events (local version of “Don’t Mess with Texas” or “Toss no Mas”).

**CED 2 Implementation Strategy 2.6:** Invite media coverage of positive events/improvements in Sunland Park.

**CED 2 Implementation Strategy 2.7:** Develop a recreational vehicle park to serve sunbirds looking for an interesting and pleasant place to spend the winter.

# 7

## Economic Development



**CE2 Implementation Strategy 2.8:** Devise a plan to recruit/retain health care providers to locate in Sunland Park. Perhaps working with Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in El Paso or the Burrell School of Osteopathic Medicine in Las Cruces.

**Community and Economic Development (CED) Goal 3 | Sunland Park has a reliable, skilled, and productive workforce.**

- Objective CED 3 – A** Workers residing in Sunland Park are qualified for high-quality, high-paying jobs.
- Objective CED 3 – B** Workers residing in Sunland Park have opportunities to improve their skills.
- Objective CED 3 – C** Workers residing in Sunland Park have opportunities to work in Sunland Park.

**CE3 Implementation Strategy 3.1:** Partner with local schools and other organizations to develop and promote workforce development programs. Examples include, Workforce Solutions <https://www.dws.state.nm.us/>, DACC Workforce Development, <https://dacc.nmsu.edu/ctp/>, or the Bridge of Southern New Mexico, <http://thebridgeofsnm.org/>.

**CE3 Implementation Strategy 3.2:** Offer and encourage participation in English as a second language programs for non-English speaking residents.

**CE3 Implementation Strategy 3.3:** Encourage local businesses to sponsor student interns and apprentices.

**CE3 Implementation Strategy 3.4:** When major infrastructure projects are planned, organize job fairs to connect local workers with available jobs.

**CE3 Implementation Strategy 3.5:** Design special community events to celebrate worker skill improvements such as the GED, graduation, certifications, and promotions.

**Community and Economic Development (CED) Goal 4 | Businesses and activities make Sunland Park a destination for regional residents, positioning Sunland Park to have immediate benefits when the new Port of Entry is opened.**

- Objective CED 4 – A** Develop a downtown destination district focusing first on things that attract and serve visitors from the region (El Paso, Las Cruces, etc.). For example food, entertainment, specialized retail to

# 7

## Economic Development



complement the presence of the casino and amusement park plus special events as mentioned under goal ED-2.

**Objective CED – B** Be prepared to take advantage of opportunities related to the future port of entry and planned infrastructure changes.

**CED 4 Implementation Strategy 4.1:** Encourage (perhaps via the new Chamber of Commerce) local entrepreneurs to develop businesses associated with the downtown destination district.

**CED 4 Implementation Strategy 4.2:** Encourage (perhaps via the new Chamber of Commerce) existing businesses in the downtown area to take a broader view of their possible market and adjust their business practices to attract new customers from the region.

**CED 4 Implementation Strategy 4.3:** Strategically zone the downtown destination district based on the future port of entry location and traffic flow changes.

**CED 4 Implementation Strategy 4.4:** Create an attractive corridor between the proposed port of entry and Sunland Park’s destination district.

**Community and Economic Development (CED) Goal 5 | Sunland Park benefits from continuing development of the existing Santa Teresa Port of Entry and intermodal facility.**

**Objective 5 CED – A** New businesses/facilities tied to Santa Teresa activities locate in the City of Sunland Park.

**CED 5 Implementation Strategy 5.1:** Strategically zone for industrial property/buildings (and access) along major corridors between Sunland Park and the highway system.

**CED 5 Implementation Strategy 5.2:** Encourage entrepreneurship within Sunland Park in sectors related to Santa Teresa port of entry and industrial activities (trucking, equipment repairs, construction, maintenance, etc).

**Community and Economic Development (CED) Goal 6 | Residents of Sunland Park are interested in and participate in community and economic development activities.**

**Objective 6 CED – A** Develop and engage community organizations.

**Objective 6 CED – B** Develop local leaders.

# 7

## Economic Development



**CED 6 Implementation Strategy 6.1:** Promote the development of organizations such as, Community Clubs, Scouts, civic clubs, young entrepreneurs, etc.

**CED 6 Implementation Strategy 6.2:** Provide opportunities for short-term (limited commitment) leadership by community members (for example planning community events or organizing clean up days). Make sure leaders are publically recognized and encouraged to continue in leadership.

**CED 6 Implementation Strategy 6.3:** Engage existing community, faith, educational, and other organizations in the community/economic development efforts. Ask for both leadership and participation. Make sure efforts are publically recognized.

### 7.2.3 | Cost of Development Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies

Successful community and economic development will bring benefits to existing residents and businesses, as well as new residents and businesses. Fairness dictates that new businesses/developments/residents pay their fair share of the costs of additional public services needed to support new development. The goals, objectives, and strategies aim to guide the allocation of the public cost of development across beneficiaries.

**Cost of Development (C) Goal 1 | Development and redevelopment projects produce as much – if not more – benefit to the community than the incurred infrastructure costs.**

- Objective C 1 – A**      Develop and implement a rational process for assessing impact fees.
- Objective C 1 – B**      Assure developers and the general public understand the need for impact fees and how the fees are determined.
- Objective C 1 – C**      Those benefiting from development projects pay a fair share of the costs.
- Objective C 1 – D**      Develop a transparent plan for assessing and choosing alternative development projects.

**C 2 Implementation Strategy 1.1:** Determine realistic estimates of the public costs associated with development projects and impose appropriate impact fees.

# 7

## Economic Development



**C 2 Implementation Strategy 1.2:** Map project impacts to impact fees assessed. Make this information available to the public.

**C 2 Implementation Strategy 1.3:** Provide literature that informs both developers and the public of rationale behind impact and permitting fees.

**C 2 Implementation Strategy 1.4:** Assure that discussions/negotiations regarding impact fees adhere to the Open Meetings Act.

**Cost of Development (C) Goal 2 | Funding is available to support viable and promising economic development projects.**

**C 2 Implementation Strategy 2.1:** Work with local business people, bankers, and civic-minded residents to develop a revolving loan fund to assist small local businesses as they adapt to the CIP and seek to improve their businesses.

**C 2 Implementation Strategy 2.2:** Develop a local community investment group to make strategic investments that will aid in Sunland Park's development.

**C 2 Implementation Strategy 2.3:** Develop a Sunland Park economic development organization, possibly a

public/private partnership to focus specifically on Sunland Park's development issues and seek funding to support local efforts. Alternatively, or as a near-term strategy, become more engaged with a regional economic development organization such as Messila Valley Economic Development Alliance, the Border Industrial Association, the Borderplex Alliance, or Region Five of the New Mexico Economic Development Department.

**C 2 Implementation Strategy 2.4:** Encourage formalization of businesses to enable greater access to banking and financial resources.



8

natural resources

# 8

## Natural Resources



**Sunland Park prioritizes open space, air and water quality, preservation of natural habitat, and resource protection to create a truly unique city on the border.**

### 8.0 | Natural Resources

Natural resources provide Sunland Park residents with recreational opportunities and benefits through economic development and tourism. Sunland Park features a number of outstanding natural features, including the Rio Grande River, Mt. Cristo Rey, and the Mesa located to the west of the city. A network of arroyos add a distinctive feature to the City's landscape and provide Sunland Park the opportunity to provide a network of open space. Although natural features can present barriers to development, if properly leveraged, they can result in net benefits to the City's quality of life and economic prosperity.

This section discusses Sunland Park's natural resources in the following subsections:

- Existing recreational amenities (including parks & open space);
- Existing environment (vegetation & floodplain/floodway);
- Issues & opportunities;
- Recommendations (including proposed recreational facilities); and
- Goals, objectives, and implementation strategies.

### 8.1 | Existing Recreational Amenities

Public access to open space, parks, and trails within proximity to where people live, work, or attend school is vital to a healthy community. The majority of parks and open spaces within the City consist of small neighborhood pocket parks.





# 8

## Natural Resources



Table 8-1 identifies the existing parks within Sunland Park, the amount of acreage, existing ownership, district, and ID number. Currently, Sunland Park has 49.67 acres of parkland, which is approximately 0.6% of the entire acreage of the municipal boundaries. The City of Sunland Park owns 28.74 acres while the rest is primarily owned by the homeowners association (HOA). The existing parks from Table 8-1 are illustrated in Figure 8-1, which also identifies the school parks.



Four categories of parkland is represented in Sunland Park, which are detailed in Table 8-1.

- Pocket Park: A small park intended to serve a concentrated population within walking distance (¼ mile vicinity) and is typically less than half an acre in size. Design and programming of pocket parks varies by location; however, usually they are privately-owned and maintained by a HOA.
- Neighborhood Park: Slightly bigger than a pocket park, a neighborhood park serves the general public within a ½ mile vicinity. A neighborhood park can range between 1-15 acres in size and generally includes recreational activities such as field games, playgrounds, picnicking, benches, shelters, etc.
- Community Park: A community park serves several neighborhoods within a 1-2 mile radius and is generally greater than 10 acres in size. Often times, a community park includes athletic complexes and/or swimming pools.
- Regional Park: A regional park draws people from the entire region for various activities/facilities. The regional park varies in size but is often greater than 25 acres.

# 8

## Natural Resources



**Table 8-1 | Park Inventory**

Name	Address	Acres	Ownership	District	ID#
105 Cedar Court	105 Cedar Court	0.88	City	2	19
Edgemont	5812 Edinburgh	0.34	HOA	6	5
Edgemont Park	Edgemont between Ireland Dr. & Wales Dr.	0.37	HOA	6	6
Haciendas San Gabriel	San Gabriel	0.16	Pending	2	-
Maria Elena Park	101 Meadow Vista Blvd.	2.57	City	4	21
Mason Farms	Tierra Vista & Alden	1.93	City	6	11
Mason Farms	6030 Lourdes	3.61	City	6	9
Mender Park	Anapra 139 Calle Carrocel	1.80	City	5	24
Sports Complex	4700 McNutt Rd.	17.95	City	6	17
The Grove	Parkway North Entrance	0.04	HOA	6	12
The Grove	Parkway North Entrance	0.06	HOA	6	13
The Grove	Lot P1 and P2	0.57	HOA	6	14
The Grove	Lot P5	1.46	HOA	6	15
The Grove	Lot P6	1.78	HOA	6	16
The Grove	P3 & P4	2.24	HOA	6	17
Tuscan Ridge Villas	Naranjo road	0.33	HOA	6	8
Valencia Hills/Park	Russell (Roundabout) Cooper Hill & Ginger Park	2.33	HOA	6	2
Valencia Park Phase 2 & 3	Laurel Park St. between Bronze Hill & Maple Park	1.46	HOA	6	1
Villa Valencia Phase 1 & 2	Megan St. between Irene St. & Elizabeth St.	0.97	HOA	6	3
Villa Valencia Phase 3	Megan St. between Aplewood St. & Russell Blvd.	0.99	HOA	6	4
YMCA	Mason Farms	7.83	YMCA	6	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>49.67</b>			



# 8

## Natural Resources



**Rio Grande River:** The Rio Grande is a defining feature of Sunland Park. The river borders the city on the east providing a physical barrier between Sunland Park, NM and El Paso, TX. Currently, a 1.3 mile multi-use path exists on the west bank of the River near Sunland Park Drive. Numerous arroyos exist throughout Sunland Park that flow into the Rio Grande. A regional Riverpark and Trail System is being constructed by the county of El Paso, TX and a potential 500-mile Rio Grande Trail is being studied by the State of New Mexico.



**Mt. Cristo Rey:** Mt. Cristo Rey is another defining feature of Sunland Park's landscape and identity. Located on the south side of Sunland Park, Mt. Cristo Rey, a 4,675-foot mountain, provides the physical border between New Mexico and Mexico. It is a major landmark in the El Paso region, thanks in part to a 29-foot stone cross built in 1939 at the top of the mountain, which is visible from much of the surrounding area and has made the site a pilgrimage destination for Catholics. Once a year, people are allowed to gather at the foot of the statue.



