PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
FOR THE
CITY OF LAS CRUCES
City Council Chambers
May 28, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
Sharon Thomas, Chair
Harvey Gordon, Vice Chair
Roberta Gran, Member
Abraham Sanchez, Member
Russ Smith, Member

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:
James Bennett, Member
LaVonne Muniz, Member

STAFF PRESENT:
Larry Nichols, Director Community Development Department, CLC
Katherine Harrison- Rogers, Senior Planner, CLC
Sara Gonzales, Planner, CLC
Adam Ochoa, Planner, CLC
Robert Cabello, CLC Legal Staff
Becky Baum, Recording Secretary, RC Creations, LLC

I. CALL TO ORDER (6:00)

Thomas: Thank you. Good evening and welcome to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Today is April 28th and it's 6:00. May, sorry. The weather just seems so tame all the time. I can't remember what month I'm in. First order of business is call to order. Becky will you call to see who's here?

Baum: Board Member Russ Smith.

Smith: Yes.

Baum: Board Member Adam Sanchez.

Sanchez: Yes, Sanchez, yes.

Baum: Board Member Roberta Gran.

Gran: Yes.

Baum: Board Member LaVonne Muniz is absent. Board Member James Bennett is absent. Board Member Harvey Gordon.
II. CONFLICT OF INTEREST
At the opening of each meeting, the chairperson shall ask if any member on the Commission or City staff has any known conflict of interest with any item on the agenda.

Thomas: Next on the agenda is conflict of interest. Does anybody have any conflict of interest with the items that are on the agenda for tonight? Seeing none we'll move ahead.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
a. April 23, 2019

Thomas: The next item is approval of the minutes. Unfortunately, Commissioner Gordon and I were both absent and there are only three people left so we don't have a majority to vote on them, so I think we'll just put them off until the next meeting. We'll move that to the next meeting.

IV. POSTPONEMENTS - NONE

Thomas: Postponements, we don't have any. Public participation.

Ochoa: Madam Chair. If I may interject. Actually we do have one postponement.

Thomas: We do?

Ochoa: We do, yes ma'am. It is a request to postpone indefinitely case 19ZO5000051. If we can have a motion, second, and a vote on that please to postpone that.

Thomas: So we should just have a motion to accept the postponement.

Gordon: I make a motion that we postpone, did you say indefinitely? Yes, indefinitely case number 19ZO5000051.

Smith: Second the motion.

Thomas: Thank you. So we've had a motion with second to postpone this case. Any discussion? No. All those in favor say "aye."
MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Thomas: Thank you. Any nays? Okay, that's a postponement. There's nothing on the consent agenda.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Thomas: I'm sorry, public participation. Is there anybody here who would like to speak just in general? If you're here for a particular item, we'd appreciate it if you wait for the item. Okay, moving on.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

Thomas: Consent agenda, we don't have any on there.

VII. OLD BUSINESS - NONE

Thomas: Or old business.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Case 19ZO5000050: An application from Steve Newby Architects for an Infill Development Process (IDP) to allow an attached corner sign on a property located within the Downtown Development Code (DDC) Main Street (MS) Overlay District on the west side of Main Street, 215 + feet south of its intersection with Las Cruces Avenue; a.k.a. 201 N. Main Street. Council District 1.

Thomas: We're ready for new business, so take it away.

Ochoa: Ladies and gentlemen. First case we have tonight is a proposed Infill Development Process proposal.

Nichols: Would you identify yourself for the record please?

Ochoa: My apologies. Adam Ochoa, Community Development for the record. First case is an Infill Development Process proposal for basically to allow a sign on a property located at 201 N. Main Street. Shown here in the zoning/vicinity map, the subject property is located here, east side of Main Street, I'm sorry west of Main Street, east of Water Street in our downtown area. As you can see there, everything around there is zoned downtown or it is located in the downtown. It's on the West side of Main Street roughly about 250 feet south of the intersection with Las Cruces Avenue. The subject property is currently zoned DDC/MC which is basically the
Downtown Development Code/Main Street district, so it is located with our Downtown Development Code area.

The subject property basically encompasses a building that encompasses the entire property which the building has recently been redeveloped for commercial purposes known as the Rad Retrocade. Here's an aerial of that property. Just to familiarize yourself here is that building here really close to the Plaza de Las Cruces here right on Main Street if you don't know where that is.

The IDP is proposing to allow an attached corner sign. It is essentially what the request is for. It's a request to approve the use of what is called a corner sign. A corner sign is actually not a permitted type of sign on the Downtown Development Code/Main Street Zone District, if you will. Because of that they are requesting the sign which measures roughly about 42 square feet in size. It actually extends about 3.5 feet out over the, from the wall over the sidewalk, but there is a 13 foot clearance from ground. Where corner signs are allowed in the Downtown Development Code area, the sign does meet the clearance requirement, easily meets the clearance requirement actually, but it does extend a little further than what's typically allowed of a corner sign by about a foot. The size is comparable to what's allowed as well for a corner sign. And again this is for the new arcade/restaurant/bar business. The sign is actually up already. And I'll have some photos of those for you so you can see what that sign looks like now.

When staff took a look at this proposed Infill Development Process proposal, we really saw that there's no real health, safety, or welfare issues identified with what they're proposing. Staff feels that Main Street is actually an area where these types of signs are needed and should be encouraged. Staff actually feels there might have been an error when that Downtown Development Code was drafted that those signs were actually not allowed on Main Street, which is something that staff believes should not have done. Staff believes these types of signs should be allowed on Main Street in the Downtown Development Code area. Staff does feel that the sign can promote economic vitality to the downtown area. Bringing people back downtown if you will, which is something that the City is really pushing for. We also feel that the sign does not obstruct any other businesses or their signs either. It actually pretty much fits in right with the Rio Grande Theater sign right next-door. Looks comparable in size and location and so forth.

And as I said before, staff does feel that the Downtown Development Code section of the 2001 zoning code does need a little bit of refinement. Staff did review this before it got adopted and we felt like it was strong and it was clean the way it was. It isn't until you start actually working with a section of a code that you start seeing there may be some changes that need to happen in order for that code to really work for what's needed for the City. With that being said, staff does feel that amendments are needed to that section of the code and staff is currently
working on amending that section of the code. And a draft of those amendments should be forthcoming before you all, to the Planning and Zoning Commission hopefully sometime soon, which would also include the sign section, or sign portion of that section as well. Which will take care of this issue as well of what we’re trying to get Infill Development Proposal approval for tonight.

Here are some site photos of that Rad Retrocade sign. As you can see very comparable in size, location, and style if you will of what’s already seen in the downtown area with the Rio Grande Theater there. This sign is actually smaller than the Rio Grande Theater sign. But hear it is looking, this picture on the left hand side is looking north on Main Street and the other picture on the right hand side is looking south. Definitely very nice sign that fits in within the area.

The proposed IDP did go out for public notice for input from the adjacent property owners. Staff did receive one letter of support which you have before you. Where the member of the public actually stated that this type of sign has been seen in the past as well in the historical pictures of Main Street, including the Rio Grande Theater and other signs that used to be up and down Main Street as well and strongly supported the proposed IDP for the new sign.

With that ladies and gentlemen, staff does recommend approval for the proposed IDP based on the findings found within your staff report. They're listed here as well. Your options here tonight with that, ladies and gentlemen is; 1) to vote "yes" and approve the proposed IDP as recommended by staff, 2) to vote "no" and deny the proposed IDP. Just FYI though a denial would require new information or findings of facts not identified in the staff report because the staff report is basically findings for approval. 3) You could vote "yes" with conditions. Any condition deemed appropriate by the Commission and 4) to table or postpone and direct staff and the applicant accordingly. That is the conclusion of my presentation. The applicant is here if you have any questions for him and I stand for questions.

Thomas: Thank you very much Adam. Steve Newby do you have anything to say?

Newby: Chairwoman, Commissioners. I'll take full responsibility for this because I sat on a four-person committee with three other architects. I'm sorry.

