

Planning Background for Doña Ana County Trails Summit

See Dan Carter's Visual Summary of Current Planning Efforts.doc

Besides the Mimbres Resource Management Plan (RMP), which is the most recent officially adopted Land Use Plan (LUP), other BLM plans for the area listed chronologically include:

- 1986 White Sands Resources Area RMP
- 1993 Mimbres RMP
- 1999 Mimbres RMP Amendment (RMPA)
- 2000 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Riparian and Aquatic Habitat Management in Las Cruces Field Office
- 2004 El Camino Real Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) and RMPA
- 2006 McGregor Range RMPA
- 2006 Tri-County RMP
- 2008 Mimbres RMPA
- 2015 Prehistoric Trackways National Monument RMP

Mimbres RMP (1993) - The most recent officially adopted BLM Land Use Plan.
Dona Ana Mountains ACEC (P.5-20)

- The State endangered Dona Ana *Mountainssonorella* (a land snail) occurs only in these mountains.
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for new ROWs in accordance with the conditions listed in Section 2 Lands Program.
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Maintain current livestock grazing practices.
- Close roads that provide access for illegal plant collecting.
- Manage for primitive and semi-primitive recreational opportunities.
- Develop primitive campsites in the "bowl" on north side (10 acres).
- Manage as VRM Class I

VRM Class I = "Preserve the existing character of the landscape. Natural ecological changes and very limited management activities are allowed. Any change to the characteristic landscape must not attract attention." P.2-57

- Manage for Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) semi-primitive non-motorized, semi-primitive motorized, and roaded natural classes.

Semi-primitive Non-motorized = “About 2,500 acres, lying at least 1/2 mile from the nearest point of motor vehicle access. The areas possess a predominantly natural landscape, where there are some evidences of other people, and where there are very few management controls. Activity opportunities include backpack camping, nature viewing, backcountry hunting, canoeing, and cross country skiing.” P.G-1

Semi-primitive Motorized = “about 2,500 acres, sometimes along unmaintained two-track routes. The areas have a mostly natural landscape where there are some evidences of other people (but numbers and frequency of contact seem to remain low) and where there are few management controls. Activity opportunities include day hunting, climbing, vehicle trail riding, mountain biking, hiking, and snowmobiling.” P.G-1-2

Roaded Natural = “The setting opportunity consists of areas alongside or near improved and maintained roads, with naturally appearing but human modified landscapes where there are often evidences and moderate numbers of people, and where there are visible management controls and developments. Activity opportunities consist of a mixture of resource and facility/vehicle-dependent recreation and generally include wood gathering, downhill skiing, fishing, off-highway vehicle driving, interpretative uses, motor boating, and vehicle camping.” P.G-2

Los Tules ACEC (P. 5-33)

- A large pithouse village partially excavated, with some sites located on private land.
- Retain all public land; acquire adjacent private land inholdings through exchange or purchase at fair market value, provided that the landowner is in agreement with such acquisition.
- Close to vehicle use.
- Exclude authorizations for new ROWs in accordance with the conditions listed in Section 2 Lands Program.
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Designate No Surface Occupancy (NSO) for fluid mineral leasing.
- Manage as VRM Class II

VRM Class II = “Retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the character of the landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.” P.2-57

- Manage for ROS semi-primitive non- motorized class.

San Diego Mountains ACEC (P.5-45)

- Petroglyphs on the north side of the San Diego Mountain. Only accessible by foot.
- Retain all public land; acquire adjacent private land inholdings through exchange or purchase at fair market value, provided that the landowner is in agreement with such acquisition.
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for new ROWs in accordance with the conditions listed in Section 2 Lands Program.
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Manage for research rather than interpretive value.
- Encourage or conduct rock art research.
- Manage as VRM Class II.

- Manage for ROS semi-primitive non-motorized class.

