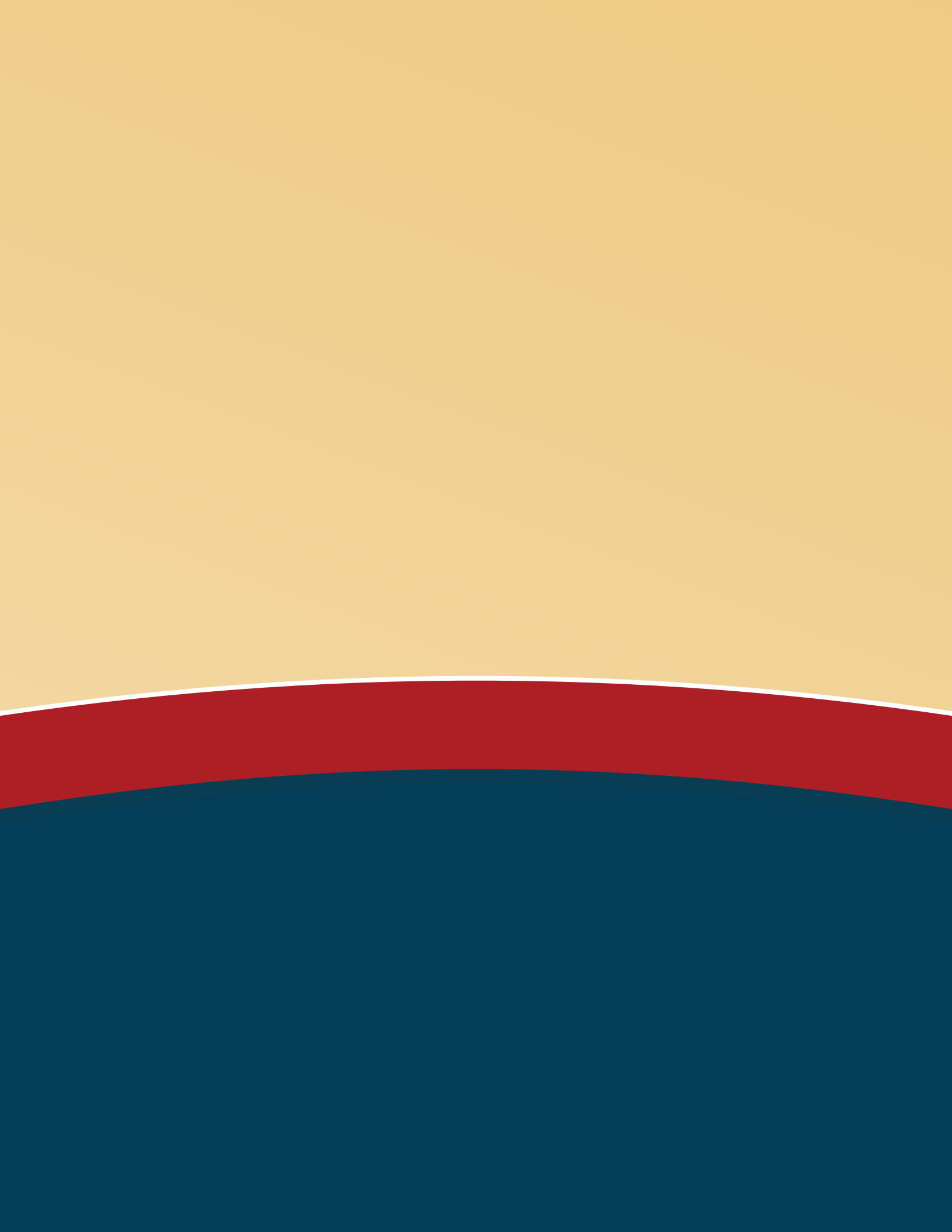




Our Community Our Future

City of Socorro 2040 Comprehensive Plan





Ivy Avalos
Mayor

Ruben Reyes
At Large

Cesar Nevarez
District 1



Alejandro Garcia
District 2

Rudy Cruz, Jr.
District 3 / Mayor Pro-Tem

Yvonne Colon - Villalobos
District 4

Adriana Rodarte
City Manager

ORDINANCE NO. 625

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SOCORRO, TEXAS, ADOPTING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH TEXAS LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE; AND PROVIDING FOR THE FUTURE ADOPTION OR AMENDMENT OF ZONING REGULATIONS AND/OR OTHER REGULATIONS AS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE TO BE IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

WHEREAS, it is necessary and reasonable for the City of Socorro, Texas, a Texas general law municipality, (herein the "City") to provide for and adopt a Comprehensive Plan, referred to and entitled as the City of Socorro, Texas Comprehensive Plan ("Comprehensive Plan") to provide for the long-range development of the City and in accordance with Chapters 211 and 213 of the Texas Local Government Code, and the laws and Constitution of the State of Texas;

WHEREAS, the City, in anticipation of growth and expansion, desires to plan for the orderly and efficient growth of the City, and the City Council finds that it is, therefore, necessary to adopt the Comprehensive Plan;

WHEREAS, the City desires to facilitate the lessening of congestion in the streets; assist the safe, orderly, healthful, and coordinated development of the City; conserve existing and future neighborhoods; securing its citizens and visitors from fire, panic and other dangers; promote the general health and welfare of the City, its residents, and the public; promote and protect the provision of adequate light and air, and prevent the overcrowding of property and undue concentration of populations; ensure the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewers, schools, parks and other public requirements; and, promote economic development of the city through an efficient and practical means by which development of the City can occur and take place; and,

WHEREAS, after review, inquiry, and after having conducted a public hearing which provided an opportunity for citizen participation at the public hearing, the City Council has found that the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan for the City, hereinafter set forth, listed in and attached to this ordinance, is reasonable and necessary for the protection and promotion of the general health and safety as well as the protection and promotion of the public health, safety, and welfare of the City, its residents, and the public.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOCORRO, TEXAS, THAT:

Section 1. Findings. The foregoing recitals are hereby found to be true and correct and are hereby adopted by the City Council and made a part hereof for all purposes as findings of fact.

Section 2. Comprehensive Plan. Having conducted a public hearing in which the public was allowed the opportunity to participate, the City Council finds that planning for the City's future development to require development of properties within the City limits to be consistent with adjacent and adjoining uses is important to the health, safety, and welfare of the City. The City Council having taken inventory of the current existing uses within the City has determined that it is appropriate to adopt the Comprehensive Plan, as represented on the map of uses attached as **Exhibit "A"** to this ordinance. The Comprehensive Plan shall be kept in the office of the City Clerk and shall be available for public inspection during normal office hours. Zoning districts, and zoning or land use regulations adopted for such zoning districts, shall be adopted to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Zoning uses or regulations, as amended from time to time at the request of a landowner or on motion of the City, shall be amended to be made consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The City may amend the Comprehensive Plan in the discretion of the City Council as permitted under state law and after a public hearing, to plan for changing plans, growth, or the development of the City.


Section 3. Severability: It is hereby declared to be the intention of the City Council that the sections, paragraphs, sentences, clauses and phrases of this Ordinance are severable and, if any phrase, sentence, paragraph or section of this Ordinance should be declared invalid by the final judgment or decree of any court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity shall not affect any of the remaining phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs and sections of this Ordinance, since the same would have been enacted by the City Council without the incorporation of this ordinance of any such invalid phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph or section. If any provision of this Ordinance shall be adjudged by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, the invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this Ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provision, and to this end the provisions of this Ordinance are declared to be severable.

Section 4. Open Meetings. It is hereby officially found and determined that the meeting at which this ordinance is passed was open to the public as required and that public notice of the time, place, and purpose of said meeting was given as required by the Open Meetings Act, *Chapter 551, Texas Government Code*.

Section 5. Effective Date. The Ordinance shall be in force and effect from and after its passage on the date shown below.

PASSED AND APPROVED at a regular meeting of the City Council of Socorro, Texas, on this 18 day of July, 2024.

CITY OF SOCORRO, TEXAS



Ivy Avalos, Mayor

ATTEST:



Olivia Navarro, City Clerk



James A. Martinez, City Attorney

Introduction, First Reading and Calling for a Public Hearing: July 11, 2023
Second Reading and Adoption: July 18, 2024

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Acknowledgments

City Council

- **Ivy Avalos**
Mayor
- **Ruben Reyes**
At-Large Representative
- **Cesar Nevarez**
District 1 Representative
- **Alejandro Garcia**
District 2 Representative
- **Rudy Cruz Jr.**
District 3 Representative/ Mayor Pro Tem
- **Yvonne Colon-Villalobos**
District 4 Representative

Planning and Zoning Commission

- **Julie Dominguez**
- **Andrew Arroyos**
- **Osvaldo Reza**
- **David Estrada**
- **Yolanda Rodriguez**
- **Enrique Cisneros**

Socorro City Management

- **Adriana Rodarte**
City Manager
- **Victor Perez**
Deputy City Manager

Steering Committee

- **Jesus Ruiz**
Former Mayor
- **Carlos Gallinar**
Former Socorro City Planner
- **Marty Loya**
*City of Socorro Initiative Board,
Business Owner*
- **Omar Martinez**
Historic Preservation
- **Geraldine Salazar**
Socorro Code Enforcer
- **Andrew Arroyos**
*Socorro Planning and Zoning
Commission Chair*
- **Evaristo Cruz**
*Director of Community Development
Department, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo*
- **Jody Stubbs**
Property Owner/Business Owner



Socorro 2040 Comprehensive Plan City Project Team

- **Lorrine Quimiro, AICP, MPA**
City Planner Director of Development
- **Jose Botello**
Planner
- **Alejandra Valadez**
*City Development Director,
Grants and Special Projects*
- **Victor Reta**
*Director of Recreation,
Communications, Historic Preservation,
Emergency Management, and
Special Events; and Member of the
Legislative Affairs Committee*
- **Robert Rojas**
Police Chief
- **Laura Arredondo**
Community Wellness Coordinator

Special Appreciation

The City of Socorro, Texas, extends its sincere gratitude to the community members who took part in this crucial process.

Comprehensive Plan Consultants



Matrix Design Group
Primary Consultant



Texas Infrastructure Development Group
Subconsultant



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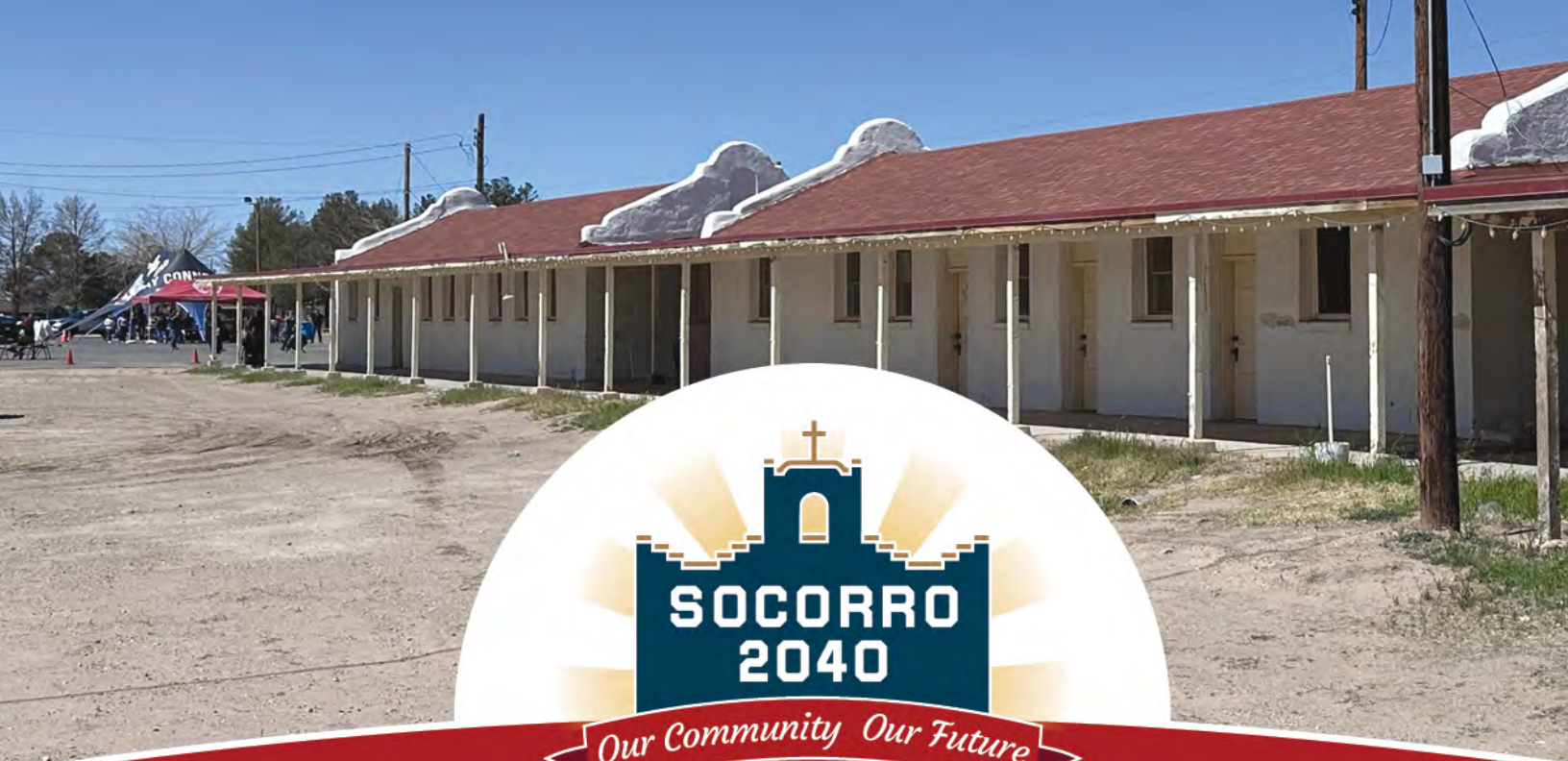
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1

Introduction

The **Socorro 2040 Comprehensive Plan** is the primary guide for the City's growth. It serves as both a long-range community vision and a policy document, offering guidance for physical, economic, and social progress. The Plan provides a blueprint for the future, directing decisions on land use, housing, recreation, historic and cultural preservation, sustainability and resiliency, community facilities, infrastructure, and circulation. Through its Vision Statement, goals, policies, maps, and implementation measures, the Plan provides a framework for future growth, ensuring balanced development and appropriate and compatible land uses. As a guide for long-term planning decisions, it aims to bring the community's vision to fruition, meeting the needs of current and future residents while fostering sustainable growth.



Socorro: A City with a Mission

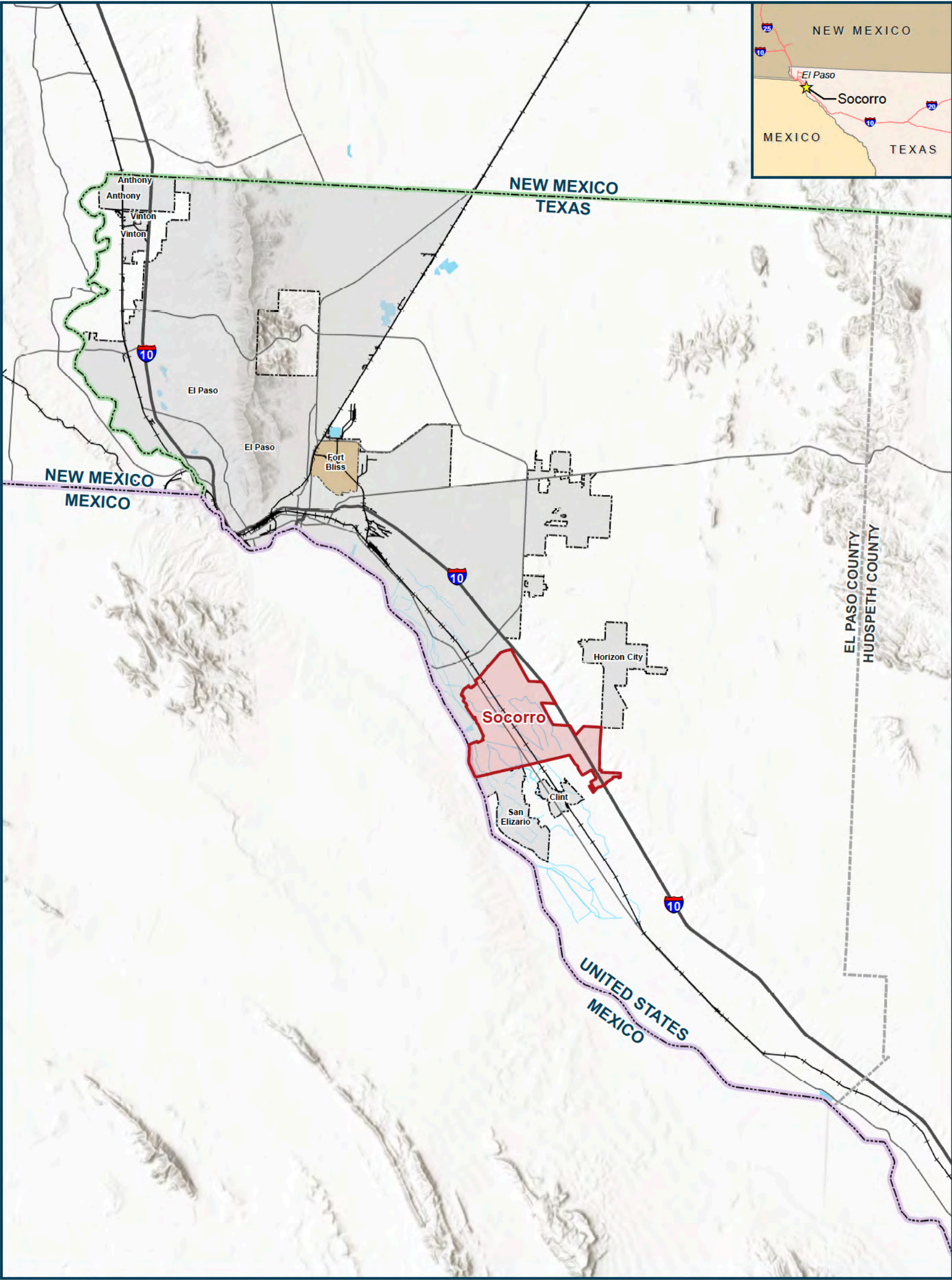
From its beginning, the City of Socorro has thrived as a ranching and agricultural community strategically nestled in the southwestern region of Texas along the Rio Grande River in the El Paso area. This location made it an ideal settlement for farmers seeking to cultivate crops and raise cattle.

Established in 1680, Socorro grew as a blend of Spanish colonialism, Mexican heritage, and American expansion, fostering a unique cultural tapestry that endures to this day. Central to the City's identity is the Socorro Mission, a historic mission around which the community has evolved. It is part of the El Paso Mission Trail, a trail system connecting three missions—Ysleta Mission, Socorro Mission, and San Elizario Presidio—and serves as a key landmark that celebrates the City's history and inspires its future.



Socorro is within El Paso County, Texas and shares part of its western border with Mexico. Nestled adjacent to Interstate 10 and in close proximity to the Loop 375 Highway, Socorro has transportation arteries that serve as vital conduits for the community's continued evolution and growth. The City's population is slightly over 36,000, with a unique composition that stems from a cultural and historical blend paired with agricultural roots.

Throughout the 20th century, Socorro experienced population growth and a surge of new development. The city today spans 14,060 acres (17.5 square miles). The regional context for the City of Socorro is shown on **Figure 1-1**.

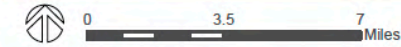


Legend

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| City of Socorro | Railroad |
| International Boundary | Interstate |
| State Boundary | Major Road |
| County Boundary | River or Stream |
| Fort Bliss | Waterbody |
| City Boundaries | |

Sources: City of Socorro, 2023. US Census, NHD.

SOCORRO 2040 *Comprehensive Plan*



Regional Context Figure 1-1



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Ysleta del Sur Pueblo: A Cornerstone in the Community

The Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, also known as the Tigua Tribe, is one of the oldest communities in Texas and has deep roots in the region surrounding Socorro, dating back over three centuries. Following the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, the tribe was forced to migrate from their ancestral lands in New Mexico to the El Paso area, establishing the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo community near the banks of the Rio Grande.



The Ysleta del Sur Pueblo is one of only three federally recognized tribes in Texas, marking it a historically and culturally significant entity. As one of the earliest Native American tribes to come into contact with European settlers in this region, it has played a crucial role in the cultural and historical landscape of West Texas. The tribe has retained much of its traditional form of governance. It continues to practice many of its ancestral customs and ceremonies, which contribute to preserving its unique cultural heritage.

The presence of the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo enriches the community of Socorro and the greater El Paso area. Their involvement in local events and the regional economy through cultural tourism and tribal enterprises underscores their integral role in local development. The tribe's efforts to maintain their language and traditions, alongside active participation in environmental conservation and education, highlight their commitment to fostering a sustainable future for their members and the wider community.

The Ysleta del Sur Pueblo also plays a pivotal role in educational outreach, offering programs that engage the public about their history and cultural practices. These initiatives not only contribute to a greater understanding and appreciation of Native American heritage in the region but also strengthen the cultural fabric of Socorro and surrounding areas.

A Plan for the Community

People are drawn to Socorro for its unique blend of history, culture, and community spirit. The city offers stunning desert landscapes, emerging retail and entertainment, and a vibrant cultural scene. It is home to several historic sites that showcase the area's deep-rooted Mexican, Spanish, and Native American heritage through the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo. Socorro's friendly and welcoming atmosphere makes it an ideal place to raise a family, with safe neighborhoods, good schools, and a strong sense of community. As the City continues to grow, preserving its heritage, roots, culture, and community identity remains a priority.

Recognizing the need to address the significant changes and growth since the last plan in 2014, the City of Socorro embarked on updating its Comprehensive Plan. The 2040 Comprehensive Plan guides the City's growth and development over the next 20 years, considering local and regional trends in the economy, business environment, industry, future land uses, demographics, and natural growth. By involving public and stakeholder participation, the City created a plan that reflects the community's aspirations.

This Comprehensive Plan is a document benefiting all of Socorro's residents. It serves as a roadmap for the City's future, ensuring that growth and development are managed and enhance the quality of life for everyone. The development of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan represents an incredible opportunity for Socorro to build on its strengths, address its challenges, and create a vision for the future that aligns with the aspirations of its residents.



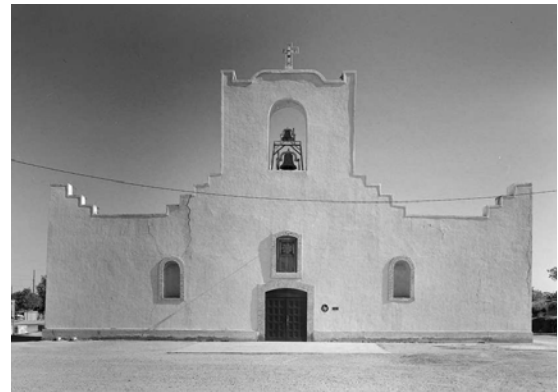
The plan will help Socorro attract new businesses, enhance tourism, develop housing solutions, and improve infrastructure, making it an even more attractive place to live, work, and visit. By setting clear goals under the guiding vision, the Comprehensive Plan will inform the City's development in a way that preserves its unique character. This is a pivotal moment for Socorro, and the successful implementation of the plan will ensure a bright and prosperous future for the City and its residents.

Socorro Past and Present

Community History

Socorro traces its origins to the aftermath of the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, which expelled Spanish settlers from New Mexico. The Piros and Mansos were the first peoples in the area, and following the revolt, the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo was established in 1682. These indigenous groups built the first Socorro Mission. Although much of their culture and identities were erased, they became integral to the Socorro community. Today, the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo remains the only pueblo community in Texas, with their reservation located within Socorro city limits. In 1682, amid this backdrop, the Spanish established a mission in Socorro, formally named Nuestra Señora de la Limpia Concepción de los Piros de Socorro del Sur. In the years that followed, the community that is today Socorro began to take shape around this mission.

The community's trajectory saw shifts in sovereignty. It became part of Mexico from 1821 until 1848, when it was incorporated into the State of Texas following the U.S.-Mexican War. Throughout the 19th century, Socorro maintained its essence as a modest agricultural community, nourished by locally built acequias irrigating crops such as alfalfa, fruit trees, and grains. Socorro, Texas was first incorporated as a city in 1871. It was later re-incorporated in 1986 in response to an annexation attempt from neighboring El Paso.



The 20th century marked a period of gradual expansion for Socorro. Developers gradually infiltrated the community, enhancing its infrastructure with additional housing and commercial services, thereby transforming the historically rural setting. This development also led to the emergence of colonias, unincorporated neighborhoods that expanded housing opportunities but presented unique challenges in urban planning due to the lack of specific supporting infrastructure. The City enacted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1988 to manage this growth,



including efforts to integrate and support the colonias. As the 21st century dawned, Socorro underwent a surge in population, with residential subdivisions and services flourishing. The City embraced its family-friendly reputation, fostering a welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike. The most recent update to the Comprehensive Plan occurred in 2014, reflecting Socorro's ongoing evolution. Amid this evolution, the community cherishes its rich history, recognizing the foundations that shaped Socorro into the vibrant city it is today.

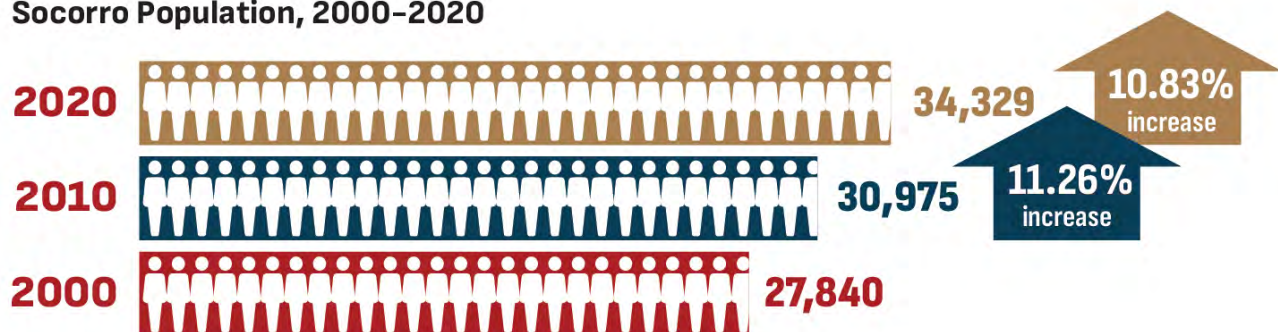


Socorro Today

Population

The City of Socorro has grown consistently during the past several decades. After adding more than 2,293 residents from 2010 to 2020, the City expects to see continued growth. In 2022, the American Community Survey estimated Socorro's population at 35,429. According to the World Population Review, by 2029, Socorro's population is expected to reach 48,748. The steady increase in population will require additional housing, commercial space, recreational facilities, and employment to support its evolving needs.

Socorro Population, 2000–2020



Source: 2000 US Decennial Census, 2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates

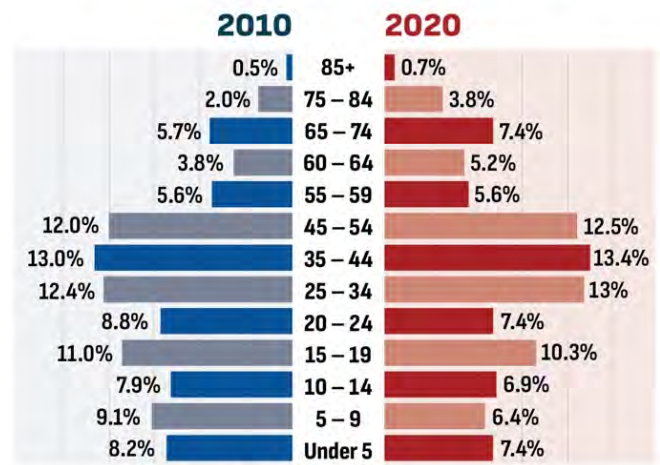
Population Distribution

Socorro residents are aging in place, and Socorro continues to appeal to newcomers.

Socorro will need to develop new housing, commercial space, and recreational facilities to accommodate the diverse demographic spectrum and provide live and work opportunities for existing residents, their growing families, and new residents. This development will not only support the accessibility and well-being of the older population but also will serve as an appealing option for the younger demographic.

For comparison, Horizon City has experienced significant economic development, including new housing projects and job opportunities, which attract new residents, particularly young families and professionals. In contrast, San Elizario retains its rural lifestyle and is seeing slower growth, with higher aging populations and fewer young families moving to the area.