Thomas: Do you swear and affirm that the testimony you're about to give is the truth and nothing but the truth under penalty of law?

Newby: Absolutely.

Thomas: Thank you.
Newby: I'm sorry. My name is Steve Newby. I'm the architect on the project. But I sat on a committee with two other architects and Andy Hume. Because we were his kitchen cabinet and we went through every single page.

Thomas: A little closer to the microphone, thanks.

Newby: Of the Downtown Development Code and we paid particular attention to the sign piece because that was very important in this code. These types of signs were to be only allowed on Main Street. Not on Church and Water, because we wanted to incentivize really cool signs. I had one picture that was taken about 1955 that I counted 59 blade signs like this up and down Main Street. Including the Hotel Herndon which used to sit where the Plaza is now and their sign stuck 14 feet away from the building and hung over Main Street. We wanted to make sure that didn't happen.

But as Adam said, there was a glitch in the final writings. It happens. I read that thing five times and didn't catch it, so there was no one more surprised when we applied for the sign permit for this and found out it was an illegal sign. And I really want to thank staff for being very flexible and suggesting the type of vehicle we did, where it's an Infill Development Proposal. And as we go forward, I pledge my help again. Although after this last time they might not want it, to make sure the next time around we look carefully at the final writings on which sign is allowed where. Thank you very much.

Thomas: Thank you Mr. Newby. So can we have a motion and a second and then we'll have discussion?

Smith: Madam Chair. I make a motion to approve case 19ZO5000050 Infill Development Process.

Thomas: Is there a second?

Gran: I second.

Thomas: Thank you. Any discussion up here? Yes, Commissioner Smith.

Smith: Madam Chair. Could I direct a question to Steve Newby?

Thomas: Sure.

Smith: So as I got the notes on this and I did a site visit, I went to see that sign and thought well of it. I think others did. I'm wondering if your client has had thoughts of a higher use than that sign because I saw one. I think you're missing out on an opportunity where perhaps a stairway and a platform above it and a zip line down across to the Plaza would be appropriate.
Newby: You're not the first one to suggest that. I have a client who is also recommended a 12-foot high Pacman sitting directly on top of the tower here with the zip line.

Smith: Much the same. I'm just hoping that it was thought of and cared about.

Newby: I will carry that forward to the client. Thank you.

Smith: Madam Chair. A comment to Adam for follow up. As staff is looking at amendments, I'd welcome seeing that. Thank you Madam Chair.

Thomas: Other comments?

Nichols: Madam Chair.

Thomas: Yes, Commissioner Sanchez. Oh, did you want to say something? Yes Mr. Nichols and then Commissioner Sanchez.

Nichols: Thank you. Commissioner, go ahead please and I'll follow you.

Thomas: Okay, Commissioner Sanchez.

Sanchez: Okay. Thank you Mr. Nichols. This is just a quick comment. I have appreciated the sign since it was put up. It is my hope today that this is just a very quick process to get you out of here and make sure that sign stays up.

Thomas: Mr. Nichols.

Nichols: Thank you Madam Chair. Larry Nichols, Community Development. I want to compliment the architect Mr. Newby for recognizing that the downtown is trying to develop a character and identifying elements like this help that a great deal. Yes, it was, this blade sign was not in our current approvable listing of signs, but for you to go ahead and continue to propose it, give us an opportunity to be there with you to recommend it, I appreciate that very much. I hope others will follow, take a page out of your book. Thank you.

Thomas: Thank you. Anyone in the public who would like to make a comment? Can you give me your name please?

Ross: My name is William Ross. I am ...

Thomas: Do you swear and affirm that the testimony you're about to give is the truth and nothing but the truth under penalty of law?
Ross: I do.

Thomas: Thank you.

Ross: Madam Chairman, Councilors. I am the managing member of Rocking Lazy Art LLC. We own the property at 275 North Main. It's within 200 feet of the subject property. I'm here to voice my support for the sign. I think it adds a lot of character to the downtown aesthetics. It blends well with the preexisting sign at the Rio Grande Theater and I also wanted to support the Planning and Zoning staff's recommendation that the code be updated to more easily allow this type of signage.

Thomas: Thank you very much for taking time to come and speak to us. We'll come back to the Commission. Are there any more comments or shall we go ahead and vote? Becky do you want to call the roll?

Baum: Board Member Smith.

Smith: I say yes. It satisfies the development direction infill for downtown and Main Street and looks good, acts good, and site visit. Thank you.

Baum: Board Member Sanchez.

Sanchez: I vote yes based on staff recommendation and this is compliant with the Infill Development Overlay.

Baum: Board Member Gran.

Gran: I vote yes based on recommendations by the staff. Certainly it's in line with Comprehensive Plan 2040. And I really do like that sign. I think it fits in beautifully with the downtown area and the vision that we all see for that area. So thank you.

Baum: Board Member Gordon.

Gordon: I vote yes based on findings and staff presentation. It's compliance with the Comprehensive Plan 2040. And my opinion it has sort of a deco look to it. An art deco look. I really like it and I hope that this will really add perhaps to the incentive of other owners down there to do the same.

Baum: Chairperson Thomas.

Thomas: Thank you. I vote yes based on site visit and the staff presentation and the compatibility with other buildings and signs downtown. Again, I really
like the sign and I'm looking forward to that business opening. Thank you.
So the vote is five to nothing and it passes. Thank you.

2. **Case 19ZO5000051**: Infill Development Proposal (IDP) to redevelop the
vacant single-family residence on the property encompassing 0.26 + acres,
zoned R-1a (Single-Family Medium Density)/ADO-3 (Alameda Depot Overlay
- Residential Core), located west of Cherry St., east of N. Alameda Blvd.;
a.k.a. 220 W. Fleming Avenue. The Applicant is seeking to redevelop the
existing residence with a new quadplex. Submitted by Chris Foster,

**POSTPONED INDEFINITELY.**

3. **Case 19ZO05000054**: A request for approval of a zone change application
by Casa Alameda LLC, property owner, from C-2 (Commercial Medium
Intensity) and C-2/R-1a (Single-Family Medium Density) to C-3/R-1a
(Commercial High Intensity)/(Single-Family Medium Density) for two
properties located on the west side of S. Alameda Blvd., 150 + feet south of
its intersection with W. Lohman Ave. (a.k.a. 526 and 536 S. Alameda) and a
portion of two adjacent properties immediately west (a.k.a. Account #'s
R0240913 and R0240914). The proposed zone change would allow for

Gonzales: Moving right along. Sarah Gonzales with Community Development for the
record. This case is for a zone change from C-2 commercial medium
intensity to C-2/R-1a single-family density, to C-3 commercial high
intensity/R-1a. Here's an aerial map of the subject property. The parcels
are highlighted in green. The subject property that is in question is
highlighted in yellow. If you notice it does overlap into the westerly
properties that are located off of Miranda. The reason we're here tonight
is based on the increased acreage for the proposed use on this property.

Here's a zoning map of the subject property. It is located in an area
where it's the Downtown Development Code. You have C-2 commercial
properties, office, multi-family, and then it's adjacent also to the Alameda
Overlay. As you can see, the highlighted portion of the blue area is the C-
2/R-1a and then a portion of it is zoned C-2.

Currently it's commercial medium intensity as well as single family
residential. It's located on the west side of Alameda Boulevard, south of
West Lohman Avenue. The parcels currently range between 0.73 and
0.96 acres in size and they're currently being utilized as an event hall, bed
and breakfast, or business office.

What the applicant is proposing is to zone change to C-3,
commercial high intensity/R-1a which would still be single family medium
density and the reason behind that is they would like to adjust the existing
lot lines towards the west side which then creates them into a larger lot
size than permitted within the C-2 zoning designation. C-2 has a
maximum lot size of one acre. This would then put them over the one acre which then puts them into the next zoning bracket or the next zoning designation of the C-3. Since the acreage would go between 0.952 and 1.187, we have now met that threshold to continue on. So for future development, if the applicant were to be approved for the zone change that would allow them to move the lot lines, adjust, and then be able to either do future development of the current property as it is, possibly adding on multi-family units that may be there. Including their parking lot that's currently there but actually located on the two adjacent parcels that are not part of this property. So it would help to bring a lot of the things that are out of compliance into compliance with the zone change and the lot line adjustment.

