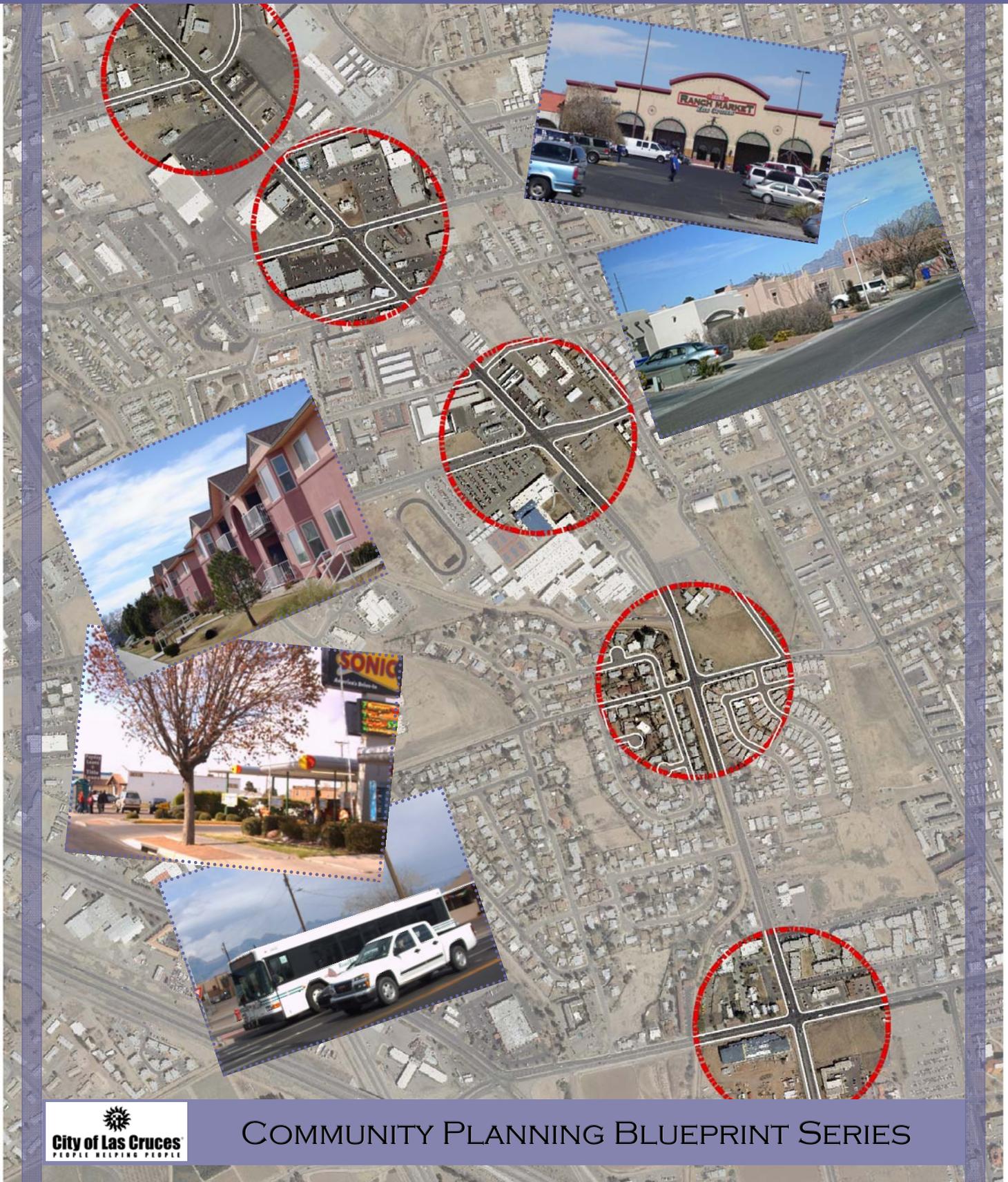
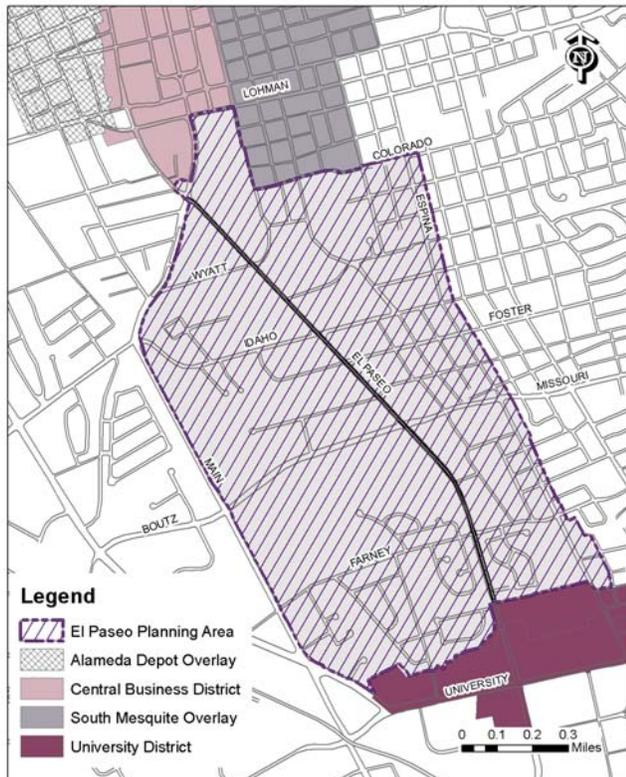