Distribution of Population by Age



Population (in Percentage)

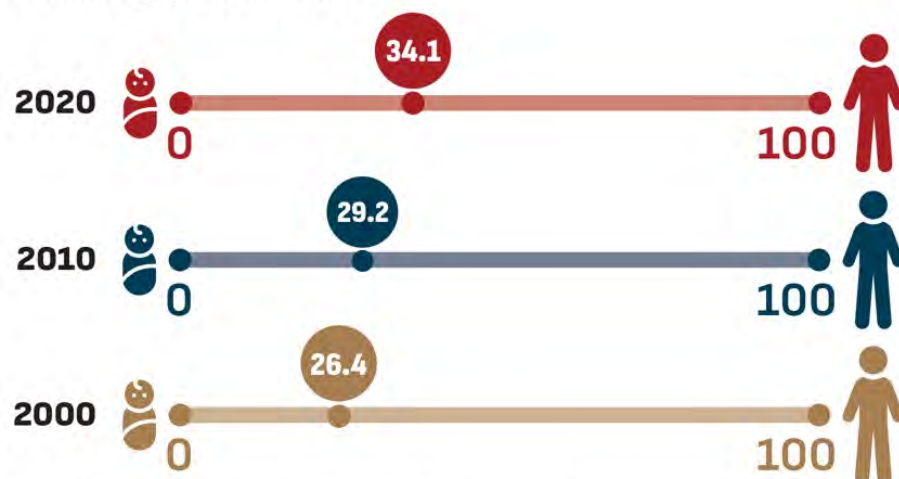
Source: 2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Median Age

While the median age in Socorro is slightly higher than in neighboring cities and continues to rise, it remains a relatively young community overall. For example, Horizon City has a median age of 29.3, and San Elizario has a median age of 27.9. This trend in Socorro is attributed to its residents aging in place, alongside the influx of young families moving into the area.

While the median age is increasing, it is important to consider recreational facilities, transportation options, housing needs, and other amenities to support a wide range of residents, with increased consideration for younger families and a younger workforce.

Median Age, 2000–2020



Source: 2000 US Decennial Census, 2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates



Vision Statement

The Vision Statement describes Socorro's desired future condition and articulates the shared aspirations of residents, property owners, leaders, and other stakeholders. The Vision Statement is a source of inspiration and guidance for the Socorro 2040 Comprehensive Plan and contains the key values governing this Plan's subordinate goals, policies, and implementation actions. Socorro's 2040 Vision Statement is:

Socorro is a welcoming community that celebrates diversity, preserves its rich culture and history, and fosters economic growth, environmental stewardship, and a high quality of life for residents and visitors alike. It stands as a symbol of unity and prosperity for future generations.

Vision Statement Explanation

Elements of the Vision Statement have been derived from feedback from the public, the Steering Committee, and City staff. Common themes are that supported the development of the Vision Statement include:

- Livable
- Family-oriented
- Prosperous
- Mission and Mission Trail
- Friendly
- Historic and agricultural heritage



What is the Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range, broad policy, living document describing the goals and policies that reflect Socorro's overarching vision, values, and aspirations. Together with a series of maps and diagrams, these components provide direction for Socorro's future by guiding growth and land development decisions in accordance with the City's goals. The Plan is intended to be used by everyone from citizens to developers, City employees, and elected leadership. The guidance within is developed by those whom the Comprehensive Plan will serve.

The Comprehensive Plan has the following qualities:



General

It provides overarching and citizen-directed policy guidance that can be used to direct future land use and resource decisions.



Broad Scope

It encompasses a wide range of community aspects, including land use, transportation, environmental protection, economic development, housing, public services, and community amenities, providing a complete framework for strategic community growth.



Long Range

It provides long-range guidance (15 years or more) on how Socorro's vision can be attained.

The Plan is not a zoning map, a tool to promote special interests, static, a detailed policy for specific properties or areas, or a capital improvement program, but it does help guide those tools.

Relationship to Other City Plans and Regulations

No single City planning document or regulation operates in isolation; rather, they are interconnected and mutually influential. The Comprehensive Plan serves as a cornerstone, offering policies to steer growth and development. While it does not explicitly delineate other planning documents or regulatory frameworks, it may contain directives that shape or revise such documents and regulations. A robust Comprehensive Plan forms the bedrock of a community's trajectory, setting the stage for a cohesive array of more detailed plans and regulatory measures. This integrated network is essential for constructing a sustainable, thriving community.



Who Uses the Comprehensive Plan?

City Staff	The Plan integrates and expands upon strategies of City departments and community collaborators. City staff will reference it during the evaluation of alterations to development regulations and rezoning appeals and when suggesting improvements to facilities, services, and capital investments. Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan will provide a strategic framework aligning local development goals with broader regional and national priorities, making it an important tool in justifying the need for grant funding and securing resources for various projects. Department leaders will employ the Plan to shape work plans, budgets, and capital enhancements.
City Council	The City Council will rely on the Plan as a framework for decision-making, ensuring the City's long-term vision remains a consistent anchor point.
Boards and Commissions	Members of appointed boards and commissions will leverage the Plan to fulfill their duties and objectives. Certain boards, such as the Planning and Zoning Commission, will regularly consult the Plan for direction in decision-making processes.
Residents	Residents will utilize the Vision Statement, goals, policies, illustrative maps, and implementation plan to evaluate the growth potential in specific areas throughout the City. They will reference it when addressing proposals or other matters before the City Council or appointed boards or commissions. Serving as a shared reference point, the Plan will facilitate constructive discussions about the benefits and concerns associated with growth and development, ensuring the welfare of Socorro.
Developers	Property owners, developers, builders, and other stakeholders involved in Socorro's advancement will consult the Plan to design projects and site plans that consider the broader community context, rather than focusing solely on individual sites. The Plan will initiate discussions on crucial issues and considerations to inform decisions regarding land use changes.



Navigating the Plan

From the vision goals to the specific goals and policies of each element, the Comprehensive Plan provides guidance and valuable insights to support informed decisions and contribute to the ongoing dialogue shaping the City's future. To improve document readability and usability, the Plan is organized into a series of elements with similar themes, goals, and policies.

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into the following chapters and elements.

- **Introduction:** Provides an overview of Socorro's history and character today, what the Comprehensive Plan is and how it is used, and a summary of the Plan.
- **Community Engagement:** Describes the community outreach that went into developing the Plan and the role that City staff, the Steering Committee, and residents played in shaping the Plan.
- **Growth and Development Element:** Provides context for future land uses and development considerations for economic prosperity as the City continues to evolve. This element covers:
 - Land Use
 - Housing
 - Economic Development
- **Quality of Life Element:** Identifies existing and future recreational features that contribute to the well-being of the Socorro community members. This element covers:
 - Historic and Cultural Resources
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Trails
 - Open Space
- **Mobility Element:** Discusses circulation throughout Socorro and modes of transportation for Socorro's residents. This element covers:
 - Transportation Network
 - Mobility Framework
 - Active Transportation
 - Public Transportation
 - Freight

- **Public Services and Infrastructure Element:** Summarizes the infrastructure and services that keep the City running and provide quality service to residents while addressing how future growth supports the upkeep of services. This element covers:
 - Government Offices
 - Public Facilities
 - Public Safety
 - Public Health Clinics
 - Educational Facilities
 - Infrastructure and Utilities
 - Capital Improvement Plan
- **Community Resilience Element** Identifies opportunities for the City to implement actions to support resiliency, sustainability, and environmental stewardship as the community grows. This element covers:
 - Sustainability and Resiliency
 - Environmental Planning
 - Water Resources
 - Energy
- **Administration and Implementation:** Includes implementable actions for the City that help accomplish the goals and policies, and ultimately, the Comprehensive Plan's vision. Elements, relevant goals, and timeframe for completion are used to organize the implementation actions. This chapter also addresses how the Comprehensive Plan is administered and amended.





What are the Goals and Policies?

Each element includes a series of goals and policies to guide future needs of the City and its residents and achieve the Vision Statement. Each goal and policy is identified by an alpha-numeric identifier for easy reference.

Goals	Each goal details the envisioned future condition. Some goals include a more detailed supporting statement or measurable metrics to further clarify the purpose of the goal.
Policies	Each goal is supported by one or more policies detailing the specific approaches and actions necessary to realize the goal. Some policies include a supporting statement while others are self-explanatory.

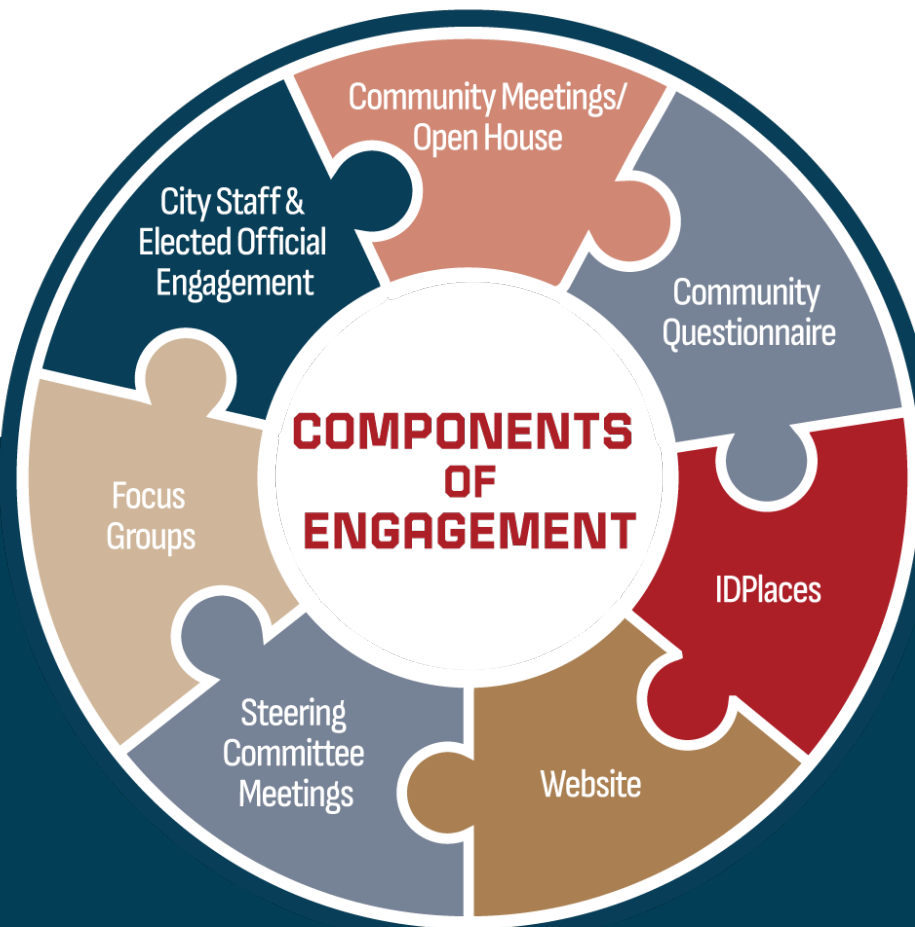




2

Community Engagement

During the planning phase of the Socorro 2040 Comprehensive Plan, it was imperative to actively seek and integrate community input. Engagement with interested and passionate residents and stakeholders was ongoing throughout the process, solidifying the profound care and enthusiasm Socorro residents hold for their community.



An essential component of crafting any comprehensive plan involves obtaining input and fostering community participation. While developing the Socorro 2040 Comprehensive Plan, this was achieved through a robust and ongoing bilingual outreach effort coordinated in English and Spanish. This initiative allowed hundreds of residents to express their opinions on a variety of topics through numerous outlets.

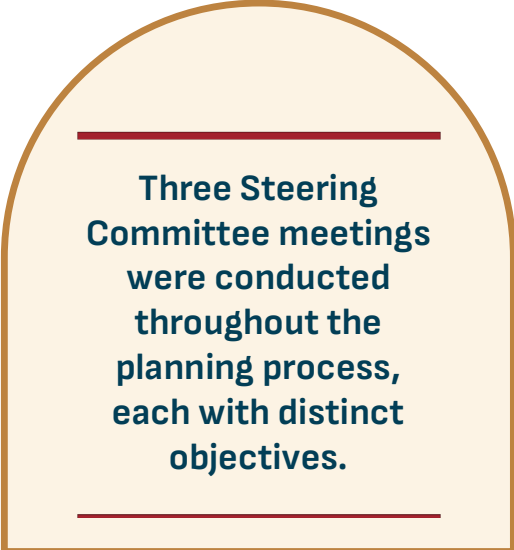
The project website served as a platform for interested citizens to provide online comments, utilize the IDPlaces mapping tool, and complete the online community questionnaire. In-person events encompassed three community meetings featuring a set of bilingual engagement activities for residents' participation. Each component of community input was considered to ensure the Socorro 2040 Comprehensive Plan authentically reflects the diverse perspectives and priorities of the community, making it a true reflection of the City of Socorro.

Steering Committee

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee consisted of a diverse group of local community members, each bringing a unique background and specialized expertise to represent the community. Their primary role was to act as advocates for the residents of Socorro, encompassing those who live, work, and recreate in the city.

The committee members served as project liaisons and played a critical role in shaping the Vision Statement and developing the Plan. They were responsible for assessing the community's priorities and identifying opportunities for Socorro's growth and improvement. Additionally, the Steering Committee members served as project ambassadors, responsible for promoting the project and disseminating information throughout the community.

The Steering Committee was engaged throughout the development of the plan via email, providing review and comment of draft materials, development of the Vision Statement, goals and policies, and Future Land Use Map, and by attending meetings.



Three Steering Committee meetings were conducted throughout the planning process, each with distinct objectives.

August 16, 2023

The Steering Committee was introduced to the Comprehensive Plan process and received an explanation of their roles and responsibilities. During the meeting, committee members participated in interactive exercises intended to assess the community's strengths and identify opportunities for the future of Socorro. Steering Committee members were also presented with a preliminary version of the community questionnaire. Each question was reviewed, and members were encouraged to provide feedback, which was subsequently integrated into the questionnaire before its distribution to the community.

October 5, 2023

The Steering Committee received an overview of the outcome from the initial community meeting. The primary goal for this meeting was to relay the public's feedback and refine the draft Vision Statement for the Plan. Committee members were encouraged to contribute ideas that personally resonated with them and encapsulated the community's vision for the Socorro 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Secondary goals of the meeting were to discuss preliminary goals and policies for the Plan and discuss the way forward for updating the Future Land Use Map, including revising the land use category descriptions.

March 4, 2024

This Steering Committee meeting primarily focused on identifying changes to the Future Land Use Map, including a review of the 2014 map, a review of current zoning across the city, and a discussion of road network improvements to identify revisions to the Map. Members engaged in a discussion on the draft land use categories, offering valuable feedback.

Committee members also reviewed a draft goals worksheet, which each member was asked to complete following the meeting and return to the project team. This worksheet helped gather additional feedback and recommendations on the draft goals, which were developed based on the community feedback received thus far.



Focus Groups

Ten focus group interview meetings were conducted with local and regional topic experts to gain an understanding of the specific needs and challenges that the Comprehensive Plan should encompass. The purpose of these interviews was to conduct smaller group discussions with a range of participants, including residents, business owners, community advocates, organizations, and technical experts. These interviews served to deepen the understanding of local issues that should be addressed in the Plan.

The focus group topics covered the following:

- Elected Officials
- Infrastructure/Utilities
- Transportation
- Housing
- Logistics
- Economic Development/
Small Businesses
- Socorro Independent
School District
- State/County Agencies
- Historic Preservation
- Community Service
Organizations





Community Contributions

The efforts to include as many community members as possible in the Comprehensive Plan development process were exhaustive. Citizens were offered a wide array of opportunities to participate and make their voices heard.



Community Engagement Opportunities

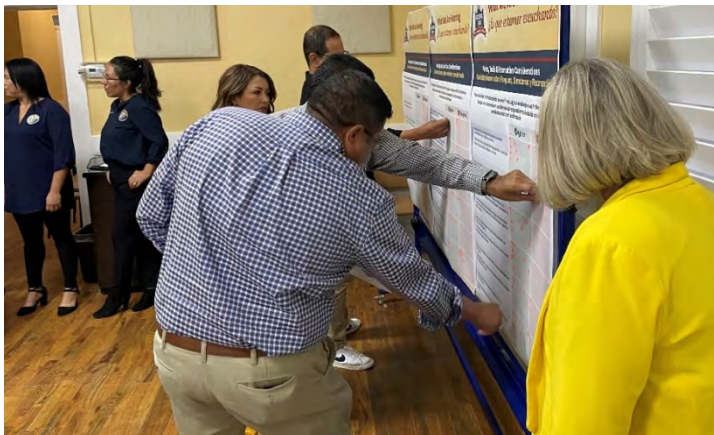
The three community meetings served as successful demonstrations of the active involvement of Socorro residents. Meeting materials were prepared in both English and Spanish, promoting inclusivity and equitable engagement. Information about the events was distributed through email lists, website updates, Socorro's social media, and City staff's presence at local community events to spread awareness.



Community Meeting #1

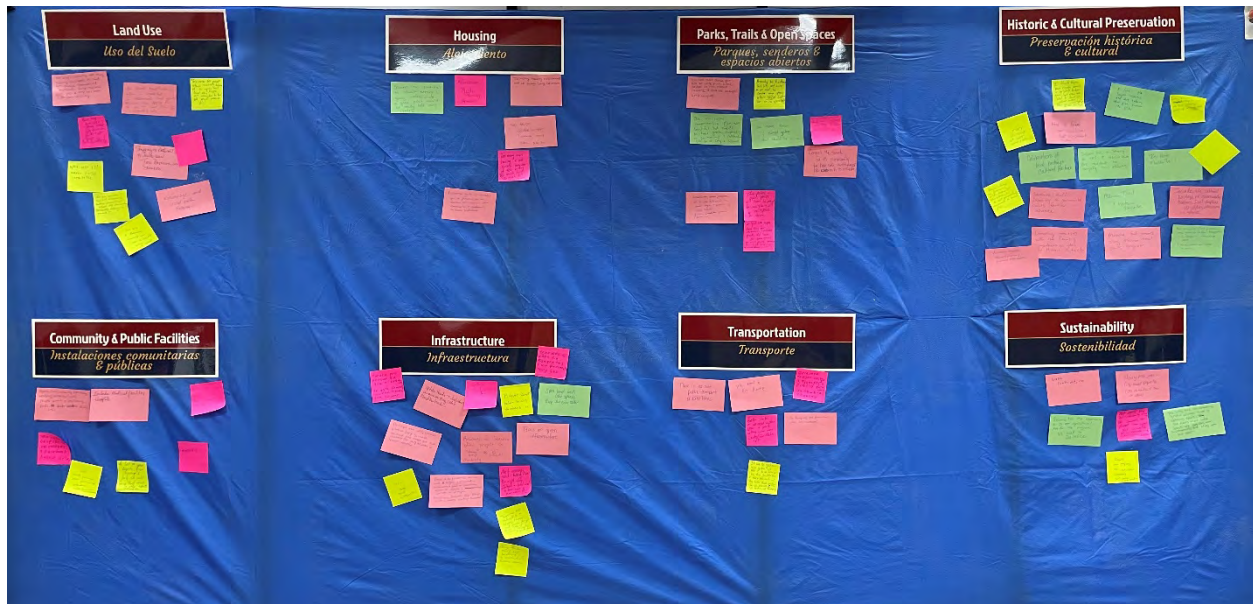
The overarching goals of the first community meeting were:

- Engage the community in developing a vision for the City of Socorro.
- Identify community priorities that can be utilized to develop implementation goals.
- Inform and encourage participation and comments from members of the community.
- Explore solutions and opportunities for several identified planning policy topic areas.
- Simplify the Comprehensive Plan update process and educate all on the next steps.
- Identify strengths and challenges throughout Socorro that should be celebrated or addressed based on a series of topics.



The meeting began with a presentation outlining the purpose of the update, followed by an open house featuring interactive exercises designed to promote maximum participation. Participants provided feedback through a variety of activities, including two open-response feedback boards where attendees expressed thoughts they love about Socorro and shared their vision for the City's future.

Furthermore, a set of statements derived from each element of the Plan encouraged attendees to voice their opinions and indicate their agreement or disagreement with the listed statements. Participants were also given an opportunity to share their insights regarding strengths and challenges that exist within the community. The feedback collected from these activities was reviewed, and the resulting community consensus played a key role in shaping specific goals and policies for the Comprehensive Plan.



Community Meeting #2

The overarching goals of the second community meeting were:

- Engage and inform the community about the progress of the Plan, encouraging an environment for constructive input and feedback to shape its development.
- Determine strategic land utilization priorities to enhance community development.
- Explore options for better thoroughfare solutions to improve connectivity and accessibility.

The event took place during the City's monthly Socorro Sunday event, where the main attraction was the 2040 Comprehensive Plan booth. Attendees engaged in a dynamic visual preference activity centered on land use. A range of land use options was presented in voting boxes, enabling community members to express their preferences for Socorro's future.



Situated near the voting boxes, a display of large format maps and bilingual information boards was arranged, offering attendees insight into the feedback received by the project team and the ongoing factors shaping the Plan's development. This setup allowed for open communication between the project team and community members.

Youth engagement initiatives were also integrated, featuring a questionnaire and coloring sheet aimed at younger participants. As an

added incentive, booth visitors who participated in activities or sought information about the Plan had the chance to spin a prize wheel and take home some fun mementos.

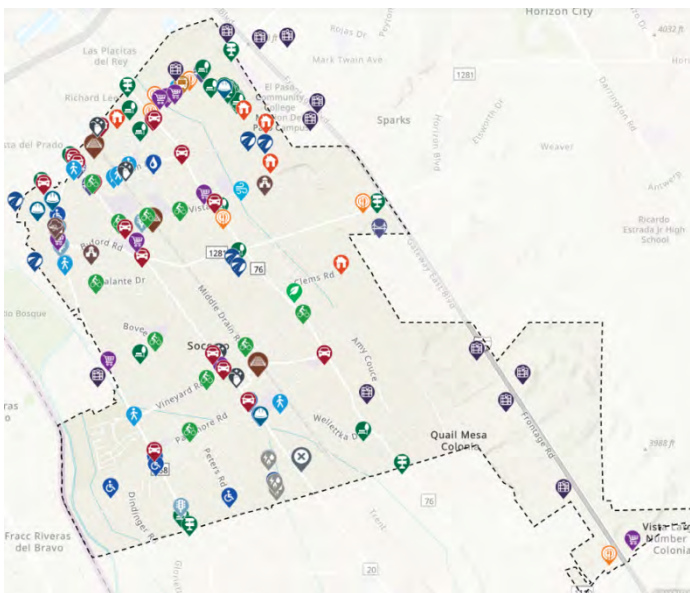
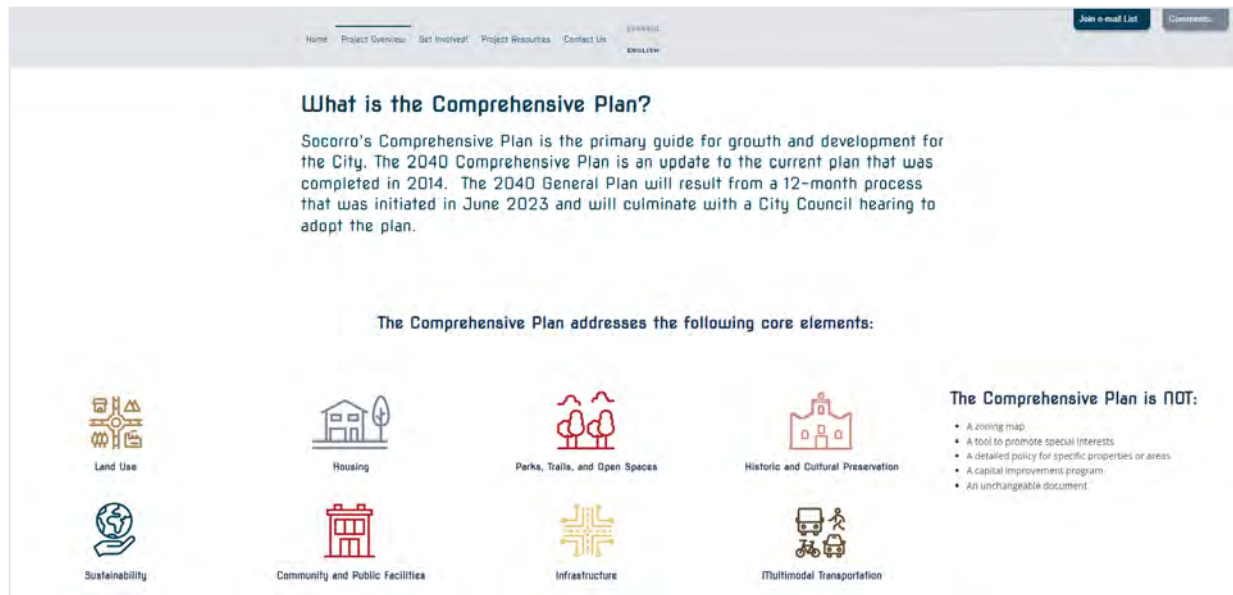
Community Meeting #3

The final community meeting was held on June 17 at the Socorro City Council Chambers. The purpose of this meeting is for the community to learn about the Draft Socorro 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the Future Land Use Map, and the goals and policies. A presentation was given to convey the importance of the Plan in guiding future growth, summarize the community engagement efforts, and discuss the components of the Plan. A question and answer period was held after the presentation, and then attendees were given time to read large format posters with key draft goals and policies and ask questions individually with the project team.



Socorro 2040 Project Website

The project website functioned as a hub that provided updates on Plan information, engagement opportunities, and relevant Plan documents for review. These features were accessible throughout the process to foster engagement at each phase of the Plan. Some engagement opportunities, such as the IDPlaces interactive mapping and comment tool and the community questionnaire, were only available for a limited time to gather input.



IDPlaces Tool

The interactive IDPlaces mapping and comment tool gave the public and stakeholders the ability to identify issues and opportunities on a dynamic, web-based map and provided the community with multiple ways to voice their opinions related to specific geographic locations. The tool allowed participants to mark the geographic area where the issue or opportunity exists and add comments. Comments were then made available for other users to see, creating a collaborative platform.


Community Questionnaire

A bilingual community questionnaire was designed to elicit insights into various aspects of the community and to assess Socorro's existing strengths and challenges. This questionnaire was developed and refined, considering specific input from the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and City staff.

The questionnaire was distributed at local community events including the first Comprehensive Plan community meeting and was available on the project website for three months. This accessibility ensured that individuals who could not attend in-person meetings had the opportunity to share their perspectives and actively engage in the process. Following this, a findings report was prepared, identifying common themes and community priorities. The feedback collected through the questionnaire played a pivotal role in shaping the development of the Comprehensive Plan and in defining the goals and policies for each element.

The findings from the questionnaire were instrumental in shaping the Plan. The community's desire for better employment and shopping opportunities led to the inclusion of economic development strategies aimed at attracting new businesses and supporting local entrepreneurs. The emphasis on historic preservation influenced the plan to incorporate guidelines for maintaining and protecting historic sites. Additionally, the feedback on community pride and family growth helped to frame a vision statement that focuses on fostering a vibrant, family-friendly environment that values its heritage and looks forward to sustainable growth.

Socorro 2040 Comprehensive Plan
Community Questionnaire



The City of Socorro and Matrix Design Group are developing the Socorro 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Your input will help the project team understand community concerns so that they may be addressed within the plan. This brief questionnaire was developed to gain information and desires from community residents, property owners, and business owners. We thank you for your time and interest in this very important project planning for the future of Socorro. More information about the 2040 Comprehensive Plan can be found on the project website www.SocorroTX2040.com.

1. How long have you lived in Socorro?
 - a. Less than 1 year
 - b. 1-5 years
 - c. 6-10 years
 - d. 11-20 years
 - e. More than 20 years
 - f. Do not live in Socorro

2. How would you describe your property in Socorro? Select the best option (you can select more than one).
 - a. Acreage
 - b. Agricultural
 - c. Residential/Subdivision
 - d. Multiple family
 - e. Undeveloped property
 - f. Commercial property
 - g. Industrial property
 - h. Other (write-in response) _____

3. Why did you move to Socorro? (can select more than one)
 - a. Was born here
 - b. Housing/affordability
 - c. Quality of life
 - d. Schools
 - e. Job opportunities
 - f. City amenities
 - g. Recreational amenities
 - h. Do not live in Socorro
 - i. Other (write-in response) _____

Socorro 2040 Comprehensive Plan Community Questionnaire

1

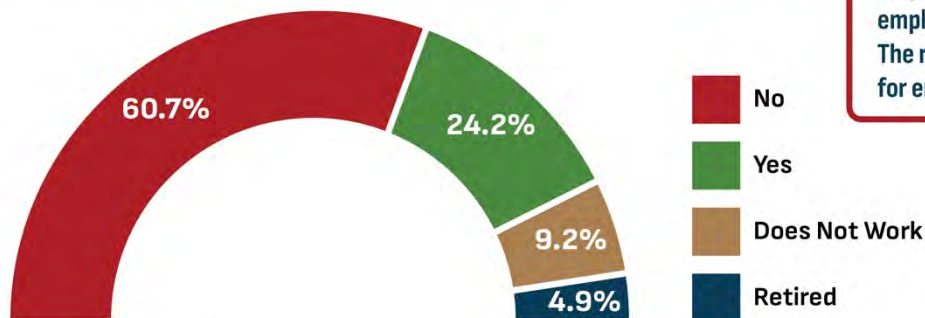


The common themes that emerged from the findings report were:

Employment and Shopping Opportunities

A significant number of respondents highlighted the need for better employment and shopping opportunities. This feedback indicates a demand for economic development initiatives that can provide more job opportunities and enhance local retail options.

