



TOWN OF SILVER CITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Chapter 1 The Process for Updating the 2004 Plan

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

On a daily basis, most residents of Silver City leave their homes for school, work, recreation, entertainment or shopping. Do you ever think about why these places are located where they are? Does traffic congestion cause you to wish you could walk to school or work, or ride your bike rather than drive? When you turn on the tap for a glass of water, do you ever think about where the water is coming from or how it is getting to your house? If so, you are beginning to consider some of the elements comprehensive planning deals with – housing, education, economic development, land use, transportation and infrastructure.

Comprehensive planning is a very important task in every community. A comprehensive planning process is meant to assist citizens of the community to identify and implement actions for better transportation, land use, housing, public facilities and programs, infrastructure, economic development, parks and open space, and other policies and programs that shape daily life in their community. The comprehensive plan could be called the "roadmap" to guide development and growth of the Town now and into the future, for the next 10 to 20 years.

The Silver City Comprehensive Plan sets forth the Town's goals regarding the types and locations of future land use and activities. It outlines the character and quality of development as well as the process for how development should proceed. While the Plan addresses many Town issues, there are other factors outside of the Town's control that influence its future land use, growth and development. Market forces and economic trends, as well as the land use and transportation decisions of adjacent communities and Grant County, are examples of the types of factors that will influence the Town of Silver City. It is important that the Plan recognizes such influences and includes a set of goals that are visionary, yet realistic, in light of these factors.

The Silver City Comprehensive Plan is based upon the community's values, goals and priorities. Its purpose in large part is to guide in the development of public policy. The Town Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission will reference the Plan when making land use and planning-related decisions. Town staff will utilize the Plan on a regular basis to assist in administering and regulating land use and development activity. The Plan will also be a guide to staff, Planning and Zoning Commissioners and elected officials in appropriate revisions of the Land Use Code and Municipal Code to address community concerns and to best follow the roadmap that has been provided. Town residents can use the Plan to understand the Town's approach to regulating development, protecting natural resources, and upholding the community's values.

The Town of Silver City Comprehensive Plan addresses key policy elements that are required and outlined by the State of New Mexico:

- **Land Use:** mapping of existing patterns; inventory of amount, type and intensity of uses by land category; location and extent of future land uses by land use category over a twenty-year period; goals, objectives and policies that address maintaining a broad variety of land uses including the range of uses existing when the plan is adopted or amended; specific actions and incentives that the Town may use to promote planned development, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, or otherwise encourage certain identified development patterns and the locations where such development patterns should be encouraged.
- **Housing:** an analysis of the existing housing supply and demand as well as forecasted housing needs; goals, objectives and policies for the improvement of housing quality, variety and affordability; reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and provision of adequate sites for housing and housing opportunities for all segments of the community; a description of the actions that may be taken to implement housing goals, objectives and policies; must comply with the affordable housing act.
- **Transportation:** a description and assessment of the location, type, capacity and condition of the existing transportation facilities; goals, objectives and policies for encouraging safe, convenient, efficient and economical transportation including mass transit and facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and potential funding mechanisms; a description and assessment of proposed location, type and capacity of proposed transportation facilities designed to implement transportation goals, objectives and policies with a description of funding mechanisms that will be used to fund proposed transportation improvements.
- **Infrastructure:** a description and assessment of the location, type, capacity and condition of existing infrastructure, including emergency services, sewage, drainage, local utilities and other types of facilities; goals, objectives and policies for promoting the efficient provision of infrastructure; a description and assessment of proposed facility expansion and improvements designed to support planned uses and implement infrastructure goals, objectives and policies.
- **Economic development:** a description of existing job composition and trends by industry and location characteristics, such as access to transportation or proximity to natural or human resources, that influence the economic development potential of the Town; goals, objectives and policies for promoting economic development; a description of the actions that the Town will take to implement economic development goals, objectives and policies.
- **Water:** description and assessment of the sources of water supply; the existing demand for water by residential, commercial, institutional, industrial and recreational sectors; assessment of the unaccounted for water losses due to leaks, theft or other reasons; goals, objectives and policies for promoting the efficient use of water and for managing

periods of drought; analysis of the demand for water that will result from future growth projected in the plan when added to existing uses and how the demand for water that will result from future projected growth will be served by current water supplies or increase water use efficiencies.