This property is also located along a minor arterial roadway which C-3 is a recommended zoning designation along these roadways, so it would basically be an adjustment. Because these uses are currently allowed in the C-2 zoning designation, they're also allowed within the C-3. So the intensity would not increase because the amount of size of the lot, it's still limiting. You wouldn't see, maybe a five-acre lot where you can build a big box store, whereas this one is already developed and there just may be improvements for future.

Here's a proposed site plan showing the lot line that would be adjusted. If you can see towards the middle of the screen, that would be the line that is vacated and then moved toward the westerly boundary. This is where it actually identifies the 1.187 size and the 0.952 acres in size. The other two remaining lots towards the west would now become 0.642 or 0.641 acres in size. So it would reduce them. So those two properties, basically lot 1A and lot 4A are going to be maintained as C-2 zoning designations. This would just be for the 526 and the 536 Alameda with the additional acreage being added on with the replat.

Staff did send this out to all relevant agencies and departments. Everybody supported it. Agreed that there can be that change. The roadway can handle basically any increased traffic because it would still be minimal based on the allowed acreage of the development for the parcel. I did send out notice to the surrounding properties within 500 feet and did receive one phone call in support. I also did receive one inquiry about what could be done to the property. How many uses are the similar to C-2 and C-3 zoning designations? Could there be an increase impact or a difference to going to the C-3 with the 0.2 acres that they add on?

So with that staff is recommending approval based on the findings within your staff report that the C-3/R-1a zoning designation are currently found within the area. It's still a commercially zoned area. It's within the downtown area that is located along an arterial roadway which these uses are recommended for the zoning designation and it does meet the intent of our Comprehensive Plan to keep growing and to keep improving the properties that we do have currently existing within these developments.
So I leave you this evening with your vote to vote "yes" and approve the proposal as recommended by staff, vote "no" to deny the proposal in which you would require additional information or facts of finding that were not provided within your staff report since staff is recommending approval, vote to amend or vote to table. P&Z is a recommending body for zone changes to the City Council. I stand for any questions and the applicant is here as well if you have any questions for them.

Thomas: Thank you Sara. Would the applicant like to say anything? No.

Gonzales: Do you want to talk Wendell? He would just stand for any questions you may have.

Thomas: Okay. All right, can I have a motion and a second and then we'll discuss.

Gordon: I make a motion that we approve case number 19ZO0500054.

Thomas: Is there a second?

Smith: Second.

Thomas: It's been moved and seconded that we approve case number 19ZO0500054. Any questions or discussion from the Commission? Commissioner Smith.

Smith: Madam Chair. Thank you. Sara has this location come up for discussion in the past? Is this a new discussion with him or is it repeated?

Gonzales: The applicant has come in several different times inquiring about what could be done or what may be done on the property. They did do a zone change in 2008 which allowed them to add the R-1a. The property was already zoned C-2 but R-1a so that way basically there's the Alameda House if you've known it and it can still be converted back into a single family residence. The R-1a allows them to continue using that as a home. And so in 2008 they did the rezone from C-2 to R-1a. In previous discussions there wasn't anything of expanding the property, so this is something that's new. It's just adding it on to where it's included within the rest of the property. Mainly because the parking lot is part of the other two westerly properties and they would like to include that at least for now and then move forward as if they were to get any proposals to add on to their buildings.

Smith: Thank you Sara. Thank you Madam Chair.
Thomas: Any other comments or questions? Anything from the public? Okay, Becky can we take a vote. Oh, we have one person. I'm sorry. Hi Peter. Do you swear and affirm the testimony you're about to give is the truth and nothing but the truth under penalty of law? Thank you.

Goodman: Yes ma'am and for the record my name is Peter Goodman. And I think I was the inquiry referred to earlier. My concern is that the other side of Miranda and other streets nearby are residential. I live on one of them. I'm somewhat reassured that the properties on Miranda apparently are not going to change their zoning. I guess I'm still concerned to some degree about whether going to commercial high intensity C-3 versus C-2 is going to result in much more noise or traffic in that area. In which case I would oppose it and suggest that if the problem is adjusting the lot line, maybe they can get a variance as to that. But I frankly don't know what the effects would be of doing this. But I would have a concern that anything that would increase the noise or the traffic flow through there. El Molino for example is a very, not only a bit narrow but curving street and the areas already hearing from new bars and that sort of thing late at night. I can't say I've heard anything from this gentleman's place that's been a problem. So I guess I'm neither supporting nor opposing but raising a concern. Thank you.

Thomas: Thank you. Sara, do you want to make any comments about that?

Gonzales: Madam Chair and Commission. One of the things that I would like to reiterate is that based on the zoning designations that are currently in place and then what would be proposed, you could still do multi-family under C-2, you could still do multi-family under C-3. Some of the intentions of where it becomes high intensity is when you have larger lots because then you can expand even more. With the property being developed and already built out, it leaves them 0.2 acres of size towards the westerly boundary to basically improve their property. So unless they were to go in and actually demo it, you would still have the amount of acreage besides the 0.2 acres that could still signify maybe access or it could still be apartments. It could be still a store that would have to still follow all design requirements. So the C-3 is just bringing it in compliance based on the zoning. Whether we would actually take it as a variance to the property lot size, the zone change actually makes it follow our current zoning standards since the uses are permitted in both.

Thomas: Thank you for that explanation. Any comments further from the Commission? No. Okay Becky, can you call the roll call?

Baum: Board Member Smith.
Smith: I vote yes based on the idea that it helps with compliance to existing codes. It's a better use for development.

Baum: Board Member Sanchez.

Sanchez: I vote yes based on staff recommendation and its compliance with the intent of the zoning code.

Baum: Board Member Gran.

Gran: I vote yes based on the fact that it meets the intent of Comprehensive Plan 2040 and it's compatible with adjacent uses and neighboring zoning districts.

Baum: Board Member Gordon.

Gordon: I vote yes based on findings, staff presentation, compliance with the Comprehensive Plan 2040.

Baum: Chairperson Thomas.

Thomas: I vote yes based on site visit and presentation by staff and the fact that it's compatible with what's going on in that particular area of the City. Thank you. So that was five to nothing and it passes. Thank you.

IX. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan: An update on the development and direction of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and its potential impact on future policy and/or land use ordinances as it relates to the authority of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Thomas: Okay next is Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Is that what we're doing next? Okay. All right.

H-Rogers: Good evening. Madam Chair, Members of the Commission. We're here tonight to talk to you about the status of the City's Park and Recreation Master Plan.

Thomas: Please state your name for the record.

H-Rogers: Yes, Katherine Harrison-Rogers with the City of Las Cruces Community Development Department. We also have our consultant here. Christian Lentz with Halff Associates. We also have Sonya Delgado, our Parks and Recreation Director. And what we'd like to discuss with you tonight is just the status of that plan that's currently underway and what that might mean
Thomas: Okay. You don't have to be sworn in. This is not a legal issue.

Lentz: All right. Thank you. Good evening Madam Chair, Members of the Commission. Again for the record my name is Christian Lentz and I'm with Halff Associates. I'm the designated project manager for the City of Las Cruces' update to its Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This is a project we have been working on in partnership with your Parks and Recreation Department since November of this past year and if adopted here in the next month by City Council would be your first Parks and Recreation Master Plan update since 2012.

As Katherine had indicated while the Planning and Zoning Commission is not necessarily a recommending body for this particular plan, the Planning and Zoning Commission will play a role in potential plan implementation. And so before providing a full plan document to the City Council, certainly we want to be able to provide you an overview so you have some background as to why certain issues may be coming to your attention over the coming months over the next coming years as well.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan, we'll give you some just general overview information, but ultimately why we do a Parks and Recreation Master Plan is just as simple as making sure that your communities investment in parkland and your investments in recreational facilities meet the needs of your community and match the preferences of residents. Match the recreational preferences of your residents.