**The Mesa:** Located west of the railroad tracks is an undeveloped elevated area of land with steep slopes. The Mesa is a popular area for recreation using off-highway vehicles; however, is not currently located within Sunland Park's city limits.

# 8

## Natural Resources



**Dinosaur Tracks:** Nearly 200 acres of accessible dinosaur tracks exist near the northern base of the Mt. Cristo Rey mountain. Nature trails have been recently developed for the dinosaur tracks, and signs are being constructed and installed by volunteers from UTEP Geological Sciences. The tracks are currently unprotected from the public and can be seen anytime. The tracks are currently unprotected from the public and thus can be seen anytime. However, this also leads to the possibility of accidental/non-accidental vandalism to the sites.

### 8.2 | Existing Environment

#### 8.2.1 | Floodplain/Floodway

Waterways, including streams, rivers and creeks, provide a natural system for stormwater collection. The Rio Grande River is the largest waterway traveling through Sunland Park. The Rio Grande adequately accommodates most storm events, helping prevent natural stormwater collection or flooding within the City (Figure 8-2). Some parts of the City, however, do experience significant localized flooding and have been the focus of ongoing flood mitigation efforts. These areas include Anapra and Tierra Madre. Flood mitigation and drainage infrastructure efforts are examined in greater detail in Chapter 6, “Community Facilities and Infrastructure.”

Figure 8-3 illustrates areas that fall within the 100-year floodplain. Floodplains are the low-lying areas of land where floodwater periodically spreads when a river or stream overtops its banks. Soils absorb water during the wet season,

**Figure 8-2 | Rio Grande**



# 8

## Natural Resources



then slowly release moisture to plants and into the stream. Land around bodies of water takes on excess water in times of flood and when managed wisely, can help to reduce the risk of damage when storms overwhelm the banks. Floodplains play a big role in the sustainability of a city because they provide clean water, habitats, flood storage, groundwater recharge, farming, and culture. Therefore, it is important to consider existing flows and proper redirection of the flows for new development to ensure that minimal flooding will occur. Floodplains are categorized into the following flood hazard zones:

- Zone A, AE, and AH: Flood insurance rate zones corresponding to the 100-year floodplain. Areas within Zone A require mandatory flood insurance. Areas within Zone AE have requirements for flood insurance. And areas within Zone AO have flood depths of 1 to 3 feet.
- Zone X: The flood insurance rate zone for areas outside of the 100-year floodplain.
- 500-Year Floodplain: Boundary of the flood that has a 0.2% chance of being met in any given year.

While a floodway is the actual channel of the river that is required to efficiently carry flood water, a floodplain is the area surrounding the river that has or may be covered by the 100-year flood. Areas within the floodway should not allow construction or development activities, while areas that fall within the 100-year floodplain should have limited development that can be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. When waterways do not have enough capacity within the floodway to move surface stormwater, flooding will occur within the floodplain. In these situations, engineering solutions are needed to improve the movement of stormwater and reduce the potential for flooding.

Portions of the study area are within the 100-year floodplain, which indicates a 1% chance that the City would experience flooding every year (Figure 8-3). The majority of the 100-year floodplain surrounds the Rio Grande River and undeveloped land within Sunland Park; however, this does not guarantee that the rest of Sunland Park would not see flooding in times of heavy rainfall. Since the entire City could potentially experience flooding, it is imperative to have proper storm drainage with the capability to redirect stormwater, while also insuring streams, rivers, and creeks are maintained, clean, and functional for the prevention of flooding.

In 2006, the City experienced severe monsoon flooding causing many residents in Anapra, Tierra Madre, and other areas to temporarily evacuate from their homes. The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) awarded two

# 8

## Natural Resources



construction contracts for rehabilitation of the Rio Grande Flood Control Project in El Paso, Texas and Doña Ana County, New Mexico funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, as a result of the 2006 flooding. Today, the IBWC is unable to certify any new levee work that removes the old FEMA 100-year floodplain outside the levees because of unresolved interior drainage investigation.

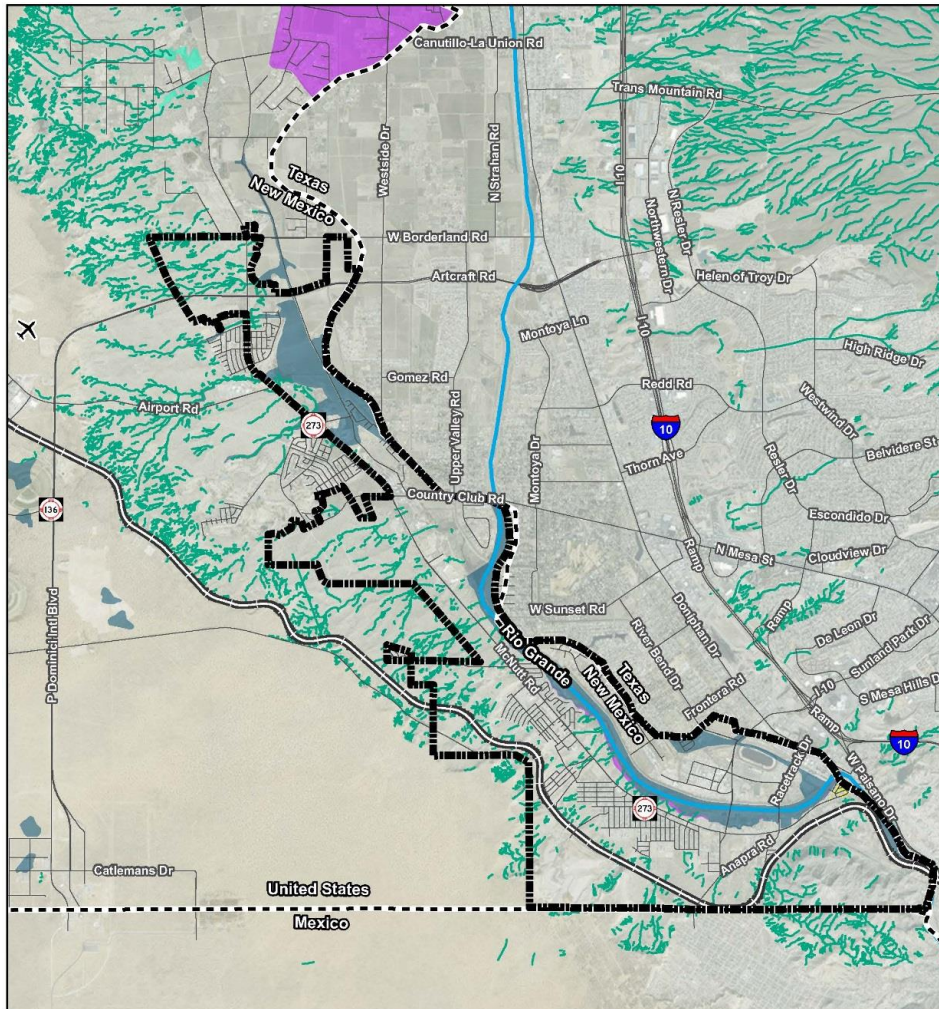
Figure 8-3 also displays arroyos. Arroyos, also called a wash, is a dry creek bed that temporarily fills and flows after rainfall. There are no floodways within City limits.

# 8

## Natural Resources



Figure 8-3 | Floodplain/Floodway in Sunland Park



### Floodplain

**Legend**

- Sunland Park Incorporated City Limits
- State/US Boundary
- Road
- Railroad
- Rio Grande
- Doña Ana County At Santa Teresa Airport
- Arroyos

**Flood Hazard Zones**

- Zone AH
- Zone AE
- Zone A
- 500 Year Floodplain





# 8

## Natural Resources



### 8.2.2 | Hazardous Mitigation Areas

In 2013, Doña Ana County conducted an All Hazard Mitigation Plan with the City of Anthony, City of Las Cruces, Elephant Butte Irrigation District, Village of Hatch, Town of Mesilla, New Mexico State University, and the City of Sunland Park. The All Hazard Mitigation Plan ensures eligibility for non-emergency, federal hazard mitigation grants for each of the participating jurisdictions.

Table 8-1 summarizes the priority hazards for each jurisdiction in the All Hazard Mitigation Plan. Sunland Park received a low priority mitigation for extreme cold and wildfire and received an identification for dam failure, drought, flooding, and severe wind. According to the plan the probability for dam failure was moderate. The plan states, “The Rio Grande floodplain area is the only part of the City that is located within the Caballo Dam failure inundation limits. The City’s municipal buildings and wastewater treatment plant are located within the dam failure hazard area, as well as approximately 17% of residential structures. Given the low probability of a failure event at Elephant Butte or Caballo Dams, and the City’s location being almost 90 river miles downstream of Caballo Dam, the vulnerability is considered to be only moderate.” Similarly for flooding, the plan states that flooding is likely but severity is limited. The area north of Country Club Road and west of NM

260 within Sunland Park is a high hazard flood area. The Plan states that, “Any development of this area should address the floodplain issues and be in compliance with the NFIP regulations and local floodplain ordinance.” The probability for drought and severe wind related issues in the City of Sunland Park was identified as likely, but limited.

**Table 8-2 | Mitigation Priority Hazards**

<b>Table 3-17: Summary of mitigation priority hazards for each participating jurisdiction</b>						
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Dam Failure</b>	<b>Drought</b>	<b>Extreme Cold</b>	<b>Flooding</b>	<b>Severe Wind</b>	<b>Wildfire</b>
Unincorporated Doña Ana County	M	M	M	M	M	M
Anthony	M	M	L	M	M	L
EBID	M	M	NH	M	NH	NH
Hatch	M	M	L	M	M	L
Las Cruces	M	M	M	M	M	M
Mesilla	M	M	M	M	M	M
NMSU	M	M	M	M	M	M
Sunland Park	M	M	L	M	M	L

M – Mitigation A/Ps will be identified  
 L – Mitigation A/Ps will be identified but given a low priority  
 NH – Nuisance hazard - no mitigation is warranted

Source: All Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2013

### 8.3 | Issues & Opportunities

From a recreational perspective, Sunland Park has a lot of untapped potential. For the most part, formal policies that take advantage of or conserve Sunland Park's natural resources have not been adopted at the municipal level.

- The lack of park space throughout the City of Sunland Park.
- The City encompasses the Rio Grande, which provides an opportunity to create pedestrian and bicycle friendly trails, additional trailheads, and river-walks.
- Mt. Cristo Rey is a regional tourist attractor that is underutilized. While safety is an immediate concern due to the proximity of Mt. Cristo Rey to the border, a strategic approach could enhance the area into a year-round tourism attraction.
- Located near Mt. Cristo Rey are unprotected dinosaur tracks that local university archeology departments have been studying for years. These tracks could become a tourism destination.
- The Mesa, which is currently undeveloped could be utilized for off-roading vehicles - attracting users from the entire region.
- Due to the proximity to the Rio Grande and flooding issues, the Anapra area could be repurposed into a recreational amenity.

#### 8.3.1 | Rio Grande

Developing the Rio Grande into a regional park that provides a recreational attraction for the region was supported during the Sunland Park 2040 plan process. Previous plans have made similar proposals, and strides have been made towards implementing recreational facilities along the Sunland Park riverfront. Ongoing initiatives for projects along the river provide Sunland Park excellent opportunities for not only new recreational facilities, but major economic development and civic improvements. Existing initiatives include a regional Riverpark and Trail System that was built by the County of El Paso and a potential 500-mile Rio Grande Trail being studied by the State of New Mexico.