Robledo Mountains ACEC (P.5-43)

- “Some of the earliest known prehistoric habitation sites in southern New Mexico are in the Robledo Mountains.”
- High diversity of cacti including the State endangered button cactus and Scheer’s pincushion cactus and uncommon reptiles including the Madrean alligator lizard and Trans-pecos rat snake.
- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust land inholdings through exchange or purchase at fair market value, provided that the landowner is in agreement with such acquisition.
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for new ROWs in accordance with the conditions listed in Section 2 Lands Program.
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Acquire legal public access.
- Maintain current livestock grazing practices.
- Manage for primitive and semi-primitive recreation opportunities (no developed facilities).
- Manage as VRM Class I.
- Manage for ROS primitive and semi-primitive non-motorized and semi-primitive motorized classes.

Primitive = about 5,000 acres, lying more than 3 miles from the nearest point of motor vehicle access. These areas are essentially unmodified natural landscapes, where there is little evidence of other people and almost completely free of management controls. Activity opportunities include overnight backpack camping, nature photography, backcountry hunting, canoeing, and snowshoeing.

Rincon ACEC (P.5-41)

- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust land in south half of Section 32 through exchange or purchase at fair market value, provided that the landowner is in agreement with such acquisition.
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude new ROW authorizations outside existing sites in accordance with the conditions listed in Section 2 Lands Program.
- Close to mineral material sales outside existing rock quarry.
- Designate NSO for mineral leasing within 100 feet of petroglyph site.
- Evaluate potential to interpret the petroglyphs.
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Manage for semi-primitive non-motorized class.

Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC (P.5-39)

- Diverse limestone types that support unique cactus communities, containing Federal and State endangered species.
- Extensive view sheds. Endangered species – Organ Mountains chipmunk and desert bighorn sheep, Organ Mountains evening primrose and Sneed’s pincushion.

- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust and private land inholdings through exchange or purchase at fair market value, provided that the landowner is in agreement with such acquisition.
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails except for the scenic ACEC portion which is closed to vehicle use (8,840 acres).
- Exclude authorizations for new ROWs in accordance with the conditions listed in Section 2 Lands Program except within existing utility corridors. The east-west corridor near Vado and the ones running north and south will be confined to a width of 14 mile. The corridor in the Anthony Gap area will be confined to a width of ¼ mile.
- Withdraw from locatable mineral entry.
- Maintain existing Classification and Multiple Use (C&MU) Act classification for minerals until protective withdrawal established.
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Acquire legal public access.
- Manage mountainous portions (generally above 5,000 feet) as VRM Class I; manage other portions as VRM Class III or IV.
- Manage in accordance with Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan.
- Prohibit dogs and pets and require hiking on designated trails only in upper Ice Canyon above the drift fence.
- Manage for ROS primitive, semi-primitive non-motorized, semi-primitive, and roaded natural classes.
- Monitor the area in accordance with the concepts of limits of acceptable change with emphasis on the most biologically or culturally sensitive areas.

Butterfield Trail (P.5-48)

- Designate the Butterfield trail as an historic trail.
- Carried mail and passengers from St. Louis to San Fran up until 1861, afterwards was used as the southern emigrant trail to CA. Stage stations were built at watering points along the trail.
- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust and private land inholdings (with emphasis on stage stations) through exchange or purchase at fair market value, provided that the landowner is in agreement with such acquisition.
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Restrict authorizations for ROWs.
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Designate NSO for mineral leasing within 1/4 mile of trail.
- Manage in accordance with existing Cultural Resource Management Plan.
- Interpret with emphasis on passive interpretation such as signing.
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive motorized class.

Aden Lava Flow RNA (P.5-52)

- Nearly flat landform with steep walled depressions, crevices, pressure ridges, and lava tubes. Most prominent feature is Aden Crater in the NW portion of the RNA.
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for new ROWs in accordance with the conditions listed in Section 2 Lands Program.
- Close to mineral materials sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing
- Research and interpret paleontological and geological features.
- Establish research permitting/information exchange process.
- Designate parking area and trail to Crater.
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Manage for ROS primitive and semi-primitive non-motorized classes.
- Develop grazing activity plan.

Paleozoic Trackways RNA (P.5-57)

- Footprints and trackways of vertebrate and invertebrate animals from 240-280 mil years ago. Largest and scientifically most important Paleozoic fossil footprint discovery in western USA. Ancient animal life ranging from 11 foot long reptiles to small sized amphibians and insects.
- Designate 720 acres as a research natural area.
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for new ROWs in accordance with the conditions listed in Section 2 Lands Program.
- Withdraw from locatable mineral entry.
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Acquire legal public access.
- Manage in accordance with recommendations provided in trackways study legislation.
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive non-motorized class.