When we prepare a Parks and Recreation Master Plan naturally we're going to look at your parklands or your park spaces, the quantity of those spaces and how they're distributed. We're also going to look at your recreational facilities. Again we're going to look at quantity, how they're distributed. In this case, in this park planning effort we were also looking at the condition of your park spaces and your recreational facilities. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan also reviews and analyzes your recreational program offerings and in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation department we look at and propose potential adjustments to those programming offerings. Obviously we also take the opportunity to look at the general day-to-day operations of your Parks and Recreation Department and providing those types of services to the general public.

Now your Parks and Recreation Master Plan it's not a Capital Improvements Plan. There is no long list of capital improvements that are ultimately going to be included in the final document, but the document does provide recommendations on the types of facilities you may want to add to your system or the existing facilities that you may want to improve
upon. It offers ideas that in the future then can be incorporated into the City's future Capital Improvements Plans.

It's important for us to point out also that a Parks and Recreation Master Plan of this nature is not an incisive park-by-park plan. It is a system wide plan. We look at your system in very broad terms. We don't look at it in terms of park A should add a swing set or park B should add water fountains or a restroom facility. It provides general policy guidance for how your parklands should be improved or how new park spaces should be developed.

One of the reasons why we're doing it now though is that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan has to be updated in conjunction with updates to your Parks and Recreation Impact Fee that you've been charging for many years now. Specifically the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is used to provide for the Impact Fee Study, new assumptions on land use and growth and development and also to re-inventory your park facilities and your parklands to provide a current or actual level of service that you're providing today. This information is then incorporated into your Impact Fee Study which measures your current parkland and park facility levels of service and helps you establish impact fees today.

Now a point that I need to make is that there is an Impact Fee Study that is being prepared concurrent with this Parks and Recreation Master Plan by a different consulting group. We have been coordinating with that other consulting group throughout the Parks and Recreation Master Planning process. So the information that they've incorporated into the Impact Fee Study regarding growth and development or growth projections and the information that they've incorporated about your parkland and park facility inventory is consistent with the work that we've been doing not just on your Parks and Recreation Master Plan but also on the Elevate Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan as well. So that's a separate study but being prepared concurrently and will likely be considered by City Council concurrent to a full Parks and Recreation Master Plan update.

Ultimately though one thing that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan does that your Impact Fee Study does not consider is that is future levels of service or target levels of service. Your Master Plan identifies the amount of parkland or the type of parkland that you want to strive for in the future and that may exceed the levels of service that you're providing today.

As I had indicated, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan process began in November so it's a fairly abbreviated time frame. We'll be producing the last chapters for a full document within the next week to a week and a half for consideration both by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and City Council. To date, three of the chapters of that document have been completed and the recommendations or the majority of recommendations that will actually be incorporated into the fourth chapter have already been viewed by and presented to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.
Throughout the process, much like with the Comprehensive Planning process that you're familiar with, we've conducted a series of stakeholder meetings with different interest groups, with different recreation providers. There have been two series of public open houses. Both near the beginning of the process and more recently at the end of the process. Initially to talk with people about park and facility preferences and then more recently to introduce some of those preliminary park recommendations to the community and also ask about areas where people in the community believe that parkland should be acquired in the future to expand your system. In addition to the open houses or that on site feedback, there has been online outreach through a project website and through an online survey that we tried really hard to beat the numbers for Elevate Las Cruces, but we fell a little bit short. But for a plan of this type, we were fairly pleased with the level of response that we were able to receive to the online survey.

Going back to how this affects the Planning and Zoning Commission as a body. Ultimately when a Parks and Recreation Master Plan is adopted by City Council, obviously there are going to be a series of recommended actions that are included in that plan. Some of those actions directly impact the Planning and Zoning Commission. One of the most significant impacts, and this is something that I'll talk to in a little bit more detail here in a few slides, is that there will be recommendations on amendments to your Zoning Code, on amendments in general to your Land Development Ordinance regarding parkland dedication; regarding multi-use trails; regarding potentially the inclusion of common areas or amenity centers in future residential and non-residential developments. So the plan will include recommended amendments to your land development regulations and obviously at a point where the City is considering those amendments. Those potential amendments will cross you and you'll have the opportunity to make recommendations on those.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan also will be something that you'll have to consider as you would with other long range planning documents in addition to Comprehensive Plan 2040 and Elevate Las Cruces when you're considering the approval or denial of permits. You'll obviously reference the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and your other planning documents as the criteria for future decision-making. But specifically we go back to the issue of the real tangible implementation that this body will have involvement in would be those potential developments to your Land Development Regulations or potential amendments.

So we'll talk about level of service quickly. Your 2012 Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified five different park types and classified all of your parks according to those five specific types. The 2019 plan has added three different park types for consideration. Actually the picture on the right of this slide is of all of the collective properties that make up the Hadley Avenue recreation complex. This according to your 2019 Parks
and Recreation Master Plan will be your one, or is your one park space that meets the definition of a regional park. Something that has facilities that are significant enough that it actually serves as a regional draw to the community. In addition we've added a category for civic parks. Civic parks takes into account the addition of Plaza de Las Cruces to your parkland inventory.

Now most people think today when they think of parkland, they think of active space, they think of ball fields and sport courts and playground facilities, but an integral part of any parks and recreation system are also those spaces that can, those iconic spaces that can be used for public events, formal gathering spaces, and so the category of civic parks has been added to the 2019 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Finally the plan proposes to add the category of natural areas or open space. This being defined, think of the Las Cruces Dam property as a natural area or open space. This is a parkland or an open space that is intended to have very minimal improvements to it. That by and large is intended to remain in its current state. Those are additional categories.

You have a total parkland inventory of over 1,500 acres, but as we were reminding City Council earlier today, a lot of that is locked away in three parks, or three specific properties. One is the Butterfield Trail Shooting Range, the Las Cruces Dam property, and then what we call in this planning document City Complex, but it's basically where the City landfill is, where the archery range is, and the RC airplane park. Those three properties make up about three-quarters of your overall parkland inventory.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan includes a levels of service assessment and a level of service assessment for the amount and type of parkland, facilities, and programs that you provide as a community. That assessment is broken down in to four different types. The first being the demand based assessment. We simply think of the methods that we've utilized to gain public input into the planning process. The second method is the resource-based assessment. This is essentially a look at those features in Las Cruces that are unique to your community that might not necessarily be shared in all communities throughout the country and that can be leveraged by this community to build your parks system upon. Then there's a service or a standards based assessment. This is really where we compare what you're offering to what other communities are offering or other organizations are offering across the country. As far as the amount of parkland, the amount of facilities, how it's distributed across your community.

We've got one table in the presentation that gives you a little snapshot of how Las Cruces has been performing in relation to the targets that you established in 2012. Now in 2012 your Parks and Recreation Master Plan established target levels of service for three park types. Three park types only. It established one level of service standard for community parks, and then it established a combined target level of
service for neighborhood and for pocket parks. Altogether these three recommended service standards amounted to a combined three acres per 1,000 residents. Over that time you've added a significant amount of parkland to your system but not necessarily as much community, neighborhood, and pocket parkland have you added as other types of property. Like the Las Cruces Dam property which would not be accounted for in this particular table since it's a natural area or open space.

So based on the targets that you set in 2012 and what you have today, the parkland inventory indicates that you have 2.6 acres of community, neighborhood, and pocket parks per 1,000 residents. And so you still have some ways to go before you can meet that original target level of service standard from 2012.

It's important to point out, and we certainly point out in the Master Plan document that when it comes to whether or not you're providing an adequate amount of parkland for your community, it shouldn't just be based on raw acreage. There is the issue of access. How is your parkland distributed? And so your 2012 Master Plan included proximity guidelines and said "in addition to whatever raw acreage amounts you're striving to add to your system, you should also try to space your parks so that community parks are spaced according to a one mile radius" and you can see on the slide that there are other radii recommendations or proximity guidelines for other park types.