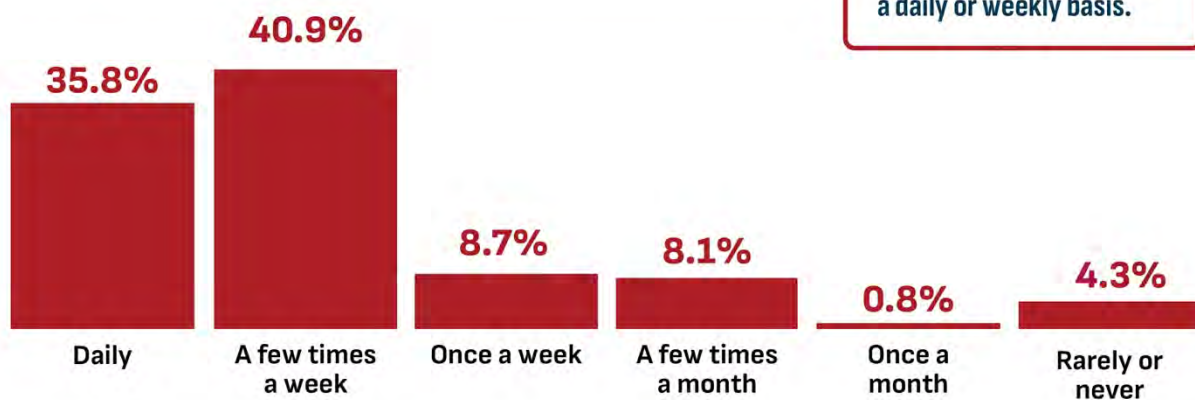
Do You Work in Socorro?



Source: Community Survey

Only about one-quarter of respondents are currently employed within the City limits. The rest commute elsewhere for employment.

How Often Do You Travel Outside Socorro to Shop, Eat, or for Recreational Amenities?



Source: Community Survey

Most individuals regularly leave Socorro, whether on a daily or weekly basis.

Historic Preservation

Protecting historic sites and buildings was deemed important by many participants. This suggests that any future development plans should include measures to preserve the community's historical heritage.

Why Is It Important to Protect Socorro's Historical and Cultural Resources?



A majority of respondents supported all options provided, including the importance of establishing a sense of place and retaining the City's character, optimizing existing resources, attracting tourism, and encouraging economic development and investment in older neighborhoods.

- All of the Above
- Not Important
- To Provide a Sense of Place and Retain Socorro's Character
- To Efficiently Use Existing Resources
- To Attract Tourism
- To Attract Economic Development and Investment in Older Neighborhoods

Source: Community Survey

City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission

As part of the focus group discussions, Mayor Ivy Avalos was interviewed and provided invaluable insights on effective community engagement practices, enriching the outreach efforts. During this exchange, Mayor Avalos highlighted the distinctive qualities of Socorro and her desire to preserve the community's character and historical attributes while embracing expected growth. She also offered her thoughts on areas where the community could direct more attention to continue the success of current policies.

Throughout the Comprehensive Plan process, the Socorro City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission members were actively engaged. Councilmembers and commissioners also participated in the community meetings and offered feedback, contributing to the Plan's development.

During the public draft review period, the Plan was presented at a joint workshop with the City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission on June 18, 2024. The workshop gave Council members and Commissioners a chance to review and discuss the Plan's components and learn how they addressed community interests and desires. An open discussion offered Council members and Commissioners an opportunity to provide guidance on updates to the Plan before it is finalized.

The Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing on July 16, followed by a public hearing by the City Council on July 18. At the July 18 public hearing, the City Council passed an ordinance to adopt the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.





3

Growth & Development

The Growth and Development Element provides a framework for maintaining Socorro’s suburban lifestyle while effectively managing sustainable growth. As new development occurs, it is imperative to set forth guidelines that protect the distinctive culture and heritage that make the City of Socorro special. This element will establish land use, economic strategies, and objectives to guide development and growth over the coming years. Socorro aims to diversify housing solutions, attract new businesses and investments, and create job and shopping opportunities for residents. This element provides a framework for achieving these efforts in a sustainable and equitable manner, considering the City’s unique characteristics, resources, and needs.

Land Use

Existing Land Use

The City of Socorro rests in the southwestern corner of Texas, with Mexico bordering to the west and Interstate 10 to the east. It is also south of the TX-375 Loop. Socorro's proximity to the Rio Grande to the west and trade corridors extending through the community from Mexico to New Mexico influenced the City's settlement patterns. Covering approximately 14,162 acres or roughly 22 square miles, Socorro remains deeply rooted in its rich historical and agricultural heritage while embracing new growth and community amenities, which is an approach to modernization that its residents cherish.

Historically, Socorro's land use has evolved organically, driven by incremental growth as former agricultural lands have been developed. Market forces have largely shaped development patterns, with zoning and infrastructure reacting to rather than guiding growth trends. During the past two decades, Socorro has experienced population growth that exceeds 22%, with newcomers drawn to the community's farming character and quiet lifestyle.



The area near highways predominantly features typical highway-oriented development, including gas stations, car washes, drive-through establishments, high-intensity commercial uses, industrial buildings, logistics centers, and warehousing facilities. Industrial activity is increasing with a significant portion dedicated to self-storage construction alongside manufacturing, logistics, and warehousing facilities. In contrast, the remainder of the City has experienced a prevalence of car-reliant establishments, with limited shopping and dining options available.



Detached single-family homes dominate Socorro's residential landscape, ranging from small-town style properties to expansive lots, reflecting its agricultural heritage. Limited multifamily options, such as apartments and condominiums, are

available in Socorro. Incorporating a wide range of housing densities into the City's zoning code can provide affordable housing, promote equality, enhance sustainability, and support a thriving, diverse community. Higher-density housing, such as apartments and townhomes, promotes a sense of community, reduces urban sprawl, preserves open spaces, and better leverages existing infrastructure. A mix of housing types can support various businesses and services, contributing to economic growth and stability and allowing the City to adapt to changing demographic trends and housing needs over time.

The City has 73 designated Colonias located within the city limits. The Colonia subdivisions surfaced in the area in the 1950s, when small farmers and developers sold portions of their land to Mexican immigrants who built dwellings to be near their work environment. The lack of affordable housing within border communities such as Socorro resulted in these individual lots becoming subdivisions that lacked basic services such as potable water, wastewater, power, natural gas, and paved streets. The Texas Legislature established laws to prevent Colonias in 1995. It established a funding source to assist in allocating resources to Texas counties to extend water and wastewater to the established Colonias. However, those funds were available only for a limited timeframe following the City's incorporation. Additionally, this does not address the need for other basic infrastructure such as electric, gas, and paved roads. Socorro is still working with El Paso County and utility providers to address Colonias within the City, some of which still do not have these basic services.





Socorro faces challenges in providing local employment opportunities, leading to a substantial portion of residents commuting outside the City for work. According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s “On The Map 2020,” 12,167 residents commute outside the City for work, while 3,405 individuals commute from outside the City into the community for employment. Only 496 people live and work within Socorro’s boundaries, highlighting the need to attract local industries that can provide jobs and foster a more self-sustaining economy.

Table 3-1 illustrates the land use distribution in Socorro and its comparison to the national standard for other communities under 50,000 across the U.S. This standard may vary due to regional differences in land planning, era of development, and community priorities, but it can help guide future land use decisions when significant land use changes are made. Generally, Socorro aligns with the commercial makeup of similar communities. Although Socorro boasts an open space percentage exceeding the average, notable prospects lie in the realm of industrial and residential development. Given the slight deficit in designated land for industrial purposes, Socorro should consider identifying areas for economic development and expansion that have the potential to grow the property and sales tax base and provide additional employment opportunities. There have been large areas of land that have been identified for future industrial development that may not be accounted for in **Table 3-1**. Similarly, diversifying housing types and products can help keep low costs of living and promote ownership opportunities for residents.

Table 3-1 **Composition of Average Land Uses in Small Cities**
(Population under 50,000 in the United States)

Land Use	Socorro	National Standard
Residential	34.5%	72%
Commercial	11.0%	11%
Industrial	4.2%	8%
Open Space	27.5%	9%
Other/Unclassified	22.8%	N/A

Source: City of Socorro, 2023; American Planning Association, 2022

Note: Land uses in Socorro are based on current zoning as of 2023 and may not reflect actual existing use.

Future Land Use

Throughout the development of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, residents emphasized the importance of preserving Socorro's unique agricultural heritage and lands. Not only should historical areas be preserved and protected, but the development surrounding these sites should also align with their character.

Residents expressed a range of preferences on housing, from large agricultural properties to small-lot, single-unit and multifamily options, to support housing diversity and attainability. To promote responsible growth, blending these preferences by buffering and appropriately transitioning to smaller, denser lots from large-lot properties is essential. This approach preserves the cherished character while providing residents with diverse housing options and services.

Socorro community members advocated for expanded retail and commercial services to accommodate the City's growth and provide for increased shopping, restaurant, and employment. In response, the City created and adopted the Shopping District on Nuevo Tanks Hueco Road. This district prioritizes additional services and entertainment, including enhanced dining, family, and shopping experiences.

The Shopping District

The City aims to attract and capture more businesses and retail establishments to enhance the quality of life for its residents. While the Shopping District was initially established for Nuevo Hueco Tanks Road, its principles and goals can be integrated into other neighborhood and regional commercial developments along major arterials to promote improved retail, dining, and entertainment throughout the entire city.





Residents also emphasized the importance of pedestrian-friendly and bikeable commercial areas to enhance community safety. Improving community connectivity through enhancements to the City's sidewalk network, along with Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS) initiatives, is crucial.

Furthermore, residents highlighted the need for new industrial development to create jobs and revenue for the City. They called for additional employment and business opportunities to allow community members to live and work within Socorro.

Given the potential impact of desired developments on employment, services, and commerce, workforce and attainable housing emerge as critical elements of the Plan to support the City's land use priorities.

Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS) are the state-specific accessibility standards that apply to public and private buildings and facilities in Texas

Future Land Use Categories

There are eleven (11) land use categories and one overlay district to capture the visioned 2040 character of Socorro. The purpose of these categories is to:

- Provide guidance for new development in undeveloped areas to ensure the necessary housing, businesses, and services for residents;
- Accommodate a range of incomes, lifestyles, and community preferences for the population;
- Facilitate economic development and employment opportunities for the City; and
- Conserve the agricultural, rural, and farming areas in Socorro in appropriate areas.

Table 3-2 2040 Future Land Use Categories

Designation	Maximum Density	Description	Total Acres in Future Land Use Map
Open Space and Parks (OSP)	N/A	This designation includes passive and active local, state, and federal parks, multipurpose trails, preserved or conserved public or private open space, wildlife corridors, nature centers, recreation areas, rivers, streams, canals, floodways, floodplains, and other uses that support an active community and outdoor tourism and have a minimal ecological impact.	1,135 acres (8.0%)
Agriculture (AG)	1 du/5+ acres or 1 du/lot with properties smaller than 5 acres	This designation supports the continuation of agricultural and related functions that are customary in Socorro. Residential densities are very low. This category applies to areas that should not be intensified or developed by 2040. Detached single-family homes at a density of 1 du/5+ acres or 1 du/lot with properties smaller than 5 acres, and accessory dwelling units are allowed along with related garages, sheds, barns, silos, and other agricultural structures. Storage and use of farm implements, equipment, vehicles and materials, livestock, and agricultural elements, including animals, pastures, croplands, vineyards, apiaries, “you-pick” farms, solar energy development, agritourism, and agricultural product retail sales such as farmers markets are also allowed.	1,624 acres (11.5%)
Rural Residential (RR)	1 du/acre	This designation supports traditional large-lot, single-family residential development. Lots are a minimum of one (1) acre (43,560 square feet), and the primary use is residential.	1,421 acres (10.0%)
Suburban Residential (SR)	5 du/acre	This designation supports detached single-family residential structures and accessory uses on lots greater than 8,500 square feet.	3,528 acres (24.9%)
Medium-Density Residential (MDR)	7.25 du/acre	This designation supports medium-density single-family residential structures, duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, townhomes, and condominiums on lots greater than 6,000 square feet.	1,303 acres (9.2%)



Table 3-2 2040 Future Land Use Categories (continued)

Designation	Maximum Density	Description	Total Acres in Future Land Use Map
Urban Residential (UR)	7.25-15 du/acre	This designation supports medium- to high-density residential uses that consist of one or more buildings that contain two or more independent dwellings on one parcel. This includes duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, row homes, townhomes, condominiums, court homes, cottage clusters, and apartments on lots greater than 6,000 square feet. Multistory development is encouraged. This land use category should occur along major thoroughfares or in areas of the city that are already established at a higher density. All development must follow multifamily design guidelines.	131 acres (0.9%)
Neighborhood Commercial (NC)	N/A	This designation allows low- to moderate-intensity commercial, service, and office uses that primarily serve market areas close to residential neighborhoods. Uses in this district promote a broad range of commercial operations and services necessary for large regions of the City such as restaurants, retail, grocery stores, fueling stations, offices, financial services, professional services, medical services, and other similar uses. Uses within this designation are compatible with residential uses and are appropriately transitioned from abutting residential uses.	628 acres (4.4%)
Regional Commercial (RC)	N/A	This designation is meant to draw in regional shoppers and economic opportunities. It supports the development of moderate- to higher-intensity commercial, service, lodging, and office activities to serve the needs of local and regional residents, visitors, and wider regional markets. These designated areas are generally positioned along highways, considering appropriateness and accessibility.	352 acres (2.5%)

Table 3-2 2040 Future Land Use Categories (continued)

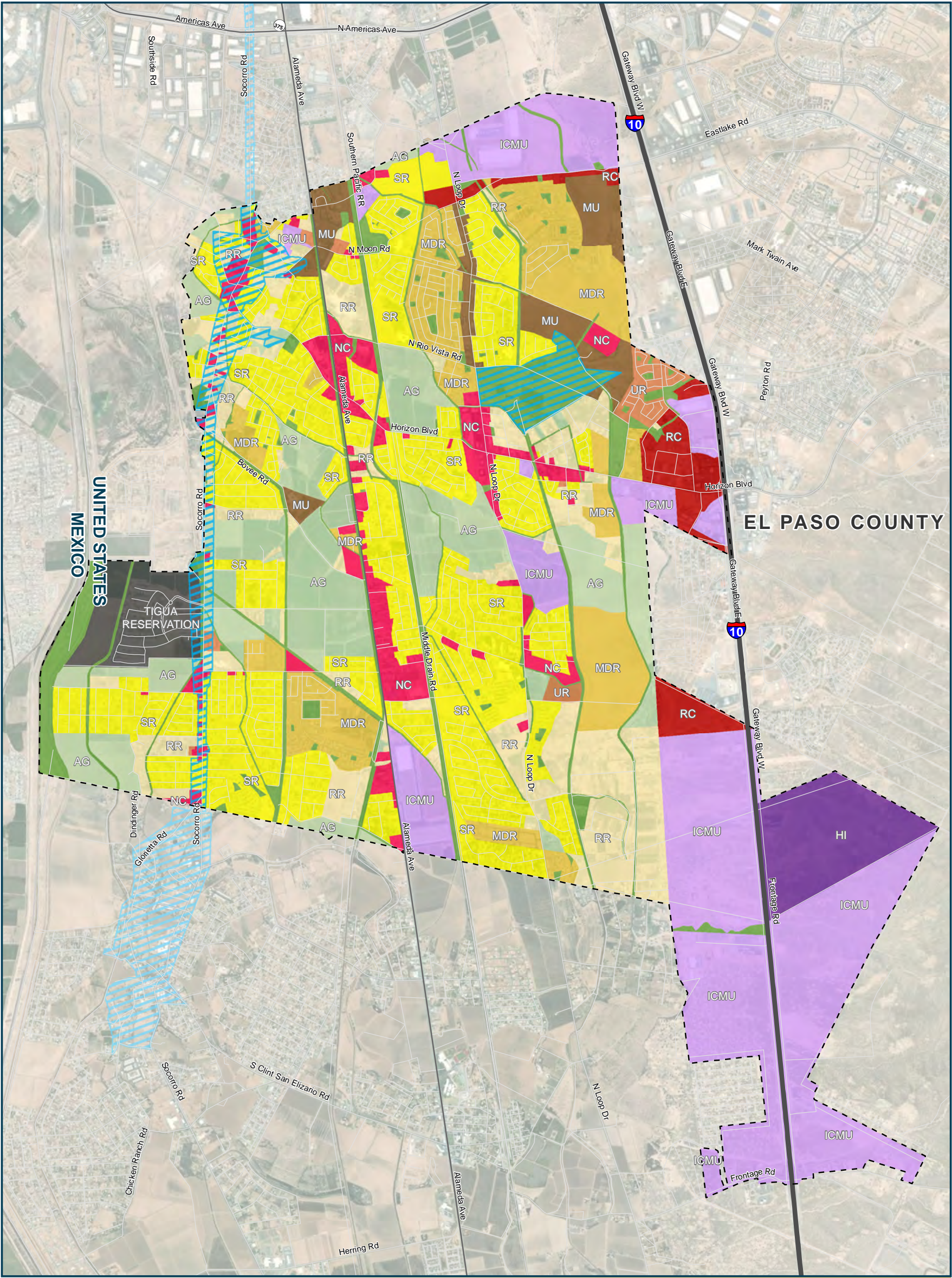
Designation	Maximum Density	Description	Total Acres in Future Land Use Map
Mixed-Use (MU)	7.25-15 du/acre	<p>This designation is intended to encourage a mix of housing, economic opportunities, shopping, and live-work space on or near areas planned for future growth. It includes a compatible and integrated mix of uses from low-intensity business parks, offices, higher-education facilities, and medical services to regional and neighborhood commercial, parks, tourism, and multifamily residential such as townhomes, condominiums, and apartments.</p> <p>This category allows a mix of base zoning districts. Multistory buildings are encouraged.</p>	411 acres (2.9%)
Industrial/Commercial Mixed-Use (ICMU)	N/A	<p>This designation is intended to provide for greater flexibility and discretion in the more integrated development of commercial, industrial, and institutional uses and combinations of such uses. Conservation of open space is also encouraged in this category. Industrial uses in this category should be lower-impact and limited-scale indoor industrial uses such as light fabrication, assembly, light manufacturing, contractors' offices, custom fabrication/assembly, small-scale machine shops, indoor self-storage, warehousing, research and development, and logistics centers. The use intensity is low to moderate and is located strategically near arterials and highway interchanges. All outdoor storage and activity areas should be fully screened from public view and residential areas, and they must be located in the rear portions of properties.</p>	2,818 acres (19.9%)



Table 3-2 2040 Future Land Use Categories (continued)

Designation	Maximum Density	Description	Total Acres in Future Land Use Map
Heavy Industrial (HI)	N/A	This designation supports the heaviest industrial uses, such as manufacturing, processing, fabrication, and large warehousing operations. These uses should be strategically located near highway interchanges. Appropriate transitioning or buffering should protect nearby uses, minimizing light, noise, odor, vibration, traffic, water, wastewater, and other utility impacts.	473 acres (3.4%)
Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Tribal Land	N/A	This is tribal land of the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo community and is not subject to land use designation through the Comprehensive Plan.	338 acres (2.4%)
Historic District (HD) Overlay	N/A	This is an overlay designation meant to protect historic resources and districts. Other land use categories are retained underneath but uses should align with protecting historic and cultural character of the districts.	196 acres (Note, this is duplicative of the underlying land use categories.)

Note: du/acre = dwelling units per acre



Legend

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|------------------------|------------|
| Open Space and Parks (OSP) | Urban Residential (UR) | Industrial/Commercial Mixed-Use (ICMU) | International Boundary | Local Road |
| Agriculture (AG) | Neighborhood Commercial (NC) | Heavy Industrial (HI) | City of Socorro | Railroad |
| Rural Residential (RR) | Regional Commercial (RC) | Historic Overlay District (HOD) | Interstate | Major Road |
| Suburban Residential (SR) | Mixed-Use (MU) | Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Tribal Land | | |
| Medium Density Residential (MDR) | | | | |

Note: A Comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.

Sources: City of Socorro, 2023. US Census, NHD.

SOCORRO 2040 Comprehensive Plan



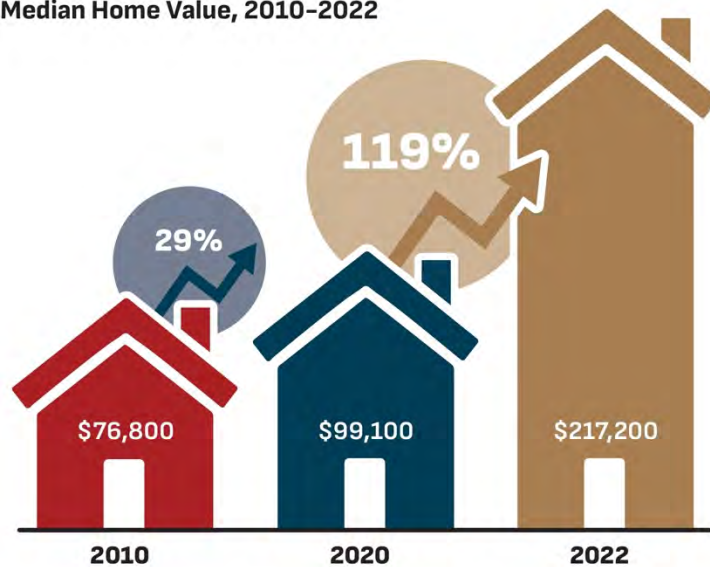
2040 Future Land Use Map Figure 3-1



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Housing

Median Home Value, 2010–2022



Source: 2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2022 National Association of Realtors

Socorro boasts an impressively high owner-occupancy rate, with 80.8% of housing units owner-occupied, according to 2022 Census data. This trend likely stems from the moderate increase in median home values from 2010 to 2020. However, between 2020 and 2022, the median home value surged by 119%, reflecting trends observed in other parts of Texas and the U.S. To maintain affordability and sustain high rates of homeownership, the housing inventory in Socorro should be diversified for various income levels. This will ensure that both long-time residents and prospective newcomers find housing options that align with their needs, thereby enhancing Socorro's appeal as a residential destination.

Addressing the availability and affordability of housing is crucial for both homeowners and renters in Socorro. Renters, in particular, face significant challenges due to limited options for mitigating housing costs. Large-lot, low-density residential developments, while appealing to those seeking Socorro's rural, agricultural atmosphere, often impede housing accessibility. To counteract this, it is essential to promote a variety of "missing middle" and multifamily housing options, including duplexes, townhomes, live-work units, and smaller-scale mixed-use and apartment buildings. These options bridge the gap between single-family homes and large multifamily complexes and are well-suited for infill development.

By strategically locating these developments near commercial centers, schools, and workplaces while preserving open spaces on the outskirts, Socorro can maintain its agricultural character while improving housing accessibility. Local housing options can also enhance the quality of life and reduce the cost of living for residents by shortening commutes and cutting transportation expenses.

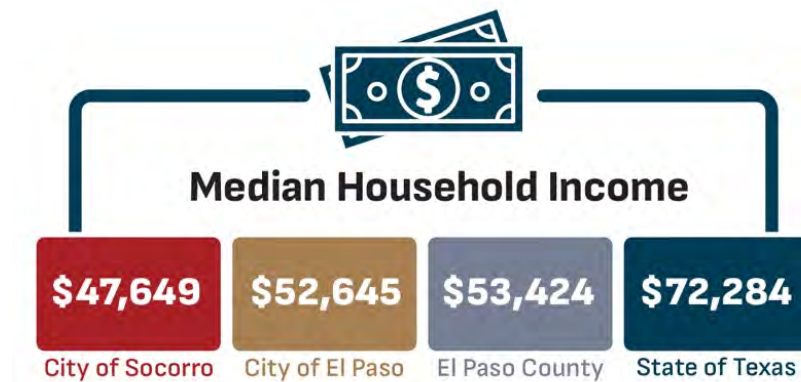


Economic Development

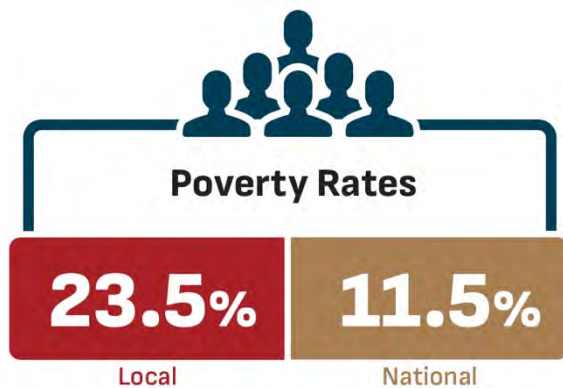
Economic Indicators

Median Household Income

In Socorro, the median income has trailed behind the County and State levels. Although incomes are rising, they are not increasing at the same rate as in El Paso County and Texas. This disparity poses a challenge: If the cost of living outpaces income growth, current residents may be displaced, and the City could struggle to attract new industries. To address this, adding well-paying jobs and diversifying industries could provide residents with more economic opportunities and attract new residents, further boosting economic activity.



Source: S1901 | 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate



Source: World Population Review, 2024

Socorro's poverty rate is notably high at 23.46%, meaning nearly a quarter of the population lives below the federal poverty line — a significant proportion compared to the national average of 11.5%. This high poverty rate is partly attributed to the area's lower income levels. Despite economic challenges, Socorro benefits from stabilizing factors such as high homeownership rates and a lower cost of living.

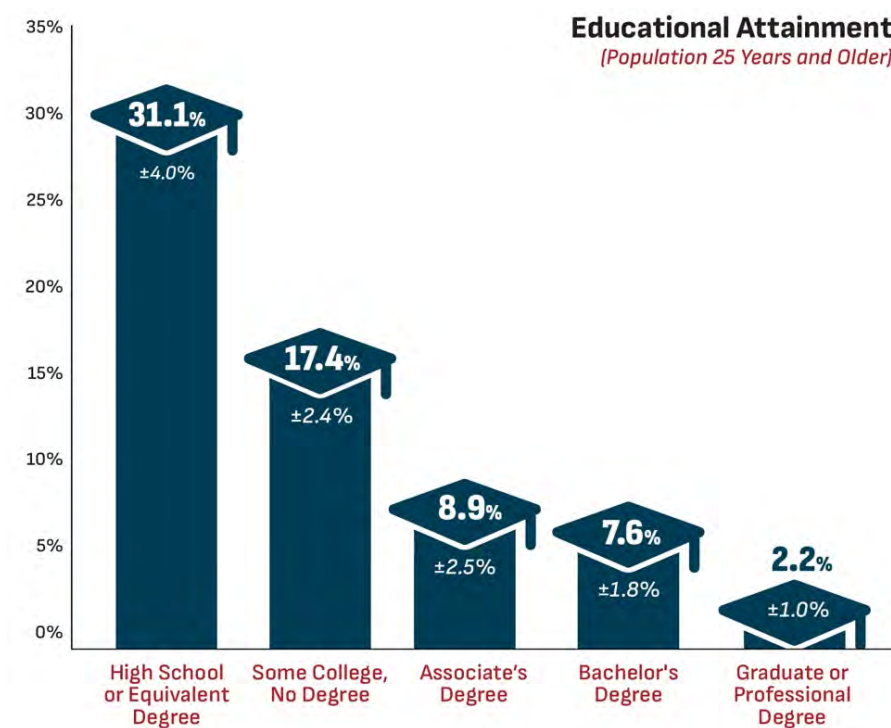
Adult Education Attainment

The City of Socorro has seen a steady increase in residents' educational attainment, possibly indicating that the population growth is driven by more highly educated individuals. In 2020, a higher percentage of residents graduated from high school and pursued post-secondary education than in previous years. This suggests a workforce with a mix of basic education and some college experience.

