

MISSION TRAIL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



July 2019

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Location

The Mission Trail

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

For four centuries, El Paso del Rio del Norte was New Spain's northern frontier. Now, known as the Camino Real Tierra Adentro, which was created by the Spaniards during their explorations of the area, is known as the Southwest United States. The two missions and presidio that were established along the Rio Grande are among the most important historical sites in the State of Texas because they pre-date the other missions in both Texas and California by many decades.

The trail dates back 1,000s of years ago as a route for trade, commerce and survival among indigenous people. The importance of this routes collaborative history and heritage between the indigenous people, Mexico, Spain, and the American Southwest territory, all prior to pilgrims landing at Plymouth in 1620. This route signifies that America was first influenced by the Spanish Crown from the southern border, colliding with the existing cultures present in Southwest America. Don Juan Oñate is attributed to leading the exploration, having arrived in present day San Elizario and traveling upstream (west) in search of an area conducive for crossing the river before deciding on a location in New Mexico.

Missions, presidios, and communities were established along or near rivers. It is no coincidence that El Paso's missions and the San Elizario presidio were established near the Rio Grande. One very interesting fact concerning the missions and presidio in El Paso County is that they changed nationalities depending on the vagaries of the Rio Grande River. Prior to 1829, both missions and the presidio were located on the southerly bank of the Rio Grande River. But that year the river flooded the entire valley. When the floodwater subsided, the river had created a new channel for itself which left the communities of Ysleta, Socorro, and San Elizario on the northerly bank of the river.

The missions and presidio chapel are priceless reminders of the elaborate system of Spanish missions and forts, colonial villages, and Indian traditions. The Rio Grande gave the mission and presidio chapel communities life, as well as caused great destruction. The Ysleta and Socorro missions were flooded, as the river periodically changed its course. The transmigration of the river moved the boundary between the United States and Mexico further south after each flood.

The Misión de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe (in Cd. Juárez) remained on the southerly side of the river. In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo between the United States and Mexico established the deepest channel of the river as the international boundary, thereby permanently placing the missions of Ysleta and Socorro, and the San Elizario presidio chapel on Texas soil.

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

The Ysleta Mission, the Socorro Mission, and the San Elizario Presidio Chapel are all situated along Socorro Road which is a portion of the Camino Real, or King's Highway, established by the Spaniards as their route from Mexico City to Santa Fe. The existence of their historic heritage is epitomized in the missions and presidio chapel, their immediate area, and the historic road which links them directly to El Paso.

1,600 Miles
Mexico City to
San Juan Pueblo,
New Mexico
400 Miles in US

National Historic
Trail under National
Park Service & BLM

Catholic Diocese
of El Paso own the
Missions and Chapel

Mission Trail
Historical Area
9 Miles Along
Socorro Road

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



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



Corpus Christi de la Ysleta del Sur

Ysleta Mission

Brief History & Existing Conditions

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

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



Corpus Christi de la Ysleta del Sur



Interior view: Corpus Christi de la Ysleta del Sur

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

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

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

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



Aerial View of Ysleta Mission area today.

SOURCE: GOOGLE EARTH

Ysleta Mission Timeline

- 16th CENTURY ● Origins of Camino Real begins era of Spaniard Colonization in Southwest America
- 1680 ● Revolt causes Tigua Indians to relocate to Ysleta del Sur, along the Mission Trail
- 1682 ● Original mission constructed
- 1740 ● Ysleta Mission destroyed by flooding of the Rio Grande and reconstructed in 1744
- 1821 ● Rule transitions from Spain to Mexico
- 1829 ● Rio Grande floods, damages Mission, and changes course, placing Mission in US
- 1848 ● Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo sets international border with Mission in US
- 1907 ● Wall portions, sacristsy, church bell and Spanish statue only items to survive a fire
- 1908 ● Mission reconstructed from surviving elements
- 1916 ● Mission & ground restored by Tigua Tribe



Mission Nuestra Señora de la Limpia Concepción de Socorro, 1766 - La Purísima Concepción de Socorro

Socorro Mission

Brief History & Existing Conditions

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

The mission is influenced by the Spanish crown and the Piro, Tano, and Jemez Indian communities. A portion of the group relocated along the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro after a revolt in New Mexico occurred. The mission is a symbol of geopolitical history and cultural fusion shaped under multiple governments as claims on the land changed, including Spain, Mexico, Republic of Texas, and the United States.



Socorro Mission exterior



Interior view: Socorro Mission

Similar to the Ysleta Mission, the Rio Grande flooded the region altering the region's landscape numerous times with "flooding destroy[ing] the mission as many as five times" (Howard Campbell, 2005). An flooding event in 1928 caused the Ysleta Mission, the Socorro Mission, as well as the Chapel of San Elzario to fall north of the Rio Grande. After political land annexation and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the missions were now permanently part of Texas and the United States. The reconstruction of the Socorro Mission after the devastating flooding of the Rio Grande brought forth the mission present today.