The pending 2019 Master Plan document proposes some changes to those level of service standard recommendations. One thing though that it does propose is that the current two acres per 1,000 residents of community parkland, that that remain your target benchmark for community parkland moving forward. And of course that's based on population. As your population grows and change, so does the actual acreage amount for community parks or the targeted acreage amount.

Regarding neighborhood and pocket parks, this plan is proposing one acre per 1,000 residents for neighborhood parkland only. Not necessarily for pocket parks, but for neighborhood parkland.

The map on the right of the slide also shows though that it goes back to the issue of considering how parks are spaced. The blue areas on the map show service area gaps. There's overlay residential areas that are not located within what we call a one-quarter mile walkshed of a community, neighborhood, or pocket park. And zooming in a little bit closer you can see what we mean by walkshed. Whereas the 2012 Master Plan said "your spacing standards or your proximity spanners should be based on a radius thus a circle around a park property", our recommendation is that these proximity standards be based on a walkshed. And a walkshed is measured by unobstructed pathways to and from the parkland. So when you look at the map on this particular slide and how it zoomed in, you'll see that it's, there aren't nice neat little circles that are drawn around each park but rather shapes that reflect the ability
of a person that's going to that park to go along a roadway or a trail way. You'll also notice things like where Solano Drive passes north/south beyond some of the parks, that it actually kind of abruptly cuts that service area to those parks, because if you're a parent of small children, you're obviously not going to want those children to cross Solano Drive by themselves to get to that park space. Thus the analysis indicates it's not really, those other properties to the other side of Solano are not really within the walkshed of those specific types of parks.

So the proximity guideline in the 2019 plan proposes a one-quarter mile walkshed or travel-shed around all community and neighborhood parks. And we include the same distance around community and neighborhood parks because in many instances, even though a community park is typically larger and typically provides more facilities, in many instances a community park is used by surrounding residents as their own neighborhood park. So there's really no difference when it comes to a proximity standard between neighborhood and community parks. Regardless of what size the park is, you want a park within a certain distance, a certain walking distance of your residence in ideal conditions.

One last item on this particular slide is that the plan proposes to remove pocket parks from any targeted level of service. Now we were very careful to tell the City Council earlier. We're not saying that pocket parks should not be built, but what we are saying is that that's not necessarily the type of park that the City should necessarily be promoting and actively seeking to construct. When you go below a certain acreage for parkland, you see visitation decline, unless that park is located in a very key location or has a very special use associated with it. There are a lot of pocket parks, not just in Las Cruces but in other communities that because of their size and because of their location, they end up having low visitation rates, they have low general public interest, and they end up being a little more than just landscaping areas and things that you have to maintain in your system and don't necessarily adequately provide for recreational needs in most cases.

Regarding multi-use trails, the 2012 Master Plan indicated that you should have roughly a quarter mile of trail for every 1,000 residents in Las Cruces. There was no proximity standard to say a trail should be this close to all of your residential areas. As of today you actually have 0.26 miles of trail per 1,000 residents in Las Cruces. So you've actually met that particular benchmark. But in the 2019 Master Plan we propose that you don't include any particular service standard for multi-use trails but that you defer to the Active Transportation Plan and you defer to the Mesilla Valley MPO's Trails Priorities Plan. Both of those plans propose over 100 miles of multi-use trail throughout Las Cruces. Those are both very ambitious goals and more than sufficient to serve a multi-use trail need in Las Cruces. There's no need for your Parks and Recreation
Master Plan to come up with some contradictory standard to those already adopted plan documents.

This particular slide is kind of a fun one for us to create, but there is a little bit of interpretation that I need to provide for you. As part of the online survey that was distributed to the public there were two questions; and those questions related to all of the facilities and activities that are listed in the right hand column on that slide. The first question it asked people "of those 28 facilities or activities, how important are each one of these individual activities or facilities to you?" And then there was a follow up question that I asked, "okay, regardless of how important you think they are, how do you think the City is performing in providing these facilities?"

The assessment chart that we have on the slide is a way to depict the results of both of those questions together. So what we have is we've got four quadrants in the chart and the bottom right hand side, the needs work quadrant, is where people say "well, we feel like it's important but we don't necessarily feel the City's been performing adequately to the level of importance that we think that has". The upper right hand side is fairly self-explanatory. Keep up the good work. Those items, facilities that are shown in that quadrant, the number of facilities, that's where the community is saying "well, we think it's very important and we think you're doing a pretty good job as a local government in providing that." On the bottom left hand side, if you have a dot that falls in that quadrant in general what's being said is "that's not necessarily much of a community priority and the City's not necessarily providing that facility" so no big deal. No harm no foul. And then in the upper left hand corner the possible overkill, this is really where you never want a dot. That is your community is telling you they don't really want that facility but you're providing a lot of it. Fortunately for Las Cruces, most of your dots fall very close to that diagonal target line. That's really where you want to be. That performance in general is coming close to matching expectations or importance. One other thing we want to point out regarding this chart is we're dealing with 28 different activities or facilities. We all know that that's not every possible recreation activity that you can conduct. As a result the survey and even at the open house we made sure to ask people about other recreational activities that they were interested in. We made a point of identifying through the survey where we saw prominent keywords or repetitive keywords. In the left hand column on the slide those are some of the keywords that we heard a lot of. Pickleball being the most Las Cruces unique. I know it surprises none of you here, but typically pickleball doesn't necessarily rise high on the list, but it does in Cruces.

So we use all of this information to recommend target levels of service for recreational facilities. Your 2012 Master Plan did not include target levels of service for any type of recreational facility. It only did for parkland. We propose that the 2019 Master Plan include target level of service for fairly common recreational facilities. Facilities that by and large tend to serve as the backbone of any municipal park system or most
municipal park system. The only exception in this case being that we did add pickleball. This is going to be unique to Las Cruces. There's a very, very, there's a couple important reasons but one important reason that I really want to point out for why we recommend this in the plan is that we've gone out and we've asked the public what type of facilities they want to see in Las Cruces. And so if we're going to take the time to ask people that, I think the people have the right to see that some of their recommendations or suggestions are being taken into account and that the City has established a target to try to meet those community expectations. So we think it's very important to include those target levels of service for different recreational facilities in your plan, but just like parkland it's a target. It's something to reach for. It's something you may not get all the way to reaching, but it's a benchmark for you to try to meet.

Want to talk about just a handful of plan recommendations with some focus specifically on potential amendments to your Land Development Regulations. There are eight goals that are proposed within the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. These goals are similar to the 2012 Master Plan. We went through a process with the public, with the questions that we had at the open house and also through discussions with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to take your old goals and either, everything was on the table. Discard some of those old goals, add some new goals, or just kind of repackage the 2012 goals. That's really what we've come out with, with the assistance of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Eight goals in your proposed 2019 Master Plan that are similar to some degree but packaged a little bit differently than that which you had in your 2012 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

In addition to the eight goals, there are supporting objectives and there are over 100 recommended actions for your Parks and Recreation system moving forward. Do not worry, I will not be going through all 100 plus recommended actions, but as I said there's a couple that I wanted to point out. Specifically because they deal with or could affect Land Development Regulations and it's something that you will see here one day at the Planning Commission dais.

The first regarding parkland acquisition and development, one of the key recommendations that the plan proposes is that in addition to your parklands system, that the City establish an open space lands program, both through the Parks and Recreation Master Planning process and through the portion of the Elevate Las Cruces planning process that we've gone through up to date. We hear again and again how much this community values open space and it values its view-sheds. And there are other communities within New Mexico, many communities throughout surrounding states that in addition to their parkland system they specifically established parallel open space systems for habitat preservation and for very low impact recreational opportunities. An open space lands program is not something that you look at as being limited to the municipal limits. This is something that would extend or potentially
extend beyond the municipal limits into your extra territorial zone and
might be a vehicle for providing dedicated open space linkages between,
like important national monument lands that surround Las Cruces and the
built portions of the City today.