##### Regional Riverpark and Trail System

On the El Paso side, a 30-mile recreational is being built along the Rio Grande. Currently the trail exists near the New Mexico-Texas border at Vinton, TX, down to the New Mexico border at Sunland Park, just north of Country Club Road. The trail will continue through central El Paso, and east to the El Paso city limits at Socorro, TX. Maintaining the trail's alignment close to the Rio Grande will require extending the trail through Sunland Park. The City and County of El Paso have expressed interest in integrating Sunland Park into the Riverpark and Trail System. Currently, there is a 4-mile long gap between the western end of the Sunland Park riverfront

# 8

## Natural Resources



trail and the present end of the Riverpark Trail, and they are located on opposite banks of the river. Although the precise alignment of the trail through Sunland Park has yet to be determined – issues and opportunities have been identified in Figure 8-4. By closing the gap in the Riverpark and Trail System, Sunland Park would become a co-host to a major regional amenity.

### **500-Mile Rio Grande Trail**

Early planning is underway in New Mexico for a statewide recreational trail following the entire length of the Rio Grande through the state. The exact alignment of the trail is still unknown but it is possible that any riverfront trail built within Sunland Park would be integrated into this project, making it an even larger draw for visitors and tourists. The trail is being promoted as a major boon to communities along its path, potentially attracting tourism dollars, boosting employment, and improving health outcomes for residents. A planning process led by New Mexico State Parks is currently underway.

### **Camino Real de Tierra Adentro**

The El Paso area lies along the original route used by the Spanish in the 1500's to settle and trade in the region. The Camino extended almost 1,500 miles from the colonial capital of Mexico City north to Santa Fe, NM. Today, the route of the Camino within the United States is a National Historic

Trail administered by the National Park Service. For the most part, the original road does not exist. In the El Paso area, the National Historic Trail lies on the Texas side, except for where the Camino crosses into Mexico. There, the Trail crosses the international border within Sunland Park, about a mile east of the peak of Mount Cristo Rey.

Little has been done in the El Paso region to recognize the Camino. In the first concerted effort to highlight the trail locally, the City of El Paso recently committed to a signage program that would indicate the route of the former trail along modern roads.

A 2016 report on visitor spending at national parks showed that visitors to the Chamizal National Memorial – located about 5 miles from Sunland Park near Downtown El Paso – generated over \$10 million in economic output and supported 142 jobs in nearby communities during 2016. Nationally, it is estimated that \$10 are generated for every dollar invested in national parks. Today, the Camino Real is not a physical park but the trail's historic significance represents an untapped opportunity for Sunland Park.

### **Previous Rio Grande Recommendations in Sunland Park**

The *2004 Sunland Park Master Plan* proposed a “riverwalk” along both sides of the Rio Grande through the city. The trail was proposed to create green/open space and to provide a facility for physical activity and recreation for residents. One

# 8

## Natural Resources



mile of the trail was extended on the north bank of the river in 2005, to the west of Sunland Park Drive and Racetrack Road. The park includes a trail as well as two basketball courts.

Similarly, making the river a regional destination is touched upon in the *2007 Downtown-McNutt Plan*. The 2007 Plan makes restoration and development of the river corridor one of its key initiatives. The 2007 proposal intended the Rio Grande to act as a focal point for civic facilities, key public spaces, and retail & entertainment development.

### 8.3.2 | Mount Cristo Rey

Mt. Cristo Rey is already a regional attraction. The 29-foot tall cross at the summit is a popular pilgrimage site for Catholics. Meanwhile, the mountain's terrain, trails, and views make it a popular spot for hikers, with trails providing a four-mile round-trip along the northern side of the mountain. Dinosaur tracks dating back as far as 97 million years ago are found along the north side of the mountain and attract researchers and visitors alike.

Unfortunately, the mountain's rough terrain and border location make it difficult to secure. Reports of visitors being robbed and assaulted are not uncommon, and visitors are advised to visit only during specific times of the year – such as during the annual pilgrimage in October – when many people are around or security is present.

Mount Cristo Rey is the center of several proposals related to developing recreational or educational facilities. The mountain has been mentioned as a possible major trailhead for the Rio Grande Trail. A broad proposal has been developed for a science center or museum on the site. Currently, a local nonprofit, Insights El Paso Science Center, owns a 200-acre site on the north side of mountain that contains the aforementioned dinosaur tracks. Currently, the group maintains the area for visitors and works to preserve the fossils.

### 8.3.3 | The Mesa

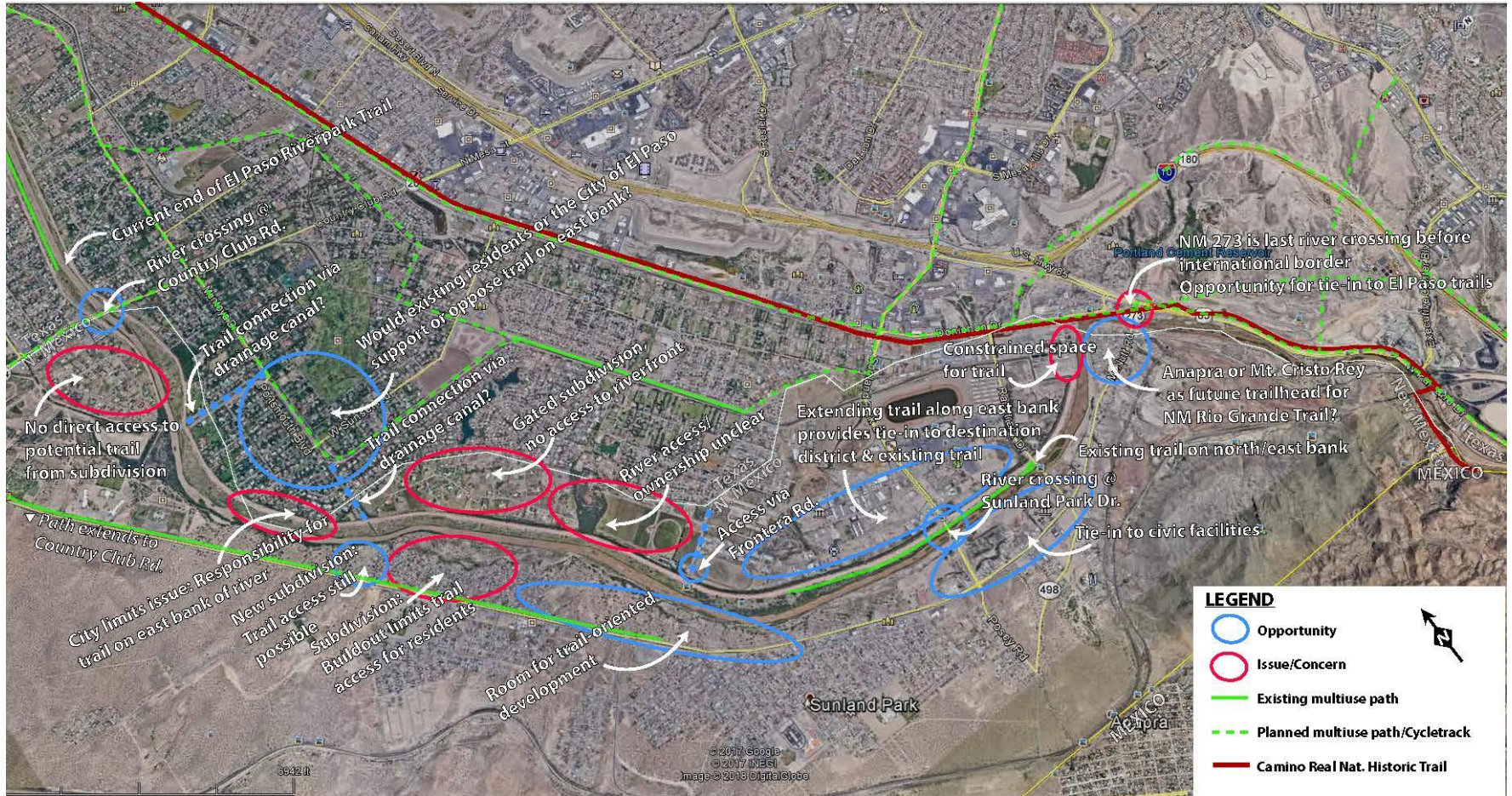
The Mesa west of the city limits is a popular area for off-highway vehicles (OHVs), including all-terrain vehicles and dirt bikes. Today, the closest designated public OHV area is Aden Hills, 20 miles southwest of Las Cruces on Bureau of Land Management acreage. Constructing a formal OHV area along the Mesa with designated paths and public infrastructure such as restrooms and parking, could make the area a regional draw for OHV enthusiasts. Furthermore, OHV parks are a productive use for land that is difficult to develop – consequently, these parks are often an effective way to conserve the natural landscape.

# 8

## Natural Resources



Figure 8-4 | Issues and Opportunities for Extending Riverfront Trail in Sunland Park



### 8.3.4 | Anapra Area

In southern Sunland Park, the existing community of Anapra has distinct challenges and opportunities. This community was once a thriving district where many would come to shop, eat and even view concerts and shows. Now, Anapra is showing signs of disinvestment and is in constant threat of flooding as it lies in the floodplain of the Rio Grande and below the Rio Grande water table. There has been some discussion about the potential cost of infrastructure improvements being so staggering for this area that redevelopment may not be the most appropriate solution for this area. Another potential solution could be to turn the flood-prone area into a wetland, creating a park for recreational use and a gateway to Mt. Cristo Rey.

### 8.4 | Proposed Recreational Amenities

Sunland Park currently has approximately 49.67 acres of parkland. When calculating the ratio of park acreage per 1,000 residents, it is important to note the 2016 population of Sunland Park is 16,544 (US Census Bureau). Today, Sunland Park has 3 acres per 1,000 residents<sup>11</sup>. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) developed a guide for parks, recreation, and open space to help guide local governments. For a community the size of Sunland Park, the NRPA recommends 9.6 acres per 1,000 residents, which means that Sunland Park is currently at a deficit of 221 acres of parkland and open space. Table 8-2 details four categories of parkland (pocket park, neighborhood park, community park, and regional park), the existing acreage in Sunland Park for each category, the NRPA acreage recommendation for each type, the 2016 deficit, and the 2040 need<sup>12</sup>.

The City has a limited amount of parkland for the current and projected population. As Sunland Park continues to grow, the need to have more significant open space becomes imperative; therefore, the City has a need to establish a responsible organization or department for the community and/or broader area to acquire, operate, and maintain public open space. A feasibility study should be conducted in order to adequately determine the current and future needs for this entity.

---

<sup>11</sup> Calculated using the equation: Total Park Acreage ÷ (Population ÷ 1,000)

<sup>12</sup>The 2040 need was based on the 2040 population projection of 32,000 people in Sunland Park.

Table 8-2 | NRPA Guidelines for Park Types

Park Type	NRPA Standard Park Acreage per 1,000 Residents	Existing NRPA Acreage Goal	Existing Acreage	2040 Projected Park Acreage	2040 Land Use Plan Park Acreage
Pocket Park	0.25-0.5	4.1-8.3	4.7	8-16	-
Neighborhood Park	1-2	16.5-33	19.19	32-64	262
Community Park	5-8	74.5-124.1	7.83	160-256	578
Regional	10+	147.2+	17.95	320+	4,168
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>242.3-312.6+</b>	<b>49.67</b>	<b>520-656</b>	<b>5,008</b>

*Calculations based on 2016 population of 16,544 residents and a 2040 population projection of 32,000.*

### Pocket Parks

A pocket park is important for creating vibrant, healthy communities. Pocket parks should be strategically situated along the local and regional trail network to connect residents to desirable recreational areas. Additionally, these parks should primarily serve residents living within “walking distance,” or about a quarter-mile, from the park. These parks should be easily accessible by pedestrians and centrally located within a neighborhood or near existing schools or civic facilities. The park may feature play structures, picnic shelters, or short walking trails.