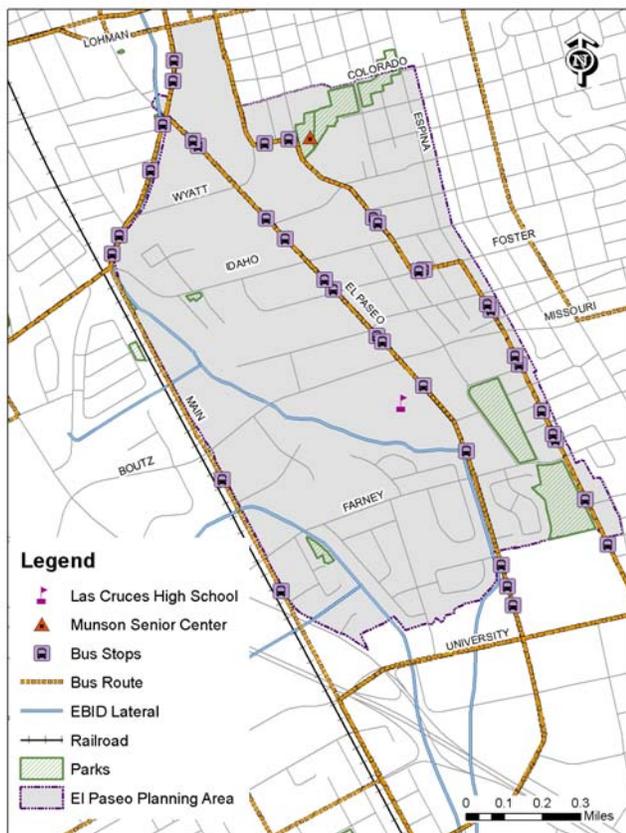
# EL PASEO CORRIDOR COMMUNITY BLUEPRINT



# EL PASEO CORRIDOR COMMUNITY BLUEPRINT



MAP 1: POTENTIAL PLAN BOUNDARIES<sup>1</sup>



MAP 2: EXISTING FACILITIES<sup>1</sup>

## Background

El Paseo Road is a Minor Arterial extending 1.7 miles from Main Street to University Avenue. The arterial provides a critical north-south link between the Central Business District/Downtown and its adjacent historic districts, and New Mexico State University (NMSU) (Map 1).

Through a long public engagement process, *Picturing El Paseo*, conducted in 2010–2011, City staff discovered what citizens from all walks of life want and need along the corridor. This input led to a Vision for El Paseo that reflects these concerns and desires for the future of the corridor:

*The El Paseo Corridor is a neighborhood built on shared ideas and a common desire for economic growth and healthy living. It is an attractive, peaceful place where people feel welcome, safe, and comfortable and a hot spot for local shopping, eateries, and businesses.*

*El Paseo Road is a thriving transit-oriented area where businesses, residents, visitors and the City work together to create a place of sustainability, one that is pedestrian and bicycle friendly and addresses the needs of all citizens.*

This document articulates goals that, if carried out, will help to fulfill the public’s vision for El Paseo Road. It also provides recommendations on how to achieve these goals.

## Issues, Challenges & Opportunities

Essentially a commercial corridor, El Paseo Road is home to over 300 active businesses that provide a variety of goods and services to the community.<sup>1</sup> The majority of businesses within the planning area draw in a large proportion of their customers from outside this trade area.<sup>2</sup> This implies, among other things, that these businesses could benefit from additional housing (potential customers) in the area.