Academic Year	State	African American	Hispanic	White	American Indian	Asian	Two or More Races
2021-22	70%	61.3%	67.1%	68.6%	60%	90.9%	77.8%
2020-21	65.2%	61.8%	62.7%	75.8%	57.1%	60.9%	76.5%

Source: Socorro ISD 2022-23 Annual Performance Report

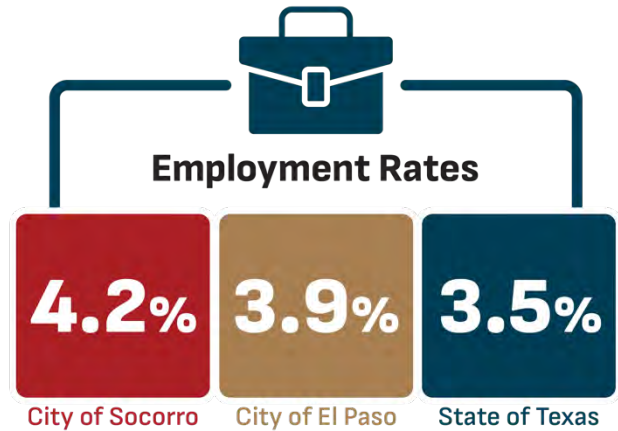
In Socorro, most residents have completed high school, but fewer have earned higher-education degrees. However, the relatively lower percentage of residents with bachelor's degrees or higher may impact the community's ability to attract high-skilled jobs and industries that require advanced education. Communities with higher educational attainment levels often experience more robust economic development due to a more skilled workforce that attracts diverse industries. Socorro's educational profile indicates potential educational growth areas to enhance economic opportunities. Increasing access to higher education and vocational training could support economic development and improve job prospects for residents.



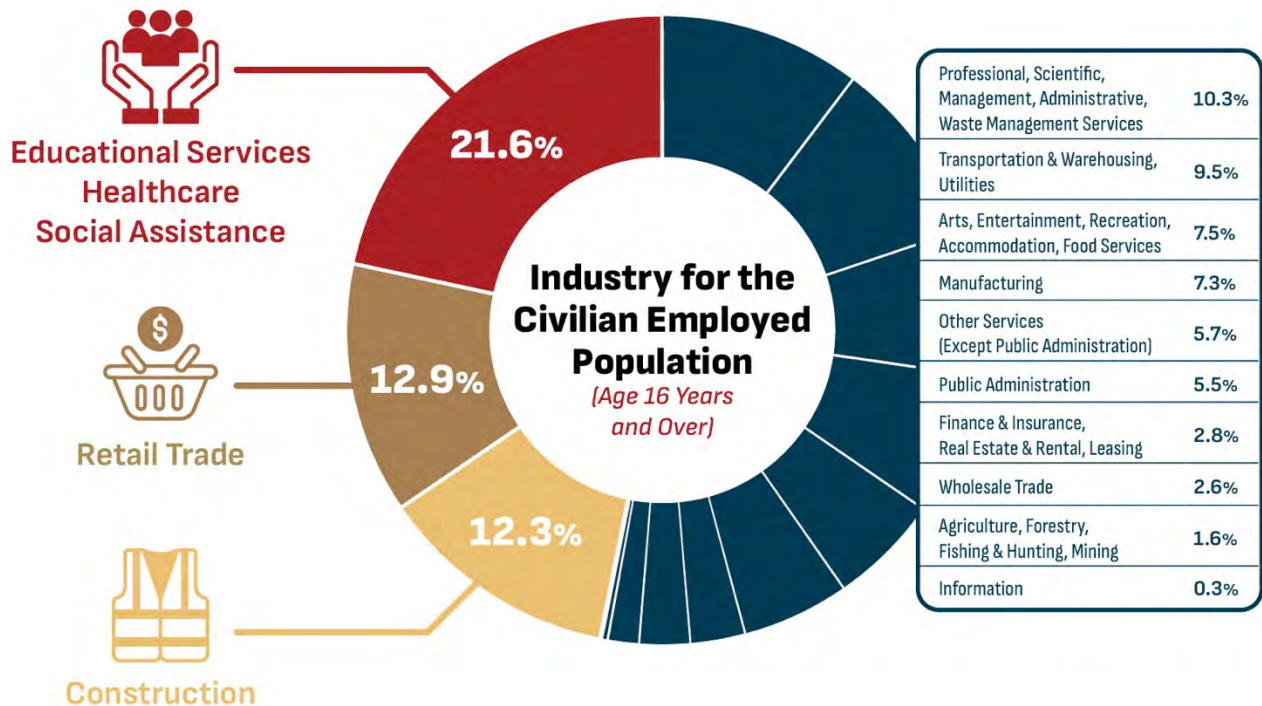
Source: S1501 | 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Employment and Industry

The City of Socorro's unemployment rate as of April 2024 of 4.2% is slightly higher than both the City of El Paso's rate at 3.9% and the State's rate of 3.5%. This suggests that Socorro is relatively stable economically, especially in comparison of broader regional metrics. New industries and employers coming to Socorro highlight potential economic growth and diversification. Providing well-paying jobs within the City can further decrease the unemployment rate and improve the overall economic well-being of the community. As Socorro attracts new industries, there is an opportunity to focus on workforce development to ensure residents are qualified for these new jobs. Currently, the top employment sectors are:



Source: Texas Workforce Commission, April 2024



Source: DP03 | 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance (21.6%)

This sector is the largest in Socorro, indicating a significant presence of schools and educational facilities, hospitals, and social service organizations. The high percentage suggests a strong demand for professionals in education, healthcare, and social work.

Retail Trade (12.9%)

Retail trade is the second-largest industry, reflecting the presence of numerous retail businesses such as stores, shops, and supermarkets. This sector provides a variety of job opportunities, from sales associates to management positions.

Construction (12.3%)

The construction industry is also prominent, highlighting ongoing development and infrastructure projects in the area. Jobs in this sector range from laborers and skilled tradespeople to project managers and engineers.

Although the agriculture industry comprises only 1.6% of Socorro's workforce, it remains a small yet vital part of the City's heritage. Therefore, it is crucial to preserve and promote employment in this sector

Economic Opportunities

The City of Socorro is developing an Economic Recovery Strategic Plan with an estimated completion date of June 2024. This Plan will help identify specific industries and retailers that can contribute to a thriving local economy. Additionally, the Plan will highlight business support needs and opportunities for local employment.

To promote greater economic wellness in the community, the City should consider investing in and advancing various industries that align with Socorro's character and contribute to a thriving and diverse business and employment sector. Specifically, the City should focus on encouraging the following sectors.

Higher Education and Vocational Training

Higher education institutions equip individuals with advanced skills and knowledge essential for high-demand jobs, enhancing workforce productivity and competitiveness. Vocational training provides specific skills tailored to particular industries, making individuals immediately employable, especially in sectors like manufacturing, construction, and healthcare. Vocational training institutions can collaborate with employers to develop courses that meet local job market needs, ensuring that students acquire in-demand skills and have opportunities for work placements and apprenticeships. Together, higher education and vocational training can diversify the local economy by preparing individuals for a wide range of occupations, from technical and skilled trades to professional and managerial roles.



Socorro should explore partnerships with local and regional universities, community colleges, training programs, the U.S. Army's Fort Bliss, and other organizations to support initiatives such as mentoring local high school students, hosting employment workshops, and possible "grow your own" programs. To further these efforts, the City should explore potential partnerships with El Paso Community College (EPCC) and Texas A&M University, leveraging their resources and expertise to address the community's higher education needs.

EPCC offers a variety of programs aimed at enhancing workforce skills, including short-term training, vocational courses, and industry-specific certifications. These programs can be tailored to meet the specific needs of local industries, ensuring that individuals acquire relevant skills and have opportunities for work placements and apprenticeships. Programs such as Adult Education and Literacy training, offered in collaboration with Texas A&M University, aim to improve educational outcomes for adults, providing them with the skills needed to succeed in the workforce. Additionally, EPCC's Workforce Strategic Initiatives department collaborates with local businesses to develop training programs that meet specific business applications and manufacturing processes, upgrading the skills of both new and existing employees.

Agriculture and Agribusiness

Agriculture, particularly pecan farming, is historically significant in Socorro, with major pecan processing facilities located in the City. Recognizing this traditional industry's importance, Socorro can explore value-added agricultural activities, such as processing and packaging, to further enhance this sector. Additionally, promoting agritourism can attract visitors interested in farm tours and locally sourced produce.

Developing agritourism activities, including farm tours, pick-your-own produce, and farmers markets, can generate additional income and support the local desire to preserve agricultural industries. Farmers markets and direct sales offer avenues for selling products directly to consumers, fostering higher margins and building customer relationships.

In terms of processing, creating value-added products such as pecan oil, flavored pecans, and other processed foods from raw agricultural materials can significantly increase profitability and market reach. Collaborating with retailers and wholesalers to distribute these products more widely enhances both wholesale and retail opportunities.

Investing in local food production initiatives can contribute to a healthier, more sustainable community. The establishment of community gardens and support for local farmers markets not only enhances local food security but also provides fresh produce that supports healthy lifestyles. Partnerships with local foodbanks further ensure that surplus produce reaches those in need, reinforcing the community's resiliency against food scarcity.





Logistics, Distribution, and Manufacturing

Socorro's strategic location along Interstate 10 makes it ideal for manufacturing, logistics, and distribution. The City's proximity to the Ysleta Port of Entry into Mexico gives companies a competitive edge by shortening supply chains and improving responsiveness to market changes. Expanding these industries can capitalize on the City's accessibility and allow them to uniquely benefit from recent nearshoring trends, where business operations are transferred to nearby countries rather than far-off locations, leading to improved operational efficiency and reduced costs. With 70% of the U.S. population reachable within 48 hours via highway travel, Socorro actively promotes itself as a distribution hub and aims to attract more manufacturing firms, leveraging benefits from the Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) established in November 2023.



The FTZ designation offers significant incentives for manufacturing businesses, allowing them to reduce import duties and other costs, thus encouraging domestic manufacturing and capital investment. Socorro can leverage a variety of grant programs, such as from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), to aid in product development and market expansion while also receiving assistance for innovative agricultural projects and sustainability initiatives through private and community grants from organizations like the American Farmland Trust and the Farm Bureau. Socorro can attract diverse manufacturing companies to complement its logistics and distribution sector. These incentives attract businesses and foster local economic growth and job creation.



Regional Commercial

Socorro's strategic vision for regional commercial areas is to create engaging, family-oriented spaces that serve as economic and social hubs. These areas should offer a blend of retail, services, lodging, and office spaces, catering to the needs of local residents and regional visitors. Located along major gateways to the community, such as Nuevo Hueco Tanks Road, these areas are designated for easy access and aim to enhance the local lifestyle.

With Socorro undergoing rapid industrial growth, planning these districts proactively is essential. By anticipating future needs, the community can ensure thoughtful and sustainable development by integrating new commercial development seamlessly with community needs. This will allow the City of Socorro to utilize the economic opportunities presented by industrial expansion while maintaining the quality of life that makes Socorro a great place to live.

City Center

Socorro is planning a city center that will serve as the heart of community interaction and a beacon of local culture. The planned city center aims to be a central gathering place for residents and visitors alike, offering a variety of resources and activities that foster community engagement. Central to this vision is the historic Rio Vista Farm, a site with a longstanding history and heritage. The City plans to restore and revitalize the Rio Vista Farm through the Rio Vista Farm District Master Plan, which will provide the following:

- New library
- Outdoor event space
- Renovated senior center
- City offices
- Medical clinic
- Fitness studio
- Dance studio
- Classrooms
- Combined museum and art gallery
- Café
- Agricultural education and/or community garden facilities



This project will preserve a significant part of Socorro's past, boost local commerce, provide employment opportunities, and enhance Socorro's overall quality of life. By integrating historic preservation with modern amenities, the city center will be where history meets community life, creating a unique and enduring space for future generations.



Tourism

Socorro's distinct history and vibrant cultural heritage highlighted by landmarks such as La Purísima Socorro Mission, the El Paso Mission Trail, and the Rio Vista Farm, provide a strong foundation for expanding the tourism and hospitality industries.

Including the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo in the tourism, strategy opens avenues for unique cultural tourism experiences that celebrate the traditions and history of the Tigua people, one of Texas's oldest Indigenous communities. Developing partnerships with the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo can enrich the visitor experience for the Tribe and the City, foster greater appreciation and understanding of Pueblo's cultural significance, and offer authentic cultural showcases, including traditional festivals, craft markets, and educational programs highlighting traditional customs, cuisine, and craftsmanship.



New businesses like restaurants, breweries, and entertainment venues are opening to create an entertainment hub and are turning the area into an emerging tourist destination. Further developing tourism infrastructure, including themed bed and breakfasts, culturally focused hotels, and specialized retail establishments, can attract visitors looking for unique cultural experiences. The City can also promote cultural and historical tourism by investing in Socorro specific marketing initiatives that highlight its unique historical

attractions. Organizing annual cultural festivals, historical reenactments, and guided tours of significant sites within the community can draw additional visitors. Additionally, collaborating with regional tourism boards and participating in wider marketing campaigns can increase Socorro's visibility as a cultural tourism destination.

Growth and Development (GD)

Goals and Policies

Land Use

Goal GD-1 **The Unified Development Code is aligned with the Future Land Use Map and Comprehensive Plan.**

Policy GD-1.a Create a Unified Development Code to include site and architectural design standards that reflect Socorro's agricultural character and implement the vision, goals, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy GD-1.b Amend the Unified Development Code to align zoning districts with the Comprehensive Plan land use categories.

Policy GD-1.c Amend the Unified Development Code for compliance with new state laws, case law, and federal requirements.

Goal GD-2 **Low-intensity land uses are located, transitioned, and buffered from higher-intensity uses.**

Policy GD-2.a Establish Unified Development Code standards to improve the buffering and transition of higher-intensity land uses to lower-intensity residential land uses.

Policy GD-2.b Evaluate and update development standards to improve land use compatibility through on-site setbacks, landscaping, screening, lot size, and building height and to align them with development codes and standards.

Policy GD-2.c Evaluate and update development standards for commercial and industrial development to fully screen, buffer, and transition to protect residential areas and preserve the agricultural character of the community.

Policy GD-2.d Allow for compatible mixed-use development in focused areas that encourages a range of uses and development styles.



Goal GD-3**New development supports the historic assets and rural, and agricultural character of Socorro.**

- Policy GD-3.a** Coordinate with willing agricultural landowners for the use of preservation or conservation easements.
- Policy GD-3.b** Update the Unified Development Code to include passive and active open space requirements to preserve agricultural areas, with a focus on retaining connections between agricultural uses.
- Policy GD-3.c** Allow boutique farm and commercial uses that support agrarian uses in coordination with agricultural and open space use.
- Policy GD-3.d** Within the historic district overlay, establish architectural design standards to ensure visual compatibility with existing historic assets and promote the agricultural heritage of the community.
- Policy GD-3.e** Encourage uses in the historic district overlay that align with heritage tourism, such as restaurants, retail, and entertainment.
- Policy GD-3.f** Provide land density bonuses for subdivisions providing large continuous open space in the form of conservation easements or parkland dedication.
- Policy GD-3.g** Partner with Texas A&M University's AgriLife Research and Extension Center to protect open space in conservation easements.
- Policy GD-3.h** Expand and connect the protected rural open space network, including floodplains and stream corridors, through open space programs, land dedications, walking paths, and parks while working with land trusts for a possible voluntary conservation easement program.
- Policy GD-3.i** Promote conservation subdivisions and utilize a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to permanently preserve open space, protect the rural character of the community, and reduce development pressure on agricultural land.
-

Goal GD-4**Conservation subdivisions protect the open space and agricultural character of Socorro.**

- Policy GD-4.a** Utilize Development Agreements for master-planned developments for subdivisions larger than twenty-five (25) acres or more than one hundred (100) residential units so that development is compatible with and reflects the agricultural character of Socorro.
- Policy GD-4.b** Encourage the integration of the natural landscape into new developments to preserve views and open space.
- Policy GD-4.c** Collaborate with agricultural organizations, land trusts, and conservation groups to identify priority agricultural areas and funding options, and work with willing landowners to secure development rights.
- Policy GD-4.d** Employ best practices for developing in conformance with natural site topography to avoid significant alterations of the landscape and to limit grading impacts.

Housing

Goal GD-5 **Diverse housing options serve existing and future residents of all ages, incomes, and needs.**

Policy GD-5.a Encourage a range of residential housing types, housing sizes, lot sizes, and densities.

Policy GD-5.b Consider regulatory incentives, such as Housing Tax Credit projects, to expand housing availability and facilitate the development of affordable housing options that are accessible to low- and moderate-income households, including workforce housing, rental units, and homeownership opportunities.

Goal GD-6 **Housing stock is abundant, attractive, and high-quality.**

Policy GD-6.a Establish single-unit and multifamily design guidelines to reinforce the rural, agricultural character of the community.

Policy GD-6.b Amend the Unified Development Code to require neighborhood amenities such as pocket parks, trails, community gardens, and playgrounds.

Policy GD-6.c Promote pedestrian and vehicular mobility by designing connections to adjacent uses.

Policy GD-6.d Identify best practices for programs related to addressing housing rehabilitation, such as emergency repair funds and community maintenance events, to maintain existing housing stock.

Goal GD-7 **Mixed-use is strategically located throughout Socorro.**

Policy GD-7.a Promote mixed-used development near El Paso Community College and in other active pedestrian districts.

Policy GD-7.b Create a Transit-Oriented Development district to encourage mixed-use opportunities around local transit lines.



Economic Development

Goal GD-8 **New businesses and industries diversify employment options and provide livable wages.**

Policy GD-8.a Utilize the Economic Recovery Strategic Plan to identify industry targets and provide incentives to attract desired industries.

Policy GD-8.b Support land uses in designated employment areas that align with emerging economic conditions and the City's target industry sectors such as restaurants, retail, tourism, and trade.

Policy GD-8.c Focus the majority of business attraction efforts on industries that complement the lifestyle of residents, as well as demonstrate regional market demand.

Policy GD-8.d Buffer existing industrial and business park development from encroachment by incompatible development.

Goal GD-9 **Development is attractive and economically viable.**

Policy GD-9.a Establish a façade improvement program to help community members locate grants or business owners secure low-interest loans to revitalize their building façades, especially in the historic districts.

Policy GD-9.b Create an Economic Development Department to attract and retain employers and improve economic opportunities.

Policy GD-9.c Improve streetscapes and invest in other beautification projects to develop a sense of place and attract investment and reinvestment.

Goal GD-10 **Necessary infrastructure is in place to recruit employers and desired industries.**

Policy GD-10.a Identify and maintain areas suitable for large-scale office complexes and industrial activities, such as distribution, logistics, manufacturing, and other uses that create employment opportunities.

Policy GD-10.b Prioritize growth in areas with existing infrastructure or areas where infrastructure can be expanded in a fiscally sound manner.

Goal GD-11 The Shopping District along Nuevo Hueco Tanks Road serves as a model for other major thoroughfares to attract and retain shopping and employment.

Policy GD-11.a Identify and promote desired uses in Shopping Districts to include entertainment and retail, movies, restaurants, retail shopping, and enhance the “Gateway to Socorro” along Nuevo Hueco Tanks Road.

Policy GD-11.b Establish a Shopping District along Nuevo Hueco Tanks Road that will provide shopping, dining, and employment for Socorro’s residents.

Policy GD-11.c Identify other major arterials, including Alameda Avenue, to develop similar Shopping Districts with economic development potential. These Districts should define commercial uses that are compatible with public support and economic development goals, as well as restrict new uses that are incompatible with City priorities.



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4

Quality of Life

The citizens of Socorro have identified preserving cultural history and enhancing parks and open space as essential for fostering quality of life and promoting sustainable growth. This Quality of Life Element focuses on these important resources within the community by building upon past reports, plans, and studies, along with the insights gathered from City staff and community members throughout the planning process. The recommendations within this element focus on sustaining and expanding these important community assets, providing for an enriched quality of life as the community prospers and grows.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Socorro's history dates back to 1680 and is significant on the local, state, and national levels, attracting visitors from all over the country, as well as international visitors. The City is home to several unique historic sites and is adjacent to the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo reservation, as identified on **Figure 4-1**. The City, property owners, and community members are committed to maintaining and enhancing the cultural, historical, and environmental resources contributing to Socorro's identity.

Ysleta del Sur Pueblo

Adjacent to Socorro, the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, often called the Tigua Tribe, embodies a deeply rooted cultural heritage that predates many modern settlements in the region. As a sovereign nation, the tribe governs itself independently, preserving a way of life that has withstood the trials of history since their forced migration from New Mexico in 1680. This sovereignty affords them unique opportunities to manage their cultural and natural resources, fostering resilience and pride in their community. The Ysleta del Sur Pueblo's historical significance as one of the oldest continuous settlements in Texas is a cornerstone to the community and offers valuable lessons in cultural endurance and adaptation. Intertwined with significant events such as the Pueblo Revolt, their history highlights their impact on the regional cultural landscape. Today, the Pueblo's active participation in environmental conservation and educational outreach enhances their role as custodians of their heritage.



Socorro can benefit from partnerships with the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo in cultural tourism, educational programs, and conservation projects. Such collaborations could focus on promoting the tribe's rich traditions and supporting sustainable practices around the reservation. This cooperative relationship not only honors the tribe's historical significance but also enriches Socorro's cultural offerings, fostering a shared community space that respects both past and present. This approach ensures that the tribe's contributions to regional culture and history are celebrated and integrated into the broader narrative of Socorro's development.

Purísima Socorro Mission



The Purísima Socorro Mission, commonly called the Socorro Mission, is one of three missions along the El Paso Mission Trail, which dates back to 1680. It was designated as a Texas Historic Landmark by the Texas Historical Commission in 1964 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 and. This mission, formally known as Nuestra Señora de La Limpia Concepción de los Píros del Socorro del Sur (Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception of the Píros of Socorro of the South), was founded in 1682. The Socorro Mission was built and established with help from the Píros, Tanos, and Jemez indigenous peoples, some of whom arrived to the area from New Mexico after the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. Throughout its history, the mission has been a symbol of protection and resilience for Socorro. Today, the Socorro Mission symbolizes Socorro's rich religious heritage and is a testament to its people's enduring strength and resilience.

Over the centuries, the mission has undergone several reconstructions. The original mission was destroyed by flooding in 1740, rebuilt, and again destroyed by flooding in 1829. These floods also altered the course of the Rio Grande, creating a new river channel. After each flood, the community came together to rebuild the mission, ultimately relocating it to its current site with construction completed in 1840, safe from the river's waters.

In the 1990s, the community initiated its most recent mission restoration project to preserve the mission's distinctive Spanish colonial architecture, characterized by its thick adobe walls and traditional vigas protruding from the exterior. The restoration stabilized the mission's walls, repaired the bell tower, and conserved the interior, ensuring the mission could continue serving as a cultural and historical landmark. The preservation of the Socorro Mission plays a substantial role in Socorro's tourism sector, attracting visitors from across the nation and abroad.



Early Site of Socorro Mission



The original mission site was protected as a State Antiquities Landmark in 2009 through the Texas Historical Commission. The original mission site has been maintained despite the challenges posed by natural disasters over the centuries, including significant floods that led to the mission's relocation. Efforts to preserve this site have involved archaeological studies and protective measures to safeguard remnants and artifacts that provide insight into the early days of the mission. These preservation activities are supported by the City, the Texas Historical Commission, and community volunteers committed to maintaining the site's integrity.

El Paso Mission Trail

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail has been a corridor of cultural exchange and commerce for over three centuries. It traces its historic routes through what is now the southwestern United States and Mexico. This "Royal Road of the Interior" originally spanned roughly 1,600 miles from Mexico City to northern New Mexico. Among its segments is the Paso Del Norte Trail, which runs through Socorro, Texas. The Texas Transportation Commission recently approved over \$16 million in transportation alternatives to enhance this area. The funding is earmarked for constructing a seven-mile segment along the Historic Mission Trail, further celebrating and preserving the trail's heritage as a part of the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.

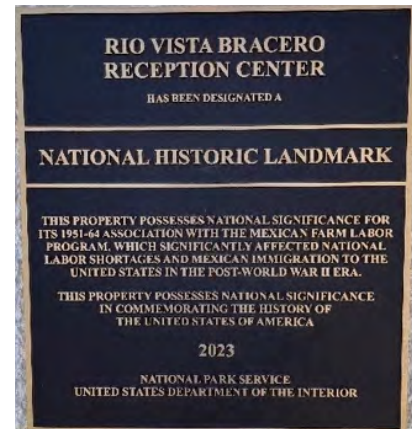


The El Paso Mission Trail is a nine-mile segment within the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail, one of the oldest corridors in the United States, and has been active since 1598. The El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro connects Mexico City, Mexico, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and boasts some of the most important historic landmarks within the trade corridor. Established during the Spanish colonial period, the El Paso Mission Trail extends along Socorro Road. It links the Ysleta Mission in El Paso, the Purísima Socorro Mission, and the San Elizario Presidio Chapel in San Elizario, collectively symbolizing a critical period in the colonization of the southwest in the spread of Spanish culture and the Catholic faith across the region.

Rio Vista Bracero Reception Center

Another important site that interweaves Socorro's culture and history dates back to 1915 when the O'Shey family opened the Rio Vista Farm to individuals needing shelter during the Great Depression. The family's generosity eventually led to the Works Progress Administration operating out of the facility through President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal program, providing provisions, job training, and job creation. Between 1951 and 1964, the site was utilized as one of five critical way stations to process and house workers for the Mexican Farm Labor Program, or the Bracero program. The Bracero program contracted with over 4.2 million migrant workers, with the Rio Vista Center issuing 800,000 contracts for workers from Mexico to engage in seasonal employment within the U.S. agricultural industry.

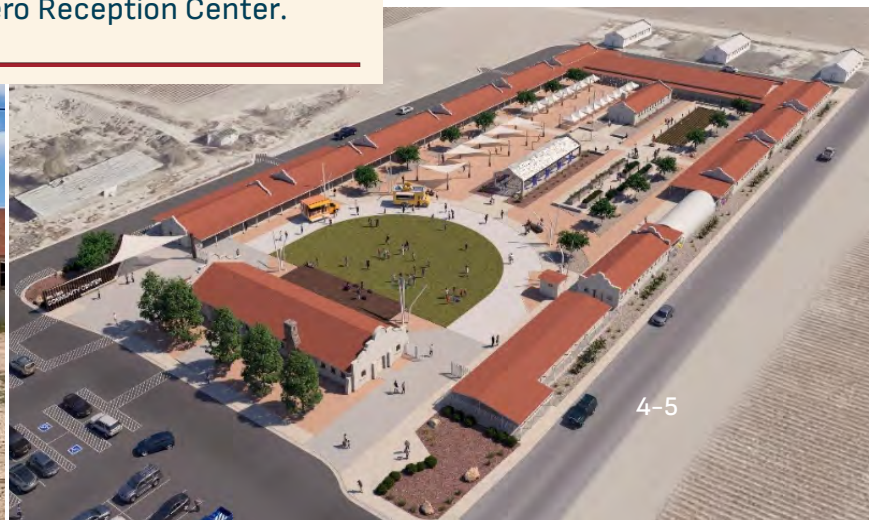
The Rio Vista Bracero Reception Center (Rio Vista Center) was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1996 and received a National Historic Landmark designation in 2024, marking the first time a National Historic Landmark was commemorated with bilingual plaques. The City developed the Rio Vista Farm District Master Plan for the 17 historic buildings and the overall site to expand the services offered within the community center and is seeking grant and other funding opportunities to bring it to fruition. Once funded, the phased approach will supply the community with a city center providing a museum and art gallery, a public library, a small business incubator, an outdoor event space, a medical clinic, a fitness and dance studio, classrooms, and a café.



On the left is a photo of the Rio Vista Bracero Reception Center today, and on the right is a conceptual rendering of the restored Rio Vista Bracero Reception Center.



Socorro 2040 Comprehensive Plan



Casa Ortiz

Casa Ortiz has been a designated Texas Historic Landmark since 1973 and sits along the El Paso Mission Trail. The structure dates back to the late 1700s and was the home of Jose Ortiz, who traded goods with the Indigenous Peoples along a trade route extending from communities within Mexico, such as Durango and Santa Fe, to communities within New Mexico such as the Guadalupe Mountains and Llano Estacado. Their trade consisted of salt from the foothills of the Guadalupe Mountains to knives, sarapes, and clothing in exchange for buffalo hides and meat. Since 2020, the building has been utilized as an art gallery, gift shop, and working studio for local artists. The studio has hosted shows and art markets featuring local vendors and has contributed to the growth of cultural tourism and activity along this stretch of the El Paso Mission Trail.