A Vision: Open Space and Trail System for Dona Ana, NM (No Date)

Citizens' Task Force for Open Space (OS) Preservation with input from the OS and Trail Network

- "An array of Core Natural Areas and River Valley Projects, linked together by a network of Connectors" P.I

Core Natural Areas	Core River Valley Projects	Connections
Organ-Franklin Mountains Dona Ana Mountains Potrillo-Aden Volcanic Area Greater Robledo Mountains Area Caballo-Jornada Area West Mesa Escarpment Tortugas mountain Mount. Cristo Rey Regional Open Space Parks	River habitat restoration sites Agricultural buffer along river Town and village buffers	Major Arroyo corridors and trails Irrigation canal and drain trails Rio Grande trail Columbus Highway Scenic Corridor and trail

- Plan emphasizes: diversity, connectivity, and cooperation.
- “GOALS from Page 2...
 - Promote opportunities for informal outdoor recreation, such as hiking, biking, horseback riding, and wildlife observation.
 - Preserve scenic views and opportunities for solitude and quiet nature enjoyment.
 - Preserve a natural drainage system throughout county to protect water quality and provide cost-effective flood control.
 - Maintain viable populations of native plants and animals by protecting critical habitat and by protecting wildlife movement corridors.
 - Preserve in an undeveloped condition unique or significant natural landforms.
 - Preserve for public enjoyment and learning significant historical and cultural sites.
 - Provide opportunities for non-motorized transportation throughout the county.
 - Provide opportunities for stationary and/or higher impact special use outdoor recreation, such as picnicking, fishing, and target shooting.
 - Preserve farmland for agricultural and environmental uses.
 - Complement urban growth planning and attract investment.”
- “CORE RIVER VALLEY PROJECTS...
 - The City of Las Cruces and Southwest Environmental Center led a cooperative effort to create the Picacho Wetlands west of the river near Mesilla.
 - The Picacho Wetlands are within the boundaries of the fledgling Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, which has received funding for the first phases of planning and development.
 - Within a few miles of the park, the City of Las Cruces and the Army Corps of Engineers have completed preliminary studies for the creation of the Alamo Drain Wetlands.
 - The Southwest Environmental Center is fund-raising to buy a 15-acre tract of land along the river north of Highway 70 with both water rights and remnant Bosque habitat.
 - The United States Section, International Boundary and Water Commission is completing an environmental impact statement for its management of the Rio Grande through Doña Ana County, which may identify sites suitable for habitat mitigation measures.
 - The City of Las Cruces’ Rio Grande Riparian Ecological Corridor Project Comprehensive Plan also identifies potential sites for habitat restoration along an 11- mile reach of the river.” P.6

- AGRICULTURAL BUFFERS...
 - Town of Mesilla preserves identity and historic character by protecting Ag lands around the town center through zoning.
 - DAC has been working with smaller communities on Village District and Community District zoning. Completed in La Union and underway in Vado.
 - OASIS CSA program at NMSU is “partnering with the Community Action Agency, the Community of Hope, and the City of Las Cruces to seek federal funding for urban vegetable gardens that could grow produce for social service agencies and provide employment opportunities.”
 - “The New Mexico Land Conservancy is a statewide land trust that can facilitate the voluntary preservation of working farms and ranches by accepting and monitoring donated conservation easements. This non-profit organization is in conversation with some Mesilla Valley farmers”” P.7

- “CONNECTORS...
 - Various planning documents (including the City of Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan and the Extraterritorial Zone Comprehensive Plan) call for the preservation of major arroyo corridors as natural open space and trail corridors.
 - This Vision proposes layering the MPO trail plan on top of policies which would protect a natural open space corridor along major arroyos (both in the City and County), as well as extending the trail plan to arroyos in areas beyond the jurisdiction of the MPO.
 - Elephant Butte Irrigation District is supportive of the concept of such a trail system, and is working with state legislators and others to resolve a liability issue brought about by an opinion from the State Attorney General.
 - The Rio Grande Riparian Ecological Corridor Project Comprehensive Plan calls for trails along an 11-mile reach of the river from the Mesilla Dam to Shalem Colony Road.
 - Columbus Highway Scenic Corridor. Traversing BLM lands west of Santa Teresa...the corridor also contains a segment of an abandoned railroad right-of-way, running all the way from El Paso to Hachita (in Grants County), which could be capitalized upon as a rails-to-trails project.” P.8-9

