

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The following are the summary minutes for the meeting of the **Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee** held on Wednesday, May 29, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. at City Hall, Room 2007-B, 700 North Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Members Present:

Sharon Thomas, Chair
Harvey Gordon, Member (Departed 12:07)
John Moscato, Member
Christina Ainsworth, Member (Departed 12:15)
Todd Stuve, Member
George Vescovo, Member
Heather Watenpaugh, Member
Roberta Gran, Member (Departed 11:56)
James Bennett, Member (Departed 12:45)

Members Absent

Mary Ann Hendrickson, Vice Chair
La Vonne Muniz, Member
Abraham Sanchez, Member
Russ Smith, Member

Staff Present:

Srijana Basnyat, Community Development
John Castillo, Community Development
Dominic Loya, Community Development
Mark Miller, Community Development
Larry Nichols, Community Development
David Weir, Community Development

Others Present:

Jim Carrillo, Halff Associates
Christian Lentz, Halff Associates
Kendall Howard, Halff Associates
Jason King, Dover, Kohl & Partners
Kasandra Gandara, City Councilor
David Chavez

1 **I. Call to Order (10:00 a.m.)**

2
3 Chairperson called the meeting to order.

4
5 **II. Introduction**

6
7 Introductions all around.

8
9 **III. Approval of Minutes**

10
11 **1. May 9, 2019**

12 The minutes were postponed to the end of the meeting.

13
14 **IV. Project Status and Update**

15
16 Halff Associates discussed the project status and Future Development Map of
17 Elevate Las Cruces. They noted their appreciation of the Board's feedback and
18 mentioned that the Community Profile now includes the most recent data for 2017.

19
20 **V. Future Development Maps – Discussion**

21
22 **1. Future Development Map Review Exercise**

23 Halff Associates explained that the first volume of the plan would include an
24 updated Vision Statement, Future Development Map, policies and a Major
25 Thoroughfare Map. Halff Associates asked the CPAC to discuss the maps and
26 place types using the consensus growth scenario as a base.

27
28 A member of the CPAC mentioned the new State Land Commissioner's interest
29 in reinstating previous Joint Planning Agreements with the City and past land
30 swap discussions with BLM.

31
32 Halff Associates noted that the Future Development Map, regardless of
33 ownership, should reflect how Las Cruces wants to develop. They noted that
34 the place type classifications are continually being refined, and that they have
35 added more examples of amenities likely found within each (educational
36 campuses, airport, industrial parks, etc.) place type. Halff Associates noted that
37 existing blueprints and neighborhood planning areas will be shown in a
38 secondary map including areas such as Amador Proximo and Apodaca. They
39 emphasized that the plan will embrace the idea of special area and district
40 planning.

41
42 CPAC discussed that the Future Development Map should show how the City
43 wants to grow and should not focus solely on investments. Halff stated that they
44 have a sense of the market, but this plan is about the vision of Las Cruces.

1 CPAC discussed enticing people to develop in areas such as the airport. Staff
2 noted that the Goals, Policies and Action items will provide the means to direct
3 development.
4

5 CPAC discussed areas around Red Hawk and Halff Associates asked for
6 direction on where to place neighborhood centers. The CPAC expressed that
7 the City needs to be more entrepreneurial rather than governmental.
8

9 Halff Associates gave an overview of each place type and asked for further
10 input from the CPAC on each one individually.
11

12 **Open space preserve**

13 Halff Associates noted that the growth of the City could be accommodated
14 within the existing City limits. They reviewed that the Future Development Map
15 shows where the community decides to grow so that the City can focus growth
16 and public infrastructure in those areas. They noted the map focuses on the
17 type of growth, not individual zoning.
18

19 CPAC discussed the need for schools, hospitals, clinics, and fire stations
20 especially east along US 70. Staff reminded the CPAC that this plan would be
21 amended every 10 years and would allow for some flexibility. They also noted
22 that the Fire Department has stations 9 and 10 planned.
23

24 CPAC discussed the arroyos and noted that they are an area of concern. Halff
25 Associates agreed to better define the arroyos and how they relate to the
26 neighborhoods around them.
27

28 **Rural reserve**

29 Halff noted the intent with this place type is to encourage conservation
30 neighborhoods, cluster development and the preservation of nature areas.
31

32 There was a discussion on how topography will play a part in development on
33 the East Mesa. CPAC discussed whether the East Mesa would be better suited
34 for cluster development rather than suburban development. Some members
35 expressed opinions that city growth should be moved further east into the East
36 Mesa because of the demand for suburban development. Staff reminded CPAC
37 that the City would have to maintain the infrastructure.
38

39 CPAC discussed adding a minimum of a 100-foot buffer to be dedicated around
40 arroyos to respect water and to maintain existing topography.
41

42 Staff asked the CPAC to consider whether the area of the East Mesa should
43 be preserved with its natural topography, alignment, and whether design should
44 consider existing topography.
45

1 Halff agreed to explore options of the East Mesa and possibly move suburban
2 development slightly east to follow the same pattern currently shown.