Tienda de Carbajal

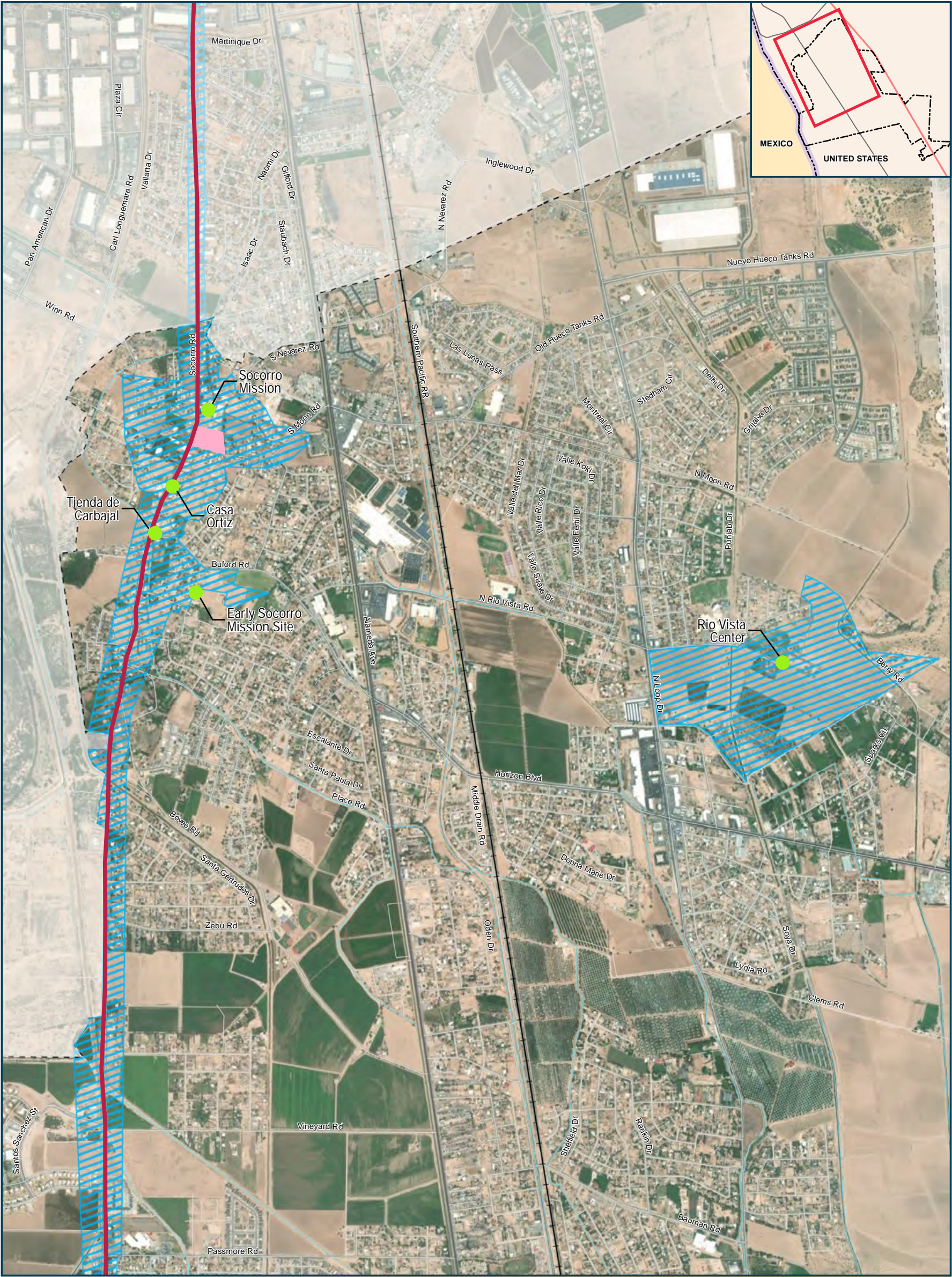
The Tienda de Carbajal sits on the site of a 19th-century hacienda recognized in an 1852 map near the San Elizario Road crossing of Acequia Madre. By 1873, parts of the original structure were demolished, and the owner, Juan Carbajal, repurposed remnants into a store and municipal offices. This site was recognized as a Texas Historical Commission Landmark in 1972 for serving as a supply hub for freight caravans traveling to Chihuahua City and Mesilla in the 19th century.

Historic Districts

Socorro has two designated historic districts. The Rio Vista Center Historic District encompasses a significant portion of land owned by the City and features the Rio Vista Bracero Reception Center and Cougar Park. The inclusion of these two facilities and open space emphasizes the City's commitment to blending historical preservation with community wellness and accessibility. The additional investment of implementing the Rio Vista Farm District Master plan warrants a review of the district boundaries to ensure adjacent private development constructed to protect the integrity of the historic nature of the area.



The Mission Trail Historic District follows The El Paso Mission Trail along Socorro Road and encompasses the Purísima Socorro Mission site and cemetery. This district is meant to preserve and strengthen the cultural and historic resources along the trail, both as cultural treasures and opportunities for appropriate economic development. This includes improvements to historic sites. Community members expressed concerns that there is a lack of visibility and public education regarding Socorro's historic sites. They view the Socorro Mission as the "heart" of the community and would like to see redevelopment in the area that celebrates and supports the historic nature, with an avoidance of industrial-type development that detracts from the value.

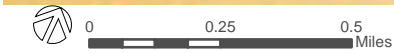


- Legend**

 - Major Historic Site
 - Socorro Mission Cemetery
 - El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail
 - Historic Overlay District
- City of Socorro
 - Railroad
 - Interstate
 - Major Road
 - Local Road
 - River or Stream

Sources: Texas Historical Commission

SOCORRO 2040 Comprehensive Plan



Major Historic Sites Figure 4-1



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Parks and Recreation

Strategically placed and equitably distributed parks can provide many individual and community enrichment opportunities. Parks and open spaces may protect environmentally sensitive lands from the potentially harmful effects of urban development, including curbing sprawl, minimizing fragmentation, and reducing climate and environmental issues while offering recreational benefits. The City of Socorro has a variety of types of parks, as shown on **Figure 4-2**. These community spaces offer citizens both active and passive recreational opportunities.



The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has comprehensively assessed more than 1,000 parks and recreation agencies to develop nationwide parks and recreation benchmarks in the 2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review. According to the national assessment, the typical parks and recreation agency has an average of 10.4 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents in its jurisdiction. The City of Socorro currently has 70.03 acres of parks, equal to 1.997 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, well below the national average. However, the City owns two community centers, which are not included in this calculation. Additional parkland can be developed and dedicated to the City as development occurs through the form of parkland dedication requirements within the updated Unified Development Code (UDC).

The dispersal of parks throughout Socorro is generally focused in the northern and southern parts of the city, leaving a void in central Socorro. Residents in the central part of the city have to travel further to access park and recreation facilities. As new development occurs in this area, park space should be incorporated to serve these residents.

Throughout the 2040 Comprehensive Plan process, residents indicated they want to improve and maintain existing parks rather than develop new ones. Key concerns included inadequate planning and design, old equipment, lack of maintenance and upkeep, and insufficient facilities. Residents noted that many parks have little shade or seating areas and requested the addition of walking trails within the parks, the extension of trails to connect parks, and the enhancement of park aesthetics with improved landscaping. Residents also identified the need for basic improvements such as signage, ADA- and TAS-required access, parking areas, and bathroom facilities. The City should update and maintain a current Parks Master Plan in order to provide for a strategic approach to the redevelopment of existing parks. Management of a current Parks Master Plan also enables the City to access Texas Parks and Wildlife funding opportunities.

Each park listed corresponds to its number on **Figure 4-2**.

1 Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, a 372-acre park located in Southeast El Paso County, is managed by the University of Texas at El Paso's Center for Environmental Resource Management. Although it lies outside Socorro's city limits, it serves as a significant recreational, ecological, and educational resource for residents. The park features walking and hiking trails for visitors.

2 Mauro Rosas Park

Mauro Rosas Park is a 3.1-acre neighborhood park on Peters Road. Formerly known as Bonita Park, it features a walking trail, a playground, basketball courts, and park lights.

3 Amistad Park

Amistad Park is a 2.06-acre park within the River Drain off Valle Palomar Road. It includes a soccer field, an open play area with playground equipment, a basketball court, and a walking trail.

4 Jardin De Flores Park

The Jardin de Flores Park is a 10.1-acre community park located on Flor Margarita Boulevard that serves primarily as a drainage and open space area. The park offers playgrounds, covered park benches, landscaping, and a sidewalk along the playground's perimeter.

5 Leonor Duran Park

The Leonor Duran Park is a two-acre undeveloped mini park. This park has space for future development to meet community needs. Potential enhancements could include playground equipment, fitness stations, public art, a splash pad, basketball courts, and landscaping to create a welcoming and functional green space for residents.

6 Hidden Valley Park

This 0.7-acre mini park is currently undeveloped and located near the Mesa Spur Drain Canal. The small space is available for future development to meet community needs. Potential enhancements could include playground equipment, seating areas, a community garden, and landscaping to create a welcoming and functional green space for residents.

Mini (Pocket) parks are the smallest park type. They are typically less than one acre in size with a service radius of one-quarter mile. The typical use or purpose of a mini park is to serve an isolated or unique need to a concentrated population, often providing a passive recreation opportunity.



7 Cougar Park

Cougar Park, located off Socorro Road in the City's Historic Mission District, is Socorro's largest community park at 10.43 acres. The park contains a soccer field, a baseball field, a basketball court, tables, a bathroom facility, barbeque grills, and benches with shade canopies.

8 Place Park

Place Park is a 2.5-acre undeveloped neighborhood park that has capacity for future development to meet community needs. The park currently features a playground. Potential enhancements could include playground equipment, fitness stations, public art, a splash pad, basketball courts, and landscaping to create a welcoming and functional green space for residents.

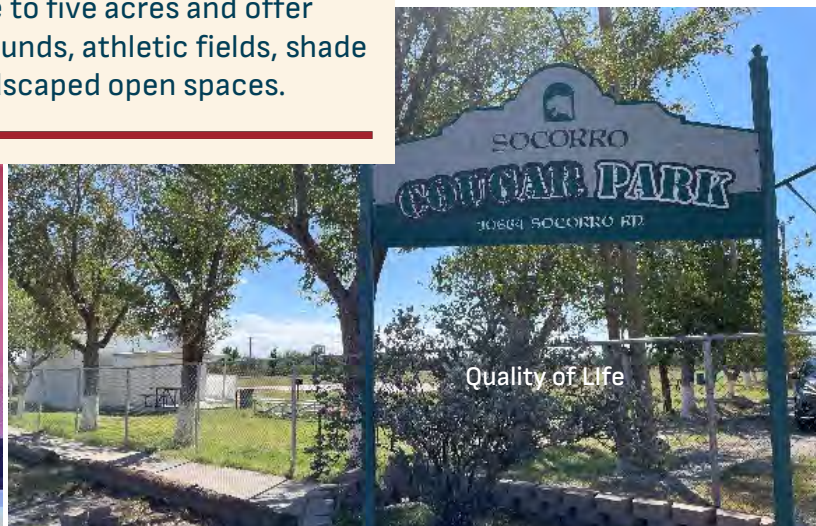
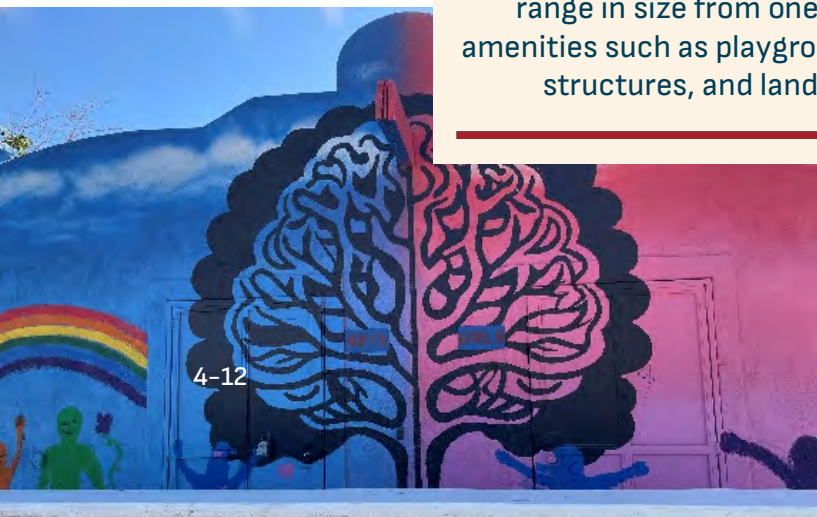
9 Bulldog Championship Park

Bulldog Championship Park is a 6.2-acre park located along Buford Road. It has a splash pad, a plaza, playgrounds, walking trails, covered areas, open space, and an amphitheater. The park's detention pond and bridge act as a focal point and allow it to reuse recycled gray water for irrigation.

10 Valle Hermoso Park

Valle Hermoso Park is a 4.4-acre neighborhood park located in the Valle del Sol subdivision. The park serves as a drainage facility and includes an open play area with playground equipment and picnic tables.

Neighborhood parks are often most frequently used by local residents, serving as cohesive elements that foster a sense of community. Typically located near the center of a neighborhood, these parks have a service radius of about half a mile. They generally range in size from one to five acres and offer amenities such as playgrounds, athletic fields, shade structures, and landscaped open spaces.



11 Cielo Azul Park

Cielo Azul Park is the smallest developed park in Socorro, covering 0.77 acres. Located on Cielo Azul Drive next to I-10, the park includes a picnic table, three shade structures with affixed seating, and six benches.

12 Moon Park

Moon Park is a 2.56-acre neighborhood park off Delhi Drive. The park features a soccer field, an open play area with playground equipment, two basketball courts, a handball court, and a walking trail. Additional amenities include a gazebo, picnic tables, shade canopies, grills, and benches.

13 Callisto Park

Castillo Park is a 3.3-acre undeveloped neighborhood park located off Callisto Court. It primarily serves as a drainage area and provides open space for the community. The park's current state provides essential drainage functions for the surrounding area while offering open space that contributes to the City's green infrastructure.

Community parks serve several neighborhoods, typically within a service radius of two miles. They are more active in nature, featuring amenities such as practice and game fields for sports leagues, community centers, walking trails, and areas for special events. The typical size of a community park ranges from five to 15 acres.



14 Rio Vista Park

Rio Vista Park is a 11.4-acre community park situated on Rio Vista Road, adjacent to the Rio Vista Community Center. As the oldest community center in Socorro, it offers a wide range of activities and programs, including Wi-Fi access, public computer use, Zumba classes, GED classes, and activities for seniors. The park features two baseball practice fields, a little league field, an open play area with playground equipment, picnic tables, and benches.

15 Montreal Park

Montreal Park is a 3.64-acre community park located on Montreal Circle. The park, which also serves as a drainage facility for the subdivision, includes a trail, soccer field, an open play area, and covered seating areas with small barbeque grills.

16 Paradise Park

Paradise Park is a 1.49-acre neighborhood park located on Mesa Drain Road. The park's amenities include a handball court, a baseball practice field, an open play area with playground equipment, covered areas, and benches.

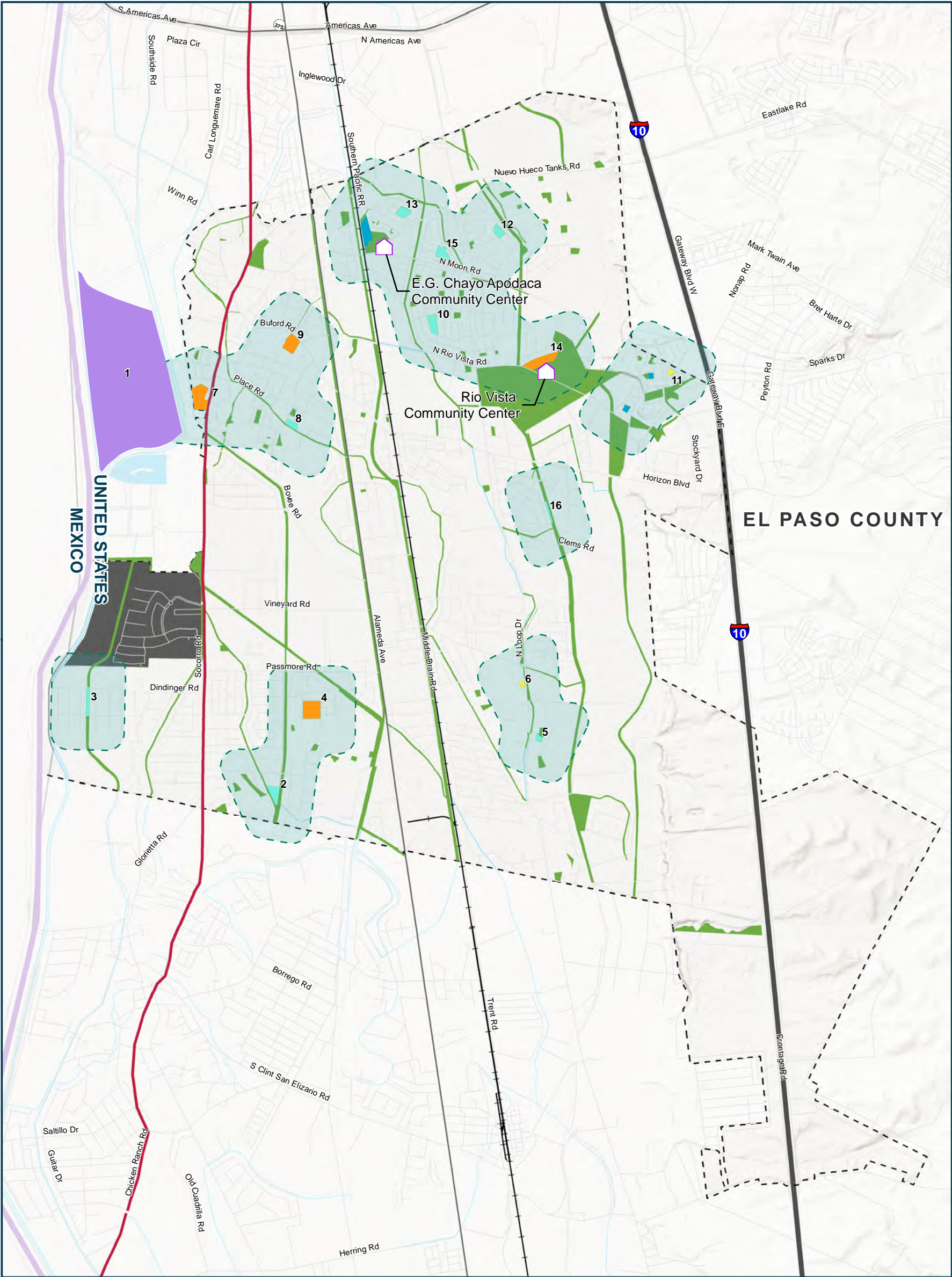
Regional parks are typically located in areas with significant natural or cultural resources, these parks have a service radius of 25-50 miles. They generally range in size from 200 to 1000+ acres and offer diverse amenities such as extensive trail systems, nature centers, and large open spaces for both active and passive recreation. Regional parks often protect important ecosystems and wildlife habitats while providing opportunities for outdoor activities. Rio Bosque Wetlands Park is an example.



4-14



Quality of Life



Legend

Parks Classification

- Community
- Neighborhood
- Mini
- Undeveloped
- City of El Paso
- Community Centers
- El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail
- Open Space
- Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Tribal Land

- International Boundary
- City of Socorro
- Railroad
- Interstate
- Major Road
- Local Road
- Waterbody
- River or Stream

Sources: City of Socorro, 2023. US Census, NHD.

SOCORRO 2040 Comprehensive Plan

0 0.5 1 Miles

Parks and Recreation Figure 4-2



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Indoor Facilities

Rio Vista Community Center

The Rio Vista Community Center is part of the Rio Vista Farm Historic District and a hub for various community events and activities. Services at the center include recreational programs such as fitness classes, sports programs, educational classes, after-school care, senior citizen programs, a community library, and a meeting space. The City is in the process of identifying funding resources to implement the phased rehabilitation of the Rio Vista Community Center to expand community services. The expansion will include creating a new library and outdoor event space, renovating the existing senior center, and providing city offices, a medical clinic, a fitness area, a dance studio, classrooms, a combined museum and art gallery, and a café.



E.G. Chayo Apodaca Community Center

The E.G. Chayo Apodaca Community Center is the newest community center in Socorro, created when the City renovated a former fire station. This community center was named after E.G. (Chayo) Apodaca, a well-known Socorro citizen who brought the first fire engine to the City and served as an early member of the City Council. It features board games, an arcade room, and a study and patio area. As part of recent COVID-19 economic recovery efforts, this center also acts as a small business support center and houses representatives from Project Vida's Micro Enterprise Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) and



Workforce Solutions Borderplex Business Support Services Program. The City owns all of the land next to and around the back of the community center. The Police Department headquarters is located to the south, and the back is being used as a vehicle holding pen by police and as a public works yard. Most of the land towards the back is vacant open space. The City has ideas for the vacant land that include a multipurpose room, meeting rooms, a basketball court, a stage, and possibly a skate park.

Trails

During the 2040 Comprehensive Plan process, community members said they would like the trail system extended to enhance connectivity to the El Paso Mission Trail and other parks and open spaces, as well as enhanced to provide increased safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. Trail expansion would provide residents with improved access to recreational paths, a safe area for hikers and bikers, and seamless integration with existing regional trails. Developing new trails and upgrading existing trails will facilitate mobility and connectivity through all the residential areas within the community.

Paso del Norte is a project involving the construction of approximately 7 miles of trails and shared-use paths in Socorro. The trail will be built along the historic Mission Trail, which includes significant landmarks such as the Socorro Mission, Casa Ortiz, and Casa Apodaca. These paths will connect bicyclists and pedestrians to historic sites, heritage tourism clusters, local food producers, parks, and natural areas along the Mission Trail. This segment is part of a larger plan to create a 68-mile trail uniting the county, providing extensive connectivity for community members to various destinations.



Public-Private Partnership
A public-private partnership occurs when the government works with a private company or organization to create public benefits. One application entails sharing resources and expertise to ensure trails or natural areas are preserved and remain accessible to everyone.

The City has limited right-of-way within some existing roadways for other trail projects. Providing alternative modes of transportation throughout the community can alleviate traffic while increasing pedestrian safety. The trails could be developed through public-private partnerships using conservation easement programs, colocation within the El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 irrigation canal rights-of-way, or partnerships with utility providers.

Open Space

Most of the open space in Socorro is undeveloped or used as agricultural land. Socorro residents prioritized maintaining the integrity of the rural agricultural land and open space areas within the community throughout the development of the 2040 Socorro Comprehensive Plan. To develop a successful program, the community must work alongside the agricultural property owners to provide a



balanced approach to preserving the agricultural and open space areas while ensuring the sustainability of agricultural operations for the next 15 to 20 years. “Smart growth” practices such as conservation subdivisions and land mitigation banking can provide opportunities for a balanced approach to growth within the community.

Conservation subdivisions are a smart growth and land use planning tool that balances residential development with preserving open space and natural resources. They are designed to promote sustainable development by clustering homes on smaller lots, leaving a significant portion of the land undeveloped for conservation, recreation, or agricultural purposes. This approach helps maintain the area's rural character and ecological health while allowing for development.

Land Banking

Land banking involves acquiring and holding land so it can be repurposed based on the community's needs, such as creating green spaces and community gardens. The land is held in careful stewardship until a new purpose can be determined.

Land mitigation banking is a conservation tool used to compensate for the adverse impacts of development on natural habitats. It involves preserving, enhancing, restoring, or creating natural areas or environmentally sensitive lands to offset the effects of development projects in more appropriate areas elsewhere.

Utilizing creative tools like these will assist the community in building a mutually beneficial relationship between the community, agricultural property owners, and regulating entities.



Quality of Life (QOL)

Goals & Policies

Historic Preservation

Goal QOL-1 Incentives are provided for rehabilitating streetscapes and façade investments that complement historic features around the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo reservation, Socorro Mission, the El Paso Mission Trail, the Rio Vista Community Center, and historic district overlays.

Policy QOL-1.a Update the boundary for Historic Preservation Districts to include a clear map of all properties within the districts.

Policy QOL-1.b Create a preservation and beautification incentive toolbox that includes all applicable federal, state, and local funding sources for preservation projects to encourage collaborative redevelopment and development of surrounding historic assets.

Policy QOL-1.c Provide at least six (6) façade improvement projects per fiscal year awarded within the El Paso Mission Trail, the Socorro Mission, and the Rio Vista Community Center Historic Preservation Districts through preservation funding sources within the incentives toolbox.

Policy QOL-1.d Support, implement, and encourage community compliance with updated design standards and architectural theming within historically designated areas.

Policy QOL-1.e Encourage uses in the historic district overlay that aligns with heritage tourism, such as restaurants, retail, and entertainment.

Goal QOL-2 Socorro's historic assets are nationally known and honored through historic asset celebration and tourism.

Policy QOL-2.a Launch educational programs and workshops to raise awareness about the importance of historic and cultural preservation.

Policy QOL-2.b Engage the community through events like heritage festivals or historic tours.

Policy QOL-2.c Continue to support the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site Designation for the El Paso Mission Trail.

Policy QOL-2.d Establish a Socorro-specific marketing plan for the Historic Preservation Districts.

Policy QOL-2.e	Develop a Socorro-specific marketing plan to provide tours and maps of historic sites to include all the historic sites within the community.
Policy QOL-2.f	Partner with local businesses on events designed to market the historic sites, such as a Night in Old Socorro, Socorro heritage crafts workshops, culinary heritage festivals, living history weekends, antique fairs, and preservation awards ceremonies.
Policy QOL-2.g	Develop Historic Preservation District wayfinding and branding signs that incorporate the El Paso Mission Trail branding and are specific to the City of Socorro.
Policy QOL-2.h	Develop short marketing videos for local businesses within the preservation districts.
Policy QOL-2.i	Create “marketing moments” or immersive experiences within the preservation districts.
Policy QOL-2.j	Partner with the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo on cultural tourism and conservation projects.

Goal QOL-3 **Historic Preservation Districts protect the character of the historic places in Socorro.**

Policy QOL-3.a	<p>Establish Historic Preservation Districts to protect the historic viewshed, enhance aesthetic appeal, attract tourists, provide environmental protection, and mitigate growth pressures in designated sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Include a 1,000-foot radius around the Socorro Mission, Rio Vista Community Center, and the Mission Trail addressing land use restrictions, architectural standards, building height and scale, and landscaping.
Policy QOL-3.b	Partner with higher education institutions to inventory the historic structures within the community.
Policy QOL-3.c	Update the Historic Landmark Commission Ordinance, design standards, dimensions, and map for the Historic Preservation Districts.
Policy QOL-3.d	Establish a route to connect the Historic Preservation Districts and include them within the conservation area.
Policy QOL-3.e	Develop design guidelines for redevelopment and new development along the Mission Trail Historic District corridor to protect its character into the future.



Goal QOL-4	Public awareness and public engagement regarding historic preservation are enhanced.
Policy QOL-4.a	Launch educational programs and workshops to raise awareness about the importance of historic and cultural preservation.
Policy QOL-4.b	Engage the community through events like heritage festivals or historic tours.
Policy QOL-4.c	Track the number of educational programs, events, and tours organized within the district annually.
Policy QOL-4.d	Work toward a 10% increase in community engagement activities related to historic preservation every year.

Goal QOL-5	An incentive toolbox encourages historic preservation.
Policy QOL-5.a	Identify municipal, county, state, and federal incentives for the preservation of properties.
Policy QOL-5.b	Utilize investment tools such as Public Improvement Districts (PIDs), Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZs), or Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts.
Policy QOL-5.c	Identify areas eligible for brownfield funding to assist in providing funds for the remediation and preservation of properties within the community.
Policy QOL-5.d	Partner with colleges focusing on architecture programs to obtain assistance with design or restoration projects.

Goal QOL-6	Historic preservation is critical to all urban planning and development decisions, including transportation, housing, and commercial development plans.
Policy QOL-6.a	Revise the subdivision regulations to include a historic preservation focus, street connectivity, and pedestrian access.
Policy QOL-6.b	Include in the creation of a City Unified Development Code guidance for setbacks, building heights, and lot sizes to supplement the community's historic character.
Policy QOL-6.c	Outline the enforcement of laws designed to protect historic properties to prevent unauthorized alterations or demolitions.
Policy QOL-6.d	Reinstitute the Building & Standards Commission to ensure dilapidated and dangerous structures are brought up to standards or removed to protect the integrity of the historic areas.
Policy QOL-6.e	Partner with local educational institutions to assist in documenting historic assets and historic landscapes and revising the design guidelines.