- “CONCLUSION...
 - Support the Open Space and Trail Network as a regional organization to facilitate communication among stakeholders, prioritization, and strategy development.
 - Encourage all user groups, including neighborhood associations and community organizations, to participate in the development and stewardship of particular projects.
 - Explore the creation of a Regional Open Space and Trail Authority for projects that cross jurisdictional boundaries.
 - Create regional development and conservation guidelines for resources that cross jurisdictional boundaries, such as an Arroyo Protection Plan, a Hillside and Escarpment Protection Plan, a Wildlife Conservation Plan, and a Farmland Conservation Plan.
 - Ask for assistance from organizations whose mission includes assisting communities in protecting open space and trail systems, such as the Trust for Public Lands, the National Park Service Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program, 1000 Friends of New Mexico, the Sonoran Institute, the Nature Conservancy, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, the New Mexico Land Conservancy, the Land Trust Alliance, the American Farmland Trust, and many, many more.

- Update the Vision regularly, to accommodate changes in our community and new ideas about the proposed open space and trail system.” P.16
- “ECONOMIC BENEFITS...
 - Parks and open space often increase the value of nearby properties, along with property tax revenue.
 - Parks and open space attract businesses and trained employees in search of a high quality of life.
 - Parks and open space attract tourists and boost recreation spending.
 - Parks and open space reduce obesity and health care costs by supporting exercise and recreation.
 - Working lands, such as farms and forests, usually contribute more money to a community than the cost of the services they require.
 - Conserved open space helps safeguard drinking water, clean the air, and prevent flooding—services provided much more expensively by other means.” P.18
- “RATIONALE...
 - Goal: Promote opportunities for informal outdoor recreation.
 - Goal: Provide scenic views and opportunities for solitude and quiet nature enjoyment.
 - Goal: Preserve a natural drainage system throughout county.
 - Goal: Maintain populations in the County of native plants and animals that are viable over the long term, and help to maintain viable populations in the region by providing connected corridors that allow movement of animals through the county.
 - Goal: Preserve in an undeveloped condition unique or significant natural landforms.
 - Goal: Preserve for public enjoyment and learning significant historical and cultural sites.
 - Goal: Provide opportunities for non-motorized transportation throughout the county.
 - Goal: Provide opportunities for stationary and/or higher impact special use outdoor recreation.
 - Goal: Preserve farmland for agricultural and environmental uses.
 - Goal: Complement urban growth planning and attract investment.” P.19-21

One Valley, One Vision (2012)

Dona Ana County/City of Las Cruces/Las Cruces MPO

- Increase access to non-motorized transportation options to promote healthy living and provide mobility alternatives.
- Promote increased tourism, including rock art and native historic sites and agricultural tourism.
- Expand agricultural museums in the area.
- Develop more tourism and activity around equestrian uses.
- Implement nature-based tourism highlighting the region’s public lands, open space, natural beauty, biodiversity and year-round opportunities.
- Develop tourism along the Rio Grande.
- Create walkable neighborhoods.
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.

Issues:

- The Rio Grande Project and the Elephant Butte Irrigation District were established for delivery of irrigation water, and currently have exclusive control of its use.
 - Doña Ana County is home to open space, arroyos, mountains, and native habitat not currently protected through a regional approach.
 - Public transportation access to many open space recreation sites does not exist.
 - Non-native species such as salt cedar and horsetail consume large volumes of water and impede flow of water through the river, canals, and drains.
 - Transportation planning and implementation typically do not incorporate wildlife corridors.
- Possible future projects:
- Development of more indoor recreation facilities, continued development of a national system of public lands, and development of a regional park with active and passive recreation that provides broad appeal. As the parks and recreation system grows, it is important to factor the required maintenance costs and travel distances for residents.
 - Approximately two-thirds of respondents agreed that the region needs more parks, with more people responding for active and indoor recreation opportunities.
 - Source: Vision 2040 Mail Survey 2008, there is no comprehensive list or map of critical and sensitive natural areas.
 - Goal 6-1-8: Encourage retention of open space, scenic aspects of rural areas, entranceways to urban areas, and transition areas between urban areas.