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

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

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



Aerial View of Socorro Mission area today.

SOURCE: GOOGLE EARTH

Socorro Mission Timeline

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



San Elizario Presidio Chapel

San Elizario Presidio

Brief History & Existing Conditions

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

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

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



Veterans Memorial Park



Interior view: San Elizario Presidio Chapel

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

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

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

The architectural style of the chapel resembles those of southwest mission architecture and features thick adobe walls. However there is a difference in form between the chapel and the missions. The missions have long sanctuary areas (in which patrons sit) and before reaching the altar, extend to either side and then the altar at the center top, resembling a cross from above. The chapel is a single nave form with a large rectangle with the half-circle altar in the center and two smaller half-circles on either side.

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

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



Aerial View of Socorro Mission area today.

SOURCE: GOOGLE EARTH

San Elizario Presidio Timeline

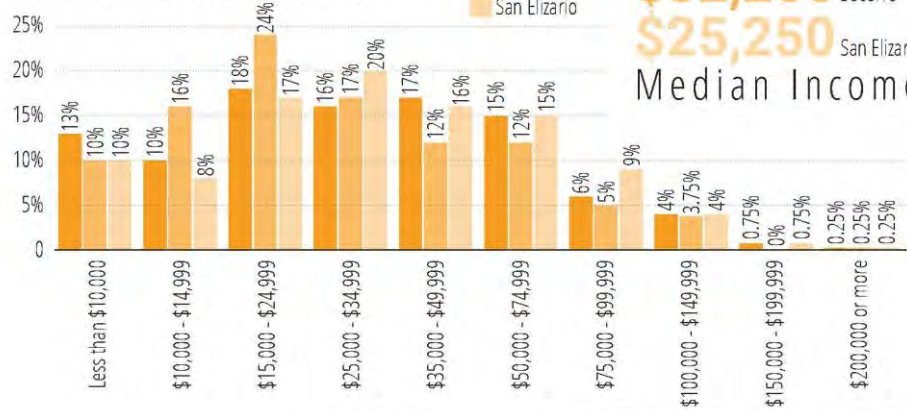
- 1598 ● La Toma held in San Elizario on April 30, claims territory for Spain
- 1789 ● Presidio constructed to protect against Apaches & Comanche raiders
- 1821 ● Mexico gains independence from Spain
- 1829 ● Rio Grande floods, damages Presidio, and changes course, placing chapel in US
- 1848 ● Treaty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

Demographics

Mission Valley Area

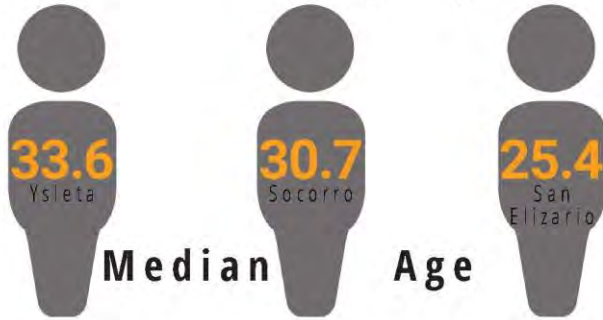
This section examines the demographics of the Mission Valley area, specifically the zip code level data for Ysleta (79907), Socorro (79927) and San Elizario (79849). This information will help to form an understanding of the Mission Trail area in terms of population, income, employment, or other data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

Income Distribution



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

97.2%
Hispanic Population



Source: ACS 2016



Travel Time to work

Median Home Price

FOR SALE
\$96,562 in Ysleta
\$89,018 in Socorro
\$63,242 in San Elizario

*Median Home Price represents the midway point of all houses/units sold at market price over a set period.



4.1%
Unemployment Rate

Community Ownership Rates



BIG 5 IDEAS

1. Create Complete Centers Around Each Mission & the Chapel

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

2. Protect & Enhance Historic Assets & Agricultural Landscapes

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

3. Add Destinations and Events

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

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

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

5. Expand Economic Base and Identify Funding Sources

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

1. Create Complete Centers

Around each Mission and the San Elizario Chapel

Live, Work, and Play in the Mission Valley

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

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

Encourage Each Community's Unique Identity

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

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

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

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

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

10/10

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

Crucial to Continue Supporting Existing Destinations along the Mission Trail



Main Street Mercantile - San Elizario



Veterans Memorial Park / La Placita, San Elizario

Support Existing Destination

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

Things To Do & Events*

- Speaking Rock Entertainment Center/ Tigua Cultural Center
- Rio Bosque Wetlands
- Outlaw Saloon at the Licon Dairy & Petting Zoo
- Veteran's Memorial Plaza
- Mission Trail Art Market
- San Elizario Historic Sculpture Series
- Tigua Performances

- Walking Tours
- Free Concert Series (Speaking Rock)
- La Cueva Theater - Socorro
- Golden Eagle Gallery
- Escamilla Art Gallery & Studio
- Main Street Mercantile
- Al Borrego Studio
- Adobe Horseshoe Theatre
- Eagle Path Gift Shop
- Casa Ronquillo
- Shooter's Smokin' BBQ