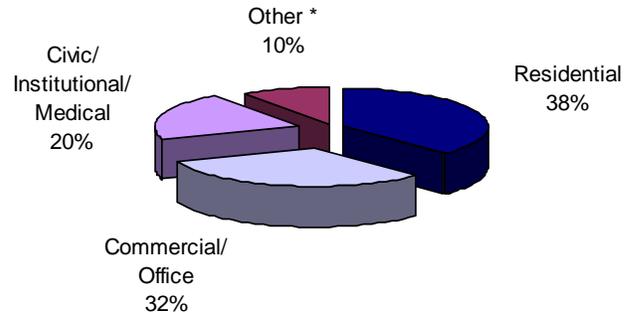
The El Paseo planning area has existing housing opportunities that range from single family subdivisions to apartment complexes consisting of a

# EL PASEO CORRIDOR COMMUNITY BLUEPRINT

diverse population in terms of age, income level, race and ethnicity.<sup>2</sup> Land uses are varied (Fig 1) but segregated (Map 3). This lessens the likelihood for walking in the area and increases the need for a vehicle to access businesses.

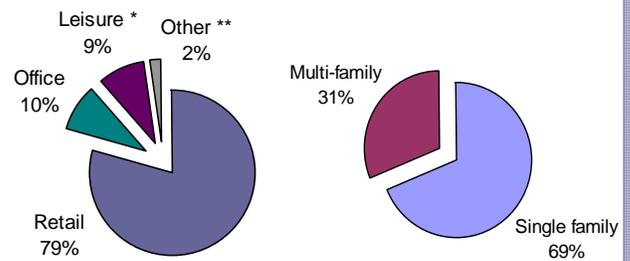
The corridor has historically been auto-oriented and is mainly comprised of small strip malls with multiple access points. Sidewalks are intermittent or in disrepair, and there is an absence of bike lanes. According to the Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Idaho/El Paseo intersection had the city's highest crash rates in a three-year (2004-2006) analysis of crash data. In 2010, over 40 crashes on El Paseo were reported, making El Paseo one of the most dangerous corridors in the city.<sup>3</sup> The 2010 Road Safety Assessment (RSA) performed on the El Paseo corridor identifies several design-related issues that would improve user-safety. Recommendations include limiting the number of access points (median crossovers and commercial driveways); reducing turning radii and lane widths; improving sidewalks and pedestrian landing areas; providing raised medians, etc. Such recommendations coincide with the results of *Picturing El Paseo* in which participants placed a strong emphasis on improving conditions for cyclists and pedestrians.<sup>4</sup> In an effort to incorporate some of these recommendations, the City is currently working on funded projects such as re-construction of the El Paseo/Idaho intersection and raised medians at El Paseo and Wyatt.

Besides its function as a connector of two major activity centers, the El Paseo corridor has the potential to develop into its own destination. A multi-modal transportation system along the corridor would not only make housing, jobs and commercial areas more accessible, it could substantially enhance the appeal of the corridor among diverse groups of users and contribute to placemaking. Stakeholders and members of the public have also expressed a strong desire for a more robust public transit system along the corridor. Roadrunner Transit has an existing bus route along El Paseo Road, which could be expanded or supplemented to meet latent demand and new requirements as the corridor develops into a more pedestrian-oriented place.



\* Properties with no structure; utility/ transportation-related structures

FIGURE 1 : EXISTING LAND USE <sup>1</sup>

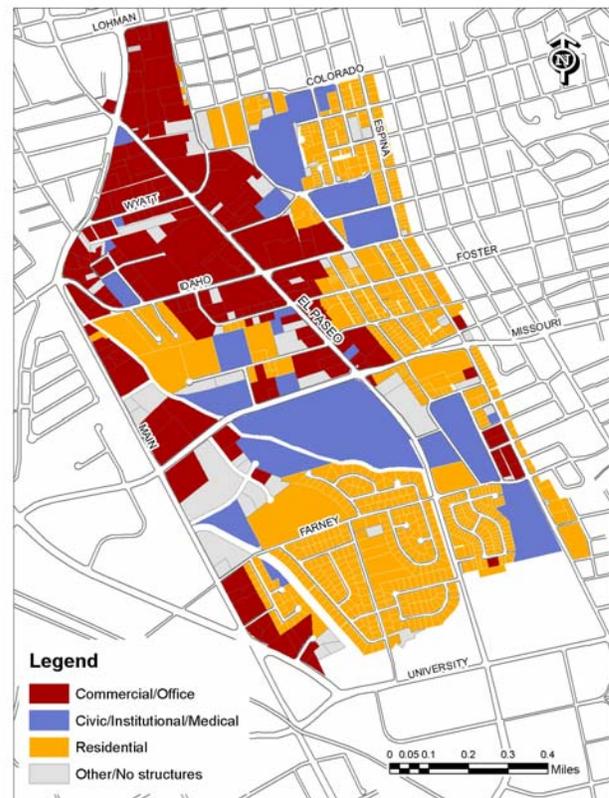


\* Includes restaurants, movie theater, hotel/hotel-like structures

\*\* Includes properties with no structures

FIG. 2 : COMMERCIAL <sup>1</sup>

FIG. 3 : RESIDENTIAL <sup>1</sup>



MAP 3 : EXISTING LAND USE <sup>1</sup>

# EL PASEO CORRIDOR COMMUNITY BLUEPRINT

Additionally, the City's Long Range Transit Plan has identified El Paseo Road as a strong candidate for transit-oriented development. The Affordable Housing Strategies Plan supports such development along the corridor for its purposes as well.