- **Hazards:** an analysis of the risks of hazards such as wildfire, floods, extreme weather conditions, accidents and terrorism; goals, objectives and policies for hazard mitigation; a description of the actions that will be taken to mitigate hazards.
- **Implementation:** a compilation of the plan's goals, objectives, policies, standards or guidelines, along with specific actions to be completed in a stated sequence, which start with adoption of the comprehensive plan.

Updating the 2004 Comprehensive Plan

The Silver City Comprehensive Plan was updated in three phases; review, information gathering, and updating and adoption. The Town's Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, Town Staff, members of the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Elected Officials provided overall direction. There were public meetings and staff reviewed the previous comprehensive plan to update information. The steering committee met many times as a group to consider different elements of the plan. Steering committee members worked many hours to consider carefully the important issues that face the community and to seek solutions that provide common ground for important future decisions for the Town. Members understood from the beginning that they were stewards of a process that meant not only providing their own knowledge and wisdom, but seeking out the best ideas of others in their group and from the general public.

Phase One, review, consisted of information gathering and departmental review of the 2004 Silver City Comprehensive Plan. In this phase, general research was conducted into the history, regional environment, existing land use and other important elements that have shaped the development of Silver City.

Phase Two, information gathering, was initiated by further public outreach. A number of public meetings were held for each Council District in the Town. At each meeting, facilitators guided the discussion and gathered important information from community residents. In addition to the district meetings, public meetings were held to address each section of the plan. Results of the community survey, also provided important information. The survey was available online and on paper. A citizen volunteer reviewed each section of the plan for updates as well as existing Town plans which should be included for reference in the revised plan. These plans are listed as Appendix 3. The information gathered from the meetings, interviews and survey shaped the 2017 document.

Upon completion of Phases One and Two of the process, the draft plan was developed. Shortly thereafter, Phase Three, the final phase of the planning process, was initiated. Phase Three

included the review of the draft plan by Town staff, the steering committee, Town officials and the public. Final changes were made in the draft plan prior to public meetings and review by public officials that preceded its adoption.

Principles of the Comprehensive Plan

The most recent Town of Silver City Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2004. When the plan was created, seven key principles emerged to guide future growth and development of the community. They are still valid today and are:

- Provide direction to both short-term and long-term economic sustainability as the Town seeks to collaborate with the county and other municipalities to develop a diverse and sustainable regional economy
- Follow principles and goals to guide the Town's collaboration with Grant County for management strategies in the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) , including procedures for joint planning
- Protect the community's historic downtown and neighborhoods, including the Town's distinctive architecture and settlement patterns
- Preserve the quality of the natural environment, open space, water and other resources
- Maintain and enhance community facilities and provide park, open space and recreational opportunities to serve the entire community
- Protect Silver City's small town feel and character, and shape new growth to promote walkable livable neighborhoods and districts with safe traffic flow
- Ensure that the Town's cultural diversity is maintained and historic traditions are protected and celebrated.

Goals, Policies & Implementation Measures

The Silver City Comprehensive Plan identifies a set of recommended goals and implementation strategies for all elements of the Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is guided by the key principles outlined in the previous section. These principles establish a direction for goals, policies and implementation measures for which these definitions are provided:

- **Goals** are general statements of values and aspirations of the community. As goals are general in nature, they are often widely supported by community members and, in most cases, are uncontroversial among residents.
- **Policies** provide a more precise interpretation and intention for a goal statement. Policies can outline means or initiatives needed to achieve a specific goal.
- **Implementation Measures** outline the plan of action the Town can take to achieve the policies, and thereby doing, achieve the goals and policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. Implementation measures may include further utilization of existing Town programs (e.g., infrastructure upgrades) and/or new planning actions

(e.g., development of a new ordinance) the Town should pursue. The action plan will also include intergovernmental collaboration and private-public partnerships to achieve desired goals.

