



**CITY OF SAN ELIZARIO  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*Adopted May 24, 2016*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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**Acknowledgements**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



*San Elizario's vision for the future is one which aims to preserve and protect the community's priceless historic and agricultural resources and basic community character while at the same time seizing opportunities for sustainable economic growth consistent with that character. The city's policies in furtherance of this vision shall strive to achieve sustainable development that improves the quality of life of its citizens.*

This executive summary is an abridged version of the full version of the Comprehensive Plan for the City of San Elizario. As such, it outlines the key goals and priorities for the City contained in the Plan and presents an overview of the comprehensive planning process.

## ***Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan***

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy guide. Its recommendations should be followed when making decisions about the City's growth and development. The Comprehensive Plan serves as the underlying basis for the laws enacted to implement the City's vision crafted with the input of the citizens of San Elizario and contained in the Appendix.

## **The Planning Process**

The Comprehensive Plan is the official land use and development policy statement of the City. It remains a work-in-progress even after it is formally adopted by the City Council. Planning is a continuous process. This document should be reviewed at least annually, and updated every three to five years to take into account changes to the City.

## **Baseline and Demographic Data**

Before outlining goals and strategies, it is important to understand San Elizario's local context. How did San Elizario first develop? Who lives in San Elizario now? What are some of San Elizario's defining features? How has it developed up until this point?



*San Elizario City Hall. Photo courtesy: City of San Elizario Facebook.*

## ***History***

San Elizario is a long-established community of hard-working families, with deep historical roots from its Spanish colonial past. It likely was first settled in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, and has slowly grown ever since. Present day San Elizario was incorporated in November 2013.

### Community Character

San Elizario is a rural community situated around 20 miles southeast of El Paso. In and around San Elizario there are sizable expanses of cultivated land planted in cotton, pecans and alfalfa. Even downtown, the “feel” of the neighborhood is distinctly rural. San Elizario’s topography is mostly flat and it lies in the Chihuahan Desert.

### Demographics

San Elizario grew at approximately 23% between the 2000 and 2010 decennial census. San Elizario is predominately Hispanic with the percentage of Hispanic residents increasing. San Elizario has a median household income (MHI) of \$25,551.

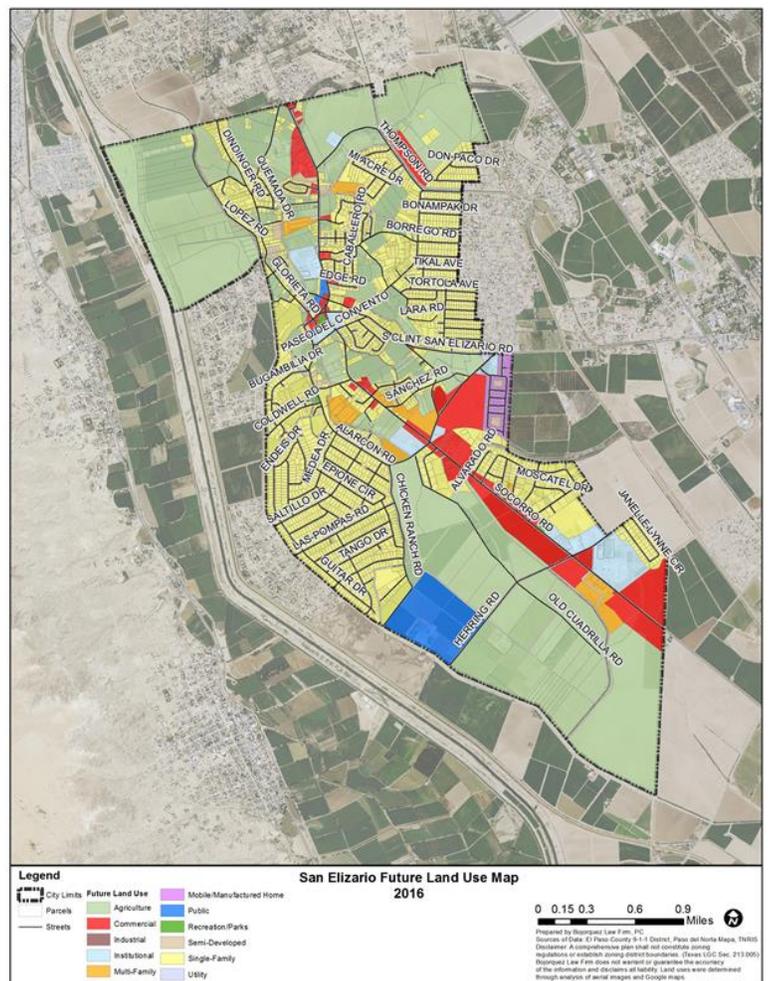
## Guidelines for San Elizario’s Future

The comprehensive plan’s objectives are separated into five areas: future land use, historic preservation, economic development, transportation, and sustainability.