The *Picturing El Paseo* process demonstrated public interest in utilizing environmentally-friendly alternatives along the corridor. Green infrastructure, drought-tolerant shade trees, facilities such as bike lanes, trails and public spaces/parks were ranked high in priority. Such amenities also contribute to healthy living and improved aesthetics, both of which are important components of the Vision for El Paseo.

Also during the public input process, developers and property owners expressed a desire for greater flexibility in development or redevelopment of the area. Opportunities exist for innovative development practices that allow for a greater degree of adaptability in land and building use.

The introduction of Pros Ranch Market in 2011 has spurred a greater interest in adjacent properties and enhances the potential for redevelopment in the area. Additionally, the Las Cruces School District has plans to redesign the Las Cruces High School campus to address the access and pedestrian problems related to the student population. This could influence design and building form in the surrounding areas. As downtown revitalization continues and NMSU carries out more of its master planning efforts, the City anticipates continued development and road improvements on El Paseo Road over the coming decade.

## Goals

In order to address the Vision for El Paseo and the issues noted above, the following goals have emerged as the main points in evaluating redevelopment options and improvements to the El Paseo planning area:

1. Redevelop El Paseo Road as a safer and more user-friendly corridor; prioritize equitable design to ensure pedestrians, bicyclists, transit-users, automobile users and people with varying abilities have equal opportunity in accessing uses along the corridor.
2. Allow diverse land uses and housing types to locate in proximity to each other in order to achieve a walkable, inclusive and economically viable area.
3. Allow flexibility in land and building uses such that development can respond to economic and ownership changes.
4. Improve the aesthetic appeal of the corridor; foster a "sense of place" or community identity along the corridor.
5. Encourage climate-responsive and environmentally sustainable development practices, such as traditional building forms, green building techniques and the use of green infrastructure along the corridor.
6. Support active living and healthy community design through appropriate guidelines and regulations for the planning area.

## Actions

The goals outlined for the El Paseo planning area indicate the need for consideration of a regulatory measure, such as an overlay or alternative code, which addresses the quality of the built environment without being overly restrictive on land/building use.

Although each of the following recommended actions supports specific goals identified for the planning area, it should be noted that the majority of these are mutually supportive and can be efficiently incorporated into one comprehensive planning document, such as a form-based code/manual.

- Develop and adopt a form-based code for the El Paseo planning area. (Goals 1- 6)
- Design El Paseo Road as a Complete Street. (Goals 1 & 6)
- Implement the RSA recommendations for El Paseo Road as appropriate within the context of the Complete Street concept. (Goals 1 & 6)

# EL PASEO CORRIDOR COMMUNITY BLUEPRINT

- Incorporate the Institute of Transportation Engineers' recommended practices in *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach*, as they pertain to the overarching vision for the plan area. (Goals 1, 2, 4 & 6)
  - Advance the City's transit plan and affordable housing strategies by encouraging higher density housing along and around the corridor. (Goals 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6)
  - Adopt policies that require, or at minimum encourage, affordable housing units to be integrated with other housing options within the same development. (Goal 2)
  - Develop standards to guide the evolution of destination-oriented and/or transit-oriented developments with distinctive, human-scaled urban environments and civic spaces. (Goals 1-6)
  - Adopt urban design and architectural standards that can improve the aesthetics and user-appeal of the streetscape. (Goals 4 & 6)
  - Adopt standards to incorporate green development and building techniques. (Goals 4, 5 & 6)
  - Investigate options to incentivize redevelopment such as investing in infrastructure improvements, pilot/catalyst projects, public-private partnerships; shared parking provisions, density bonus allowances; streamlining the application process, and organizing design competitions and charrettes. (Goals 1- 6)
4. 98% of respondents indicated that mobility safety was a high priority, 94% indicated that bicycle facilities were important and 90% indicated that proper sidewalks were important.