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

Museums + Visitors Centers*

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

*as of July 2019

2. Protect & Enhance

Historic Assets & Agricultural Landscape

Document Historic Assets, Landscapes & Artifacts

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

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

Protect Historic Assets

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

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

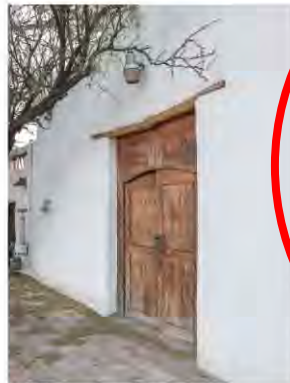
Another path to protect and enhance the historical assets of the Mission Trail is to seek World Heritage Site designation. World Heritage Sites are selected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). World Heritage Sites are legally protected under international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

8/10

Tables Recommended protection due to the cultural heritage contribution to the Mission Trail

1,092

Cultural & Natural UNESCO World Heritage Sites Only **1** is in Texas



La Cueva Theatre, Socorro

1.15



Agricultural land adjacent to Socorro Road

Preserve Agricultural Assets

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

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

1.16

ENOUGH PROTECTIONS?



3. Add Destinations & Events

Destinations & Events in Each Community

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

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

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

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

9/10

Tables Recommended the addition of New Destinations and Events to the Communities

78%

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



Adobe Horseshoe Theatre, San Elizario



Main Street, San Elizario

Common Links to Destinations

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

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

4. Connect the Mission Valley

Add Trails & Improve Streets

Add Trails Along Historic Irrigation Canals & Socorro Road

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

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

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

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

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

Improve Access and Visibility

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

8/10

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

100%

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

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



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



Socorro Road near Tiwa Boulevard, Socorro

Maintain the auto-mobility of the commuting network

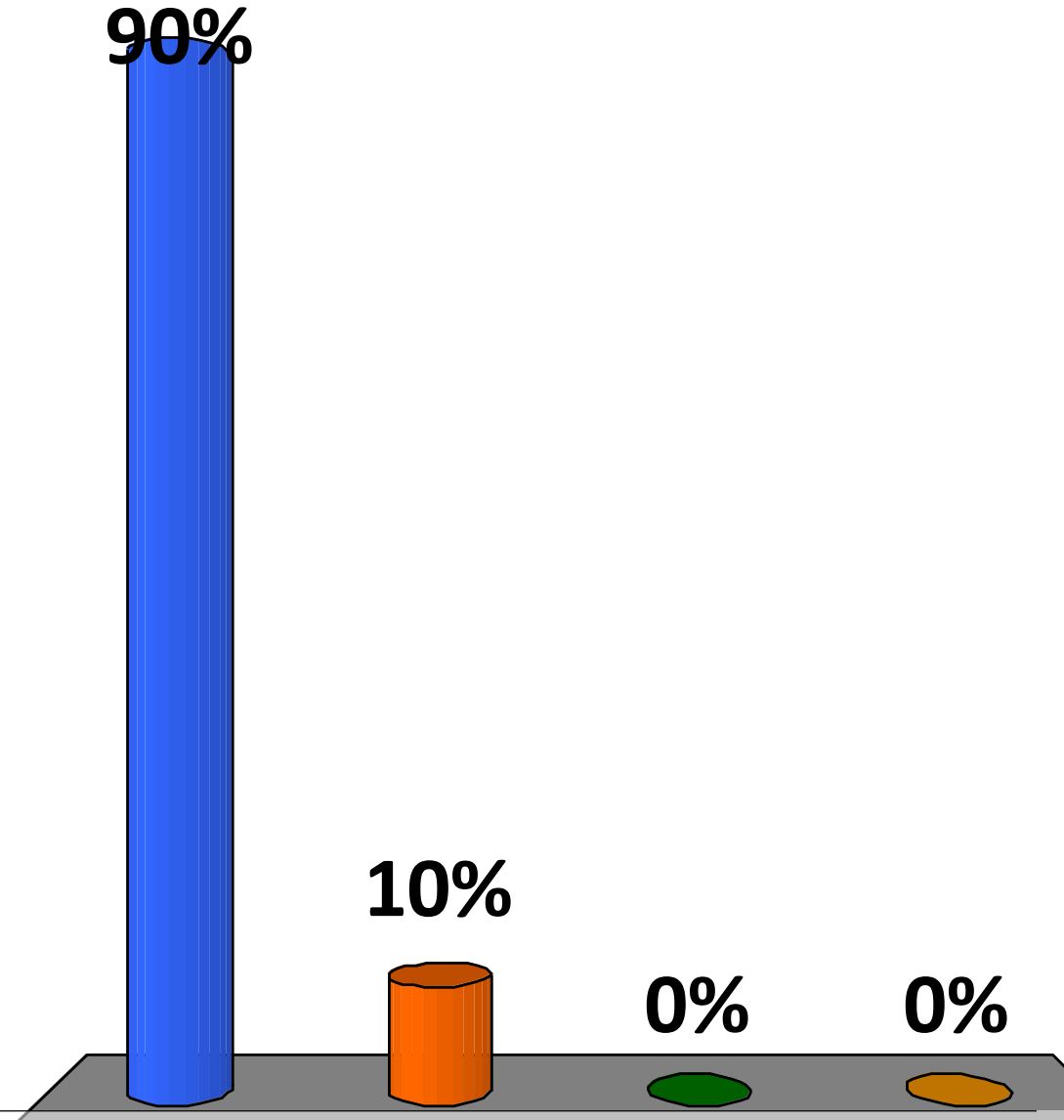
The Mission Trail (Socorro Road) is the main traffic artery for the Mission Valley. As the primary way of getting from the Valley to the City of El Paso, Socorro Road's function as a critical mobility corridor must be maintained and improved upon. Many charrette attendees noted that traffic is a growing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