Goal QOL-7	Historic preservation is considered critical, and ordinances are consistently monitored and updated as needed.
Policy QOL-7.a	Monitor approved certificate-of-appropriateness applications issued through the City's Historic Landmark Commission to track any variances or hardships granted through the commission. Identify any trends to ensure the historic district ordinances meet the community's needs.
Policy QOL-7.b	Monitor and document any relocated or demolished historic structures.
Policy QOL-7.c	Annually monitor non-occupied historic structures for maintenance and preservation to ensure they are not becoming delapidated or dangerous.
Policy QOL-7.d	Establish a route to connect the historic sites and include them within the Historic Preservation Districts.

Parks and Recreation

Goal QOL-8	Neighborhood parks are attractive, well-maintained, and have appropriate amenities.
Policy QOL-8.a	Establish a maintenance and improvement schedule to ensure the equitable distribution of safe and attractive park facilities throughout the City.
Policy QOL-8.b	Develop landscaping standards for parks to improve aesthetics while providing heat relief and protection.
Policy QOL-8.c	Conduct a park survey among residents to identify desired amenities in City parks and seek grant funding or establish donation programs to acquire the amenities.

Goal QOL-9	Community parks and recreation facilities serve residents of all ages, needs, and abilities.
Policy QOL-9.a	Revise the City of Socorro Parks Master Plan to identify parks and recreation opportunities that provide entertainment for a range of ages and abilities.
Policy QOL-9.b	Diversify the types of recreation available for residents, including sports courts, indoor multipurpose spaces, and arts and music facilities.
Policy QOL-9.c	Identify opportunities for all residents to be located within a 15-minute walk to a park, trail, or public open space.



Goal QOL-10	Rio Vista Community Center provides a variety of recreational programs and is a multipurpose community gathering and recreation space.
Policy QOL-10.a	Incorporate opportunities for educational, cultural, and historical elements that focus on Socorro's history.
Policy QOL-10.b	Continue to identify funding opportunities and grants to complete the rehabilitation project.

Goal QOL-11	Parks are well-connected and safe for pedestrians through a cohesive and established pedestrian and bicycle trail network.
Policy QOL-11.a	Develop a trails plan that identifies multiuse trails, open space, and corridors throughout the City and connects existing and future parks with neighborhoods.
Policy QOL-11.b	Coordinate with the El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 regarding pathway improvements along the canals and use the paths to connect parks.
Policy QOL-11.c	Work with the El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 to enhance the irrigation canal system, looking for new multipurpose opportunities along the canal right-of-way and providing access from local businesses to the canals.
Policy QOL-11.d	Implement the trails plan by tracking the existing total mileage of trails annually and committing to expanding this network by adding at least one (1) mile of new trails each year.
Policy QOL-11.e	Explore other trail corridor linkage areas to connect parks, such as coordinating with utility providers to establish unpaved trails along utility easements like Middle Drain and Franklin Drain.
Policy QOL-11.f	Coordinate with the City of El Paso to develop an improved walking trail with signage and defined paths from Cougar Park to Rio Bosque Wetlands Park.

Goal QOL-12 Parks and open space initiatives within the community are prioritized.

- Policy QOL-12.a** Update the City of Socorro Parks Master Plan to become eligible for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department funding to develop parks and hike and bike trails.
- Policy QOL-12.b** Partner with the industrial and business community, including the Maquila Association, to develop and adopt parks throughout the community.
- Policy QOL-12.c** Prioritize improvements and restoration needs for existing park properties.
- Policy QOL-12.d** Include in the creation of a City Unified Development Code parkland dedication requirements for the development and dedication of new parks as development occurs within the community.



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Mobility

As Socorro continues to grow, improving mobility and transportation systems is crucial for supporting sustainable development and improving the quality of life for residents. The Mobility Element evaluates a comprehensive network of circulation and multimodal transportation, encompassing public transportation options, improved road infrastructure, and the incorporation of pedestrian and cycling paths to encourage safer accessibility and use. These recommendations can help relieve traffic congestion, stimulate economic growth, support recreation and active lifestyles, and broaden access to educational and healthcare services. Given Socorro's proximity to the El Paso metropolitan area, improved mobility can enhance regional connectivity, presenting new opportunities for residents and businesses alike.



Transportation Network

Continuously monitoring and improving the circulation network throughout Socorro is essential for connecting urban areas, fostering economic growth, and improving accessibility. A multimodal transportation network considers users who rely on various modes of transport, such as pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, rideshare users, and public transit riders. These networks improve efficiency in the city and promote ease of access and viability of land uses. A well-designed roadway network is key to reducing urban sprawl and congestion, promoting a healthier environment, and ensuring equitable access for all residents.

Functional Roadway Classifications

Roads and streets within the City of Socorro are assigned functional classifications based on their role in the network, categorizing them into the following classes.

- **Principal Arterials** are major roads designed for high capacity and faster flow of traffic providing regional connections. They connect key areas and facilitate efficient long-distance and regional traffic flow. State roadways such as SH-20 (Alameda Avenue) and FM-1281 (Horizon Boulevard) are classified as principal arterials.
- **Minor Arterials** provide access to city areas with less traffic than those served by principal arterials, ensuring intra-community connectivity without directly traversing larger neighborhoods. FM-258 (Socorro Road) and FM-76 (North Loop Drive) are examples of minor arterials.
- **Collectors** channel traffic from local streets into the arterial system and vice versa, while also facilitating land access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas. Old Hueco Tanks Road and Rio Vista Road are examples of major collectors.
- **Local Streets** are mainly designed to provide local access to homes primarily, offering short-distance connectivity and accommodating lower volumes of vehicular traffic compared to other road types.



Key Roadways

There are seven key roadways throughout Socorro that are strategically designed to facilitate local commuting needs and connectivity throughout the city and to larger transportation routes, illustrated on **Figure 5-1**. These roadways serve as essential conduits for transportation within and beyond the City's boundaries. The Texas Department of Transportation's Statewide Planning Map provides a comprehensive list of arterial and collector roads in Socorro, along with their classifications.

- **FM-258 (Socorro Road)** is a two-lane arterial road that traverses the City's western side in a north-south direction. FM-258 is a minor arterial owned by the State of Texas and maintained by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).
- **SH-20 (Alameda Avenue)** is a four-lane arterial road centrally located in Socorro, running in a north-south orientation. SH-20 is a principal arterial owned by the State and maintained by TxDOT.
- **FM-76 (North Loop Drive)** alternates between a two-lane and a four-lane arterial, stretching north-south through the heart of Socorro. It is a minor arterial owned by the State and maintained by TxDOT.
- **FM-1281 (Horizon Boulevard)** is a four-lane arterial road traversing the central-northern section of Socorro in an east-west direction. It is a principal arterial owned by the State and maintained by TxDOT.
- **Nuevo Hueco Tanks Road** is a four-lane collector street running east-west from I-10 to North Loop Drive in the eastern part of the city. This major collector is owned and maintained by the City of Socorro.
- **Rio Vista Road** is a two-lane collector street, traversing the City's north-central area in an east-west direction. This major collector is owned and maintained by the City of Socorro.
- **Moon Road** is a two-lane collector stretching east-west through the northern part of the city. This major collector is owned and maintained by the City of Socorro.



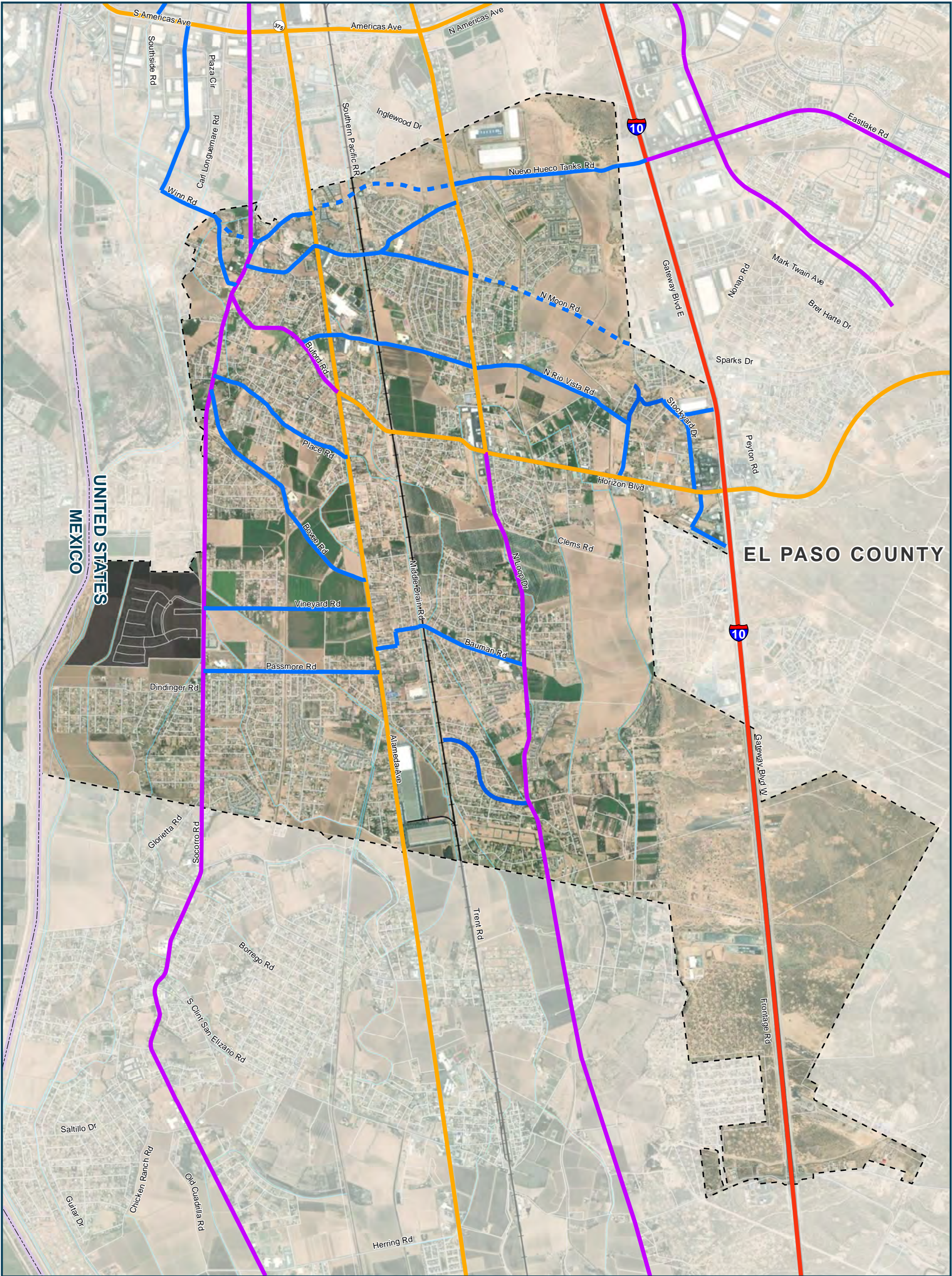
Mobility Framework

Most of Socorro's residents rely on their cars to get around. While cars are expected to continue as the primary and most prevalent mode of transportation for the foreseeable future, incorporating mobility options in addition to roadway expansions will be needed to continue supporting growth.

In 2020, the City of Socorro adopted the Major Thoroughfare Plan, which identifies existing infrastructure and new roadway connections to meet the needs of the community's travel patterns. To ensure that improvements and operational efficiency are sustained as the City grows, Socorro should continue to regularly update this Plan to ensure it remains consistent with planned growth and needs. Socorro's geographical and demographic context allows for ample opportunity to integrate various multimodal opportunities throughout the city. The development of a Multimodal Transportation Master Plan would enhance connectivity and foster opportunities for live-work neighborhoods. This plan should identify specific strategies for active transportation in Socorro and shared mobility options, locate new multiuse paths and bicycle routes, add new sidewalks and pedestrian safety features, advocate for additional public transport routes and services, and integrate smart technologies to improve user experience and safety. It would serve as a catalyst for Socorro's strategic development, adaptability, and long-term prosperity.

The City is actively working to accommodate the increasing adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) by installing additional charging infrastructure. The El Paso Regional Climate Action Plan outlines a specific project to install 14 public Level 2 EV charging stations at strategic locations in Socorro, including community centers, parks, retail hubs, and tourist sites along the historic Mission Trail. By proactively installing public charging stations, Socorro is positioning itself to meet the growing demand for EV charging as adoption rates increase, ensuring residents and visitors have access to reliable charging options.

Major thoroughfare plans focus on improving traffic flow, reducing congestion, and enhancing connectivity between different parts of cities and their surrounding areas.



Legend

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Existing Circulation | Future Circulation | International Boundary |
| Interstate | Future Major Collector | City of Socorro |
| Principal Arterial | | Railroad |
| Minor Arterial | | Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Tribal Land |
| Collector | | River or Stream |
| Local Road | | |

Sources: El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization RMS 2050 MTP, TxDOT



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Active Transportation

To improve connectivity and accommodate a diverse range of mobility needs within the city, it is important to prioritize the development and enhancement of infrastructure supporting active transportation. Beyond their positive environmental impact, these modes contribute to enhancing the quality of life, creating community recreation, promoting community health, and alleviating traffic congestion, and with proper planning, they can help improve Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS) accessibility.

Active transportation encompasses various modes such as walking, running, jogging, cycling, wheelchairs, and other low-to zero-emission means of travel.

Many residents have emphasized the importance of integrating multi-use paths throughout the city. These paths not only serve recreational purposes but also provide connections to the established Mission Trail path, a point of community pride. By accommodating walkers, runners, and cyclists, multiuse paths can enhance connectivity and integrate with historic trails and paths, thereby enriching the quality of life and celebrating Socorro's cultural and historic heritage.

While the City has worked to enhance pedestrian infrastructure and accessibility through the adoption of the Socorro Master Sidewalk Plan and ADA Transition Plan in 2019, further expansion or integration of sidewalks, bike routes, and shared-use paths is necessary to establish a comprehensive and accessible active transportation system. One key setback to enhancing the sidewalk system is the limited availability of right-of-way along some roads to construct new sidewalks. Collaborating with the El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 to establish an enhanced trail network along the canal system presents an excellent opportunity to expand community connectivity, safety, and recreational amenities.

The development of a Multimodal Transportation Master Plan should include a dedicated section focusing on active transportation, outlining a strategic plan for enhancing walking and bicycling conditions throughout the City.



Pedestrian Accessibility and Safety

To enhance connectivity and accommodate a broader range of active transportation options within Socorro, prioritizing multi-use paths, protected bike lanes, and sidewalk improvements is essential. Safe routes for walking and biking to school are also a top priority. Many residents have expressed a strong preference for developing multiuse paths that provide appropriate buffers from high-traffic roads while connecting various parts of the city.

Improving mobility throughout the city requires a comprehensive assessment of the existing pedestrian network and infrastructure. With increasing traffic and pedestrian activity, implementing effective strategies to ensure the safety of all road users is crucial. In Socorro, there is a significant disparity in pedestrian infrastructure across different areas. While key roads like Horizon Boulevard, Nuevo Huevo Tanks Road, North Loop Drive, and North Rio Vista Road are equipped with sidewalks, others such as Alameda Avenue and North Moon Road lack this basic amenity. According to the Socorro Master Sidewalk Plan, Socorro should continue to install sidewalks and develop maintenance plans to ensure they remain useful, safe, and accessible for all residents.

The City should consider implementing a Complete Streets program to enhance safety, accessibility, and mobility for all residents. By designing streets to accommodate various modes of transportation, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit users, and motorists, a Complete Streets approach can promote physical activity, reduce traffic congestion and vehicle emissions, and foster a more vibrant community. A Complete Streets program in Socorro would involve redesigning major corridors and neighborhood streets to include features like well-maintained sidewalks, dedicated bike lanes, enhanced crosswalks, accessible public transit stops, and traffic calming measures.

At crossing points, clearly marked crosswalks at all intersections and high-pedestrian traffic areas can alert signal drivers to the presence of pedestrians. Using high-visibility paint and textured surfaces can enhance safety for visually impaired pedestrians and encourage drivers to yield, aligning with the ADA Transition Plan.






Street cross-sections should be reviewed and coordinated with TxDOT, which is responsible for developing and maintaining many of the arterials within Socorro. The City can continue collaborating with the State, El Paso County, and TxDOT to coordinate improvements, explore funding opportunities, and advance transportation goals and policies that align with local, regional, and state objectives. This collaboration will enhance travel conditions, improve air quality, and contribute to a higher quality of life for residents.

Bicycle Accessibility and Safety

Enhancing bicycle safety is a critical concern in Socorro, due to inadequate infrastructure for cyclists. A notable issue is the scarcity of bike lanes, and lack of adequate protection for bicyclists, with only two roads in Socorro featuring marked bike lanes. These lanes start at North Loop Drive and extend to the intersection with Nuevo Hueco Tanks Road, continuing along Nuevo Hueco Tanks Road. This limited infrastructure is insufficient to fully support cycling as a practical transportation option. Existing unprotected bike lanes are underutilized due to safety concerns.

To make biking a viable option for residents, a comprehensive network of bicycle facilities should be developed. Such a network would ensure safer travel for cyclists of all ages and abilities, promote physical activity, and contribute to reducing traffic congestion and environmental impact. Providing safe bike lanes can significantly reduce the risk of accidents, creating a safer environment for all road users. Safe routes for walking and biking to school are a priority. Early adoption of bike usage is essential, but unprotected lanes do not effectively facilitate access to K-12 public schools. Additionally, a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly city is more attractive to residents and visitors, potentially boosting local businesses and tourism. These measures also align with broader sustainability goals, contributing to a more environmentally responsible and livable city.

Socorro should consider adopting a bike-share program to enhance transportation accessibility. A bike-share program can offer residents a convenient alternative to vehicular travel. By placing bike-share stations in key areas such as commercial centers and tourism destinations, Socorro can boost local commerce and provide residents with affordable transportation options.

Shared Use Path	Bicycle Lane	Protected Bike Facility
		

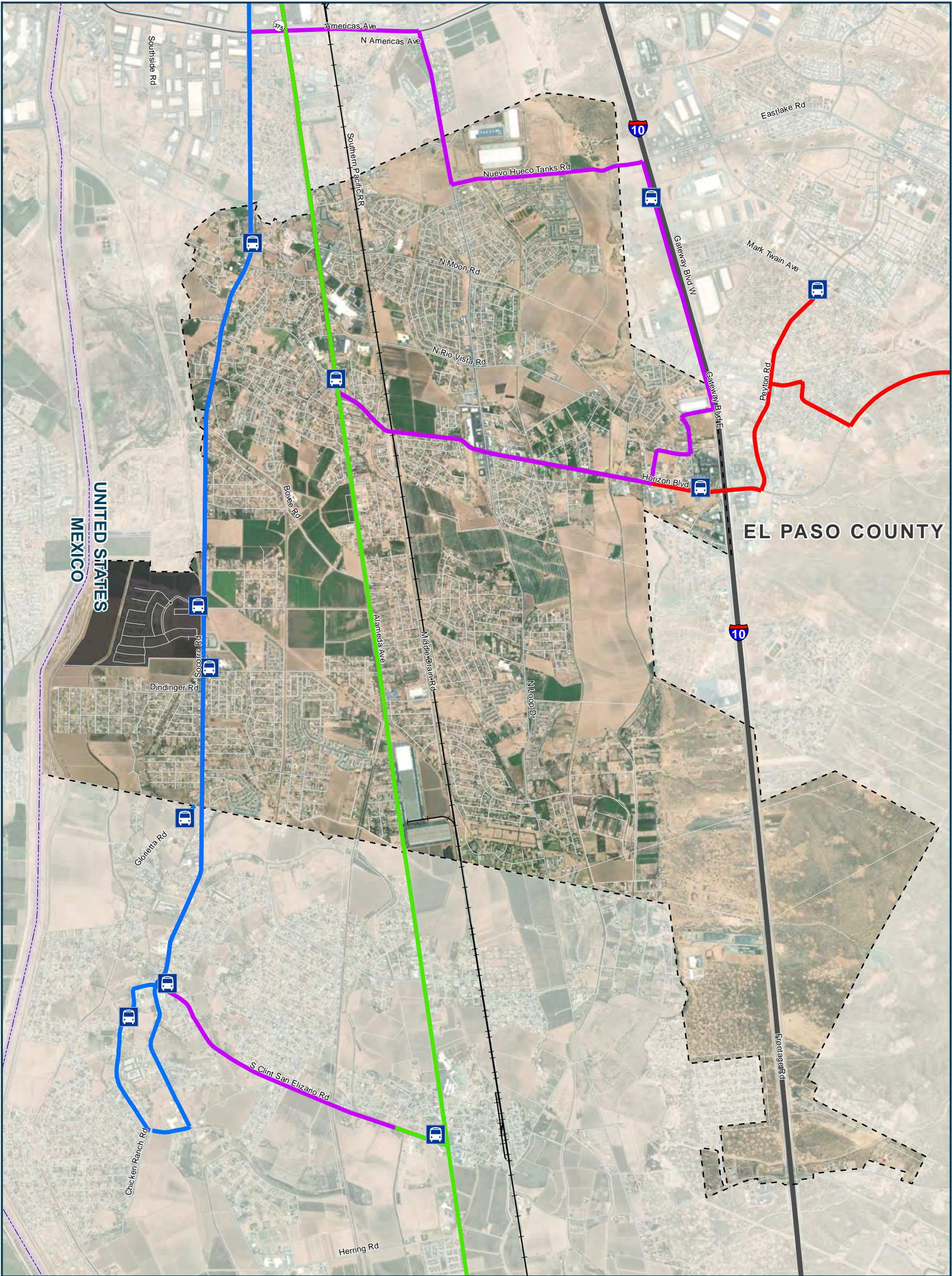
Public Transportation

Sun Metro services in Socorro have historically been provided through an agreement with El Paso County Transit. Existing routes as of June 2024 are shown on **Figure 5-2**. This publicly financed system, encompassing bus and paratransit services, facilitates travel for students, senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, and other community members to and from neighboring cities. However, during the development of this Plan, the El Paso County Rural Transit District voted to reduce service to the City of Socorro and will begin to evaluate the reduction, including the full elimination of transit service within the city.



Sun Metro currently operates with a limited number of routes in Socorro, raising concerns about accessibility and usability. The existing bus routes predominantly follow a north-south axis, serving only a fraction of the city. This limited coverage has left many residents underserved and disconnected from services and opportunities. The scarcity of bus routes not only inconveniences passengers but also reduces access to vital areas of the city. In addition, the lack of infrastructure like ADA and TAS access, heat protections, and seating along existing bus routes and bus stops raises concerns regarding access to transit for vulnerable populations that rely on public transit the most, like people with disabilities, senior citizens, and people with mobility issues. Many residents have expressed the need to expand the bus network to ensure that a more significant portion of the City's population can benefit from reliable and accessible public transportation. In response, the City of Socorro will develop a comprehensive Transit Development Plan.

Enhancing and expanding public transit services like buses and shuttles can provide residents with reliable and affordable alternatives to private vehicles. This includes extending service hours, increasing route frequencies, and potentially integrating regional transit connections. The City of Socorro should continue to promote the use of public transit among residents and visitors. Prioritizing safety, comfort, accessibility, and reliability should be a top priority. Many residents have also advocated for improving the bus stops and adding shaded benches.



Legend

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Bus Stops | International Boundary | Interstate |
| Route 40 | City of Socorro | Major Road |
| Route 50 | Railroad | Local Road |
| Route 84 | Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Tribal Land | |
| Route 30 | | |

Note: Bus Routes shown are current as of June 2024 and are subject to change.

Sources: City of Socorro, 2023. US Census, NHD.



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Freight

Embracing multiple modes of transportation for all users can relieve pressure on the road network and provide more sustainable and efficient freight movement options. With an expanding industrial footprint and a strategic location requiring robust freight movement, Socorro is poised to redefine its freight transportation network. Future enhancements should prioritize efficiency, sustainability, and community well-being. Optimizing current roads and highways to improve traffic flow will enhance access and reduce travel time in and around Socorro.

Truck

Currently, Socorro's freight transportation infrastructure primarily consists of truck routes. The routes effectively serve the city's agricultural and industrial areas. However, as land use for these purposes increases, freight congestion has become a significant concern. While the existing truck routes may suffice for current needs, they may not be adequate as the City expands and diversifies its land use. This highlights the need for a strategic approach to enhance the freight transportation network to accommodate future growth and alleviate congestion.

As Socorro continues to develop, identifying improvements to existing routes is imperative. Improving intersections and adding dedicated freight lanes where feasible can enhance access and decrease travel times for freight movement. Future land use plans should prioritize identifying and establishing new freight routes connecting key industrial areas with major highways and intermodal facilities, thus reducing the distance and time required for freight movement.

Rail

The Union Pacific Railroad runs through Socorro, transporting materials and industrial goods. Historically, the presence and development of railroads have significantly impacted the local community by providing access to larger markets and facilitating economic growth. While there are no rail stops in Socorro, the network has enabled market access and encouraged settlement, contributing to the growth of Socorro and its surrounding regions.



Throughout the public input process, many residents have expressed concerns about the rail system and the lack of public safety accessibility when trains pass through. These interruptions cause delays in emergency response times and negatively impact community members. Additionally, the lack of above-grade separation impacts mobility in Socorro and exacerbates traffic congestion, hindering the efficient movement of both vehicles and pedestrians.



Mobility (MOB) Goals and Policies

Goal MOB-1 **Multimodal transit options are enhanced by integrating innovative traffic calming technologies, expanding the number and distance of secure pathways for pedestrians and cyclists, and forging new links that unite residential areas with economic and recreational centers.**

Policy MOB-1.a Incentivize the development of multimodal transit hubs in key neighborhood locations.

Policy MOB-1.b Establish a citywide network of safety-enhanced multiuse trails connecting key community spaces, and providing access to transit, with a focus on expanding or connecting existing trail networks such as the Mission Trail and Paso del Norte Trail segments.

Policy MOB-1.c Explore funding to develop a bike share program and install bike share stations along the Paso del Norte Trail and along the Mission Trail segment on Socorro Road.

Policy MOB-1.d Install electric vehicle charging stations at key activity centers such as City government offices, community centers, and public parks.

Policy MOB-1.e Enhance and expand public transit services, including buses and shuttles.

Goal MOB-2 **Pedestrian routes and active transportation are enhanced by leveraging the Socorro Master Sidewalk Plan for infrastructure investment and locating shared-use paths along urban waterways.**

Policy MOB-2.a Allocate funds to revitalize existing sidewalk infrastructure, prioritizing high-density neighborhoods.

Policy MOB-2.b Partner with environmental agencies to transform canal banks into vibrant community trails.

Goal MOB-3	Mobility improvements are cost-shared with TxDOT and other potential partners. They will consider employing development agreements or Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) to facilitate Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs) and other public use developments.
Policy MOB-3.a	Investigate and establish new funding consortia with state and regional entities for transportation ventures.
Policy MOB-3.b	Negotiate CBAs to underwrite public-oriented spaces within private developments.
Policy MOB-3.c	Leverage private-sector investment through public-private partnerships (PPPs) for the development of mobility infrastructure.

Goal MOB-4	A comprehensive Multimodal Transportation Master Plan propels the creation of interconnected trails, enhances pedestrian byways, secures railway crossings, and uplifts the City's overall transit framework.
Policy MOB-4.a	Design a blueprint for expanded cycling and pedestrian networks that encompass key districts, landmarks and neighborhoods.
Policy MOB-4.b	Upgrade transit stop infrastructure and integrate technology to improve the user experience and service efficiency.
Policy MOB-4.c	Invest in pedestrian and cyclist safety improvements on trails and streets to facilitate better and safer connectivity and access.

Goal MOB-5	The Complete Streets program is implemented along major roadways and incorporates shared-use paths, sidewalks, and transit access while adopting active transportation design standards to ensure uniform development of active transportation infrastructure throughout the city.
Policy MOB-5.a	Redefine roadway infrastructure to accommodate multiple transportation modes, emphasizing a pedestrian-first approach.
Policy MOB-5.b	Develop design codes and standards that mandate active transportation elements in new road construction projects citywide.
Policy MOB-5.c	Develop a list of priority roads for Complete Streets integration, such as Rio Vista Road and Moon Road.



Goal MOB-6 **Arterial expansions and redesigns are strategically used to streamline vehicle flow and reduce bottlenecks, as well as introduce the Complete Street improvements. These changes are thoughtful design cues drawn from the City's heritage and cultural narrative.**

Policy MOB-6.a Develop community outreach programs to involve residents in the design process, ensuring arterial redesigns reflect local values and heritage.

Policy MOB-6.b Introduce context-sensitive design standards that align new construction with Socorro's historical character.

Policy MOB-6.c Implement intelligent traffic management systems in collaboration with the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program.

Goal MOB-7 **A comprehensive Thoroughfare Plan map establishes a visionary blueprint for future transportation networks that will enhance citywide connectivity and effectively manage growth.**

Policy MOB-7.a Routinely update the Thoroughfare Plan map to identify current and future transportation corridors, potential areas for expansion, and multimodal transit integration points.