3
4 **Suburban Neighborhood**

5 Halff Associates explained that residential development is changing and that
6 the average person wants different styles of homes for different chapters of
7 their life. They referenced a number of new trends desired in residential:
8 connectivity, walkability, and multi-generational neighborhoods.

9
10 CPAC noted that older neighborhoods tend to have parkways and trees making
11 them more appealing to walk along. They noted the difference in newer
12 neighborhoods that tend to be warmer due to the lack of a cooling effect, which
13 leads them to be more unattractive to live in.

14
15 A CPAC member thought that the city's design standards required a 7-foot
16 parkway for trees to be planted which would limit opportunities. The CPAC
17 recommended focusing trees on the people rather than within the medians and
18 noted the importance of identifying streets for parkways.

19
20 **Regional Commercial**

21 CPAC mentioned a lack of parking lot connections on El Paseo.

22
23 Halff Associates noted that most communities do a good job making sure that
24 sidewalks are put in but forget to think about how the pedestrians get from the
25 sidewalks to the buildings. They mentioned that Regional Commercial is
26 intended to be more car-oriented, but that the CPAC should also consider the
27 walkable development policies to accomplish a pedestrian-friendly
28 environment. CPAC mentioned Oro Valley in Tucson, AZ as an example.

29
30 Staff stated the need to create visual consistency and harmony in architecture,
31 but not limit business owner's creativity.

32
33 David Chavez discussed the issues that have affected Las Cruces including
34 urban renewal in the '60s and '70s, which closed Main Street. He noted the
35 desire to create neighborhoods that have different and unique architecture to
36 emphasize our region of the country. He encouraged consistent architecture
37 that complements our cultural heritage.

38
39 **Downtown**

40 Halff Associates mentioned that downtown is the single most important area of
41 the City and that the development of the City must complement the downtown
42 district.

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44 CPAC discussed the concept of complete neighborhoods and how the idea
45 varies throughout different neighborhoods.

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Neighborhood Centers

Halff Associates noted the potential to use neighborhood centers to tie together the feel of an entire neighborhood.

CPAC asked for clarification on the distance between neighborhood centers.

Halff Associates responded that in a perfect world, there would be a neighborhood center every quarter mile.

CPAC mentioned the 10 years that the City took to restart downtown. They expressed concerns about the amount of buy-in from the community.

2. Major Future Thoroughfare Map Exercise

Staff noted that the current MTP includes large streets (collectors and above) but does not include local streets or policies.

CPAC mentioned the MPO is much more committed to this type of discussion but that the City has no control over funding and would need a population of over 200,000 to receive better funding.

VI. Design Workshop Demonstration Sites – Discussion

Jason King discussed the Elevate Las Cruces meeting held last evening and noted that additional meetings would be held over the next couple of days. He mentioned the need for more walkability, coffee shops and small grocery, art, housing types for all, repurposed malls, downtown parking garages, changing parking to developments or parks, more art, children's museum. They discussed using word clouds today and in the future.

Halff Associates asked the CPAC if they had comments on the Future Development Map. CPAC noted that University Avenue was shown as a Mixed-Use Corridor.

Halff Associates discussed that many of the roads in Las Cruces tend to be wide to accommodate a large number of cars but are uncomfortable for other users. They discussed the sliding scale of mobility with the highway as an example: the more vehicular mobility, the less access. They noted that streets need to be balanced for all users and that slower traffic and calmer streets can lead to economic development. They mentioned treatments to existing roadways to make them multi-modal including adjusting lane widths.

Halff Associates discussed that in general rural streets tend to be designed for vehicular mobility and tend to connect people to employment centers or residential areas while lacking curb and gutter. They said sidewalks and bicycle

1 accommodations tend to be optional on these types of roads. They noted that
2 Dover Kohl will be developing examples of how place types can be designed and
3 developed throughout the week during the Design Workshop.
4

5 **VII. Public Comment Period**

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7 There was no public comment.
8

9 **VIII. Next Steps**

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11 Survey Number 2 will open to the public in the next few weeks. The next CPAC
12 meeting was announced to be during the upcoming summer.
13

14 **IX. Approval of Minutes**

15
16 George Vescovo proposed an edit that the last slide in his presentation referenced
17 gross receipts tax rates across the state of New Mexico.
18

19 George Vescovo moved to approve the minutes with the change mentioned
20 previously. Heather Watenpaugh seconded the motion. The motion passed
21 unanimously.
22

23 **X. Adjournment**

24
25 Heather Watenpaugh moved to adjourn the meeting. George Vescovo seconded
26 the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.