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

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

DO YOU LIKE THE IDEA OF RURAL PEDESTRIAN-BIKE TRAILS?

- 1. Yes
- 2. Probably Yes
- 3. Can't Tell Yet
- 4. No



EL PASO MISSION TRAIL

5. Expand Economic Base

Identify New Funding Sources

Bring Together Mission Trail Advocacy Groups

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

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

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

Coordinate Existing Funding Sources

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

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

Seek Additional Funding Sources

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

6/10

Tables Recommended
Finding New
Ways to Fund
Improvements
in the Mission Valley

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



Street improvement along Socorro Road



Sombras del Pasado Restaurant (for sale), Socorro

Public Improvement District

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

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

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

Mission Trail Area Resident

2 LAND USE & URBAN DESIGN

Existing Conditions Land Use and Development Patterns

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

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

Zoning & Land Use Data

Mission Trail Along Socorro Road

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

One of the highest concentrations of lots is on El Ranch Farm / Agricultural. This is not an ideal location for zoning. This area also has the potential for large tracts of Ranch Farm / Agricultural but are not currently zoned for this use. A large amount of area remains a large area that is still available for agriculture cultivation or may be a great opportunity for preservation in order to maintain the rural character of the area.

Another important area in the location of the zoning map is the large area in the City of Socorro that is indicated by the zoning map as being "Open Space". In total there are approximately 200 acres of rural and agricultural land along Socorro Road that is developed as an unincorporated subdivision.



El Paso Miss on Trail Comprehensive Plan



Ysleta Community Area

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

Ysleta lies within the limits of the City of El Paso and is the most accessible part of the 1955 Year El Paso annexed Ysleta. The Ysleta Mission is accessible to most of the City by way of Alameda Avenue, or by transit to the Mission Valley Rapid Transit Center. The Speeding Rock Entertainment Center is located within the same block as the Mission. The "Old Indians" own a large parcel of property in the area and have services and housing for the community including the Ysleta Health Center and the "Old Indians" Home located through the Speeding Rock Cultural Center.

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

1955 Year El Paso annexed Ysleta

Land Use & Urban Design



Socorro Mission Area

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

The former El Meson de Oñate and Pueblo de Socorro on White Road extends the historic district of the area and provide potential places for people to extend their visit by extending and improving to the Mission. This collection of buildings and the extension of the historic nature of the area. Finding uses for these vacant buildings will help to bring life back to this area.

Collection of historic public buildings are located at the intersections of Socorro and Moon Road and well as by Coahuila Road. A connection between these buildings and the area around the Mission should be explored including improvements to Socorro Road.

City First Incorporated 1871
Re-incorporated 1985

In response to an annexation attempt from neighboring El Paso

El Paso Miss on Trail Comprehensive Plan



San Elizario Presidio Chapel Area

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

The presidio chapel and its surroundings are within an historic district with some single family residential zoning around the edges. San Elizario is a community that is currently not having a lot of growth. This provides a place for the community to gather, host events, and for the community to build improvements and find uses for these vacant buildings.

Some of the buildings around the presidio chapel are now owned by City of El Paso County Art Museum, Adobe Historical Theatre and Event Center, Joe Portales Museum, Golden Eagle Gallery, Moon Street Monuments, and Escamilla, among others.

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

City First Incorporated 1851
Re-incorporated 2013

In response to an annexation attempt from neighboring Socorro

Land Use & Urban Design

Community Concerns

Land Use and Development Patterns

Loss of Farmland & Open Space

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

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

Residents want to see the remaining farmland be preserved. However, many recognize the economic realities and that inevitably development that will occur over time. If development will happen, residents would like to see new communities that fit into the existing fabric and that mirror the architectural designs that make the area so special. Future development should maintain some rural characteristics, uniformity with the history of the area, and not be less of a generic suburban design.