Sunland Park should require one acre of park space for every 100 dwelling units in new residential subdivisions. The city should also convert existing city-owned drainage ponds into parks, including ponds within existing neighborhoods. In some cases, open space and drainage ponds can be contributed to the total parkland requirement. Parks within Sunland Park should be required to be located within walking distance of residences, and certain equipment, such as play structures, should be included on the site. This recommendation mirrors the City of El Paso, which currently requires dedication of park space in new residential subdivisions. By 2040, Sunland Park should have approximately 8 to 16 acres of pocket parks throughout the city creating a vibrant and healthy place to live.

# 8

## Natural Resources



### Neighborhood Parks

By 2040, Sunland Park should have approximately 32 to 64 acres of neighborhood parks throughout the city creating a vibrant and healthy place to live. In order to meet this goal, the city should require one acre of parkland per 100 dwelling units in new residential subdivisions. The City of Sunland Park should recommend parks or plazas (community gathering spaces) to be constructed at the center of new neighborhoods, creating a unifying civic space (Figure 8-5). These neighborhood-scale spaces can become components of a citywide landscape network that would include natural landscapes & trails, streetscapes, and plazas, squares, & parks. The City should:

- Adopt new subdivision standards that require a neighborhood park to be developed in new subdivisions, based on number of dwelling units.
- Ensure there is dedicated funding for the maintenance of new neighborhood parks, including maintenance of equipment and landscaping.
- Ensure safe pedestrian access – especially for young children – to its neighborhood parks, with sidewalks, signage, and crosswalks as needed.

### Community Parks

Sunland Park currently has a deficit of community park space. By 2040, the City should have approximately 160-256 acres of community park space. In order to achieve this goal, the City needs to incentivize community recreational facilities to locate within the City. This could include swimming, tennis, fitness centers, rock-climbing, trails, and public park space. These recreational amenities should be strategically situated along the bicycle and pedestrian network for multimodal access.



# 8

## Natural Resources



**Figure 8-5 | Conceptual Neighborhood Park in Anapra**



*Source: 2007 Downtown-McNutt Plan: "View of the Anapra neighborhood central park and community center with surrounding residences, following the recommended upgrades of the Master Plan."*

### 8.4.1 | Sunland Park Riverfront and Rio Grande Trail

The City of Sunland Park can make the most of the Rio Grande's potential, both with improvements within the city limits and leadership on wider initiatives beyond its borders. To further capitalize on the potential of the Rio Grande, the City of Sunland Park should work to extend and enhance the existing riverfront trail and park space. Recommendations include:

- Creating a 6.3 mile Riverpark Trail that connects the existing 1.3 mile trail with the southern end of the El Paso Riverpark trail - located just north of Country Club Road on the west bank - and provide connections to El Paso, TX at the Anapra Bridge. The trail alignment should come from the current planning efforts. (Figures 8-6 and 8-7)
- Establish the Rio Grande Valley as a state park.
- Enhancing bicycle-pedestrian connections across existing river bridges at Sunland Park Drive, Racetrack Drive, and Anapra Road. This will enhance connectivity to the trail from both New Mexico and Texas.
- Encouraging attractive public spaces and orienting development towards the river, outside of the floodplain.
- Implementing pedestrian elements such as a boardwalk path (taking trail users to the river's edge), performance or gathering spaces such as an amphitheater, lighting, wayfinding, benches, art installations, and historical markers.

Figure 8-6 | Rio Grande Trail Examples



# 8

## Natural Resources



In order to help establish the Rio Grande as a regional amenity, it is imperative to link improvements in Sunland Park with initiatives in surrounding communities and at the state level. The City of Sunland Park should become engaged with planning and implementation of regional and state initiatives that seek to capitalize on the Rio Grande’s recreational, tourism, and economic development potential. These include the El Paso Riverpark and Trail System led by the County of El Paso, and the Rio Grande Trail envisioned by the State of New Mexico.

The City should support the completion of the Riverpark Trail System and the Rio Grande Trail within the city limits. The scale of these projects creates a major attraction for visitors across the region, state, and nation. The City should advocate for articulation of high-quality designs for future facilities and for full implementation of these projects.

The creation of a major recreational facility can generate opportunities for funding, marketing, and development. Other recreation and economic development initiatives in Sunland Park should be linked to those focused on the Rio Grande. These include the development of the Destination District Drive (Figure 8-8), future of the Anapra area, Mt. Cristo Rey, and the Sunland Park POE.

**Figure 8-7 | Rio Grande Trail Examples**



**Figure 8-8 | Oklahoma Riverwalk Example**



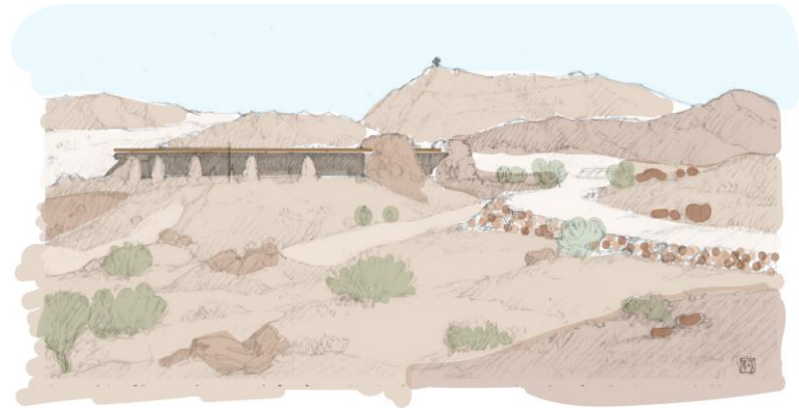
### 8.4.2 | Mt. Cristo Rey Regional Park

Today, security issues limit the community’s ability to access the mountain year-round, but Mt. Cristo Rey offers great potential as a site for recreational, civic, educational facilities. The City of Sunland Park should pursue transforming the mountain into a regional park. In order to do so the City should convene the Roman Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces, Insights El Paso, Mount Cristo Rey Restoration Committee, Rio Grande Trail Commission, and the Border Patrol to explore methods of preserving and enhancing the mountain.

Wayfinding and signage elements should be incorporated throughout the Mt. Cristo Rey area, especially the entrance. The future Rio Grande Trail and Sunland Park POE should have signage connecting to Mt. Cristo Rey. Earlier proposals called for new facilities on Mt. Cristo Rey to better capitalize on the peak’s natural features, while attracting new resources to preserve existing attractions on the mountain (Figure 8-9). The City of Sunland Park should engage stakeholders of Mt. Cristo Rey to further develop and implement a science center or museum related to the dinosaur tracks and an amphitheater performance space on the mountain. The State Parks Division of New Mexico’s Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department intends to facilitate discussions about the dinosaur tracks property, while also involving key stakeholders to the discussion such

as the Roman Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces, which owns Mt. Cristo Rey.

### Figure 8-9 | Mt. Cristo Rey Science Center/Museum Recommendation

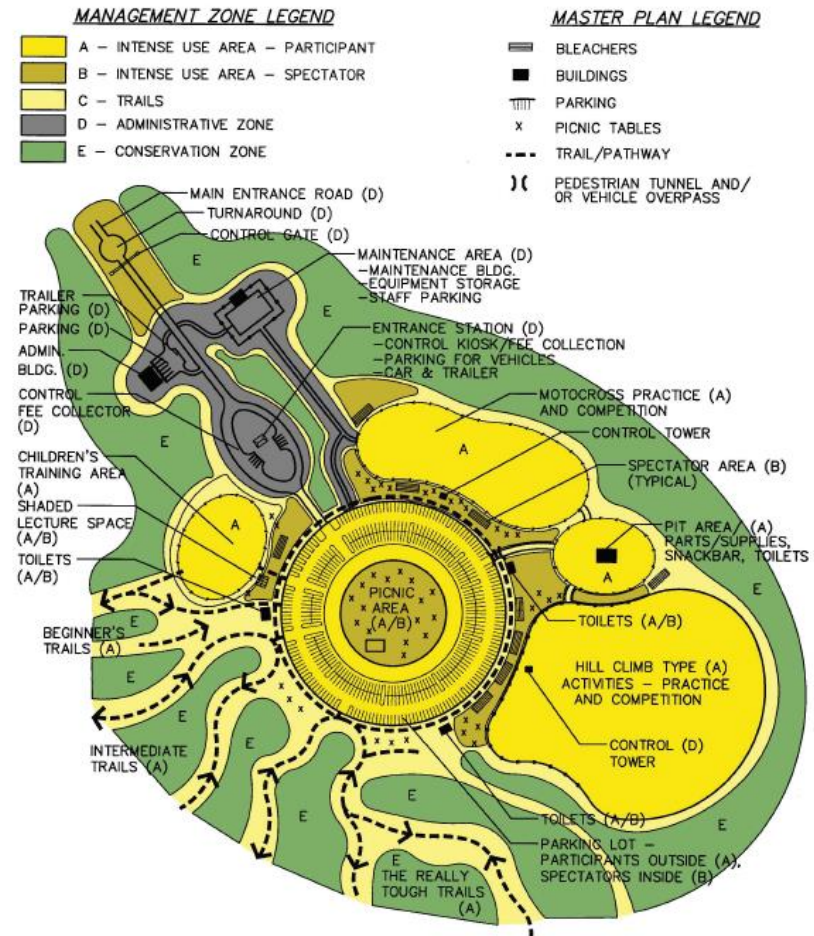


*Source: Downtown McNutt Plan: “Conceptual view of the proposed museum at the foot of Mount Cristo Rey, shown as stone construction native to the region. Investments in civic spaces such as museums, libraries, and performance spaces create long-term destinations that add to the overall character of the city.”*

### 8.4.3 | Mesa Regional Recreation Destination

With few quality off-roading areas in the El Paso region, Sunland Park has an opportunity to create a regional destination for the activity. The area is not currently located within Sunland Park’s city limits but is identified in the Future Land Use plan future growth area. The City should engage the Sunland Park residents and other potential stakeholders and assess the demand for and feasibility of an off-highway vehicles (OHV) park on the Mesa. The issues that should be considered include: resident support for creation of a park, costs of annexation or purchase of property, potential demand among residents of greater El Paso region, long-term ownership, maintenance, or operations of park. If the engagement process reveals that the OHV park is feasible, a formal market study and park design process should be undertaken.

**Figure 8-10 | OHV Park Site Layout Example**



Source: Park Guidelines for OHVs, 2002, National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council

#### 8.4.4 | Environment

##### Floodplain/Floodway

A Drainage Master Plan for the City is strongly recommended. This plan will include recommendations for improving flood mitigation infrastructure, such as levees. The plan may also recommend that certain flood zones be converted to or maintained as open space or recreational areas, limiting the potential property damage to these area were they to be developed.

##### Hazardous Mitigation

The Doña Ana County All Hazard Mitigation Plan ensures eligibility for non-emergency, federal hazard mitigation grants within Sunland Park. The Plan was completed in 2013 and is required to be updated every five years. Identified in the 2013 Plan were mitigation actions/projects specific to Sunland Park (Table 8-3). An update on the progress of these goals have been identified to determine recommendations specific to Sunland Park. The All Hazard Mitigation Plan is currently in the process of being updated and Sunland Park met all the deadlines to move forward in the planning process.