Comprehensive Plan 2040 Administrative Update (2013)

City of Las Cruces

- **“GOAL 4: Enhance the quantity and quality of parks, programs, and associated facilities to satisfy the recreational, cultural, and educational needs of residents.**
- 4.1 Increase the number of existing facilities in an existing park where needed as per the Parks & Recreation Master Plan, as amended.
- 4.2 Introduce new facilities in existing parks as found within the Parks & Recreation Master Plan, as amended.
- 4.3 Encourage an even distribution of parks and recreational facilities throughout the city.
- 4.4 Encourage a distribution of activities in all parks and recreational facilities throughout the city.
- 4.5 Establish standards and policies for trails, pocket, neighborhood, and community parks.
 - a. Provide a combined service standard of 1 acre per 1,000 persons of developed neighborhood and pocket parks.
 - b. Provide a combined service standard of 3 acres per 1,000 persons of developed community parks.
 - c. Pocket parks shall serve those who live in the surrounding area and shall generally serve a population of 500 - 2,500. Amusements, circuses, carnivals, craft fairs, etc., shall be prohibited; only recreational activities and neighborhood affairs, such as, concerts, shall be permitted.
 - d. Neighborhood parks shall serve those people who live in the surrounding area and generally serve a population of 1,000 - 7,500. Amusements, circuses, carnivals, craft fairs, etc., shall be prohibited; only recreational activities and neighborhood affairs, such as, concerts, shall be permitted.

- e. Community parks shall serve all residents living in Las Cruces. Community parks shall generally range from 10 - 100 acres in size. Recreational activities, concerts, craft fairs, and small amusements shall be permitted.
- f. Provide a combined trail service standard of 0.25 miles per 1,000 persons.” P.35
- **“GOAL 5: Provide a comprehensive, attractive, cost- and resource-efficient system of parks and recreation facilities responsive to the needs and desires of the community.” P.6**
- **“GOAL 10: Provide multiple mobility options and connections to move within and outside Las Cruces.**
- 10.1 Encourage a comprehensive trail system which provides linkage between parks, recreational facilities, and other activity centers. Trails should be multi-purpose and allow all citizens an opportunity to use them. Trails should be easily accessible and well maintained.
 - a. Continue to work with Elephant Butte Irrigation District, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation and other state and federal agencies so that the lateral and drainage way trail network may be expanded and improved.
 - b. Collaborate efforts with local governments to link facilities in order to provide connectivity between facilities for a more regional approach toward recreational planning.
 - c. Utilize arroyo buffers as trails.
 - d. Develop trails within existing easements.
 - e. Incorporate maintenance and safety strategies, such as lighting, landscaping and signage, into trail design.” P.46
- **“GOAL 22: Protect those natural resources and features unique to the region.” P.79**
- “46.6 Work cooperatively with local schools, New Mexico State University, clubs, individuals, businesses, religious organizations, neighborhood groups and other similar organizations on the design, creation, connectivity, use and maintenance of trails, parks, facilities and open space.” P.124
- “49.13 Acquire easements or purchase major arroyos and their buffers for public uses as drainage, open space networks and alternate transportation modes.

Develop arroyo systems, rights-of-way and City-owned land as multi-use open spaces, stressing the development of recreational trails and other connections between parks and other public and private open spaces, maintenance of natural landscape and aesthetic drainage improvements.” P.131

City of Las Cruces Arroyo Management Plan (2015)

The City of Las Cruces

Two Elements from Purpose relate to trails: 1. Increase protected open space; and 2. Increase trails, trail connectivity, and recreational opportunities.