Too Many Vacant Parcels

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

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

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

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



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



Vacant parcels along Socorro Road

Lack of Park Space

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

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

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

National Recreational Association

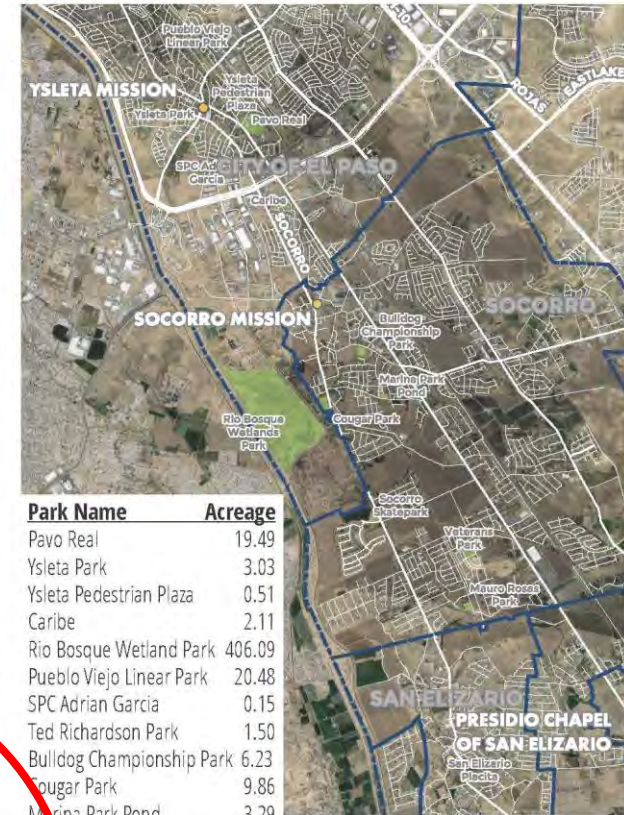
Recommends 10 Park Acres for Every 1,000 Residents