**Table 8-3 | Mitigation Actions/Projects Identified by Sunland Park**

Name	Hazard(s) Mitigated	Description	Anticipated Completion	Progress Update 2018
Relocation of City Hall	Dam Failure, Flood	Locate, design, and construct a new city hall to remove from high risk dam failure and flood limits	December 2017	Land intended for relocation was not deeded to the City. No action has taken place at this time.
County-Wide Flood Warning and Response System	Flood, Dam Failure	Participate with Doña Ana County Flood Commission to develop a countywide Flood Warning and Response System, by providing localized feedback regarding potential locations for local gages and targeted populations to receive warnings.	Annually	A weather station has been added to the Santa Teresa Fire Station and in La Union, which can alert Sunland Park residents of an event.
Drought Related Public Education and Outreach	Drought	Participate with Doña Ana County to conduct a countywide public education campaign to raise awareness of drought conditions and provide recommendations for ways to conserve water. Public	Annually	South-Central New Mexico Stormwater Management Coalition is currently seeking grant funds from the US Bureau of

# 8

## Natural Resources



		contact may be accomplished through website notices, utility bill inserts, flyers and pamphlets.		Reclamation in order to put together a county wide drought plan.
Drought Resistant Landscape Regulation	Drought	Encourage and/or mandate the use of drought resistant landscaping, as appropriate, through ordinance development and/or enforcement.	Ongoing as needed	Zoning ordinance update includes landscaping standards.
Building Code Review, Update and/or Adoption	Flood, Extreme Cold, Severe Wind	Assess and review existing building codes, and implement necessary updates as needed to maintain current standards and compliance with State Law requirements	Annually	The City of Sunland Park follows the International Building Codes (IBC)/International Code Council (ICC) 2015
Assist Doña Ana County to Improve Emergency Communications County-wide.	Dam Failure, Extreme Cold, Flood, Severe Wind, Wildfire	Work in cooperation with Doña Ana County to improve county-wide emergency communications and hazard event warning capacity. Provide assistance with identifying community specific resources (amateur radio operators, receivers and repeaters, cellular towers, power sustainability, and critical warning and communications systems) as well as providing feedback regarding anticipated resource needs.	Annually	The Mesilla Valley Regional Dispatch Authority (MVRDA) uses the VESTA Alert system for area-wide emergency notification for all of Doña Ana County. Social media is also used to notify the County about closures, events, etc.
Pipe Freeze Assessment for City Owned Buildings	Extreme Cold	Perform an inspection and assessment of all City owned buildings to determine freeze and burst vulnerability of potable water lines at exposed locations. Assessment shall include the preparation of a proposal for ways to mitigate.	December 2017	No action has taken place at this time.
Defensible Space Practices	Wildfire	Recommend and implement defensible space, coupled with Firewise Communities practices, to reduce structural ignitability and to protect critical infrastructure within the wildland-urban interface areas	Ongoing as needed	No action has taken place at this time.
Waterline Insulation Program	Extreme Cold	City will retrofit all exposed waterlines identified in A/P H7 for City-owned facilities, with insulation materials as recommended.	December 2018	No action has taken place at this time.

Source: Doña Ana County All Hazard Mitigation Plan

# 8

## Natural Resources



Recommendations for hazardous mitigation within Sunland Park include:

- Pursuing mitigation strategies to ensure City Hall is no longer within the high risk dam failure area as well as within the existing floodplain limits.
- Encouraging the use of drought resistant landscaping through proper enforcement. The 2018 Zoning Ordinance Update establishes landscaping standards, which state .
- Performing an inspection of all City owned buildings to assess the vulnerability of exposed waterlines to freeze and burst. The City should then retrofit any exposed waterlines with insulation materials.
- Initiating community outreach through brochures, letters, mailers, social media to inform the public about hazardous mitigation issues throughout the community.





## 8.5 | Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies

Sunland Park citizens support increased recreational amenities throughout the City and an environment that prioritizes open space, preservation of natural habitat, and resource protection. The City's natural resources goals, policies, and implementation strategies envision a well-connected, healthy, and active community.

As growth occurs, Sunland Park emphasizes the importance of natural resources by requiring an allotment of parkland per dwelling unit. The City's image as an attractive, livable community is promoted through diverse natural features reinforcing Sunland Park as the recreational hub within the region.

**Natural Resource (NR) Goal 1 | Create and maintain a comprehensive recreational system of parks and open space for residents and visitors of all ages.**

**Objective NR 1 – A** Promote public health, community involvement, and quality of life through passive and active recreational activities and facilities.

**Objective NR 1 – B** Offer and maintain a wide range of parks and recreational

activities that meet the existing and future recreational needs in Sunland Park.

**Objective NR 1 – C** Ensure new parkland is ADA accessible for all residents and has convenient access to bicycling and pedestrian facilities.

**NR 1 Implementation Strategy 1.1:** Create and implement a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that:

- Develops a strategy to acquire, operate, and maintain a Parks and Recreations system in the City;
- Outlines the Parks and Recreation program operational responsibilities (i.e. park maintenance, recreation center development and management, etc.);
- Defines the correct organizational structure to manage the property and infrastructure; and
- Defines a strategy and identifies the mechanisms to fund the desired Parks & Recreation program.

**NR 1 Implementation Strategy 1.2:** Review and periodically update the Parks and Recreation Plan as needed to monitor progress towards goals while identifying new priorities.

# 8

## Natural Resources



**NR 1 Implementation Strategy 1.3:** Anticipate and plan for acquisition of land for future parks and recreational facilities. Allocate additional funding for acquisition, improvements, and maintenance.

**NR 1 Implementation Strategy 1.4:** Achieve and maintain the level of service park goals established by this Plan.

**NR 1 Implementation Strategy 1.5:** Encourage the establishment of a new multi-purpose community center.

**Natural Resource (NR) Goal 2 | Encourage tourism activities, programs, and amenities that enhance the City's recreational identity while preserving the natural environment.**

**Objective NR 2 – A** Provide unique family friendly activities throughout Sunland Park.

**Objective NR 2 – B** Celebrate the community's history and culture drawing visitors from the region.

**Objective NR 2 – C** Market activities, programs, and amenities in Sunland Park to the entire El Paso metropolitan region.

**Objective NR 2 – C** Coordinate recreational plans with proposals from surrounding jurisdictions.

**NR 2 Implementation Strategy 2.1:** Seek to transform Mt. Cristo Rey into a regional park with facilities that serve as community event spaces year-round while also preserving the grounds.

**NR 2 Implementation Strategy 2.2:** Encourage development of the Mesa into a recreational OHV park.

**NR 2 Implementation Strategy 2.3:** Seek to transform the Rio Grande into a regional park with hiking, biking, walking, canoeing, and rafting activities.

**NR 2 Implementation Strategy 2.4:** Approve and construct the Rio Grande Trail within Sunland Park, with connections to the existing and planned trail in El Paso.

**NR 2 Implementation Strategy 2.5:** Partner with Visit El Paso and utilize social media platforms to advertise activities and amenities in Sunland Park.

**Environment (E) Goal 1 | Reduce the possibility of damage and/or loss to existing and future community assets and infrastructure.**

# 8

## Natural Resources



- Objective E 1 – A** Improve communication with federal, state, local, government agencies as well as the private sector.
- Objective E 1 – B** Encourage future development that is disaster resistant.
- Objective E 1 – C** Promote public understanding of hazard mitigation issues.
- Objective E 1 – D** Develop community resiliency.
- Objective E 1 – E** Explore internal and external funding strategies to address mitigation activities.

**E 1 Implementation Strategy 1.1:** Pursue hazard mitigation strategies at city hall to remove the existing facility from high risk dam failure and flood limits.

**E 1 Implementation Strategy 1.2:** Retrofit all exposed waterlines identified in A/P H7 for City-owned facilities, with insulation materials.

**E 1 Implementation Strategy 1.3:** Inspect and assess all City owned buildings to determine freeze and burst vulnerability of potable water lines at exposed locations. Assessment should include a proposal for ways to mitigate.

**E 1 Implementation Strategy 1.4:** Encourage community outreach about hazard mitigation issues through brochure mailings, social media, and other communication methods.

**E 1 Implementation Strategy 1.5:** Approve and construct the Rio Grande Trail within Sunland Park, with connections to the existing and planned trail in El Paso.

**E 1 Implementation Strategy 1.6:** Encourage parkland within existing floodplain areas.

(This page intentionally left blank)

A night cityscape with a large green arrow sign in the foreground. The sign is illuminated and points to the right. The background shows a building with many lit windows.

9

implementation

## 9.0 | Implementation

Implementation of the recommendations of this plan will require the involvement of city leaders and staff; local residents and business owners; officials from county, state, regional, and federal agencies; and other stakeholders in the Sunland Park community. Section 9.1 lists the primary organizations that will be responsible for leading implementation of each of the strategies described in the preceding chapters. Section 9.2 discusses possible sources of funding for these strategies.

### 9.1 | Implementation Strategies

The following Implementation Strategies matrix (Table 9-1) compiles the implementation strategies from each chapter and details the organizations that should lead their implementation.

**Table 9-1 | Implementation Strategies**

Implementation Strategy	Description	Responsible Organizations
<b>Land Use</b>		
<b>LU 1 - 1.1</b>	Provide incentives for high-quality infill development, reducing the burden on the City for providing services and maintaining infrastructure (compared with development in new areas). Incentives can include expedited development review by staff and expedited rezoning and variance approval through the Planning and Zoning Commission. The feasibility of financial incentives should also be investigated.	City of Sunland Park, Doña Ana County, CRRUA
<b>LU 1 - 1.2</b>	The City should coordinate with the County, CRRUA, and other relevant bodies to ensure that development adjacent to the existing city limits or within the Future Growth Area is high quality and implemented in a way that enhances, rather than limits, Sunland Park's growth and prosperity.	City of Sunland Park, Doña Ana County, CRRUA

# 9

## Implementation



<b>LU 1 - 1.3</b>	The City should develop an official policy permitting the creation of development agreements that support the vision and land use goals of this plan.	City of Sunland Park, developers
<b>LU 1 - 1.4</b>	The City should continue its involvement with the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization towards an end of supporting transportation projects that fulfill the vision and development goals of Sunland Park.	City of Sunland Park, El Paso MPO
<b>LU 1 - 1.5</b>	The City should prepare and adopt plans for the destination, institutional, commercial, and industrial districts, especially within identified activity centers. These plans should establish place-making strategies, helping to marshal resources and stakeholders to develop quality places to live, work and play. Form-based codes defined in conjunction with these new plans can enhance distinctive qualities of each district through the built environment.	City of Sunland Park
<b>LU 1 - 1.6</b>	Encourage development and redevelopment projects within the Entertainment District as identified in the 2007 Downtown Master Plan.	City of Sunland Park
<b>LU 2 - 2.1</b>	Through its development review, rezoning, and variance approval processes, the City should support development proposals that contain or foster a diverse mix of uses. This may mean supporting Master Planned Communities that include a mix of uses within a single development, or backing single-use developments that support rather than exclude different adjacent land uses.	City of Sunland Park
<b>LU 2 - 2.2</b>	Establish a policy for supporting high-quality infill development adjacent to existing neighborhoods and principal corridors through expedited development review, financial incentives, land assembly, and/or direct funding of elements of a development, such as affordable housing or infrastructure improvements.	City of Sunland Park

# 9

## Implementation



<b>LU 2 - 2.3</b>	The City should enforce new standards for park or open space dedication, as defined in the zoning code, and dedicate sufficient resources for the maintenance of existing and newly dedicated parks.	City of Sunland Park
<b>LU 2 - 2.4</b>	The City should be flexible when applying Future Land Use designations and allow interpretation by decision makers when the Future Land Use map does not perfectly align with parcels of land.	City of Sunland Park, CRRUA, Doña Ana County
<b>LU 3 - 3.1</b>	Through the development review process, the City should work with developers to establish sufficient open space or vegetation buffers or construct other nuisance-mitigation elements. Elements should be built to standards defined in the zoning and development ordinance.	City of Sunland Park, developers
<b>LU 3 - 3.2</b>	The City should enforce lighting standards for new development, especially within and adjacent to residential development.	City of Sunland Park
<b>LU 3 - 3.3</b>	The City should work through existing channels or establish new relationships with representatives of the Doña Ana County International Jetport at Santa Teresa and the Union Pacific Railroad to ensure that new expansion of important air and rail transportation infrastructure does not impose an undue nuisance burden on the residents or business owners of Sunland Park, current or future.	City of Sunland Park, Doña Ana County, UPRR, CRRUA, residents
<b>LU 4 - 4.1</b>	Work with developers to ensure safe, comfortable pedestrian connections on development sites, such as through parking lots, and adequate connections between adjacent development sites, such as with off-street paths.	City of Sunland Park, developers
<b>LU 4 - 4.2</b>	With new development sidewalks and paths should adhere to Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards, including adequate curb ramps and sufficient width, in order to accommodate those with limited mobility, including those with disabilities and users who are younger or older.	City of Sunland Park, developers