Additional recommendations include a recommendation to establish
parkland dedication requirements within your land development
regulations. Today currently, well actually I'll go to the next slide.
Currently as a City beyond the parkland that you purchase, that you use
tax dollars and impact fees to purchase, currently the only other way that
you are acquiring parkland is if developers donate or dedicate that
parkland as part of their new subdivision, specifically neighborhood
parkland. This process was established as part of your 2013 Impact Fee
Resolution and it gave that in addition to the resolution that was adopted,
there were standards by which developers could donate or dedicate
neighborhood parkland as part of their developments and there was ways
that the developer would be paid back for the cost of those improvements
from the actual impact fees that you would otherwise be collecting.

A problem, a few problems that have arisen with that. First off,
when the developer dedicates the neighborhood parkland and makes the
improvement and uses the very impact fees that they were otherwise
going to contribute to pay for those improvements, you're not collecting
impact fees for community parklands. These are much larger parks that
you the City are solely responsible for providing moving forward. Another
problem is that the minimum standards that were established in 2013 don't
necessarily address location or how that acreage within a new
development might be distributed. And it gives some suggestion on
amenities, but there's nothing in that language that tells the developer that
as a City, we want to make sure that the parkland is located in these types
of locations. That the amenities meet these specific needs that are
identified in our Parks and Recreation Master Plan. You're actually left in
a situation where you're kind of responding to what's proposed or what's
otherwise given to you as a community rather than dictating how those
park spaces and those improvements should be incorporated into new
development. And as a result you end up with situations just like we've
got on the picture. You end up with parklands where you have power
lines that are running right through the middle of them and you've got
splash pads in electrifying areas, I guess is the best way we can put it.
What model provisions parkland dedication provisions would provide is it
would provide a neighborhood parkland requirement as part of new
development. It would be up to the City through well-drafted provisions to
determine the location, proximity, and how you make sure that that
parkland is accessible to the maximum number of people in those new
developments. It would be up to the City to establish through ordinance
the minimum acreage requirements that you would require based on the
number of dwelling units provided, the preferred amenities, and it would
be up to you as to whether or not you wanted to, rather than accepting
consolidated parkland that meets a certain acreage requirement would be up to you as a City to determine whether you feel like on a case by case basis smaller pocket parks in lieu of neighborhood parks would be a more feasible way to add parkland to your current system.

In the case of the model parkland dedication requirements, impact fees would not necessarily be used for required park improvements. And also the City would have the ability, depending on how the ordinance is written, to accept fees in lieu of parkland in any given situation.

In addition, another potential amendment to the land development regulations that the Master Plan will be proposing is amendments that would allow you as a City to require common areas or amenities centers as part of new multi-family development, or even require formal gathering spaces as part of new non-residential development that exceeds certain square footages or certain size. These are very common tools that are used by a lot of other communities in a lot of other places. So while they might potentially be new to Las Cruces, they certainly have precedence throughout the country. They’re not, as much as I’d love to stand up here and say "look how innovative we’re being", these are not necessarily new concepts.

In addition we have to acknowledge that you’ve got a growing multi-use trail network that up to this point has really been constructed solely through the use of capital project funds. Well, as development occurs just like the need to add new parkland to your system, there is an opportunity also to add trail mileage to your proposed multi-use trail system as well. So in addition to parkland dedication requirements, this plan will propose amendments to your land development regulations that would allow you to require multi-use trail easement dedication and in some cases even construction. How that would work is where a corridor is identified on your Active Transportation Plan or the MPO’s Trails Priority Plan. Where that corridor is identified as a new development occurs and it appears that that development is either adjacent to or bisected by that corridor, the ordinance would allow you to require easement reservation according to a very general alignment. A perceived alignment based on your overall City map.

These ordinances are typically written so that only the easement is required if there’s no connecting trail already existing, or if there is no public funding source that’s already been identified to construct adjacent segments of the trail. Provisions of this type though also do allow local governments to require actual construction of that multi-use trail segment within the dedicated easement where certain conditions exist, such as there is an adjacent segment that it can connect to or within the development itself by constructing that segment you are going to connect to more destinations within that development. Destinations being other parks, schools, things of that nature.

And in addition, the plan will recommend model provisions for pathway connectivity. That being ensuring that as you construct a larger
multi-use trail network across the City of Las Cruces that new
development, residential and non-residential development is tying in to
that multi-use trail network. Because it doesn’t matter how many miles of
trail that you provide, if people can’t access that trail system or if it doesn’t
provide access between destinations, the utility of that trail system is
diminished significantly.

There will be a wide variety of additional recommended actions in
the Parks and Recreation Master Plan dealing with parkland acquisition,
facility development, facility improvement, programming, administration
and operations, but for the benefit of the Planning and Zoning Commission
once again, since these are potentially issues that will impact you in the
future we wanted to make sure that you had some background information
about where these ideas came from. So I’ll be happy to answer any
questions as Katherine had indicated. Sonya Delgado, your Director of
Parks and Recreation is also here and perhaps there are questions that
she can answer as well.

Thomas: Any questions or comments from the Commission? Yes, Commissioner
Gordon.

Gordon: Question. Thanks for coming. Always nice to see you, we’ll see you
tomorrow I assume. I learned years ago, probably five, six, seven years
ago when there were a lot of interest by local athletic teams to play
baseball, football, soccer, whatever it was on the parks that the City
provided, that there was a limit as to how much the City could charge for
an impact fee. Because there was always a problem that these leagues
could not, they could only pay up to a certain dollar amount. When these
plans were discussed and put together, just a question I'm not criticizing
for what was done, but was there some consideration taken for the fact as
to apparently how much impact fees could go into the effect of how much
it would cost to maintain these projects? How much would it cost to build
them? Because there's only so much money out there. I know from a lot
of the leagues that these kids who play ball their parents can't really afford
to pay a lot of money for them to play. And I notice that one of the items
that we're talking about right at the beginning of your presentation was
impact fees.

Lentz: Well, there's a difference between the impact fee for development and
what I think you're talking about is actual programming fees.

Gordon: Yes.

Lentz: The impact fee is a fee that is charged to new development. New roof
tops to provide monies for the construction of new parkland. The
programming fees that you're talking about with the athletic groups, those
types of fees, and I'll have to let Sonya add into this, but those are the
types of fees that are generally going to be collected to recover the cost of operating and administering those programs and also for providing some degree of facility maintenance.

Gordon: Let me just follow up a little bit before she starts and thank you. As the City increases in population and there are new, there is a development and developers build more homes and especially up in the East Mesa where you're talking about large impact on development, the City is going to have to provide more parks. These neighborhood parks that you talk about are usually, the developer usually says "okay, I've got, I'm going to build 100 homes and let's say 100 acres, 100 homes, but I will give you one acre to develop a park". So of course he's not really doing anything but just increasing the cost of the other 99 people who are going to buy those remaining lots. But yet when that park is dedicated to the City, the City's going to have to pay for it. The upkeep and the maintenance and I don't know whether or not you're going to say that people who live in that area or let's say perhaps some way possible maybe it's an HOA or something that they're going to be money provided to give the City to maintain these parks. I mean all of this is going to have to be provided by the City to pay for all of this. I'm always thinking that I'm criticized for more often as that my thought always goes back to cost. As an accounting background that's always what I think about. So I guess we're talking about two different types of impact here. I'm thinking about one and you're giving me another. So you're going to have to explain to me what you mean by this because I don't think I understand when you say impact fee.

Lentz: When we refer to impact fee we're referring to a one-time fee that is charged to new development. And that fee that's charged to new development to new housing units that are being constructed is provided to allow the City to maintain the current level of service that it already provides when it comes to parklands and facilities. So it's a fee that's charged to new development and to the new residents to pay for the increased demand that they're putting on the current Parks and Recreation system to allow you, the City, to provide the same level of park space and the same number or level of facilities to your growing population.

Gordon: But isn't there a lot of times when in lieu of these fees the developer donates the property to the City? There's no money exchanging hands here, just land?