Approx 104,000 Mission Trail Residents =

1,040 Acres Parks

Mission Trail Area currently has

511 Acres of Parkland, Half the Recommended Acreage



Strategies

To Address Community Concerns

Infill Possibilities: Housing

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

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

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

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



Existing Conditions

Proposed Infill Housing in a Courtyard Housing Form - Plan View



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

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

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

Infill Possibilities: Small Organic Farms

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

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



Existing Conditions

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





Paseo de Convento

Socorro Road

COURTYARD HOUSING TYPE WITH COMMUNITY GARDEN

Plan



Paseo de Convento

Socorro Road

On-street Parking

Cottage House

Community Garden

Common Green

COURTYARD HOUSING TYPE WITH COMMUNITY GARDEN

Proposed Plan



Paseo de Convento

Socorro Road

COURTYARD HOUSING TYPE WITH COMMUNITY GARDEN
Existing Conditions



Paseo de Convento

Socorro Road

COURTYARD HOUSING TYPE WITH COMMUNITY GARDEN

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Existing Conditions

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



Traditional Neighborhood or Clustered Development

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

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

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

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



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

Existing Landscape

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



1 - Continuing the Suburban Trend

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



2 - Traditional Neighborhood /or Cluster Development

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





TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT

Existing Farmlands



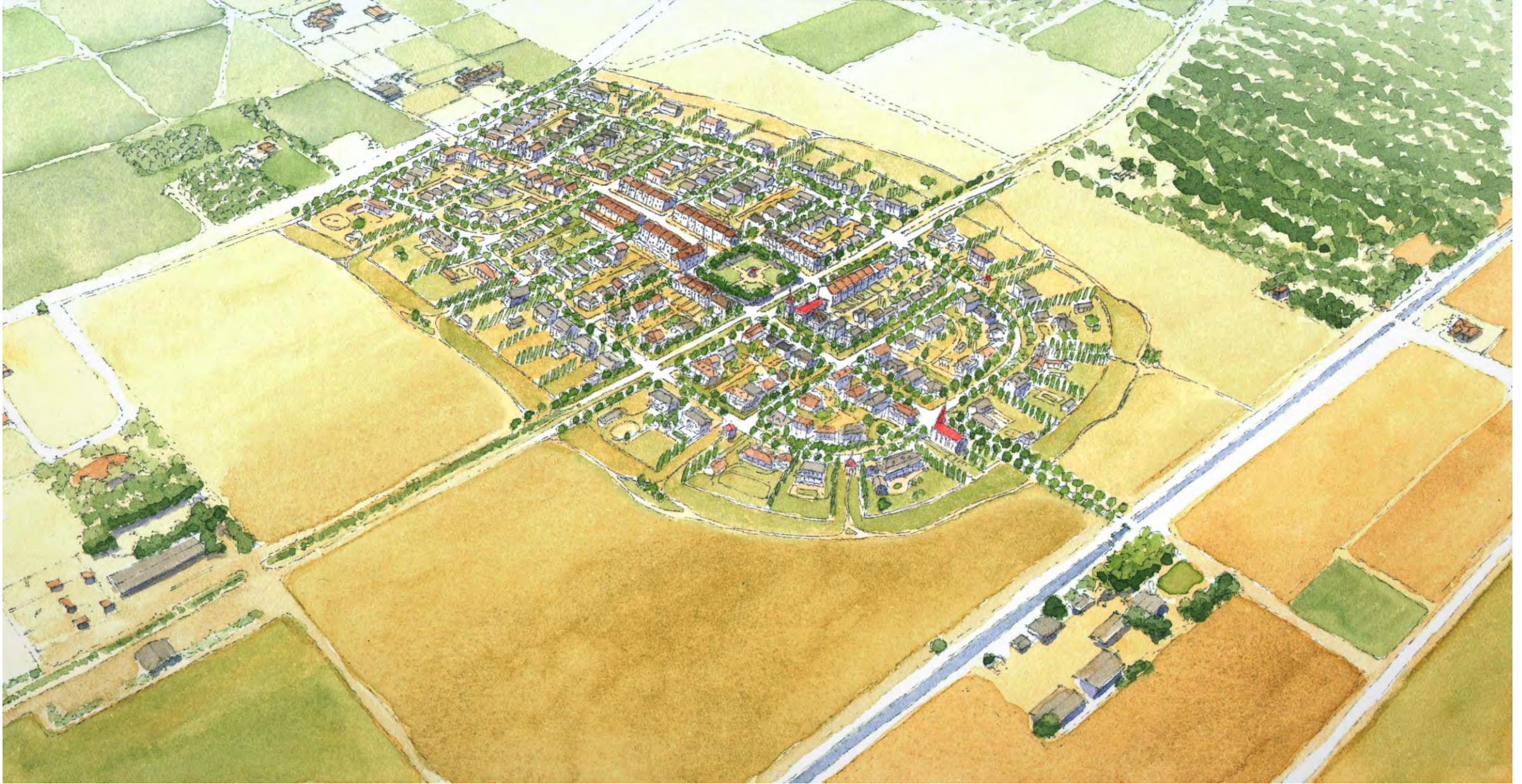
TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT

Suburban Development eliminates rural character of the area



TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT

Existing Farmlands



TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT

Clustered or Traditional Development preserves rural character of the area with smaller development footprint

Ysleta Mission Area

Introduction to the Area

Located within the City of El Paso, Ysleta is often the first stop for people seeking a sense of Mission History. The character of the area is much more urban than other portions of the Mission Trail. Ysleta has the potential to provide both a complete experience for visitors, and an excellent "basecamp" for excursions into the rest of the Mission Trail. Ideally, a visit to the Ysleta Mission and the surrounding community will boost interest in going further, and seeing more of the Mission Trail.

Ysleta has been home to the Tigua Indians for more than 300 years. The Ysleta area boasts multiple entertainment and tourism destinations such as the Ysleta Mission, Speaking Rock Entertainment Center, and Pueblo Cultural Center. Most of the entities are located along Socorro Road or Alameda Avenue. This area can serve as a gateway to the community, showcasing the unique history and culture of the Tigua Indians.

The Ysleta Mission is a small enclave of buildings separated from the surrounding suburban community by walls. This helps to keep the Mission and its grounds intact while the community develops around it. The Ysleta Mission is also adjacent to the Speaking Rock Entertainment Center.

Utilize Rapid Transit System (RTS) Station

The Ysleta Mission offers a unique opportunity as a tourist attraction at the end of the Alameda Corridor RTS line. With a connected bus system, the transfer center allows people to easily visit the historic mission from various points around the City.

Implement a Streetcar System

Helping people get to each of the destinations along the Mission Trail can help to cut down on traffic and make it easier for tourists to get around. A streetcar type system could run from the Ysleta Mission to the Socorro Mission and then on to the San Elizario Presidio Chapel. It could include an audio tour of the area and provide history and background on the areas they are passing as well as of the missions and chapel themselves.

Enrich Commercial & Office

Opportunities along Alameda Avenue
Ysleta Mission has the most people living in close proximity to it and enhancements to the area should benefit the people in the surrounding area. With increased density and increased modes of mobility, it is important to be able to meet one's daily needs in close proximity to where one lives or works. Alameda Avenue serves many of the community's needs, but typically at a cost to the pedestrian, in favor of automobiles. Large parking lots should be lined with commercial or residential uses, enhancing the pedestrian environment and eliminating dead zones. This will not only help pedestrians and reduce transportation problems, but will also help in recreating a self-sufficient local economy in the Ysleta area.