# 9

## Implementation



<b>LU 4 - 4.3</b>	Especially as major development proposals occur, City staff should work with local transit agencies to examine the effects of the development on transit services, as well as the potential opportunities to provide enhanced service for residents and workers.	City of Sunland Park, SCRTD, Sun Metro, NMDOT, City of El Paso, El Paso MPO, developers
<b>LU 4 - 4.4</b>	Conduct corridor studies along major arterials within Sunland Park to identify potential improvements to city services and important bicycle, pedestrian, or transit connections.	City of Sunland Park, NMDOT, CRRUA, Doña Ana County, local stakeholders
<b>LU 5 - 5.1</b>	Design and construct entry signage at the major gateways into Sunland Park as well as at the entrances to community districts.	City of Sunland Park, NMDOT
<b>LU 5 - 5.2</b>	The City should prepare and adopt plans for the destination, institutional, commercial, and industrial districts, especially in identified activity centers. These plans establish place-making strategies, helping to marshal resources and stakeholders to develop quality places to live, work and play. Form-based codes defined in conjunction with these new plans can enhance distinctive qualities of each district through the built environment.	City of Sunland Park, local stakeholders
<b>LU 5 - 5.3</b>	The City should provide adequate code enforcement staff to administer the existing codes on property maintenance.	City of Sunland Park
<b>LU 5 - 5.4</b>	The City should undertake an awareness campaign – including with social media, mailers, billboards, or other methods – to publicize among residents common code violations and how to avoid penalties for them.	City of Sunland Park, local organizations
<b>Land Use - Growth Area</b>		
<b>GA 1 - 1.1</b>	Develop a process for evaluating proposed annexation areas that is tied to the existing infrastructure capacity, cost of extending the infrastructure network, and the City’s ability to provide municipal services.	City of Sunland Park, CRRUA, Doña Ana County
<b>GA 1 - 1.2</b>	Prioritize annexation of areas that support industrial and commercial growth that can be supported by infrastructure.	City of Sunland Park, CRRUA, Doña Ana County

# 9

## Implementation



<b>GA 1 – 1.3</b>	Initiate and participate in discussions with CRRUA, Doña Ana County, and Santa Teresa stakeholders to discuss growth and development issues.	City of Sunland Park, CRRUA, Doña Ana County
<b>Housing &amp; Neighborhoods</b>		
<b>H 1 – 1.1</b>	Create a streamlined and well-defined development review process for Master Planned Neighborhood proposals that seek to reduce the length of review and uncertainty for developers.	City of Sunland Park, CRRUA
<b>H 1 – 1.2</b>	During the development review process for Master Planned Neighborhoods, the City should permit or encourage inclusion of higher-density residential development, including townhomes and apartments.	City of Sunland Park
<b>H 1 – 1.3</b>	Partner with regional organizations to rehabilitate or replace existing residential structures that are in poor condition.	City of Sunland Park, regional organizations
<b>H 2 – 2.1</b>	Develop and adopt an Affordable Housing Plan, per New Mexico state regulations, that will permit the City to support and fund affordable housing projects.	City of Sunland Park, Doña Ana County, Sunland Park Housing Authority
<b>H 2 – 2.2</b>	Develop a policy to incentivize development projects that include affordable or subsidized housing units through waiving of development review fees, City funding of new infrastructure or utilities, or partnerships for Federal funding programs, such as CDBG, that can support private development that meet certain community benefit criteria.	City of Sunland Park, Sunland Park Housing Authority
<b>H 2 – 2.3</b>	The City should partner with the Sunland Park Public Housing Authority and other potential partners to fund and construct new affordable housing units, per target number of units defined in a new affordable housing plan.	City of Sunland Park, Public Housing Authority, additional partners
<b>H 2 – 2.4</b>	Work through city representation on the CRRUA board to keep utility rate increases to a minimum.	City of Sunland Park, CRRUA
<b>H 2 – 2.5</b>	Work with CRRUA and other potential partners to create a program that incentivizes energy and water conservation by residents, such as through	City of Sunland Park, CRRUA

# 9

## Implementation



	rebate programs that refund part of the cost of energy-efficient appliances, light bulbs, insulation or other equipment.	
<b>H 3 – 3.1</b>	Work with interested private and nonprofit sector partners to assemble infill parcels for development/redevelopment, especially where properties are blighted.	City of Sunland Park, developers
<b>H 3 – 3.2</b>	Encourage development and redevelopment projects where other economic development investment is occurring, including within the Entertainment District as identified in the Downtown Master Plan.	City of Sunland Park, developers
<b>H 3 – 3.3</b>	Adopt and maintain new zoning and development standards that require open space and recreational amenities as part of new residential development.	City of Sunland Park, developers
<b>H 3 – 3.4</b>	Work with developers to define standards for specific Master Planned Neighborhoods proposals prior to development approval. Standards should address and provide for sufficient: open space and recreational amenities; buffering between incompatible land uses; pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections; and quality architectural and landscaping standards.	City of Sunland Park, developers
<b>Transportation</b>		
<b>T 1 – 1.1</b>	The City should ensure the limited transportation connections across state line into El Paso provide sufficient capacity for traffic crossing to/from Sunland Park, expanding them if warranted.	City of Sunland Park, City of El Paso, NMDOT, TXDOT, El Paso MPO
<b>T 1 – 1.2</b>	The City should extend Sunland Park Drive to the proposed Sunland Park LPOE.	City of Sunland Park, Customs and Border Protection
<b>T 1 – 1.3</b>	The City should work with local transit agencies to improve transit service between Sunland Park, El Paso, Las Cruces, and understand the feasibility of transit service to the Sunland Park LPOE. Coordination should occur with transit agencies on the Chihuahua side of the	City of Sunland Park, SCRTD, Sun Metro, NMDOT, Instituto Municipal de Investigación y Planeación (Ciudad Juárez), Chihuahua, MX state gov't.

# 9

## Implementation



	international border to provide service between the LPOE and central Juárez.	
<b>T 1 – 1.4</b>	The City should encourage expansion of the Doña Ana County International Jetport at Santa Teresa Airport to support more air traffic and a wider range of aircraft types.	City of Sunland Park, Doña Ana County
<b>T 1 – 1.5</b>	The City should engage and advocate with the El Paso MPO for support of projects that benefit Sunland Park and the wider region.	City of Sunland Park, El Paso MPO
<b>T 2 – 2.1</b>	As new development occurs within Sunland Park, the City should evaluate the capacity of its roadway network and, when warranted, strategically expand.	City of Sunland Park, Doña Ana County, NMDOT, El Paso MPO
<b>T 2 – 2.2</b>	With large development projects, the City should require completion of a traffic study before development approval, per standards in the Updated Zoning and Development Ordinance.	City of Sunland Park
<b>T 2 – 2.3</b>	The City should coordinate with Sun Transit and/or SCRTD to ensure adequate transit connections to destinations within Sunland Park are provided, especially as new development occurs.	City of Sunland Park, Sun Metro, SCRTD, NMDOT
<b>T 2 – 2.4</b>	The City should implement recommendations in this plan for bicycle facilities and shared-use paths.	City of Sunland Park, City of El Paso, Doña Ana County, El Paso MPO
<b>T 2 – 2.5</b>	The City should require construction of sidewalks and other pedestrian connections with new development, per standards in the Updated Zoning and Development Ordinance.	City of Sunland Park, CRRUA, Doña Ana County
<b>T 2 – 2.6</b>	The City encourages the elimination of sidewalk gaps between development.	City of Sunland Park
<b>T 3 – 3.1</b>	The City should support implementation of recent regional transportation plans, including the Santa Teresa Border Area Transportation Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan, Santa Teresa	City of Sunland Park, plan partners

# 9

## Implementation



	International Rail Study, and the New Mexico-Chihuahua Border Master Plan.	
<b>T 3 – 3.2</b>	The City should encourage construction of roadway facilities in line with the standard cross sections based on functional classification.	City of Sunland Park, NMDOT
<b>T 3 – 3.3</b>	The City should ensure that adequate connections to transit service exist with sufficient sidewalks, seating, and lighting.	City of Sunland Park, NMDOT
<b>T 3 – 3.4</b>	The City should accommodate freight while strategically preserving the existing and future transportation network.	City of Sunland Park, El Paso MPO, UPRR, Doña Ana County, Customs and Border Protection
<b>Community Services (See Community Facilities &amp; Infrastructure, chapter 6)</b>		
<b>CS 1 – 1.1</b>	Coordinate with the New Mexico Dept. of Health, New Mexico Family Services (NMFS), and La Clínica de Familia (LCDF) on distributing information to the community regarding available health services.	City of Sunland Park, NM Department of Health – Sunland Park Center, NM Family Services, LCDF
<b>CS 1 – 1.2</b>	Ensure that branding and marketing efforts for Sunland Park highlight the available health care resources.	City of Sunland Park, NM Department of Health – Sunland Park Center, NM Family Services, LCDF
<b>CS 1 – 1.3</b>	Encourage strategic health care development to address gaps in existing services.	City of Sunland Park
<b>CS 2 – 2.1</b>	Adopt and implement recommendations from the 2017 Police Audit.	City of Sunland Park, Police Department
<b>CS 2 – 2.2</b>	Conduct an inventory of existing fire stations to develop a fire station location plan.	City of Sunland Park, Fire Department
<b>CS 3 – 3.1</b>	Expand the Sunland Park Public Library, hire additional staff, and expand youth programming.	City of Sunland Park

# 9

## Implementation



<b>CS 3 – 3.2</b>	Work with the Gadsden Independent School District and New Mexico State University to offer technical training during non-school hours.	City of Sunland Park, Gadsden Independent School District, New Mexico State University
<b>CS 3 – 3.3</b>	Coordinate with the Gadsden Independent School District (GISD) during the five-year facilities plan update (2020, 2025, 2030, 2035, and 2040). Provide planned development information.	City of Sunland Park, Gadsden Independent School District
<b>CS 3 – 3.4</b>	Assist in the implementation of the recommendations within the GISD Facilities Master Plan.	City of Sunland Park, Gadsden Independent School District
<b>Economic Development - Fiscal</b>		
<b>F 1 – 1.1</b>	Diligently comply with open meeting laws by conducting public business in full public view.	City of Sunland Park
<b>F 1 – 1.2</b>	Make every effort to inform Sunland Park residents of public meeting times, dates, and agenda items. Materials should be bi-lingual and utilize the following platforms: website, social media, posters in high traffic locations, signs at intersections. Assure that English/Spanish translation is available at public meetings.	City of Sunland Park
<b>F 1 – 1.3</b>	Maintain separate financial records for spending on CIP and economic development projects. In budgeting, account for project sequencing and assure correspondence of funding availability with spending needs.	City of Sunland Park
<b>F 1 – 1.4</b>	Engage/invite outside monitoring of records related to CIP and economic development spending (independent audits) and make reports publically available in full and summary form.	City of Sunland Park
<b>F 1 – 1.5</b>	Seek appropriate grants, matching funds, state incentives only to the extent that they support the CIP and/or economic development plan and assure that ongoing financial obligations related to grants and incentives can clearly be sustainably funded.	City of Sunland Park