Lentz: Yes and that's what we were indicating in the presentation. One of the problems with the current policy has been that the developer has been donating land, often times not necessarily the best land, for the City to add to its system. The way the policy was written that the impact fees that are
being collected that are intended to be distributed throughout the City to
continue the current level of service are going back, just straight back to
that park to pay for the construction costs for that park.

Gordon: Okay, I just have one other item. If you could somehow or another go
back to your presentation that was, I think, again goals number four. The
one about maintenance. The one before that. It says "Parkland facility
may provide a high level of parkland and facility maintenance that places
equal emphasis on landscapes, hardscapes, and structures." Now where
is this going to come from? The money.

Delgado: Good evening. Sonya Delgado, Parks and Recreation Director. Madam
Chair and Commissioner Gordon. Where this money would come from,
well we would have to ask for it every year at the budget time, with
regards to general maintenance. But in some of this, part of this goal not
only is it facility maintenance the daily operational maintenance, but it's
also making sure that we're able to replace equipment and amenities that
are on the park. For example, benches, water fountains, playground
equipment, etc.

Gordon: Well it's very ambitious and I hope that the City has the money to provide
it. Thank you.

Lentz: We'll say it's not a slide that we've provided the Planning and Zoning
Commission but currently the City funds most of its recreation, parks and
recreation budget, roughly about 70% of that through general tax fund
revenues.

Gordon: I understand but you have to understand also that it does give me thought
every time I have to sit here and okay a development of X number of
houses and there's going to be more parks. I'm also, in the back of my
mind considering these things. So I do so the P&Z Commission does play
a part in their decision-making or their thought process.

Thomas: Commissioner Smith.

Smith: Madam Chair. Thank you. Question for Sonya Delgado and maybe a few
questions that would sort of line up. The pocket parks idea and where
you're trying to maybe reduce them or eliminate them from the set of
obligations that maintenance has to deal with on any given day, it caught
my attention. And it reminds me of some of the ideas that came out of
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board where you were finding yourselves
trying to be efficient with service to all the parks; on a daily basis, on a
weekly basis, on a general maintenance level basis you're trying to serve
those parks. And I imagine sometimes this morning's start up and you
would lift these barriers around all your trucks and vehicles and people
and staff and it's sort of like a turtle race going out into the system hoping
to get the work done. Yes there's a certain amount of management
efficiency to that, but it was still always sort of a chase to keep up with it.
Then there was this other thing that was dropped on top of it which was as
something popped up, here comes the idea "well Parks and Recreation
will fix it. They will service it. They will man it. They will attend to it." On
a short-term basis, on an immediate basis, or even long-term basis. Not
budgeted, not planned for, but here it is. I posed that idea to ask the
question, what should the Commission understand about future parks,
development, maintenance, those issues of cost? What should the
Commission understand about your overarching planning for more parks?

Delgado: Madam Chair, Commission Smith. What should you know? Well, first and
foremost you already know that our City is growing. We're getting more
and more individuals that come into our City which is a great thing. We
have a great place to live. In doing so we all need more amenities.
Because if we stop building parks today and we still keep getting more
and more individuals moving to Las Cruces, we're going to have less and
less space to play on, if you will. And we have a lot of individuals because
of our weather that move here for that. And we have great weather and
they like to be outdoors. We get requests constantly for new parks, bigger
parks, different amenities, etc. etc. So and we can provide different types
of programming, but to do so, I mean with our community continuing to
grow, we're going to need the space.

Smith: A comment in passing as an observation, call it a site visit, but in the last
two weeks I've been to two events at the Plaza and I've observed staff
doing clean up. Parks and Recreation staff has been, in my witness, a
remarkable job of staying on top of trash, collecting trash, putting litter in
the appropriate dumpsters, hauling it away, and they've done it in a very
active, proactive, meaningful, caring way. I just wanted to get that
comment there that you have good people doing good work.

Delgado: Thank you.

Smith: I happen to have an observation that was only a couple of weeks ago in
Plaza de Las Cruces where there were skateboarders on the stage. And I
noticed for about a 20-minute period four probably 20-year-old
skateboarders hopping off the stage and onto the ground and for 20
minutes, one after the other after the other landing and falling. Not one of
their landings was successful. They all fell and they would yell, they would
cuss, they would say ow, they would groan, and they're very loud and right
across the street are open door businesses. It seems inappropriate and it
seems rather unsafe and I just wanted to comment there and also maybe
any response to how that's managed or not?
Delgado: Madam Chair, Commissioner Smith. How is that managed? Well, it's a
public space. It's an open space. We do understand that we need more
skate park areas. We're in the process of addressing that now. We do
need to do some renovations at our current skate park. We're talking
about having skate park spots at some of our parks already and other
places around town so that we can get individuals away from one Plaza
de Las Cruces and also here City Hall. Out in front on the weekends and
in the evenings they'll be out here as well. And underneath the parking
garage. They like to come out here. It's a big open space. And so we
understand that and we're trying to address that.

Smith: The Trails Priority Plan. Chris you alluded to that. How does staff deal
with that currently? Perhaps Larry, you know of this? There are
easements on the drawing board or actively sought. Is that in motion now
or is it something for the plan to activate? The Master Plan.

Nichols: Madam Chair and Commissioner Smith. We have, you know as projects
come up, they have different designs in mind and we evaluate those. I
think one of the things that has come out of the Park Master Plan study is
that you asked earlier what would be some of the expectations. What can
we foresee developing? Normally what we've done up to this point is we
say "well, we need a certain amount of space. We need an acre for every
so many folks, you know." It hasn't really been, as Christian pointed out, it
hasn't always been the ideal location of what's been provided. In my
opinion, not necessarily the amount of area. What should be is happening
and I think what might come out of this plan from what we've been
presented this evening is not necessarily the quantity or we want to say
the quality of life, quality of place. I think the threshold we're about to
embark on is the quality of experience and if we concentrate on that and I
think this Parks Master Plan is going to have a lot of contribution to that.
It's the experience that you have as much as the quantity of space.

And so as far as your question about easement and trails, there are
established trails now. We just went through an Active Transportation
Plan and we're in the process of hiring an Active Transportation
Coordinator that's going to work with not only the bicycle and the walk but
also the trails. I think that's when we'll begin to see more structured
programming for the trails system.

Smith: Thank you Larry. One final question Madam Chair for either Chris or
Sonya. Do you have any ideas for a zip line somewhere? Maybe over at
Hadley? Across town? I just, forgive my ambition for that. Madam Chair
thank you.

Thomas: Commission Smith. In Albuquerque on the north side of town, fairly close
to the soccer complex, there is a child's playground and it has two zip lines
on it. Two. The kids, they just, they have to pull it back up to the
beginning. It's not very high or long, it's child size, but the kids love it. Other comments or questions? Yes, Commissioner Sanchez.

Sanchez: Okay, two things briefly, I hope. A comment and then a question. I would want to comment first, Ms. Delgado thank you very much for talking about the skate parks. Actually that was something that was on my mind to ask about. Then Russ you actually reminded me even more because this past Friday as I was walking through Klein Park I saw the same thing. I saw kids falling over and over. They were jumping off skate boards off the stage, but I'm glad that you noted that we're trying to do some things to address that. So thank you.

But along those lines of talking about Klein Park, I'm curious because I live in District 1. This is the oldest part of Las Cruces. Since I think about District 1, we have two parks, Klein Park and Pioneer Women's Park. And I'm curious actually what type if any attention this Master Plan might actually pay to our most historic parks in the City?

Lentz: As I had indicated before, the Parks Master Plan doesn't necessarily include a park-by-park capital improvements list. What it did include was a conditions assessment. So we had a team that went to every single park in your inventory and fill out very extensive conditions assessment forms across 12 different categories and all of your parks were ranked according to condition of the structures on the site, walk ways, the turf, the vegetation, a variety of different categories. And it's that prioritization list that Sonya and her staff are going to take to identify where key improvements or priority improvements should be proposed and funded and incorporated into future capital budgets and into future general maintenance budgets as well.