Tigua Indian Community Center

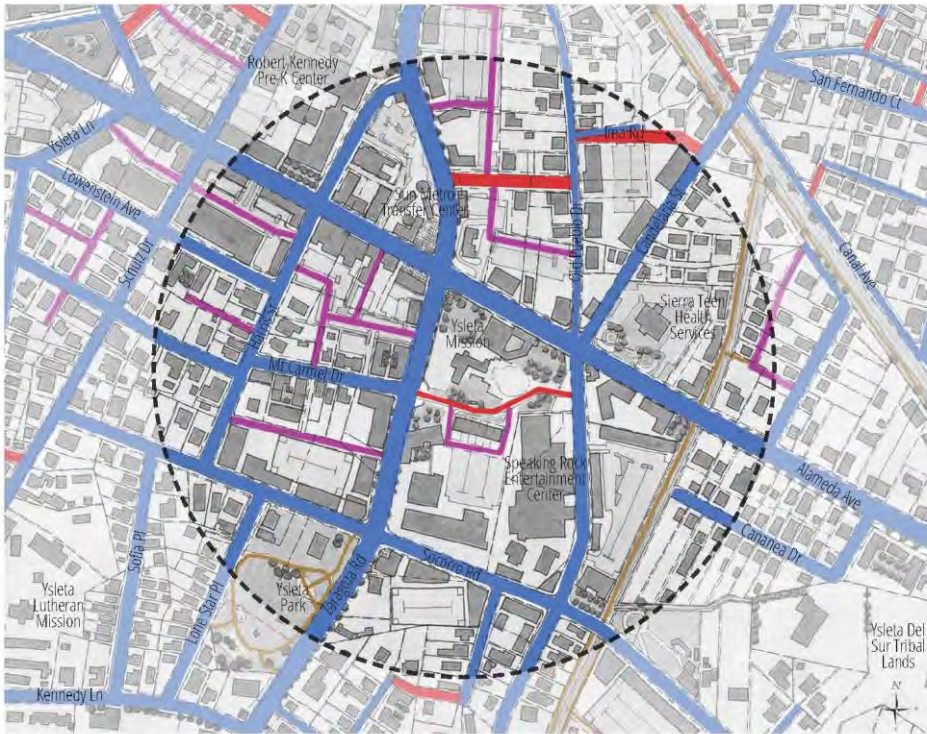
The Ysleta Mission is both a center of the Ysleta community and a landmark destination for visitors to El Paso. New homes, businesses, and services designed in context with the area, and with the pedestrian in mind, can enhance the experience of living in and visiting Ysleta.



Ysleta Mission Illustrative Plan

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

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



Street Network

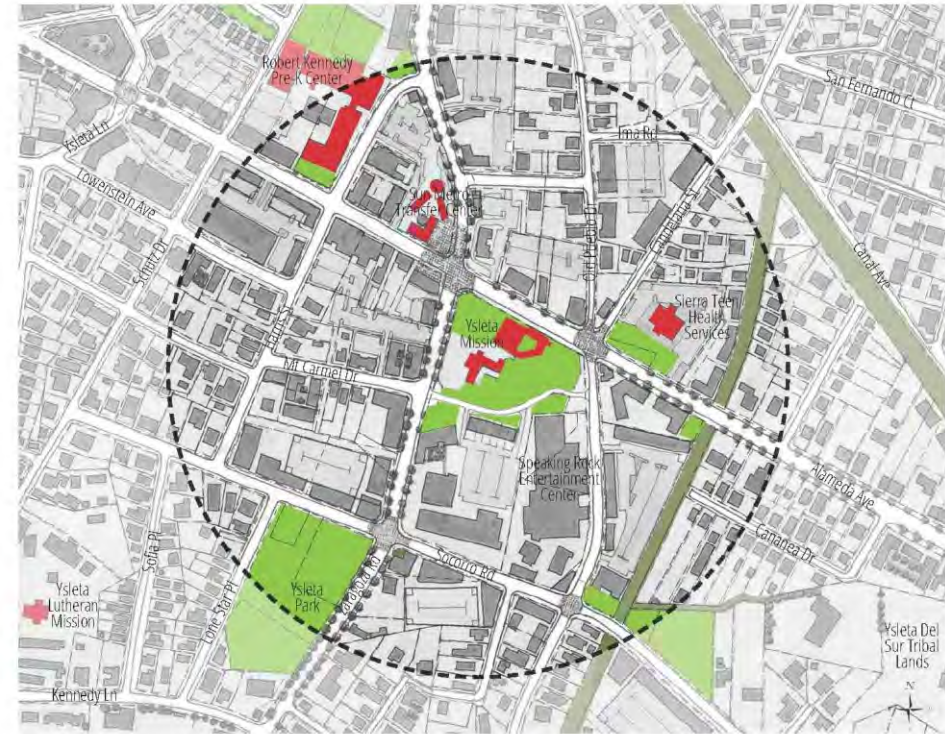
Existing Streets: The Ysleta street network is well connected. Many of the existing streets are very narrow and slow-moving. The character of these streets should be emulated as new street connections are created or as roads are repaired and infrastructure is upgraded.