# 9

## Implementation



<b>F 1 – 1.6</b>	Assign responsibility for each aspect of the CIP and economic development plan to a person, office, or entity and make the assignment of responsibility public (update regularly as personnel change).	City of Sunland Park
<b>F 1 – 1.7</b>	During every budget cycle, make necessary adjustments to spending, tax rates, and the tax base, to assure sound public finances are maintained.	City of Sunland Park
<b>F 1 – 1.8</b>	In all communications between the public sector and the general public, assure that both the costs and benefits of public activities are discussed.	City of Sunland Park
<b>F 2 – 2.1</b>	Enhance “community services” page on the City of Sunland Park’s website making it as easy as possible for users to find information on zoning and related compliance/licensing issues.	City of Sunland Park
<b>F 2 – 2.2</b>	Continue efforts to update zoning and other regulations such as building codes, business licensing/registration.	City of Sunland Park
<b>F 2 – 2.3</b>	Develop and implement training plans to assure that a subset of local officials/offices are up to date on state, federal regulations that impact Sunland Park residents/businesses.	City of Sunland Park
<b>F 2 – 2.4</b>	Define clear and transparent processes and paths of responsibility for decision-making on zoning, permits, etc.	City of Sunland Park
<b>Economic Development - Community and Economic Development</b>		
<b>CED 1 – 1.1</b>	Conduct a local inventory business to identify cases where they are sourcing supplies, materials, etc. that could possibly be competitively provided by local businesses. The City should encourage a local business fair where each business has the opportunity to let the public (and other businesses) know what it has to offer.	City of Sunland Park, local businesses
<b>CED 1 – 1.2</b>	Encourage local entrepreneurs to pursue business opportunities that can compete with similar businesses in the region. A newly formed Chamber of Commerce, perhaps in cooperation with Doña Ana Community College, could organize basic training in marketing to help local	City of Sunland Park, Doña Ana Community College

# 9

## Implementation



	entrepreneurs expand their focus and present themselves in new markets.	
<b>CED 1 – 1.3</b>	Plan, zone, and permit infill development to help create continuity between separate neighborhoods within Sunland Park encouraging residents to utilize local businesses.	City of Sunland Park
<b>CED 1 – 1.4</b>	Work with the local business community to encourage improvements in the physical attractiveness of businesses, provision of customer-friendly service, and improvements in signage.	City of Sunland Park, local businesses
<b>CED 1 – 1.5</b>	Encourage the creation of a Sunland Park Chamber of Commerce or similar business organization to lead and provide support to the business community.	City of Sunland Park
<b>CED 1 – 1.6</b>	Encourage local businesses to be specific about their location in Sunland Park, NM, in their advertising and other promotional materials, even if they are service providers who primarily serve non-Sunland Park customers.	City of Sunland Park, local businesses
<b>CED 1 – 1.7</b>	Showcase local businesses when community events are held.	City of Sunland Park, local businesses
<b>CED 1 – 1.8</b>	When zoning for residential development include commercial zoning for neighborhood commercial development.	City of Sunland Park
<b>CED 1 – 1.9</b>	Consider participation in New Mexico MainStreet Program.	City of Sunland Park, New Mexico MainStreet Program
<b>CED 2 – 2.1</b>	Improve signage at City boundaries so residents and visitors can clearly distinguish Sunland Park from Santa Teresa and Texas.	City of Sunland Park, NMDOT, Doña Ana County
<b>CED 2 – 2.2</b>	Encourage Sunland Park schools and businesses that claim a Santa Teresa name or address to rename or increase their identity within Sunland Park.	City of Sunland Park, local businesses, GISD
<b>CED 2 – 2.3</b>	Plan both regular and special community events, including some events that specifically engage non-residents. Examples might be charity runs,	City of Sunland Park



# 9

## Implementation



	bicycle rallies, Mt. Christo Rey related activities, motocross rallies, local markets, and equestrian oriented events. Aim for safe, well-run, and enjoyable events that will leave visitors and residents alike with positive thoughts about Sunland Park.	
<b>CED 2 – 2.4</b>	Seek to develop park or park-like facilities within the floodplain where community activities could be held.	City of Sunland Park
<b>CED 2 – 2.5</b>	Encourage community clean-up and beautification events (local version of “Don’t Mess with Texas” or “Toss no Mas”).	City of Sunland Park
<b>CED 2 – 2.6</b>	Invite media coverage of positive events/improvements in Sunland Park.	City of Sunland Park, local news organizations
<b>CED 2 – 2.7</b>	Develop a recreational vehicle park to serve sunbirds looking for an interesting and pleasant place to spend the winter.	City of Sunland Park
<b>CED 2 – 2.8</b>	Devise a plan to recruit/retain health care providers to locate in Sunland Park. Perhaps working with Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in El Paso or the Burrell School of Osteopathic Medicine in Las Cruces.	City of Sunland Park, Texas Tech University Health Services Center, or Burrell School of Osteopathic Medicine
<b>CED 3 – 3.1</b>	Partner with local schools and other organizations to develop and promote workforce development programs.	City of Sunland Park, GISD, New Mexico State University, Doña Ana Community College
<b>CED 3 – 3.2</b>	Offer and encourage participation in English as a second language programs for non-English speaking residents.	City of Sunland Park, GISD, New Mexico State University, Doña Ana Community College
<b>CED 3 – 3.3</b>	Encourage local businesses to sponsor student interns and apprentices.	City of Sunland Park, local businesses
<b>CED 3 – 3.4</b>	When major infrastructure projects are planned, organize job fairs to connect local workers with available jobs.	City of Sunland Park, GISD, New Mexico State University,

# 9

## Implementation



		Doña Ana Community College, local businesses
<b>CED 3 – 3.5</b>	Design special community events to celebrate worker skill improvements such as the GED, graduation, certifications, and promotions.	City of Sunland Park, GISD, New Mexico State University, Doña Ana Community College, local businesses
<b>CED 4 – 4.1</b>	Encourage (perhaps via the new Chamber of Commerce) local entrepreneurs to develop businesses associated with the downtown destination district.	City of Sunland Park, local businesses
<b>CED 4 – 4.2</b>	Encourage (perhaps via the new Chamber of Commerce) existing businesses in the downtown area to take a broader view of their possible market and adjust their business practices to attract new customers from the region.	City of Sunland Park, local businesses
<b>CED 4 – 4.3</b>	Strategically zone the downtown destination district based on the future port of entry location and traffic flow changes.	City of Sunland Park
<b>CED 4 – 4.4</b>	Create an attractive corridor between the proposed port of entry and Sunland Park’s destination district.	City of Sunland Park
<b>CED 5 – 5.1</b>	Strategically zone for industrial property/buildings (and access) along major corridors between Sunland Park and the highway system.	City of Sunland Park
<b>CED 5 – 5.2</b>	Encourage entrepreneurship within Sunland Park in sectors related to Santa Teresa port of entry and industrial activities (trucking, equipment repairs, construction, maintenance, etc).	City of Sunland Park
<b>CED 6 – 6.1</b>	Promote the development of organizations such as, Community Clubs, Scouts, civic clubs, young entrepreneurs, etc.	City of Sunland Park
<b>CED 6 – 6.2</b>	Provide opportunities for short-term (limited commitment) leadership by community members (for example planning community events or organizing clean up days). Make sure leaders are publically recognized and encouraged to continue in leadership.	City of Sunland Park

# 9 Implementation



<b>CED 6 – 6.3</b>	Engage existing community, faith, educational, and other organizations in the community/economic development efforts. Ask for both leadership and participation. Make sure efforts are publically recognized.	City of Sunland Park, local organizations
<b>Economic Development - Cost of Development</b>		
<b>C 1 – 1.1</b>	Determine realistic estimates of the public costs associated with development projects and impose appropriate impact fees.	City of Sunland Park
<b>C 1 – 1.2</b>	Map project impacts to impact fees assessed. Make this information available to the public.	City of Sunland Park
<b>C 1 – 1.3</b>	Provide literature that informs both developers and the public of rationale behind impact and permitting fees.	City of Sunland Park
<b>C 1 – 1.4</b>	Assure that discussions/negotiations regarding impact fees adhere to the Open Meetings Act.	City of Sunland Park
<b>C 2 – 2.1</b>	Work with local business people, bankers, and civic-minded residents to develop a revolving loan fund to assist small local businesses as they adapt to the CIP and seek to improve their businesses.	City of Sunland Park, local businesses
<b>C 2 – 2.2</b>	Develop a local community investment group to make strategic investments that will aid in Sunland Park’s development.	City of Sunland Park
<b>C 2 – 2.3</b>	Develop a Sunland Park economic development organization, possibly a public/private partnership to focus specifically on Sunland Park’s development issues and seek funding to support local efforts. Alternatively, or as a near-term strategy, become more engaged with a regional economic development organization such as Messila Valley Economic Development Alliance, the Border Industrial Association, the Borderplex Alliance, or Region Five of the New Mexico Economic Development Department.	City of Sunland Park, Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance, Border Industrial Association, Borderplex Alliance, NMEDD
<b>C 2 – 2.4</b>	Encourage formalization of businesses to enable greater access to banking and financial resources.	City of Sunland Park
<b>Natural Resources</b>		

# 9

## Implementation



<b>NR 1 – 1.1</b>	Create and implement a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.	City of Sunland Park
<b>NR 1 – 1.2</b>	Review and periodically update the Parks and Recreation Plan as needed to monitor progress towards goals while identifying new priorities.	City of Sunland Park
<b>NR 1 – 1.3</b>	Anticipate and plan for acquisition of land for future parks and recreational facilities. Allocate additional funding for acquisition, improvements, and maintenance.	City of Sunland Park
<b>NR 1 – 1.4</b>	Achieve and maintain the level of service park goals established by this Plan.	City of Sunland Park
<b>NR 1 – 1.5</b>	Encourage the establishment of a new multi-purpose community center.	City of Sunland Park
<b>NR 2 – 2.1</b>	Seek to transform Mt. Cristo Rey into a regional park with facilities that serve as community event spaces year-round while also preserving the grounds.	City of Sunland Park, Roman Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces, Insights El Paso, Mount Cristo Rey Restoration Committee, Rio Grande Trail Commission, Border Patrol
<b>NR 2 – 2.2</b>	Encourage development of the Mesa into a recreational OHV park.	City of Sunland Park, property owners
<b>NR 2 – 2.3</b>	Seek to transform the Rio Grande into a regional park with hiking, biking, walking, canoeing, and rafting activities.	City of Sunland Park, City of El Paso, State of New Mexico, property owners
<b>NR 2 – 2.4</b>	Approve and construct the Rio Grande Trail within Sunland Park, with connections to the existing and planned trail in El Paso.	City of Sunland Park, City of El Paso, State of New Mexico, property owners
<b>NR 2 – 2.5</b>	Partner with Visit El Paso and utilize social media platforms to advertise activities and amenities in Sunland Park.	City of Sunland Park, Visit El Paso

# 9

## Implementation



Environment		
<b>E 1 - 1.1</b>	Pursue hazard mitigation strategies at city hall to remove the existing facility from high risk dam failure and flood limits.	City of Sunland Park
<b>E 1 - 1.2</b>	Retrofit all exposed waterlines identified in A/P H7 for City-owned facilities, with insulation materials.	City of Sunland Park
<b>E 1 - 1.3</b>	Inspect and assess all City owned buildings to determine freeze and burst vulnerability of potable water lines at exposed locations. Assessment should include a proposal for ways to mitigate.	City of Sunland Park
<b>E 1 - 1.4</b>	Encourage community outreach about hazard mitigation issues through brochure mailings, social media, and other communication methods.	City of Sunland Park
<b>E 1 - 1.5</b>	Approve and construct the Rio Grande Trail within Sunland Park, with connections to the existing and planned trail in El Paso.	City of Sunland Park
<b>E 1 - 1.6</b>	Encourage parkland within existing floodplain areas.	City of Sunland Park

## 9.2 | Funding

Implementation of some of the recommendations above will not require significant investment, but rather will involve policy changes, administrative action, or dedication of staff time. However, many, especially transportation and infrastructure projects, will ultimately require significant expenditure. A number of federal and state programs, as well as possible local approaches, can help close funding gaps.