“In 1967, for unknown reasons, the New Mexico legislature cloned the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Act and enacted NMSA Sections 72-17-1 through 72-17-103, entitled the “Las Cruces Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority,” which created an independent Authority to operate a flood control system throughout the Las Cruces area. The Authority had less taxing authority than provided in the 1965 municipal Flood Control statute and there is some uncertainty as to the historical status of the Authority.” P.6

“The Parks and Recreation Master Plan, updated in 2013, suggests integrating the siting of proposed trail segments into the development design process and requiring development projects along designated trail routes to incorporate the trail as part of the project. It also supports the MPO’s Transport 2040’s Trail Plan by calling for a comprehensive parks and trails facilities mapping program that promotes active lifestyles in Las Cruces and integrating arroyos into the trail system. Additional policies address trail accessibility for all users and promote an open space protection program.”... “At present, the 2001 Zoning Code as amended has three zoning districts related to open space and arroyos: Flood Control (FC); Open Space-Recreation (OS-R); and Open Space-Natural/Conservation (OS-NC).” P.8

“These dams are currently required by state law to drain their impounded water within 96 hours from the end of the storm. They also allow groundwater recharge by ponding runoff and allowing it to slowly infiltrate into the aquifer. In addition, through cooperative planning, these dams can fulfill other purposes such as habitat restoration, open space preservation, and public recreation.” P.26

“Low impact development (LID) and green infrastructure (GI) techniques can reduce the volume of runoff that reaches arroyos.” P.40

Parks and Open Space (OS) as discussed on P.56-59:

- Development should be placed further back from the 100-year flood zone to allow for more trail possibilities along arroyos.
- OHV’s have caused damage to vegetation and wildlife and require dedicated areas with fencing and signage.
- Equestrian trails are sparse and need better design standards that consider multiple users.
- East-west linear parks along arroyos may be a future possibility.
- Funding sources need to be identified for OS and arroyo buffer acquisitions by the city and to ensure maintenance and repairs.
- Better connections between “schools, neighborhoods, commuter bike routes and major commercial area” are needed.
- Mesilla Valley MPO proposed trail plan follows arroyos and could help provide for some of the needed connectivity for non-motorized transportation.
- “High quality of life – including parks, aesthetics open space, and easy access to the outdoors.” P.57
- Often more cost-effective to maintain OS to control flooding rather than expensive infrastructure.
- Conservation easements are good.

Goals and Policies as discussed on P.60-66:

- Growth will likely have effects on the following arroyos: Fillmore, Dona Ana, Moreno, and Tortugas.
- “Construct trails outside the designated 100-year flood zone boundary on an arroyo.” P.64
- “Update MPO Trail Plan to improve connectivity of trails between arroyos, parks and other public open spaces, such as SLO and BLM land.” P.64

“Although one may not think immediately of economic development when considering arroyo management, key research results found by a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation survey conclude that open space has a positive effect on residential property values and that environmental protection and the

mental health benefits afforded by open space protection should be considered indirect positive effects.”
P.76

El Camino Real – Corridor Enhancement Plan (2015)

Dona Ana County and the Camino Real Consortium

- Camino Real Consortium, of the Viva Dona Ana Initiative is made up of: Dona Ana County, City of Las Cruces, Town of Mesilla, Colonias Development Council, South Central Regional Transit District, El Paso MPO, City of Sunland Park, South Central COG, NMSU, Tierra del Sol Housing Corp, Mesilla Valley MPO, and La Semilla Food Center.
- 1,500 mile route stretching from Mexico City to Santa Fe (Not sure how many miles pass through Dona Ana County)
- “Thirty-two percent of the population along the corridor lives below the poverty level.” P.IV
- To be considered a National Scenic Byway, the route must contain at least one of the following intrinsic qualities: scenic, natural, historic, cultural, archeological, and recreational. El Camino Real in Doña Ana County contains all six intrinsic qualities. P.4
- Future projects should either preserve or improve upon these qualities.