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

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

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

- Existing Streets
- Proposed Streets
- Alleys
- Pedestrian Paths



Green & Civic Spaces

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

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

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

- Existing Civic Spaces
- Proposed Civic Spaces
- Civic Buildings

Ysleta Gateway

Alameda Avenue as a Gateway to the Mission Trail

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

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

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



Existing Conditions

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



Step 1

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



Step 2

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



Step 3

YSLETA GATEWAY – ALAMEDA AVE & HARRIS STREET

Existing Conditions



YSLETA GATEWAY – ALAMEDA AVE & HARRIS STREET

Public Street Improvements



YSLETA GATEWAY – ALAMEDA AVE & HARRIS STREET

Private Investment



YSLETA GATEWAY – ALAMEDA AVE & HARRIS STREET

Private Investment



YSLETA GATEWAY – ALAMEDA AVE & HARRIS STREET

Existing Conditions



Socorro Road

Residential Streetscape Improvements

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

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

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

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



Existing Conditions



Step 1



Step 2



Step 3

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

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



Step 4



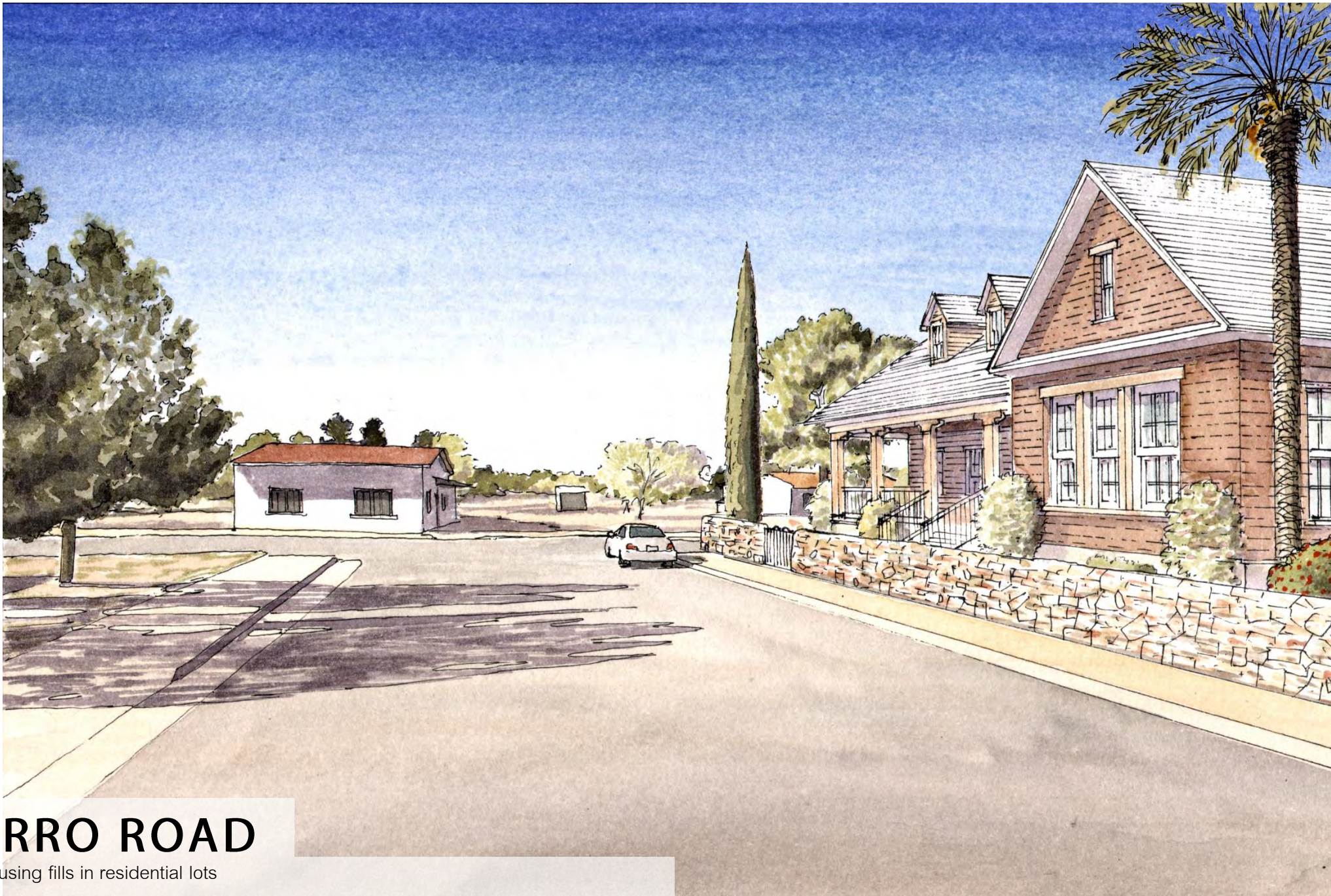
SOCORRO ROAD

Existing Conditions – Residential Area at the start of Socorro Road



SOCORRO ROAD

Step 1 – Powerlines are relocated and chain link fencing is removed



SOCORRO ROAD

Step 2 – New housing fills in residential lots



SOCORRO ROAD

Step 3 – Additional Housing Redevelopment