### 9.2.1 | Federal and State Programs

Federal and state funding can help support major transportation and economic/community development investments in a community. The state plays an important role in planning and programming where both its own and federal funds are spent – most federal funding is allocated to state agencies, such as the Department of Transportation, which then suballocate it to projects across the state based on how those project meet state or regional needs and goals.

Most federal and many state funding programs require a local funding match, usually 20% in the case of federal funding.

#### **Federal Transportation Funding**

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST) is the current funding authorization for federal spending on surface transportation projects in the United States, committing a total of \$225 billion for fiscal years 2016 through 2020. The FAST Act consists of a number funding programs defined by different funding priorities or eligibility criteria for projects.

The transportation system is planned and programmed in the El Paso area (including Sunland Park) through the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization (EPMPO). A metropolitan planning organization is a federally recognized body that carries out transportation planning at a regional level for urbanized areas with populations of 50,000 or more. The EPMPO encompasses the City of El Paso, El Paso County, municipalities in the County, and the southern part of New Mexico. The EPMPO determines – through competitive scoring processes – which projects across the MPO's area receive federal transportation funding.

The current key federal transportation funding programs under the FAST Act include those discussed below.

# 9 Implementation



## National Highway Performance Program

The largest amount of money set aside under the FAST Act is for the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP). NHPP funds are intended to support the condition/maintenance and performance of the National Highway System, which includes the Interstate Highway System (IHS) as well as other roads important to the nation's economy, defense, and mobility, as well as international border crossings. Funding under the NHPP is suballocated by state governments to meet goals set out in State's Asset Management Plan for the NHS. Funding may be obligated for a variety of projects, including the following listed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA):

- Construction, reconstruction, resurfacing, restoration, and rehabilitation;
- Operational improvements;
- Construction and operational improvements of a Federal-aid highway not on the NHS,
- Construction of a transit project associated with an NHS corridor;
- Highway safety improvements;
- Transportation planning;
- Bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways; and
- Publicly-owned intracity or intercity bus terminals.

## Surface Transportation Block Grant Program

The Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) is a block grant funding program under the FAST Act that may be used for projects to preserve or improve conditions and performance on any Federal-aid highway, bridge projects on any public road, facilities for non-motorized transportation, transit capital projects, and public bus terminals and facilities.

### *STBGP Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside*

The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside is a portion of the STBGP that is dedicated in each fiscal year to funding alternatives to conventional automobile-based transportation projects. The Federal Highway Administration defines a number of project types eligible for funding under the set-aside, including the following:

# 9

## Implementation



“...[O]n- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities such as historic preservation and vegetation management, and environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity; recreational trail projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former divided highways.”

### Highway Safety Improvement Program

The FAST Act’s Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is intended to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads, including non-State-owned public roads and roads on tribal lands. HSIP requires that the states develop, implement, and update a Strategic Highway Safety Plan, and funding through the HSIP must meet the goals of the Plan or address a safety issue on a roadway.

### Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program provides funds to regions for transportation projects designed to reduce air pollution caused by automobile traffic and traffic congestion. CMAQ funding is available to areas that do not meet federal air quality standards or in “maintenance areas” that have had previous air quality problems. CMAQ projects reduce motor vehicle emissions by encouraging shifts to alternative modes (such as rideshare, transit, bicycling, or walking), by improving traffic flow (thereby cutting idling and driving behaviors that generate higher emissions), or through application of emission-reduction technologies, such as alternative fuels.

### Transit Programs

The FAST Act also includes funding for transit-specific programs, including the following major programs:

- Section 5307 - The Urbanized Area Formula Funding program (49 U.S.C. 5307) provides funding to urbanized areas and to states for transit capital and operating expenses and for transit-related planning. The New Mexico portion of the El Paso TX-NM Urbanized Area (consisting mostly of Sunland Park) received \$500,000 in FY 2018.



# 9

## Implementation



- Section 5309 - Capital Investment Grants (CIG) is FTA's primary grant program for funding major transit capital investments, including heavy rail, commuter rail, light rail, streetcars, and bus rapid transit. It is a competitive grant program.
- Section 5339 - Bus and Bus Related Equipment and Facilities and Low-No Programs – This program funds replacement of buses and bus-related facilities, especially including equipment upgrades for refueling or maintenance of low or no-emissions vehicles. It is a competitive grant program.

### State Transportation Funding

State transportation funding programs include the State Road Fund, largely funded by the state's fuel taxes, and several others including the Local Government Road Fund and the Severance Tax Bond program. On occasion, the state legislature can choose, through its budget approval process, to fund projects directly from the General Fund as a capital outlay.

#### State Road Fund

The State Road Fund was established to support development and maintenance of roads through the State of New Mexico. The Fund generally is used for highway maintenance, as well as fund NMDOT operations and make debt payments for highway capital improvement bonds. Federal funds (discussed above) are mostly applied to construction projects. The State Road Fund is supported by a State Gasoline Tax (about 30 percent of total revenue), Special Fuels Tax on diesel (25 percent), Weight-Distance Tax on commercial trucking (20 percent), Vehicle Registration Fees (20 percent), and other minor fees. Estimated revenue available through the State Road Fund for FY 2016 – FY 2032 is \$383 million; this is down significantly from the pre-Great Depression funding level.

#### Local Government Road Fund

The Local Government Road Fund (LGRF) is available to be used in conjunction with projects by municipalities, counties, Indian Tribes/Pueblos, and other State and Federal Agencies that may be participating partners. The LGRF supports several programs, including: Cooperative Program (CO-OP), County Arterial Program (CAP), School Bus Route Program (SBR), and Municipal Arterial Program (MAP).

### **Housing and Community Development Funding - Federal**

A myriad of federal programs support the creation of affordable housing, or provide housing assistance directly to income-qualifying individuals. Within New Mexico, the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) regulates and/or allocates this funding. Two key programs that can be harnessed by the City or partners are the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs. CDBG funding can also support a wider range of community development projects beyond housing.

#### **Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)**

The program provides federal income tax credits to developers creating housing with a certain number of units set aside as affordable housing. The tax credits can be issued to developers, reducing their tax liability over ten years, or the credits can be awarded to nonprofit or public sector developers, who then sell the tax credits to the private sector and use the proceeds to help fund the affordable housing development.

#### **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**

The Community Development Block Grant program is funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) but is administered at the state level by the Local Government Division of the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration (DFA). The intent of the Community Development Block Program is to assist those who are most vulnerable in our communities through provision of affordable housing and services and the creation of employment opportunities through the retention and expansion of businesses.

### **9.2.2 | Local funding**

Traditional local funding sources include sales tax and property tax, the proceeds from which can either directly fund projects or be used to pay the debt for general obligation or revenue bonds issued to fund projects. New Mexico does not technically have sales tax, but instead charges a gross receipts tax, or GRT, to businesses. Additional levies or issuing of bonds by municipalities must be approved by residents via election.

# 9 Implementation



Communities throughout the country have had recent success in employing “value capture” approaches. Defined by state statute, these attempt to use the value created by new development to fund improvements associated with that development. Several value capture approaches are authorized by state law to be create by local governments.

In New Mexico, municipalities, counties, and certain sublocal entities, such as special districts, are encouraged to submit Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plans (ICIP) to the state Department of Finance and Administration (DFA). The ICIP covers five years and should be updated annually. The creation of an ICIP is intended to help local bodies plan their capital investments in advance and to allow public input into the project selection process. Submitting the ICIP to the state can help a municipality receive consideration for capital outlay funding from the state legislature or help a community’s chances of receiving Community Development Block Grant or other suballocated federal funds.

## **Municipal Infrastructure Gross Receipts Tax**

Municipalities in New Mexico may add up to a 0.25% tax on gross receipts to repay obligation bonds for infrastructure projects, fund public transit systems, or finance economic development plans and projects. However, elections are required for all infrastructure gross receipts taxes dedicated to economic development and for gross receipts taxes in excess of 0.125%.

## **Value Capture**

### *Special Assessment District (SAD)*

Special Assessment Districts can be started by municipalities or counties in New Mexico to fund specific projects that further the public health, safety, and welfare within the district. Assessments are paid by owners of property within the district to the governing body. These assessments are then used by the governing body to pay for bonds issued for the improvements. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, transportation infrastructure, sewer/water/drainage improvements, and recreation and open space projects.

Special Assessment Districts may be started in one of two ways: the Provisional Order Method, where the governing body initiates the district to protect public health, safety, and welfare; or the Petition Method, which requires two-thirds of benefiting properties to petition the governing body requesting the district. Following this, the governing body must follow a series of

# 9

## Implementation



legislated processes to establish the district. More information about the special assessment district legislation may be found in Chapter 3, Article 33 of the New Mexico State Statutes.

### Tax Increment Development District (TIDD)

The Tax Increment Development District is a financing mechanism reserved for municipalities and counties in New Mexico that ties the growth of the tax base in a particular area to the funding of improvements within that area. The intent of this innovative financing mechanism is to support economic development and job creation by investing in community infrastructure in growing areas.

When a TIDD is developed, the amount of taxes collected in the district that year is defined as the “base tax.” Moving forward, the tax increments (or the taxes collected in the district over and above the “base tax”) on gross receipts and/or property taxes go into a special fund for the district to pay for issued bonds. The governing body must develop an approved tax increment development plan that identifies the allocation of the tax increments collected by the district. The tax increments collected in the TIDD must first go to those projects identified in the tax increment development plan.

### Public Improvement District (PID)

Public Improvement Districts are a streamlined version of the Special Assessment District noted above. Like Special Assessment Districts, Public Improvement Districts are available to municipalities and counties to fund a wide array of public improvements that benefit the established district.

To form a PID, first, an application must be submitted to the governing body with a petition signed by the owners of at least 25% of the real property contained in the district. Then, the governing body must adopt a resolution and hold an election on the formation of the PID that is open to the owners of the real property in the PID. Once established, the governing body may finance public improvements in the district through property taxes, special levies, or use charges within the district.

### Impact Fees

Development impact fees aim to recoup the cost of building infrastructure by charging developers who are creating or adding to the need for improvements. There are currently no municipalities in the El Paso region or Southern New Mexico that assess a transportation-specific impact fee. Development impact fees have been generally well received in other states and municipalities in the United States.

# 9 Implementation



## 9.2.3 | Other Sources

### **Philanthropy**

From time to time, donations from a private philanthropist are given to improve infrastructure. There is a well-established history of private philanthropy in and around Sunland Park. Examples of recent philanthropy that will benefit the area's infrastructure include additional improvements by private developers that were over and above the improvements required by development conditions and a donation made by a local casino owner to facilitate cross-border movement.

### **North American Development Bank**

Sunland Park falls within the funding area of the North American Development Bank. With ratification of NAFTA, two binational institutions were established to support development of environmental infrastructure of the U.S./Mexico border region: North American Development Bank (NADB) and Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC). The NADB is a financial institution structured to finance infrastructure projects in the U.S./Mexico International Border Region. It is jointly capitalized and governed by the U.S. and Mexico. The BECC assists through the design and certification of projects, based on criteria agreed to by the two nations. The BECC focuses on defining projects, and the NADB concentrates on financing, implementation, and oversight of the project. According to the NADB Web site, the BECC and NADB operate collaboratively to enhance the well-being of residents in both nations through support of projects "...that will prevent, control or reduce environmental pollutants or contaminants, improve the drinking water supply, or protect flora and fauna, so as to improve human health, promote sustainable development, or contribute to a higher quality of life." In fact, the BECC and NADB merged in 2015, creating one single entity for supporting improvement projects in the border regions. Although specifically oriented to environmental conditions and the improvement thereof, transportation-related projects are possible within the framework of the institutional roles defined for the BECC/NADB.