Corridor Identity:

1. Agriculture: Actual agricultural production: vineyards/pecan groves/chile fields.
2. History, Culture, & Art: Town plazas (Mesilla, Doña Ana) Churches, Fort Selden, and art galleries.
3. Environment: Rio Grande, Leasburg State Park, Robledos, and the Chihuahuan Desert.
4. Transportation: Railroad, Historic El Camino Real, and the Spaceport.
 - “Dedicated bicycle facilities do not exist in any location along the corridor. However, the corridor through Las Cruces and south along NM 28 is currently identified as an existing bike route by the Las Cruces MPO and is often used by bicyclists as they share the road with vehicular traffic.” P.22

Concepts for Catalytic Projects:

1. Wayfinding and Signage
 - Gateways, Highway, and Wayfinding signage: “A hierarchy of larger, more comprehensive signage that highlights a variety of cultural and historic points of interest and directs locals and visitors to the corridor and points of interest along the route.” P.28
2. Travel and Transportation
 - Transportation Goal: “To create comfortable places for walking within communities. A majority of El Camino Real contains unpaved shoulders that parallel the roadway; this is also true of a majority of the communities along its route.” P.29
 - Transportation Toolkit: “Installation of sidewalks, planting of shade trees where pedestrians would walk, and installation of pedestrian scale lighting that complements the local architecture.” P.29
 - Bicycle Infrastructure - 1ST PHASE: Between La Union and Mesilla (24mi) 6’ striped bike lane continuous with motor traffic. LONGTERM: “A dedicated 6-8’ bike lane that runs the entirety of El Camino Real within Dona Ana County.” P.30
3. Local Agriculture

- Promote culinary destinations (restaurants, wineries, etc.) “Over 1,000 Dona Ana County farms smaller than 10 acres as of 2007) with additional buyers, locally and abroad.” P.31
- 4. Community Revitalization
 - The restoration and enhancement of plazas, churches, and other cultural landmarks that are identified in the report, which are tied to the history of the corridor: e.g. La Union, San Miguel, Mesilla, and La Mesa. P.33
 - The renovation and revitalization of certain commercial and art districts: e.g. Hatch, La Mesa, San Miguel, La Union, Mesilla, and Sunland Park. P.33
- Bicycle Infrastructure scoping on P.53: Minimum ROW needed for bike lane is 36’ and, “The majority of the corridor [along NM28] has this amount of right-of-way available, with the exception of one small segment just north of the intersection with NM 182.” P.53
- There are no bicycle trail connections from NM28 to the Rio Grande, but EBID arroyos provide potential connections.
- Cost estimate for the 24-mile project would be 3.36mil in the short-medium term and 13mil in the long term to complete 92 miles of corridor.

Parks and Multi-Use Trails in the Doña Ana County Comprehensive Plan: A Health Impact Assessment (2015)

Dona Ana PLACE MATTERS Team

- “Aim is to insert language about health into all aspects of the 20-year Comprehensive Plan and the accompanying Unified Development Code in an effort to eliminate systemic and unjust health disparities and achieve health equity.” P.1
- Access to outdoor recreational and active transit spaces is influenced by three factors: P.2
 1. Proximity: ~50% of residents are not within walking distance (1/4mi) of a park or trail.
 2. Facilities: Outdoor recreation spaces lack facilities e.g. lighting, fencing, bathrooms, water fountains, seating, shade
 3. Safety: safety concerns persist e.g. trash, loose dogs, drug use, uneven pavement, unsafe drivers, lack of sidewalks
- Physical inactivity for adults was slightly higher countywide than the state of NM’s rate for 2011-2013, DAC 26% vs NM 24% and youth who had ‘participated in no daily physical activity’, 2011 data, DAC 18% vs NM 13%. P.7
- If a shared use agreement were enacted between school districts and the county, 86% of county residents would live within ¼ mile of a park compared to 50% currently. P.25
- “Recreational spaces without facilities like drinking fountains, restrooms, seating, lighting, paved trails, courts and playgrounds are less likely to be used by residents.” These spaces are not attractive and there needs to be an asset management plan (NOT CURRENTLY included in the 1st draft of the Comp Plan) for improving existing park facilities or disinvestment will continue to decrease usage over time. P.31-32
- “Insufficient lighting and law enforcement, loose dogs, substance use, vandalism, fears of violence, and speeding cars all contribute to a perceived lack of safety that reduces usage of existing parks and trails.” P.32
- Recommendations P.32

1. Improve opportunities for access
2. Establish additional parks and multi-use trails
3. Adopt a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach
4. Access diverse funding sources

PLAN2040 Comprehensive Plan (2015)