### Future Land Use

A Future Land Use Plan provides opportunities for coordinated, well-planned growth and development within the City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) while maintaining and enhancing the City’s heritage and rural character. The Future Land Use Plan is a decision-making guide and should be the basis for the City’s zoning regulations as they are developed and enacted. It establishes a development pattern and designates areas for particular uses. Here are some of the land use types that the future land use plan outlines:

**Residential.** This land use pattern should continue while maintaining the agrarian characteristics of the city. *Low density single-family* uses can be buffered from nonresidential uses by developing medium-density residential uses. The City should offer a range of lot sizes to provide for market choice, and allow some higher density uses to better preserve open space



and parkland. The City allows for *medium density duplex-style* homes, which can occupy smaller amounts of space because of their increased density. There may also be a market for *high density apartment-style* homes in the future due to the city's population growth.

**Non-Residential.** *Office* uses maintain the small-town character of the community, and can help transition between higher intensity commercial uses and residential uses. *Local retail* contributes to the city's scenic ambiance, and future retail should support this unique physical charm. The City should adopt zoning regulations and design guidelines to promote practices that will make new retail compatible with existing retail. There will be greater demand for *regional retail* as the population grows, and these should be made compatible with the existing community character. Other non-residential land uses include *Mixed Use, Business Park, Commercial Services, and Public/Semi-Public uses.*

**Development Proposals.** The City may craft *Planned Developments* within the city limits, and *Development Agreements* in the ETJ to ameliorate inconsistencies between existing zoning regulations and the future land use plan and to allow for flexibility as demographics may change.

### **Historic Preservation**

The City should include a historical overlay in its zoning ordinance for the Mission Trail historic district. The City should also enact a historic preservation ordinance to preserve and maintain the City's historic structures. This can include incentives to improve or maintain historic properties and develop standards for designating historic sites. The City should also seek to acquire oversight and control of the historic district from the County of El Paso.



*Presidio Chapel of San Elizario*

### **Economic Development**

As a newly incorporated city, San Elizario should focus on three areas related to economic development: (1) general economic development which entails the creation of programs that take advantage of available state and federal resources; (2) tourism, which can capitalize on the Mission Trail Historic Area attractions; and (3) education and workforce development which benefits both the business community and San Elizario residents.

## **Transportation**

Along with anticipated growth comes increased traffic congestion. The City should address how best to accommodate this future growth within its existing transportation system. It can protect neighborhood character by directing traffic generated by growth away from existing neighborhoods.

Impact studies should be required for new development. The city might also consider adopting traffic calming measures, such as speed bumps, to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists. To encourage pedestrian accessibility and safety, the City can require developers to construct sidewalks in new subdivisions, through a subdivision ordinance. As San Elizario grows, the City may want to become more involved in any regional commuter network and mass transit programs proposed.

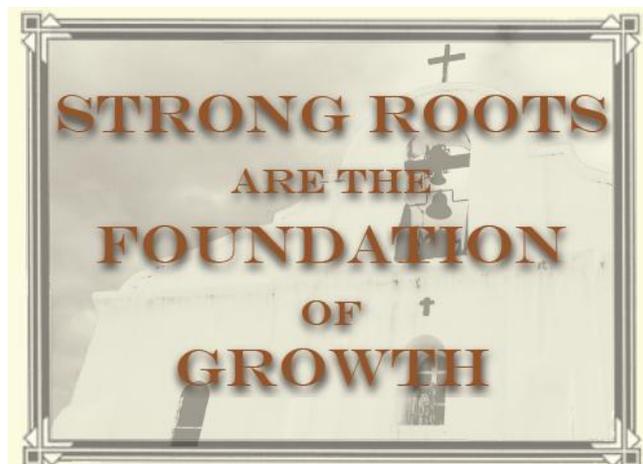
## **Sustainability**

The City might consider adopting policies that preserve open space, develop sustainable water resources, increase walkability and street connectivity, integrate diverse community features, and create areas with a strong sense of place, which helps to foster a community's resilient identity. The City may look toward developing programs that support renewable energy, that better integrate transportation planning and land planning through Traditional Neighborhood Development, Transit Oriented Development or "Complete Streets" programs.

## ***Implementation***

In order to carry out the Comprehensive Plan, the City can use an array of implementation tools, including the creation of ordinances such as the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Ordinance, leveraging of public funds, impact fees and assessments, the Planning and Zoning Commission, annexation plans, and the Comprehensive Plan update and review process.

The Comprehensive Plan provides a guide of objectives and identified tasks to implement those goals. The Plan also includes a list of resources which the City can access for funding to fund its projects.



**City of San Elizario Vision Statement**

**“Vision for San Elizario”**