Delgado: Madam Chair, Commissioner Sanchez. Actually Klein Park and Women's Pioneer Park both have specific Master Plans for each one of them. So Klein Park has been working through theirs for the last several years and we got a lot of funding from the State Legislature and then now Women's Pioneer Park is going through the same process. We just started the Master Plan process with them and they'll be coming to Council for the Women's Pioneer Park for final adoption on that one. In some instances we do do a Master Plan for each particular park and we have done those on those two particular ones that you brought up.

Sanchez: Thank you for that.

Thomas: Other comments or questions? So I have a couple comments. Somebody came to me the other day and asked me about soccer facilities. They said that kids playing, that's the highest number of kids in the recreation program in our soccer. Yet they only have four soccer field locations and so they're wondering how that might change going forward
since the number of kids playing soccer keeps increasing dramatically every year.

Delgado: Madam Chair Thomas. Currently we're working on a lease with the Las Cruces Public Schools to utilize their fields. Right now we use five, six, seven fields over there now and we're asking for a long-term lease with them to grab five of them. They're going to build some other property on the other parcels of land but hopefully those will be able to come our way. Once that happens then we'll be able to spend capital dollars on there. Right now I can't. So they're not technically the City's but we do use them and there are seven fields over there. We also have soccer fields that are on the corner of Hadley and Solano, Provencio-Van Dame, and depending on the age group we can lay out 12 soccer-playing facilities there, playing fields, and then we also have three adult size fields at Burn Lake. Those are lit, they're about to come back online this weekend. Those are the only ones we have at the moment. The GO Bond will bring on two large soccer fields and then once a large soccer field comes online then we can utilize that and break it up into smaller fields depending on the age group, because they don't all play on a full size field.

Thomas: Right.

Nichols: Madam Chairman. If I may. I remember seeing this in your presentation Christian. Talk about soccer fields there, it was surprising to me because all we hear about is need of soccer fields a lot, but to see that the level of need there was moderate. That came from your survey, right? I would've expected that to have been high based on comments that we hear so often. And the other one that struck me unusual was splash pad. We hear a lot about that but here it says that level of need was moderate. Then getting back to soccer fields it says your deficiency is well like one now, then of course what 2045 we're going to need seven of them. But right now you're only showing a deficiency of one. Did that come from the survey?

Lentz: Yes. The level of need is identified by comparing the gap between importance and performance. We've got a spreadsheet that provides kind of a numerical difference between the two to determine whether that level of need should be characterized as high, moderate, or low. But ultimately there is a degree of subjectivity when it comes to establishing the target levels of service for any of these particular facilities because although through the planning process we compared Las Cruces to a number of benchmark communities and also to the NRPA's national performance standard reviews, these level of service standards just vary across the board. So there's no real community to say Las Cruces is just like that one. In spite of what you're saying, what this table acknowledges is that there is a need and actually it does propose to increase your target level
of service. This table compares your current target level of service, or
your current level of service with a much more robust target level of
service, but tries to do so in a way I guess that considers some of what
Mr. Gordon was bringing up and that is trying not to grow too fast.

What this table doesn't show specifically for soccer fields, it only
shows the City owned fields. It doesn't necessarily account for the leases
that Ms. Delgado was talking about. In addition we also have to consider
that often times what we categorize as a multi-purpose field is oftentimes
used just as much for soccer as it is for different sporting activities as well.
And just like soccer fields this level of service table proposed more robust
targets than what you have currently.

Thomas: Thank you for that information. The Burn Lake fields have been
unavailable for a long time. That's had a really big impact on soccer
because those are some of the best fields. But I'm glad to hear going
forward that they're going to be some more and I'm especially happy to
hear we're going to work out something with the schools because other
places where I've lived we've used the school fields all the time.

So I have a couple other questions. We don't have, I was in
Philomath, Oregon last weekend for my son's birthday party. And in that
little town they have this center where you can have parties, you can rent
it and it had an indoor part where you could have kind of, there was a
kitchen and a place to put food and two bathrooms. Then there was a
covered outdoor part and it was so, such a useful place. It was in the
middle of a park and there were a lot of things for kids to do. It was very
easy to serve food to a lot of people and have people inside and outside
and be grilling outside. I just wondered if there are any plots of doing that
kind of a facility somewhere in the City. Because it was such a great
facility for our event.

Delgado: Madam Chair. We can certainly take that into consideration. And as we
move forward with the East Mesa Sports Complex we're also going to
have an open space with that as well. So that is something to, I'll make
note of that and bring it forward.

Thomas: Thank you very much. Yes, that's a good idea, the East Mesa place.

Lentz: I'll just add that the nature of this Master Planning process, the design, the
layout of that particular type of space is not something that the Master
Plan goes into. But the Master Plan in this case does propose or does
recommend additions to your indoor recreation space that you currently
offer; either in the form of new community or recreation buildings or even
the addition to existing buildings as well.

Thomas: Okay and I just want to comment on what you were talking about,
connecting trails and so on. Lots of times we have subdivisions that are
stuck one on another on another and there's no road, but we could improve the connectivity if we had the multi-use trails that connected the subdivisions. So I really like that idea taking that into consideration in the future. Thank you much for your presentation. Yes, you have one more question? Yes.

Gordon: You brought up the fact about Butterfield Shooting Range. This is, I don't know if anybody is really very familiar with it out here, but I do belong to the Mesilla Valley Shotgun Club where I do a lot of trap shooting as sporting clays. So I'm very active out there. Unfortunately there are only certain places that you can put a facility like that. You need thousands, especially with the rifle ranges and the pistol ranges you need a certain amount of distance. You can't have bullets flying over houses and things like that. But I do understand that because of the law you can go out in the desert here and just shoot all you want as long as you don't probably bother anybody the State doesn't bother you or the police. I think that the City has done an excellent job out there and I think more people should get involved. It's a wonderful facility. It's not just a bunch of, for lack of a better word, hooligans getting together and shooting guns. It's a very, very, the facility is very well kept and is very well maintained and also very, very strict as far what the requirements are for safety. Just to say that I think the City did a nice job in doing that for the people here who do get involved in those sports and especially the support of the Mesilla Valley Shotgun by letting them build that facility. I can tell you I've shot in plenty of them and it is a very, very nice facility that they did. Basically with all volunteer labor. So thank anyway, thank the City for that.

Thomas: Thank you for that comment. Thank you again for your presentation.

X. COMMISSION COMMENTARY

Thomas: We'll move on now to Commission commentary. Does anybody have any comments to offer? Commissioner Smith.

Smith: Madam Chair. In Philomath, Oregon that multi-use facility, did it have a zip line?

Thomas: No it did not, I'm sorry to say. But we can look into that next time I'm out there. I think I have a picture of the zip line. A park in Albuquerque, I'll look for it. Any other comments from Commissioners? Well, you all know I think that this is a big week with the design workshops and so that's what I have to say. I hope everybody's going to be able to find some time during the week to stop at the design workshops and see what's going on there.

XI. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS
Thomas: Staff announcements?

Nichols: Yes. Madam Chair. Thank you. I have just two announcements and you've helped me, you made one of them just now. There is the workshop. In fact there's one going on right now. All of them are being held at the Bank of the West. I think this Commission is very familiar with it because you are CPAC as well. And so you have all the dates going from May 28th, 29th, 30th, clear down to June 1st of the various times. Those have all been posted.

And then the other announcement I have is I'd like to have the Commission recognize that our very own Sara Gonzales has been awarded the Certificate of Zoning Official. It's a very prestigious award and we're very proud that she was awarded that.

Thomas: Thank you very much. Congratulations Sara.

Gonzales: Thank you.

Thomas: Did you have any staff comments to make?

Gonzales: No, our Director has covered them. Based on requests from Srijana and from the Comp Plan. We do have the CPAC meeting also tomorrow as another reminder. That would be the end of our announcements.

Thomas: Thank you very much.

XII. ADJOURNMENT (7:14)

Thomas: Okay, I'll entertain the motion to adjourn.

Gordon: I make a motion we adjourn.

Smith: Second.

Thomas: All those in favor.

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Thomas: Okay, so we're adjourned and it's 7:14.

Chairperson