## References

- Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (Esri) and Infogroup.
- Las Cruces Metropolitan Organization (MPO) <[www.las-cruces.org](http://www.las-cruces.org)>.
- Picturing El Paseo project page, City of Las Cruces website. <[www.las-cruces.org](http://www.las-cruces.org)>.
- 2010 Road Safety Assessment report, Picturing El Paseo project page, City of Las Cruces website. <[www.las-cruces.org](http://www.las-cruces.org)>.

## Related Plans & Policies

1. City of Las Cruces Affordable Housing Strategies Plan, 2009. Resolution No. 10-057.
2. City of Las Cruces Long Range Transit Plan, 2012. Resolution No. 12-127.
3. Complete Streets Guiding Principles, 2009. Resolution No. 09-301.
4. Transport 2040: 2010 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Las Cruces MPO.

## Notes

1. City of Las Cruces.
2. Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (Esri) and Infogroup.
3. Las Cruces Metropolitan Organization (MPO) <[www.las-cruces.org](http://www.las-cruces.org)>.

# EL PASEO CORRIDOR COMMUNITY BLUEPRINT

The following is a composite of visualization sketches and images that were part of the public visioning process, *Picturing El Paseo*. The sketches were conceptualized and drawn by Las Cruces residents; the images are samples of the preferences shown by Las Cruces residents during the Visual Preference Survey™ and the Photovoice® exercise; the graphic of a Complete Street cross section is an example of how a mixed-use corridor may be configured.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE: BIOSWALE IN PARKING LOT



TWO OR THREE STORY BUILDINGS



ARCHITECTURAL STYLE/BUILDING FRONTAGE RELATES TO STREET



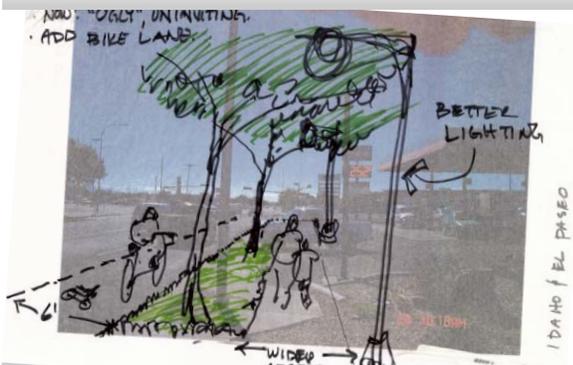
SKETCH SHOWING PUBLIC TRANSIT, BUILDINGS LINING SIDEWALKS & LIMITED CURB CUTS



COMPLETE STREET: MIXED-USE CORRIDOR



COMMERCIAL SPACE WITH RESIDENTIAL ABOVE



SKETCH SHOWING BIKE LANE, STREET TREES, BETTER LIGHTING & WIDER SIDEWALKS



TERMINATING VISTA, MEDIAN/CROSSWALKS, STREETSCAPE

Note: All graphics are for illustrative purposes only; they do not represent any existing or proposed redevelopment along El Paseo Road.

# EL PASEO CORRIDOR COMMUNITY BLUEPRINT

## Glossary

**Complete Street:** a street that is designed and operated to enable safe and convenient access for all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities).

*For further information:*

Transport 2040, Las Cruces MPO  
Complete Streets resolution, City of Las Cruces;  
The National Complete Streets Coalition  
<http://www.completestreets.org/>

**Form-based Code (FBC):** a regulatory tool that prioritizes physical form over use. A FBC addresses the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. Form-based codes are drafted to implement a community plan. They try to achieve a community vision based on time-tested forms of urbanism.

*For further information:*

Form-based Codes Institute  
<http://www.formbasedcodes.org/what-are-form-based-codes>

**Healthy Community Design:** an approach to community design based on the realization that the way we design and build our communities can affect our physical and mental health. Healthy community design integrates evidence-based health strategies into community planning, transportation, and land-use decisions.

*For further information,*

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Healthy Community Design Initiative  
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/>

**Placemaking:** a multi-faceted approach to creating places that have meaning to people. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the goal of ultimately creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well being.

*For further information:*

Project for Public Spaces  
[http://www.pps.org/articles/what\\_is\\_placemaking/](http://www.pps.org/articles/what_is_placemaking/)

**Public Realm:** all exterior places, linkages and elements of the built form that are physically and/or visually accessible to the public, such as streets, building facades and open spaces.

**Transit Oriented Development (TOD):** a compact mixed-use development, usually within a half-mile radius of a transit stop/station, designed to encourage the use of public transportation.

*For further information:*

Transport 2040, Las Cruces MPO;  
The Center for Transit-Oriented Development  
<http://www.ctod.org/>

## Acknowledgements

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### DATE OF ADOPTION

Month, Day, 2012  
Resolution No.



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