Policy MOB-7.b Incorporate community input and cross-sector collaboration in the development and periodic revision of the Thoroughfare Plan to ensure it meets the evolving needs of Socorro.

Policy MOB-7.c Integrate advanced GIS mapping and scenario modeling in the thoroughfare planning process to anticipate and plan for future mobility patterns.

Policy MOB-7.d Improve intersections by evaluating the efficiency of dedicated freight lanes where feasible to enhance access and decrease travel times for freight movement.

Goal MOB-8 **Bus stops throughout the City are appropriately located to serve the community and have amenities, including shading and seating, to provide safety and comfort for users.**

Policy MOB-8.a Approve an annual amount to be dedicated to the planning, design, and construction of bus stops with shading and seating throughout the bus route system.

Policy MOB-8.b Coordinate with local civic organizations to seek donations or funding, such as dedication of names or organizations on seating, toward the overall costs involved with bus stop amenities.

Policy MOB-8.c Seek grant funding through federal and state agencies, such as TxDOT, Safe Routes to Schools, or other agencies that grant funds for roadside improvement infrastructure.



6

Public Services & Infrastructure

Public services and infrastructure provide the backbone and lifeblood of a community. They ensure that residents are safe and have adequate resources and access to have a good quality of life. This element addresses the City’s approach to providing essential services, infrastructure, and facilities to meet the needs of its residents, businesses, employees, and visitors as the city grows. This element also outlines goals and policies to guide the planning, development, and maintenance of services and facilities and serves as a blueprint for ensuring that Socorro’s services and facilities remain effective, efficient, and responsive to the evolving needs of the community.



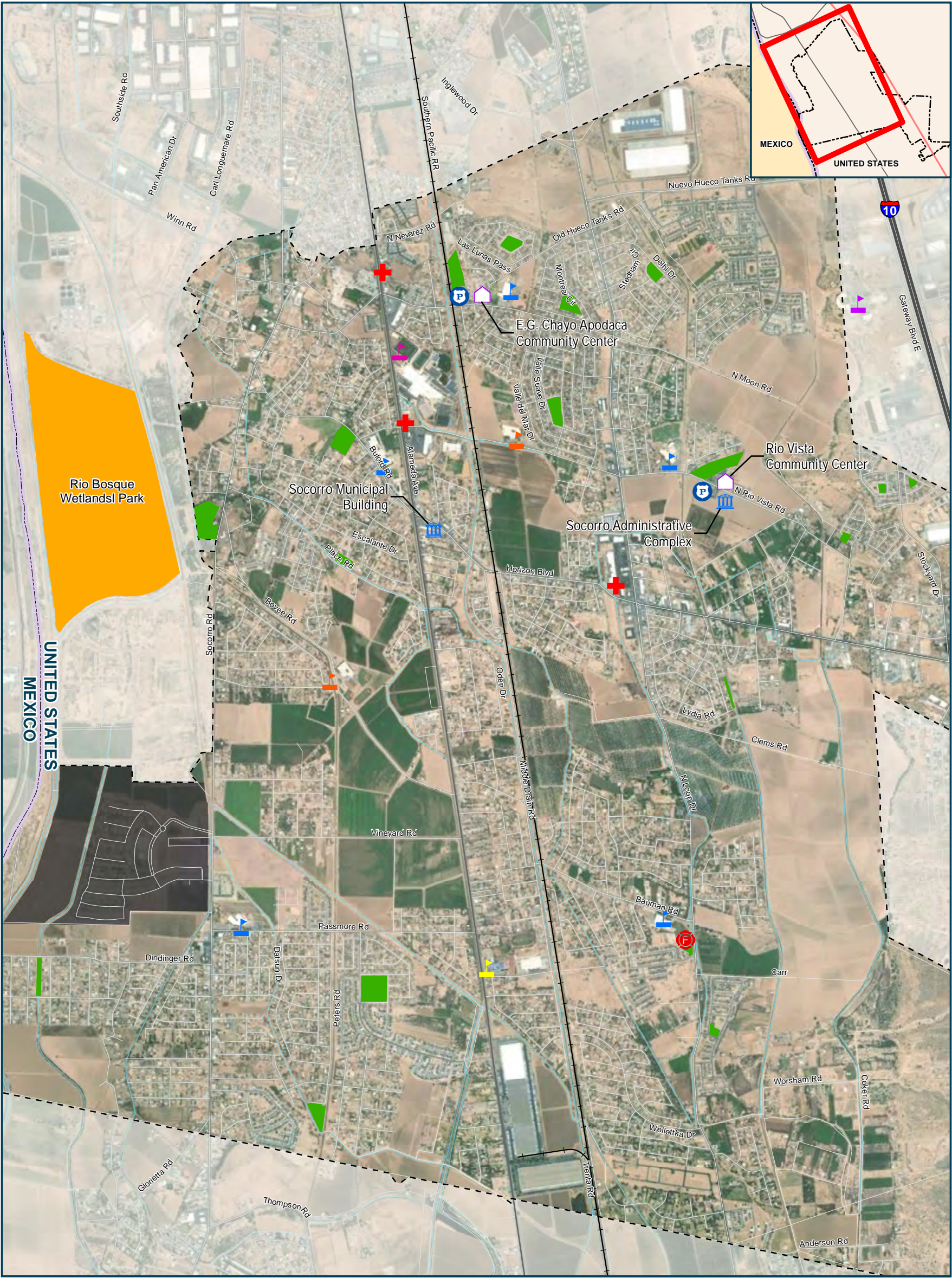
Public facilities and services are fundamental for a safe and healthy community and typically cover a large range of needs, including governmental services, parks and recreation, education, and public health and safety. Services covered under this element include publicly provided services as well as private and nonprofit services. These sectors offer services that fill gaps and provide support not currently covered by the City. These contracted services ensure community members have adequate access and help improve overall service quality. This element identifies the community's expectations regarding public services and the facilities needed to provide these services. The public facilities plan for Socorro focuses on both the building space and personnel needed to provide services such as police, fire, recreation, administration, and infrastructure for the city's residents. Public buildings that house the various governmental and service functions are generally of two types: those that serve the entire municipal area, and those that serve segments of the community on a service-area basis. Socorro's City Administrative Complex is an example of a governmental building that serves the entire community, while local schools and satellite police offices represent public buildings that typically serve a portion of the community's geographic area. **Figure 6-1** shows the location of community facilities in Socorro.

Government Offices

Government offices serve as the administrative backbone for the community where the policies of the elected body get turned into action items for enactment by and through the administration of the city staff. The Socorro government offices are split between two primary locations. The Socorro Municipal Building houses offices of the Mayor, City Council, City Manager, City Clerk, Finance Department, and Human Resources. The City Administrative Complex in eastern Socorro, part of the historic district in that area, contains the Municipal Courtroom, City Council chambers, the Planning and Zoning Department, Information Technology, Code Enforcement, and Animal Services. Recreation Services staff are located across the street from the Administrative Complex in the Rio Vista Center. Additionally, the Parks and Public Works Department's main office is located in northern Socorro, and the Police Department is down the street. The Grants and Special Projects Department is located in the E.G. Chayo Apodaca Community Center next to the Police Department. The City desires to create a centralized and consolidated government complex as the dispersal of government facilities causes some impacts to efficiency and communication/coordination between departments.

Government services are provided by the following departments:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ■ Police Department | ■ Planning and Zoning Department |
| ■ Parks and Public Works | ■ Recreation Services |
| ■ Administration | ■ Grants and Special Projects |
| ■ Municipal Court | ■ Planning and Zoning Department |



Legend

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Elementary School | Health Clinics | City of Socorro Park | Railroad |
| Elementary/Middle School | Community Centers | City of El Paso Park | Interstate |
| Middle School | Government Facilities | City of Socorro | Major Road |
| High School | Fire Station | International | Local Road |
| El Paso Community College | Police Station | Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Tribal Land | River or Stream |

Sources: City of Socorro, 2023. US Census, NHD.

SOCORRO 2040 Comprehensive Plan



Public Facilities Figure 6-1



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Parks & Public Works



The City of Socorro's Parks and Public Works Department is responsible for the operation and maintenance of streets, rights-of-way, infrastructure, drainage collections, City parks and facilities, and recreational equipment. Department staff have

responsibility for numerous other City properties with duties such as mowing all parks and all roadside rights-of-way and creeks within the city limits where easements have been established. This daily work includes upkeep on grass, weeds, and visual hazards along the streets, sidewalks, pathways, and parks to ensure safe passage by motorists and pedestrians.

The Parks and Public Works Department is also responsible for compliance with the requirements of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas Railroad Commission, Texas Water Development Board, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This department plays a significant role in emergency preparedness and emergency management planning for the City and is responsible for the daily security and protection of all assets and infrastructure. This responsibility applies during all emergencies. The Parks and Public Works Department coordinates with the City management team, other City departments, and outside agencies to make timely decisions during emergencies and push accurate and timely notifications.

Recycling Center and Trash Service

The Socorro Recycling Center has facilities for residents to recycle cardboard, paper, and plastic. It does not accept glass, tires, or household trash. Residential and commercial trash pickup services in Socorro are provided by the Lower Valley Water District for a fee. It does accept large bulk items for a fee, but it also does one free bulk pickup per year and rents 20-, 30- and 40-yard roll-off construction dumpsters.

Grants and Special Projects

The primary function of the Grants and Special Projects Department is to assist Socorro's departments and nonprofit partner organizations in meeting the City's mission and vision. The Department promotes development and collaboration among the local government, community, and business sectors in Socorro by supporting local government project development and funding, developing and supporting economic development programs, and assisting in the growth and support of the nonprofit sector.





City Administration

The Socorro Municipal Building houses the City Council offices, as well as the City Manager and Deputy City Manager, City Auditor, City Clerk, Finance Department, and Human Resources Department.

City Council

The Socorro City Council is composed of four City Council members elected by districts, one At-Large Representative, and the Mayor, who is elected at-large. City Council members and the Mayor are elected by Socorro residents and serve staggered four-year terms. The City Council is the legislative policy-making body of the City and is responsible for:

- Approving the annual budget,
- Approving contracts,
- Adopting regulatory ordinances and resolutions,
- Determining the tax rate,
- Providing direction to the City Manager and other City Council appointees, and
- Providing a forum for active community participation in setting and achieving City policies, goals, and objectives.



City Manager and Deputy City Manager

The City Manager is responsible for the City's day-to-day operations, applies direction for departments, implements City Council policies, and coordinates community issues. The Deputy City Manager supports the City Manager.

City Auditor

The City Auditor aids Socorro in achieving objectivity by taking a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes.

City Clerk

The City Clerk's office is the custodian of the City's official records, including ordinances, resolutions, deeds, contracts, leases, easements, annexation proceedings, petitions and minutes of City Council, and other official bodies. The Clerk serves as a public notary, processes all notices for publication, receives competitive bids, and records minutes of the official bid opening sessions. The City Clerk also conducts elections held every four years to elect the Mayor and City Council members.

Human Resources Department

The Human Resources Department is deeply committed to recruiting, retaining, and developing a forward-thinking workforce that serves the citizens of Socorro. With a focus on customer service and accountability, it strives to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction.



Finance Department

The Department offers effective and efficient financial planning, reporting, and support for other City departments and provides financial information and budget documents to the City Council and the City Manager. The Department has a fiduciary responsibility to safeguard the City's financial assets and manage its financial resources in accordance with the goals of the City Council, the City Manager, and the City's Charter and in compliance with applicable laws and generally accepted accounting and financial principles.

Information Technology

The Information Technology Department is responsible for administering and supporting technology architecture, hardware, software, voice data, and video infrastructure for City staff and officials. The Department also oversees the automation, installation, maintenance, management, integration, and security of the City's digital and physical network system mainframe.



Municipal Court

The Municipal Court serves the citizens of Socorro with a fair and impartial court of law by interpreting and adjudicating applicable state laws and city ordinances. The Court strives to provide efficient and effective services through the promotion of justice. It also provides reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities and individuals who speak languages other than English. The Judge presides over bench trials, jury trials, contempt proceedings, indigent hearings, pre-trials, show cause hearings, ordinance hearings, animal control hearings, and other court proceedings. The judge also performs magistrate functions, such as administering warnings to those arrested, setting bail, and issuing arrest warrants, search warrants, and summons.



Planning and Zoning

The Planning and Zoning Department is responsible for overseeing land use and development within Socorro, including all zoning and subdivision requests, business permitting, and building inspections. It also conducts meetings for the Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustments, and Building and Standards Commission.



Recreation Services

The Recreation Services Department provides a wide range of activities and programs to enhance the community's quality of life and promote health, wellness, and social interaction for all age groups.



Media and Communications

The Media and Communications team is responsible for the innovation, broadcasting, and distribution of information to the community through traditional and emerging media platforms. The team is also responsible for capturing photography/videography at City events, public relations, marketing, and branding. The team coordinates with other departments and outside agencies to provide effective and efficient responses to support the City.

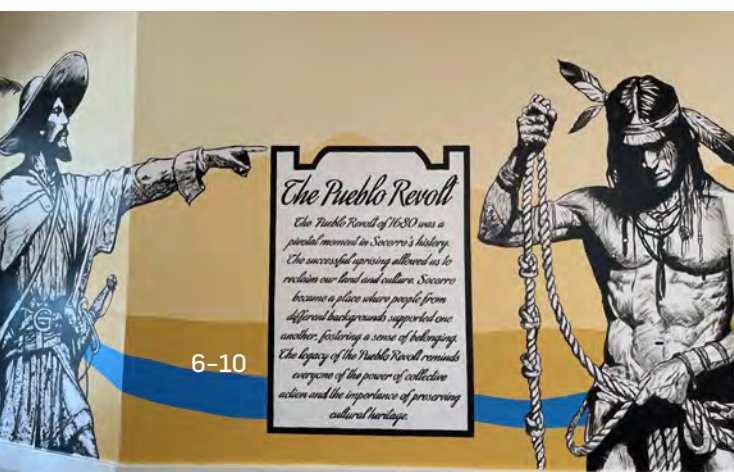
Historic Preservation



Socorro's history has had such an important impact on shaping growth in the American Southwest. The Historic Preservation team works with other departments to celebrate and commemorate important historical resources within the City and enhance their preservation to be valuable resources for current and future generations. This is apparent with the May 2024 designation of the Rio Vista National Historic Landmark at Rio Vista Farm.

Public Art Program

Socorro's Public Art Program includes a group of passionate artists who work with the area's youth to provide grant-funded art pieces aimed at beautifying Socorro. The artists and the youth have collaborated to accomplish several art installations, exhibitions, and murals that are displayed throughout the city.



Public Facilities

Many of Socorro's public facilities, including some of the City parks, are old and in need of significant improvements. For example, both the Municipal Building on Horizon Boulevard and the Administrative Complex on Rio Vista Road are too small to house all the City's departments in one location. Consolidating all the government offices into one central location would provide a more efficient government operation and reduce traffic nearby while also being more convenient for residents by providing a "one-stop-shop." A new, consolidated Government Center or Municipal Building could also serve as an anchor for the city center in Socorro and provide an economic opportunity for associated growth, restaurants, and other amenities.

During the development of the 2040 Socorro Comprehensive Plan, residents expressed an ongoing need for amenities such as sidewalks; dedicated bike lanes on roads and bike paths and/or shared sidewalks, such as hike and bike trails throughout the community; shaded bus stops with seating along the established bus routes; public restrooms in parks; a combined centrally located government center complex; a larger and improved library; a public swimming pool with advanced amenities; and a dog park.

As a result of the public input collected, the City could consider creating a public facilities committee or contracting with a consultant who could evaluate all current and future needs of the City's public facilities. This would also entail ranking the facilities and issues that need to be corrected from "critical" to "urgent" to "important" to "unnecessary." It would establish a timeframe that specifies when facility issues and needs should be addressed, as well as determine how they would be paid for, either out of the General Fund Budget or Capital Improvement Budget or by applying for appropriate federal and state grant funding.





Public Safety

Police Department

The Socorro Police Department is essential for ensuring the city remains a safe and peaceable community through its mission to protect lives and property. The Department is a forward-thinking municipal police agency dedicated to serving Socorro's citizens and visitors. The Socorro Police Department patrol the more than 27 square miles encompassed by the incorporated city limits.

During the public input process, participants emphasized that Socorro needs more police officers and a larger holding facility. They also highlighted the need for a police substation on the southwestern side of the railroad tracks to prevent trains from delaying the critical response times of emergency services.



**The Socorro Police
Department
responds to
approximately
28,000 calls for
service each year.**

Code Enforcement

The Code Compliance Department is in charge of ensuring adherence to City ordinances within the city limits to achieve the highest possible quality of life and a safe community for all current and future residents.

Animal Control

Socorro's Animal Control Department provides care and control of lost, stray, and loose animals. Services include animal collection, vaccinations, adoptions, and pet returns.

Fire Department

The Socorro Volunteer Fire Department is part of the El Paso County Emergency Services District #2, and it enhances the public safety and welfare of the community by protecting life, property, and the environment. Firefighters are volunteers whose operations are funded through a districtwide portion of property and sales taxes. The Socorro Volunteer Fire Department also provides service to the communities of Clint, San Elizario, Fabens, Montana Vista, and Vinton. District #2 headquarters is planned for Socorro to provide a central location for the monthly district meetings.

Throughout the public input process, residents expressed a strong desire to transform the volunteer fire department into a paid force that is more available and better prepared for emergencies. This concern is also prevalent in other small towns within El Paso County. Socorro representatives have proposed paying the salaries of a few full-time firefighters, but the issue is complicated by the division between City and County finances, as well as the deployment of firefighters throughout the County. Hiring a few full-time firefighters would be feasible if the City is willing to commit funds for this purpose.



Ambulance Services

Elite Medical Transport of Texas, LLC, has been the ambulance provider for the City of Socorro since October 1, 2019. The company operates two ambulances dedicated to the City of Socorro with additional backup located in Horizon City and El Paso. They offer the most advanced emergency medical services available in El Paso County where its staff of paramedics and EMTs are highly trained and well-qualified. Patients can be transported to the hospital of their choice unless the destination is determined by local trauma or medical protocols. All billing is done by Elite Medical Transport and not the City of Socorro.



Public Health Clinics

Socorro residents feel that more public healthcare facilities, clinics, and services should be located within the City, not only to meet immediate emergency and urgent care needs but also to reduce the frequency of having to travel to El Paso for medical services. There are medical provider agencies that will co-op with a community and set up a clinic if the City and other larger employers are willing to ensure that all participating employees will use the clinic as their primary healthcare provider. Some of these provider agencies also offer dental care, vision, and hearing services in the clinics.

Las Palmas Del Sol Regional Hospital

The Las Palmas Del Sol Regional Hospital is the closest full-service medical facility to Socorro and is located just northeast of Socorro's city limits. It is recognized as a full-service hospital with a 24-hour Emergency Room and offers services that include family and community medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, and pediatrics. It provides primary care and family medicine to Socorro's residents, as well as additional specialty services.

Educational Facilities

Socorro Independent School District

The Socorro Independent School District (SISD) serves the southeastern portion of El Paso County, covering over 136 square miles. It serves the City of Socorro, Horizon City, and the eastern portion of the City of El Paso. The SISD is one of the fastest-growing school districts in Texas. **Table 6-1** includes information on the SISD schools within Socorro.

Table 6-1 SISD Schools in the City of Socorro

School	Grades	Year Opened
Campestre Elementary School	Pre-Kindergarten—5th Grade	1982
Ernesto Serna Fine Arts Academy	Pre-Kindergarten—8th Grade	2000
Robert R. Rojas Elementary School	Kindergarten—5th Grade	1987
H.D. Hilley Elementary School*	Kindergarten—5th Grade	1980
Escontrias STEAM Academy*	Pre-Kindergarten—5th Grade	1924
Hueco Elementary School*	Kindergarten—5th Grade	1983
Salvador H. Sanchez Middle School	6th Grade—8th Grade	1990
Socorro Middle School	6th Grade—8th Grade	1990
Socorro High School	9th Grade—12th Grade	1965

*Offers the Head Start Program



Head Start Program

Head Start is a federally funded early childhood education and development program that partners with school districts, local agencies, social services, and healthcare providers for low-income families. The program offers a high-quality, comprehensive early childhood development and education package, including pre-kindergarten. The program's services are designed to increase children's school readiness and future preparedness.

The program also offers a range of free services designed to foster the healthy development of children from birth until age five. Services extended to Head Start children and families include healthcare, education, nutrition, disabilities, mental health, and family services. Socorro includes four Head Start program locations: Escontrias Early Childhood Center, Hueco Elementary School, and H.D. Hilley Elementary School.

El Paso Community College — Mission Del Paso Campus

The El Paso Community College — Mission del Paso campus is just outside Socorro's municipal limits to the northeast. This campus offers a full range of classes and certifications in technical and vocational programs such as accounting, industrial manufacturing, advanced technology, court reporting, dental assisting and hygiene, digital video production, and nursing. It also offers degree programs in traditional academic disciplines such as art, biology, geology, and mathematics.

In 2000, the college opened a state-of-the-art Law Enforcement Training Academy, which meets the training needs of area law enforcement agencies and provides a full spectrum of training programs for security guards and peace officers. In 2004, to accommodate growth, a new building opened to provide much-needed space to house instructional labs for English as a Second Language (ESL), reading, and general tutoring services, along with faculty offices and two multipurpose classrooms. All student services are available including admission, registration, financial aid, and counseling.



Infrastructure and Utilities

The infrastructure of Socorro is the backbone of the community, underpinning essential services and facilitating the city's growth and development. This section assesses the current infrastructure, identifies challenges, and outlines strategic recommendations to enhance service delivery and support the community's evolving needs. As Socorro continues to grow, the strategic enhancement and continued maintenance of its infrastructure is vital for ensuring efficiency, sustainability, and the well-being of its residents.

Socorro's utility infrastructure is a critical yet often unseen framework that undergirds the City's day-to-day operations and reinforces its potential for growth. It encompasses a diverse and complex network of water, power, natural gas, and communications services that facilitate the comfort and convenience of modern living. While the City of Socorro does not directly own these utility services, it plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the provision of these essential services is seamless, sustainable, and poised to meet the burgeoning demands of its growing population. Through strategic alliances with utility providers, Socorro manages to offer comprehensive coverage to its residents and businesses while also identifying areas within the city that would benefit from enhanced utility expansion. The relationship between the City and utility providers is symbiotic, with ongoing dialogue aimed at understanding service origins, managing efficient delivery, and strategizing over the extension of utility infrastructure into new developments and existing underserved areas.



Water and Wastewater

The Lower Valley Water District (LVWD) manages water and wastewater services in Socorro, with a water supply sourced from the El Paso Water Utility. The LVWD was created as a municipal utility district in 1986 in El Paso County. The City of Socorro and the community of San Elizario, the Town of Clint and El Paso County Sparks Addition, Sand Hills, and El Paso County Colonias are located within the LVWD's boundaries. A Board of Directors consisting of five members who are elected by the district's taxpaying residents provide oversight of the LVWD. The Board, along with the management and staff of the LVWD, work diligently to achieve the goal of providing water, wastewater, and solid waste services within the service area.

The LVWD oversees the distribution network within city limits, ensuring that residents' and businesses' water needs are met efficiently and reliably. Socorro's wastewater system, comprising gravity and force mains, directs waste to the Roberto Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant just outside the city's western boundary. This maintains the City's sanitation and environmental health. The LVWD regularly applies for funding from local, state, and federal agencies to construct adequate water and wastewater systems for the 210 square miles within the district's boundaries, which lie east of the El Paso city limits. Looking forward, the wastewater infrastructure is set for strategic expansion. Initiatives are underway to extend the sewer service areas and construct a new lift station, which is indicative of the LVWD's commitment to meeting the increasing demand for services. These enhancements aim to broaden coverage to unserved areas, cater to new subdivisions, and revitalize existing sectors in need of improvements.

The El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 provides additional irrigation water service within El Paso County. The district delivers surface water from the Rio Grande in El Paso County to water right lands within its 156-square mile services area through more than 350 miles of canals and laterals in the distribution system and over 269 miles in the drainage system. The district also assesses and collects taxes for the water right lands within its boundaries. Conservation and efficient delivery of surface water are high priorities for the district. A five-member Board of Directors oversees the district's operations.

Electric and Natural Gas

El Paso Electric (EPE) provides Socorro with electricity through a comprehensive network of overhead distribution lines. This network is essential for powering residential, commercial, educational, and other establishments, thus serving as the backbone of the City's energy infrastructure. EPE demonstrates its dedication to Socorro through rigorous management of the electrical supply and proactive response to the increasing energy demands associated with growth. Although there are no significant upgrades planned in the near future, the infrastructure is constantly evaluated to maintain its resilience, efficiency, and capacity to meet the evolving needs of Socorro.

Texas Gas Service (TGS) supplies natural gas to Socorro through a complex network of pipelines to ensure reliable and safe delivery to the community. TGS's strategic planning and continuous maintenance of this network reflect a strong commitment to providing seamless service while also expanding to accommodate new developments within Socorro.

Communications Infrastructure

The communications infrastructure in Socorro is powered by providers like AT&T and Time Warner, who maintain a complex array of cables and fiber optics. This network not only facilitates essential communications but also supports the digital infrastructure that modern life demands. As technology progresses, Socorro's partnerships with these providers ensure that the City's communications infrastructure remains at the leading edge, capable of supporting everything from everyday communications to telecommuting and remote learning.

Identifying and targeting areas within Socorro for enhanced utility coverage is a key strategic objective. With the growth of residential communities and commercial corridors, the City is aware of the need for a concerted effort to expand utility services. This includes not only addressing the physical extension of infrastructure but also ensuring equitable access, sustainability, and the capacity to support future technological innovations.

Organizational Development

A strategic approach to organizational development is important to implementing the City of Socorro's Comprehensive Plan. This method ensures that the City's goals and policies listed in the Plan are approached through a structured evaluation of staffing needs, training programs, community interfacing software, management systems, and integration of new technology. By systematically identifying the areas where improvements are needed, the City can make informed decisions about resource allocation while preparing the annual budget.



Capital Improvement Plan

Socorro's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) outlines the City's approach to managing significant capital expenditures over the next five years and is updated on a regular basis. Coordinating the planning of municipal infrastructure, such as roads, utilities, and other community essentials, is fundamental to its purpose. By integrating community planning, fiscal strategy, and infrastructure needs, the CIP ensures the judicious use of limited financial resources.

Funding mechanisms within the CIP include ad valorem taxes, roadway funds from TxDOT, and various forms of bond financing such as General Obligation Bonds, Revenue Bonds, and Certificates of Obligation. These bonds support substantial projects and facilitate the maintenance and expansion of vital infrastructure. The plan emphasizes prudent financial management by spreading costs over time through debt financing, allowing for regular investment in the maintenance and expansion of City services and facilities.

The CIP is updated annually to reflect changes in financial forecasts and project priorities, maintaining alignment with Socorro's long-term development goals. It operates in conjunction with the annual operating budget to ensure financial sustainability and to strategically time infrastructure improvements that support the City's expansion and service enhancements. This proactive and flexible planning framework is crucial for meeting the current and future needs of Socorro's residents and businesses.



Public Services and Infrastructure (PSI)

Goals and Policies

Community and Public Facilities

Goal PSI-1 **The City of Socorro maintains a Public Facilities Committee to evaluate existing City facilities to determine current and future needs and monitor a Community Facility Master Plan.**

Policy PSI-1.a Develop a Community Facility Master Plan to determine and rank which specific public facilities need to be upgraded, expanded, improved, or added to allow the City Council to plan for and fund these needs appropriately into the future.

Policy PSI-1.b Prioritize and seek out funding for community facilities, including a new City Government Center that consolidates public services in one location, a community pool and aquatic recreation center, a community library, and a dog park.

Policy PSI-1.c Explore options to establish a Public Facilities Committee, such as assigning the tasks of said committee to an existing City committee, hiring a professional consultant, and/or creating a volunteer Public Facilities Committee to evaluate the current and future needs of existing public facilities, and then determine how to create a Community Facility Master Plan that determines and ranks future needs and evaluates the best funding mechanisms available to help pay for those needed facilities and/or upgrades.

Goal PSI-2 **A community library enhances educational resources and fosters community engagement, serving as a center for learning and cultural activities.**

Policy PSI-2.a Survey community members to identify the desired materials and programs to be provided at the library.

Policy PSI-2.b Identify sustainable funding sources and select a central location for the library to maximize accessibility. The library may be co-located with an existing City facility.

Policy PSI-2.c Collaborate with local educators and school librarians to develop a relevant and comprehensive collection of materials and programs.