Camino Real Consortium > Dona Ana County

- The fourth priority listed in the chapter on Natural Lands: “Develop a statewide trail system.” P.61
- Reference to One Valley, One Vision 2040 Regional Plan, targeted approach for protecting open space areas: The Rio Grande corridor; Scenic vistas and visible hillsides; Working agricultural areas in or near communities; and Linkages for trails, trailheads, and connection of open space parcels. P.61
- “A trail system for recreation, health and fitness, and transportation. SCORP recommends statewide trail network to promote both economic development via tourism and health via increased activity.” P.62
- “GOAL3.2 Provide Usable Civic Space and Protect Sensitive Areas...
 - ACTION Where possible, the open spaces and civic spaces should be linked together with bicycle and walking trails. This will require significant coordination between municipalities and the County.” P.65
- “GOAL3.4 Encourage Active Recreation Options to Improve County Health...
 - ACTION Improve County Trail Network.
 - Leverage new funding source for design and construction of multi-use paths. Funds are available from the Mesilla Valley and the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Update the Doña Ana County Open Space / Trails Master Plan and develop a County-wide Civic and Open Space Master Plan. Improve inter-agency cooperation to utilize irrigation service routes as a part of the network.
 - Provide More Transportation Choice.
 - Enhance Economic Competitiveness.
 - Support Existing Communities.
 - RESPONSIBLE ENTITIES
 - Community Development Department
 - Facilities and Parks Department
 - Elephant Butte Irrigation District
 - U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission” P.67
- “G10.4 New Communities Should Enable Active Lifestyles...
 - ACTION Develop Ordinances and Policies that Encourage Pedestrian and Bicycling Facilities.
 - Require complete streets in new developments and incentivize trail networks and parks within walking distance of residential developments. This contributes to a broader transportation network and a reduction in carbon emissions, as well as improving the health of the community.
 - Support Existing Communities
 - Coordinate Policies and Investments

- Provide More Transportation Choice
- RESPONSIBLE ENTITIES
 - Community Development Department
 - Engineering/Roads Department
 - Facilities & Parks Department” P.138

VIVA New Mexico: A Statewide Plan for Outdoor Adventure (2016)

New Mexico State Parks

Southwest Region: Residents were most likely to wish there were more trails, swimming areas, and restrooms in their local area.

Key Findings Actions	Actions
Residents suppress activities due to lack of facilities, and they are most likely to say current facilities and amenities do not meet their needs.	To better meet needs, balance improving and maintaining existing hiking, cycling, camping, and swimming facilities with building new facilities.
Lowest level of satisfaction with general recreation opportunities and opportunities for youth.	Along with the Southeast region, prioritize this area for in-flow of funds, new construction, and improvement.

New Mexico State University (NMSU) Physical & Facilities Master Plan (Draft 2017-2027)

NMSU Las Cruces Campus Master Plan Executive Committee

- Pedestrian access will be improved with additional sidewalks around the perimeter of the campus will make pedestrian travel safer. Foot traffic around the residential and academic core, along with the pedestrian malls for pedestrian movement around campus, is good. There are areas of conflict along pedestrian pathways, mostly entering and exiting parking lots. The University has been involved in city planning efforts and will be working to connect to surrounding multi-use trails whenever possible. This effort will improve transportation to and from the campus.

District 9 - West Campus and Heritage Farm

- An arboretum, walkways, park settings, setting areas and multi-use gathering points will also serve as a tourist destination and a place for community members to enjoy. Experiential learning for K-12 and guided tours and will incorporate historical acequias/agricultural waterways to prove importance of water in the Southwest. NMSU plans to connect walkways and trails along University Avenue to various attractions throughout the City of Las Cruces.

Arrowhead Park

- Tie to Sisbarro Park trail system and campus bike paths

Integrate with Metropolitan Planning Organization regional trail system

“The Alamogordo Physical Plant building needs renovations, as does the Campbell Art Center. The Advanced Technology Center was constructed such that expansion would be relatively easily accomplished to accommodate growth. The land north of the Tays Center that is currently dedicated as a walking trail is set aside as a land bank for future expansion.” P.84-85

Las Cruces Active Transportation Plan (Draft 2018)

The City of Las Cruces

<https://www.activelascruces.com/document-library>

Michael to summarize.