Goal PSI-3 The Rio Vista Community Center is a comprehensive hub for community services and engagement, making it a cornerstone of local interaction and support.

- Policy PSI-3.a** Rehabilitate Rio Vista Farm to serve the community and include a civic plaza, recreational and educational amenities, solar energy generation, and a food hub for local community food programs such as aquaponics and a community garden.
- Policy PSI-3.b** Upgrade the physical infrastructure of the Rio Vista Community Center to support a wide array of activities and services, from health screenings to cultural events.
- Policy PSI-3.c** Develop and promote a diverse calendar of programs that address the needs of various demographic groups within the community.
- Policy PSI-3.d** Establish partnerships with local businesses and nonprofits to fund and facilitate an expanded range of community services.
-

Goal PSI-4 Public parks and recreational facilities are sustainable and resilient and improve community health and environmental resiliency.

- Policy PSI-4.a** Enhance the functionality of public spaces by incorporating features that support a wide range of recreational and cultural activities.
- Policy PSI-4.b** Develop and implement a routine maintenance plan to ensure all facilities, equipment, and assets are properly maintained on an ongoing basis.
- Policy PSI-4.c** Allocate sufficient resources in the annual budget to support routine maintenance activities.
- Policy PSI-4.d** Prioritize preventive maintenance to reduce unexpected breakdowns and extend asset lifespans.
- Policy PSI-4.e** Adopt green building and landscaping practices in the design and maintenance of parks to promote environmental sustainability.

Public Safety

Goal PSI-5 **Appropriate public safety infrastructure is in place to ensure comprehensive emergency coverage and enhance community security as the population grows.**

Policy PSI-5.a Identify strategic locations for new facilities to optimize coverage and minimize response times in underserved areas as new development occurs.

Policy PSI-5.b Allocate resources for the latest technological advancements in emergency response and public safety communication systems.

Policy PSI-5.c Enhance public safety protocols and community outreach programs to improve emergency preparedness and awareness among residents.

Goal PSI-6 **Socorro's healthcare infrastructure meets the increasing requirements of the community, and residents of all ages and needs have access to comprehensive medical services.**

Policy PSI-6.a Incentivize the development of new healthcare facilities and the expansion of existing ones through strategic partnerships and funding allocations.

Policy PSI-6.b Collaborate with medical professionals and healthcare organizations to improve the range and quality of services offered.

Infrastructure

Goal PSI-7 **Socorro's CIP is updated annually to manage infrastructure development effectively, ensuring that it supports the City's strategic goals and meets community needs.**

Policy PSI-7.a Conduct comprehensive assessments of infrastructure needs and prioritize projects based on their potential impact on community growth and well-being.

Policy PSI-7.b Implement a program that allows the community to propose improvements for their neighborhoods as a part of the CIP process.

Goal PSI-8 **Strategic funding mechanisms robustly support capital improvement projects, ensuring the efficient use of resources and fostering long-term infrastructure growth and maintenance.**

Policy PSI-8.a Utilize a variety of funding sources, including grants, bonds, and public-private partnerships, to finance capital projects.

Policy PSI-8.b Implement a rigorous project evaluation framework to ensure that investments are economically viable and aligned with the City's strategic objectives.



Goal PSI-9 **The City sidewalk network is comprehensive, connected, and ADA-compliant.**

- Policy PSI-9.a** Review existing conditions and improve existing sidewalks in accordance with the Socorro Master Sidewalk Plan.
- Policy PSI-9.b** Evaluate and prioritize strategies for the development of sidewalks in existing neighborhoods in coordination with the Sidewalk Master Plan.
- Policy PSI-9.c** Consider approval of an annual funding to be dedicated for the planning, design, and construction of ADA-approved sidewalks and bike paths that can be built in phases until completed throughout the city.
- Policy PSI-9.d** Include a requirement in the Unified Development Code for new commercial developments and residential subdivisions to include the construction of ADA-compliant sidewalks and bike paths and to connect and match existing sidewalks and bike paths installed by the City to ensure uniform connectivity.

Utilities

Goal PSI-10 **A formal Utilities Committee enhances the oversight and strategic planning of utility services, ensuring efficient and sustainable utility management.**

- Policy PSI-10.a** Schedule regular evaluations of utility infrastructure to adapt to growing demands and environmental considerations.
- Policy PSI-10.b** Enhance communication between utility providers and City staff and leadership to synchronize efforts and maximize resource efficiency.



7

Community Resilience

Building a sustainable and resilient community is foundational to Socorro’s health and success. The City aims to create a balanced, adaptable, and thriving environment for current and future generations. This commitment includes considerations and innovative approaches to environmental planning, sustainable use of water resources, and exploring renewable energy options. As growth occurs in the historically agricultural portions of the community, there is a desire among residents to maintain their ranching roots while effectively managing new development. As a part of this initiative, community members actively advocate for developing a future that is mindful of the practices that make the community sustainable and resilient. Integrating sustainable practices helps mitigate environmental impacts and enhances the community's ability to withstand and adapt to future challenges.

Environmental Planning

With anticipated development and population growth, it is critical to acknowledge the risks that changes in climate and environmental factors pose to the City of Socorro. As Socorro's population increases and its infrastructure develops, construction projects, road improvements, and utility installations will inevitably impact the natural environment. Socorro should plan for these challenges and work to mitigate adverse impacts associated with future development. Such environmental concerns can cumulatively affect both the developed and outlying areas of the City, impacting its residents and their health and quality of life.

Long-term environmental planning revolves around creating sustainable development that caters to people's needs and prioritizes conserving and protecting the natural environment. This planning approach considers social, economic, and environmental impacts. Environmental planning involves decision-making processes for managing relationships between natural systems and human systems. Cumulative effects on environmental resources occur when the incremental impact of an action combines with current conditions and planned future projects. These effects can stem from individual minor actions that, together over time, lead to significant impacts. To address potential adverse impacts from future development projects, Socorro should identify and implement effective mitigation measures. Coordination with local, state, and federal agencies will be necessary to ensure the success of these projects.




Environmental planning is a widespread component of this Comprehensive Plan and applies to every element, such as in the form of ecologically friendly land use and development, multimodal transportation, housing characteristics, efficient water and resource management, connected trails and parks systems, and sustainable infrastructure development. Integrating environmental considerations into these facets is essential for fostering a holistic and sustainable approach to future development. Through 2040, it will be necessary to remain aware of and incorporate new technological advances that support environmental planning and sustainable development into the fabric of the community.

Green Infrastructure

Environmental planning practices that benefit current and future generations should be prioritized. Residents will benefit from creating an environment where the past and the present coexist and agriculture and the structures of progress intertwine, fostering a vibrant and sustainable community that cherishes its roots while reaching toward a promising future.

As Socorro grows, it is critical to balance the natural and built environments by supporting planning practices that emphasize conservation and preservation methods. This framework advocates for the integration of open spaces, contributing to the enhancement of community health.



Green infrastructure is an interconnected network of protected land and water that supports native species, maintains natural and ecological processes, sustains air and water resources, and contributes to the health and quality of life for communities and people. It includes trails, wildlife corridors, parks, drainage ponds, wetland, and other natural areas.

Site Design

Stormwater drainage is a significant issue in Socorro, with parts of the City, particularly those near the interstate, experiencing periodic flooding. To address this, the implementation and maintenance of detention and retention basins, outlet structures, and drainage channels is essential. Managing stormwater is critical for controlling runoff from storm events and for preserving and enhancing surface water quality, as well as ensuring resident safety. Development often increases the quantity of impervious areas with elements such as pavements, roofs, and roads. These impervious areas not only increase the volume of runoff entering surface water bodies but also trap contaminants like oil, heavy metals, and pollutants, which negatively impact water quality and riparian habitats.

By implementing low-impact development and green infrastructure, it is possible to replicate natural processes that encourage infiltration, evapotranspiration, and efficient utilization of stormwater. This approach helps protect water quality and the associated riparian habitats. Several practices adhere to these principles, including promoting reduced irrigation needs through xeriscaping and use of native plants in landscape designs, prioritizing non-turf areas that require less water and maintenance than turf lawns, and encouraging the use of permeable pavements in public and private developments to promote infiltration. Additionally, employing low-volume watering methods such as drip irrigation systems helps avoid excessive watering and reduces water usage. Minimizing the use of fertilizers and pesticides in favor of less-toxic alternatives like composted organic material, using mulch or straw to prevent erosion and reduce weed growth, and opting for less-hazardous household products for cleaning, car care, and home improvement can also mitigate stormwater pollution. Proper disposal of pet and livestock waste is crucial to prevent runoff pollution from reaching nearby water bodies or storm drains. By adopting these practices, Socorro can effectively manage stormwater and protect its environmental resources. Integrating sustainable practices into site design principles is a pivotal aspect of environmental planning efforts. These considerations should be codified and evaluated when reviewing new development or redevelopment proposals. Spaces should continue to evolve and adapt to changing environmental conditions and community needs over time.

Infiltration is the process by which water on the ground surface enters the soil.

Evapotranspiration is the process by which water evaporates from the land and passes into the atmosphere.

These play a key role in agricultural irrigation and water resource management.



Conservation Subdivisions

Socorro should continue to integrate new development seamlessly into the existing fabric of ranching culture, fostering a sense of continuity and pride in the City's rich history. As a way to accomplish this, Socorro should develop conservation subdivisions to complement the existing traditional subdivisions. As the community grows, typical development patterns are not aligned with the community's desires to preserve agricultural and open spaces. Conservation subdivisions help protect environmentally sensitive areas. Typically, they preserve 40% to 70% or more of the total acreage as open space, which can include agricultural lands, parks, and other open spaces or natural areas. This open space is protected through conservation easements or deed restrictions and is managed by homeowners' associations or land trusts.

Homes are typically clustered on smaller lots, allowing for the preservation of larger contiguous areas of open space. This clustering reduces the overall footprint of the development and minimizes land disturbance. Conservation subdivisions enhance stormwater management by slowing and filtering runoff through natural landscapes and bioretention facilities, reducing the risk of flooding and protecting water quality. They also reduce infrastructure costs, as shorter roads and utility lines are needed. Residents benefit from recreational opportunities and scenic views provided by the preserved open spaces. These areas can include walking and biking trails, play areas, and community gardens, fostering a stronger sense of community.



A **conservation subdivision** is a type of residential development that preserves a significant portion of the site as permanently protected open space while clustering homes on the remaining portion of the site. This approach integrates environmental conservation with residential development.

Sustainability Considerations

- **Landscaping:** Incorporating large-canopy trees and native plants can contribute to city cooling efforts and will support habitat for local wildlife.
- **Stormwater:** Proper stormwater management through intentional design principles can minimize runoff and limit the erosion of the environment. On-site ponding and stormwater mitigation can aid flood control if all properties replicate a site's predevelopment hydrologic function.
- **Low-Impact Infrastructure:** Encouraging the use of permeable surfaces and pavements can improve water drainage, reduce runoff, and minimize environmental impact, fostering sustainable development and mitigating the risks of flooding and erosion.

Water Resources

Effective management of water resources is crucial for Socorro to meet current and future demands. With a large agricultural population and emerging residential, commercial, and industrial development, water security is essential for supporting a thriving community. The City should consider developing a comprehensive water management plan that addresses the social, economic, and environmental aspects of water usage while protecting and rehabilitating water quality and quantity. Investing in both the management of existing resources and the exploration of additional practices can support a sustainable water supply for future growth and development.

Like many areas in the region, Socorro faces challenges related to water scarcity and the need for sustainable water management. The City has implemented aggressive water conservation programs, including restrictions on outdoor watering during peak evaporation months and the promotion of water-efficient fixtures. The El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 manages irrigation infrastructure and delivers water for agricultural purposes, which is vital for local farmers.

Throughout the development of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, residents and landowners who rely on agriculture for their livelihood have expressed concerns about the quality and quantity of water resources available for watering their crops. This has impacted crop yields, and some agriculture operators are considering selling their land as it has become economically difficult to maintain agricultural operations. The City should continue to promote sustainable planning and efficient use of water resources through water conservation and drought planning programs.

Flooding is another significant issue in Socorro. The Texas Water Development Board and local authorities have developed flood management plans to address risks and improve infrastructure. These plans include sediment and vegetation control, drainage studies, and stormwater management initiatives for Socorro and surrounding areas. The region relies heavily on groundwater, which is being depleted faster than it can be recharged. This overexploitation poses a long-term risk to water availability, making efforts to conserve groundwater and manage its use more sustainably essential.



Lower Valley Water District

The Lower Valley Water District (LVWD) distributes and maintains water and wastewater in Socorro. In addition to overseeing the maintenance of water and wastewater systems, the LVWD operates and maintains irrigation canals, laterals, drains, and other waterways critical for delivering surface water for irrigation. The LVWD sources its water supply from the El Paso Water Utility through master meters.

Within the City of Socorro limits, the LVWD is responsible for operating, maintaining, and overseeing billing for the distribution network. The infrastructure of the LVWD was designed to support build-out and is well-positioned to meet the demands of future water and sewer services development.

The LVWD has undertaken multiple phases of infrastructure upgrades to improve water and wastewater services. These projects include constructing major wastewater interceptors, lift stations, water transmission lines, and storage facilities. Significant investments from federal and state programs, such as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, are being directed toward upgrading water infrastructure in Socorro. This includes expanding sewer systems and improving water treatment facilities to ensure clean and reliable water supplies. By continuing these efforts, Socorro can address its water resource challenges and support sustainable development.

Rio Grande

Frequent droughts in Texas expose Socorro to the risk of water scarcity, emphasizing the need for proactive management and stewardship to safeguard water resources and community needs. In Socorro, the relationship between water resources and agriculture is significant for the local farming community. Given the region's concentration of agriculture and farming practices, irrigation emerges as a vital component for supporting robust crop growth. The Rio Grande, flowing west of the City, is a crucial water source for irrigation. The El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 manages the irrigation canals. Water quality and quantity management is imperative to prevent adverse effects on soil fertility and crop health. Implementing efficient irrigation technologies, such as drip irrigation, becomes essential to optimize water use, particularly in the face of occasional drought conditions. The careful management of water resources is central to sustaining local agriculture, ensuring the resiliency of crops, and fostering the long-term viability of the farming community amid unique regional challenges.

Water Policy

In 2023, the State of Texas passed several propositions related to water policy, offering potential benefits for Socorro. Among these, Proposition 6 is a constitutional amendment designed to establish two accounts to help fund water projects: the State Water Implementation Fund of Texas and the State Water Implementation Revenue Fund of Texas.

The funds could assist in financing community projects, including the construction of new reservoirs, repairing pipes, and recharging groundwater. Notably, Proposition 6 includes provisions specifying that a minimum of 20% of the allocated funds must be directed toward conservation and reuse efforts, with an additional 10% reserved for rural areas. This allocation for rural areas can benefit Socorro and contribute to agricultural conservation endeavors.

Energy

El Paso Electric (EPE) provides electric service in Socorro, operating overhead distribution lines that extend services across the City. The El Paso Regional Climate Action Plan includes projects to install public electric vehicle charging stations and transition municipal fleets to electric or low-emission vehicles, which will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote cleaner energy use. The Socorro Independent School District also received significant federal funding to replace diesel buses with electric models, contributing to improved air quality and reduced operational costs.

In Socorro, numerous residential properties face significant challenges in establishing utility connections, which hinders the extension of electricity services to these areas. This is due to previous residential developments that were created without proper infrastructure planning. Coordination efforts with EPE are necessary to supply power to residents experiencing these issues. EPE has a diverse range of energy sources, including nuclear fuel, natural gas, purchased power, solar, and wind turbines.

Renewable Energy

El Paso Electric has been working to increase its renewable energy portfolio and reduce reliance on nonrenewable energy sources. Various solar projects throughout the State contribute to the group's goal of achieving 80% carbon-free energy by 2035 and 100% by 2045. The transition to renewable energy faces challenges such as the need for funding, regulatory support, and the development of local renewable energy projects.



While some renewable energy sources are being utilized, Socorro should consider exploring alternative energy solutions to reduce dependence on traditional sources. While renewable energy sources are becoming more cost-effective, the initial investment for infrastructure and technology remains high. Continuing to explore state and federal grants can help address financial challenges that are associated with renewables. Additionally, diversifying energy resources, particularly solar and wind, for commercial and residential properties enhances community resiliency. Socorro should investigate cost-effective energy efficiency measures such as amending development codes to encourage energy-conscious building designs and promoting adoption of energy-saving technologies.

Community Resilience (CR)

Goals and Policies

Sustainability and Resiliency

Goal CR-1 Socorro has a sustainable provision of quality, reliable infrastructure.

Policy CR-1.a Coordinate with the Lower Valley Water District to develop a new wastewater treatment plant to address population growth and capacity needs.

Policy CR-1.b Prioritize compact development to minimize new infrastructure system needs.

Policy CR-1.c Develop a stormwater master plan to manage rainwater and runoff in ways that reduce the environmental impact by reducing pollution, conserving water, mitigating floods, and reducing the pressure on the sewer system.

Policy CR-1.d Partner with energy providers such as El Paso Electric to enhance the community's electrical grid and diversify energy production with increased renewable energy sources.

Policy CR-1.e Establish an energy cooperative to address service gaps, proactively explore renewable energy sources, and identify opportunities in distribution.

Policy CR-1.f Regularly update policies to ensure continuity of services and address natural hazards that may impact the community.

Environmental Planning

Goal CR-2 Natural resources are conserved through a reduction in development impacts including natural drainage corridors, native vegetation, and other sensitive natural features of the land.

Policy CR-2.a Encourage new development to incorporate natural open space into development plans.

Policy CR-2.b Coordinate with agricultural property owners to explore land dedications and density bonus incentives in order to maintain rural open space.

Policy CR-2.c Partner with the Lower Valley Water District or acquire land for parks and trails along drainage corridors and floodways to preserve environmentally sensitive lands, provide recreation opportunities, and promote stormwater management through natural infrastructure.

Policy CR-2.d Promote and facilitate the use of land mitigation banking as a conservation tool to offset impacts on natural habitats and environmentally sensitive areas with new development projects.



Goal CR-3**Green infrastructure improvements provide natural health-protection measures.**

- Policy CR-3.a** Establish green infrastructure requirements and design standards, integrating them into development projects.
- Policy CR-3.b** Incorporate tree-lined walking and biking corridors, especially adjacent to minor and major arterials, as well as in areas where pedestrians and bicyclists frequently gather.
- Policy CR-3.c** Implement efficient irrigation and landscaping practices to minimize water consumption.
- Policy CR-3.d** Establish landscape and tree preservation standards within the Unified Development Code (UDC) that promote expansive tree canopies and shading, ensuring compatibility with stormwater infrastructure and water resilience.
- Policy CR-3.e** Promote the integration of solar energy generation, wind turbines, or other renewable energy sources to reduce the environmental impact and reliance on nonrenewable resources.

Water Resources**Goal CR-4****Socorro's water resources remain reliable, sustainable, and sufficient as the community grows.**

- Policy CR-4.a** Develop a matrix that assesses current water extension priority projects to include the degree and number of impacted households and the socioeconomic demographic.
- Policy CR-4.b** Improve coordination efforts with the Lower Valley Water District to discover gaps in water service and quality.
- Policy CR-4.c** Develop low-impact development standards for public street and infrastructure projects that address stormwater and retention.
- Policy CR-4.d** Partner with the Rio Grande Water Conservation District and the El Paso Water Improvement District to ensure water quality and quantity and enhance important natural areas contributing to a natural, healthy community and environment.

Goal CR-5 **Natural resources are protected, and sustainable development practices, such as water conservation and the preservation of natural areas, are promoted.**

Policy CR-5.a Encourage the implementation of alternative water conservation methods, including stormwater collection systems such as green infrastructure and low-impact development principles.

Policy CR-5.b Actively educate residents on water conservation best practices through outreach programs such as the El Paso Certified Water Partner Program.

Policy CR-5.c Encourage the use of drought-tolerant landscaping in new development. Require the use of xeriscape landscaping and plants with low water needs in appropriate areas of the City.

Goal CR-6 **Water is proactively managed and responsibly used by Socorro community members.**

Policy CR-6.a Establish a water conservation program that educates residents on appropriate water conservation strategies.

Policy CR-6.b Implement a water resource conservation ordinance that identifies standards for water conservation, habitat retention, and pollutant mitigation.

Policy CR-6.c Consider a water conservation incentive program for the City's water service area to assist water-intensive developments in conserving water.

Policy CR-6.d Explore funding opportunities for water conservation and reuse.



Energy

Goal CR-7 **Redundant power sources supporting regional and community utility systems exist, minimizing service disruptions.**

- Policy CR-7.a** Evaluate best practices for community-scale solar energy policies to determine if similar policies could benefit the City of Socorro.
- Policy CR-7.b** Require solar energy generation facilities to be developed in a manner that does not impact adjacent uses or interfere with wildlife movement or existing development.
- Policy CR-7.c** Establish a committee to develop guidelines and regulations for solar energy facilities to include performance standards, minimum distances from existing uses or other land use categories, minimum or maximum lot size, taxation, visual impact mitigation and buffering requirements, and wildlife migration.
- Policy CR-7.d** Require new community- or regional-scale solar energy development proposals to include a reclamation plan that describes how the land will be positioned for redevelopment or restored to its original state.
- Policy CR-7.e** Review utility tax, fees, licenses, or other revenue mechanisms that may be applicable to solar and other power-generation facilities.



8

Administration & Implementation

Implementation and administration of the Comprehensive Plan is authorized in accordance Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code (LGC). Administration of the Comprehensive Plan is focused on the nuts and bolts of update and maintenance—when and how to make revisions—and how to interpret the Plan Implementation of the plan is focused on how to meet the goals and accomplish the policies identified within each element. Implementation is only possible if there are available resources. These include funding, staff, and public as well as municipal support.



Plan Administration

Plan Adoption

Chapter 213 of the Texas LGC authorizes a municipality's governing body to adopt a comprehensive plan for its long-range development. The plan's purpose is to promote sound municipal development and enhance public health, safety, and welfare. It may include provisions on land use, transportation, and public facilities.

The adoption of a comprehensive plan requires a public hearing, during which the public can provide testimony and present written evidence. The plan must also be reviewed by the City's planning commission and City Council. Following the public hearing and review, the comprehensive plan may be adopted or amended by ordinance.

Interpretation

The Comprehensive Plan may be used to coordinate and guide the establishment of development regulations. A municipality may define the relationship between a comprehensive plan and development regulations and provide standards for determining the required consistency between them.

The Comprehensive Plan and the Future Land Use Map do not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries but are meant to guide zoning. Zoning regulations must be adopted in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan and must be designed to promote public health, safety, and welfare.

The Comprehensive Plan provides for reasonable flexibility in interpretation. However, to remain relevant over time, the Plan should be annually reviewed. It should be kept current but not continuously amended due to developments in progress.

Plan Amendments

Amendments to this Comprehensive Plan may be initiated by the City or requested by private individuals or agencies in accordance with the procedures set forth in state law. Similar to the adoption process, amendments require a public hearing where the public can provide input for consideration. The proposed amendments must be reviewed by the City's Planning and Zoning Commission before going to City Council for approval. Following the public hearing and review, amendments are adopted by ordinance.

Plan Implementation

The Implementation Plan includes actions to achieve the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. This set of actions will be carried out over the next 15-20 years to help the City accomplish the vision, goals, and policies adopted in the Socorro 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The actions should be addressed within specific timeframes to facilitate the continued advancement of the Plan's goals and policies. Many mid- and long-term actions are dependent on the completion of short-term and ongoing actions.

Creating a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee comprised of the City of Socorro executive leadership and a Councilperson liaison is recommended to assist in implementing the goals and policies within the plan. This committee would analyze assets needed to implement the plan, such as staffing needs, training programs, community interfacing software, management systems, and recommendations for integrating new technology. Creating the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will ensure the plan's successful implementation and bridge the gap between goals and policies within the plan, organizational development, and budget preparations.

Implementation Action Timeframes

The following timeframes are meant to be a guide for completing the implementation actions identified in **Table 8-1**. Completion of the actions may be dependent upon available City resources such as staff and budget.



Ongoing

Actions should occur on a continuous basis once implemented.



Short-term

Actions should be completed within 1 to 4 years of Plan adoption.



Mid-term

Actions should be completed within 5 to 10 years of Plan adoption.



Long-term

Actions should be completed more than 10 years after Plan adoption.



Table 8-1 Implementation Plan








Implementation Action	Relevant Goals	Timeframe
IMP-1: Evaluate and regularly update the Unified Development Code to eliminate unnecessary regulations, streamline processes, and conform with new laws and case law.	GD-1	 Ongoing
IMP-2: Establish a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to assist in implementing the goals and policies within the plan and analyze assets needed to implement the plan, such as staffing needs, training programs, community interfacing software, management systems, and recommendations for integrating new technology.	N/A	 Short-term
IMP-3: Create a Unified Development Code to include site and architectural design standards that reflect Socorro's community character.	GD-1 GD-3 GD-4 GD-6 GD-9 QOL-1	 Short-term
IMP-4: Amend the official zoning map and related ordinances to align with the Future Land Use Map.	GD-1	 Short-term
IMP-5: Establish Unified Development Code standards to improve the buffering and transition of higher-intensity uses to lower-intensity residential land uses.	GD-2 GD-3	 Short-term
IMP-6: Develop a prioritization, maintenance, and improvement schedule for parks and recreational facilities.	PSI-4 QOL-8	 Short-term
IMP-7: Explore state and federal grants to fund preservation and development projects.	GD-11 QOL-12	 Short-term
IMP-8: Explore and utilize a variety of funding sources for capital improvement projects.	PSI-7 PSI-8 CR-1	 Short-term

Table 8-1 Implementation Plan (continued)











Implementation Action	Relevant Goals	Timeframe
IMP-9- Develop a Utilities Committee for the oversight and strategic planning of utility services and infrastructure.	PSI-10	 Short-term
IMP-10: Develop a Stormwater Master Plan to manage rainwater and runoff.	CR-1	 Short-term
IMP-11: Coordinate with willing agricultural landowners for the use of preservation or conservation easements.	GD-3 GD-4 CR-2	 Mid-term
IMP-12: Encourage a range of residential housing types, sizes, and densities.	GD-2 GD-5 GD-6	 Mid-term
IMP-13: Utilize the Economic Recovery Strategic Plan to identify industry targets and provide incentives.	GD-8	 Mid-term
IMP-14: Establish a façade improvement program to help revitalize building façades that align with Socorro’s character.	GD-9 GD-11 QOL-1	 Mid-term
IMP-15: Create and implement a Socorro-specific marketing plan to attract tourists and employment industries.	QOL-2	 Mid-term
IMP-16: Create and implement a Parks Master Plan to enhance and develop parks and recreational facilities.	PSI-4 QOL-8 QOL-11	 Mid-term
IMP-17: Implement historic preservation programs and incentives to protect and promote historic sites.	QOL-1 QOL-2 QOL-3	 Mid-term
IMP-18: Implement the Socorro Master Sidewalk Plan to enhance pedestrian routes.	MOB-2 PSI-9	 Mid-term



Table 8-1 Implementation Plan (continued)














Implementation Action	Relevant Goals	Timeframe
IMP-19: Develop a Multimodal Transportation Master Plan for expanded mobility options and pedestrian networks.	GD-6 MOB-1 MOB-4 MOB-5 QOL-11 QOL-12	 Mid-term
IMP-20: Develop a Public Facility Master Plan to determine public facilities needs.	PSI-1 PSI-7	 Mid-term
IMP-21: Identify sustainable funding sources and select a central location for a new community library.	PSI-2	 Mid-term
IMP-22: Prioritize the rehabilitation of Rio Vista Farm to serve the community with various amenities.	PSI-3 QOL-10	 Mid-term
IMP-23: Identify strategic locations for new public safety facilities to optimize coverage and response times.	PSI-5	 Mid-term
IMP-24: Implement green infrastructure requirements and design standards.	CR-1 CR-2 CR-3	 Mid-term
IMP-25: Evaluate opportunities for power and water resiliency and redundancy	CR-4 CR-5 CR-6 CR-7	 Mid-term
IMP-26: Utilize Development Agreements for master-planned developments to ensure compatibility with the agricultural character of Socorro.	GD-4	 Long-term
IMP-27: Promote mixed-use development near El Paso Community College and other active pedestrian districts.	GD-2 GD-9	 Long-term
IMP-28: Create an Economic Development Department.	GD-9	 Long-term

Table 8-1 Implementation Plan (continued)

Implementation Action	Relevant Goals	Timeframe
IMP-29: Identify and maintain areas suitable for large-scale office complexes and industrial activities.	GD-10	 Long-term
IMP-30: Develop a transit development plan to improve and expand public transportation services.	MOB-1 MOB-8	 Long-term
IMP-31: Incentivize the development of new healthcare facilities and expand existing ones.	PSI-6	 Long-term



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