Chapter 2 Strategic Actions

Strategic Planning

Key issues addressed by the Comprehensive Plan are often interrelated, and strategic actions should take advantage of the opportunity to address two or more issues simultaneously and in a holistic manner. At the same time, an integrated approach should not compromise the focus of the overall strategic plan and its specific action items, thereby limiting its chances for success. The strategic actions identified by the Town create a framework for making decisions and allocating limited resources. Each of the six strategic actions set forth below should include the process, projects, and programs that the Town and community may initiate to achieve the specific planning goals. The Town may pursue these six major strategic initiatives in partnership with the county, other organizations, and neighboring agencies, both locally and regionally.

- Economic Development Strategy
- Intergovernmental Coordination and Community Collaboration Strategy
- Affordable Housing Strategy
- Parks, Trails and Open Space Strategy
- Transportation and Land Use Strategy
- Downtown Enhancement Strategy

While this chapter identifies recommended strategic actions, the Town does not have the necessary resources to undertake all the actions at one time. Thus strategic actions phase projects and programs over time. In addition, these strategies identify ongoing projects or programs as well as those projects that could be implemented as opportunities for funding or implementation arise. For each action, it is critical that the Town identify:

- The responsible organizations or entities - and sometimes the specific individuals - that should assume the lead roles;
- The time frame within which the action should be undertaken including near-term (1-3 years) mid-term (3-5 years) and/or long-term (5+ years); and
- Potential funding sources.

Implementing strategic actions is not a static process. Over time, resources, opportunities, and new challenges will inevitably present themselves. The Town's strategic actions should be periodically reviewed and revised as the primary goals are accomplished and new actions, programs, and priorities are developed to face new challenges. Likewise, the Town's overarching principles, as outlined in Chapter One, should be periodically tested and revisited, parallel to the community's goals and policies. As always, the ability of the Town to implement goals and policies depends on funds available and budget priorities. These are inevitably tied to both State and Federal financial realities.

Implementation Principles

Four principles have been developed as a guide for effective implementation of the Town's strategic actions:

Build on what we have: Successful existing programs should continue to be supported as new initiatives are implemented. Too often communities take for granted successful programs and divert resources unwisely into new or different programs; care should be taken that these existing programs continue to be nurtured and supported. The proven successes of the Town should continue to be supported.

Encourage public-private and community partnerships: The successful implementation of the Town's strategic action agenda is contingent upon the continued support and cooperation of the entire community, including the public and private sectors, community groups and residents.

Identify partners: The dedication, commitment, and accountability provided by a lead organization and specific individuals are key to successful implementation. Identifying the key organization and establishing a process for cooperation will turn plans into reality.

Monitor and evaluate on-going progress: Periodic assessments help to identify barriers to success and determine if "mid-course corrections" are needed. Furthermore, demonstrated success helps sustain and increase community support, commitment and enthusiasm toward common goals.

Chapter 3 Land Use & Community Design

Accomplishments from the 2004 Plan

Since the 2004 Plan's adoption, the following Land Use Goals have been met:

- Utilization of an ICIP process was implemented.
- The Land Use Code of 2010 was adopted which included development regulations within the Town and the ETJ.
- Development review and incentive review processes were streamlined and formalized.
- A MRA (Metropolitan Redevelopment Act) District was approved for the Downtown area.
- Zoning policies to encourage a desirable mix of uses were used in the creation of the Mixed-Use and Historic Downtown Commercial Districts.

In addition, the following Community Design Goals have been met:

- The Historic Design Review Committee meets regularly to insure historic qualities of the four Historic Districts are maintained.
- Sign regulations were updated in the Land Use Code of 2010.

Silver City: History and Background

Silver City is the county seat and regional center for Grant County. The Town of Silver City is located within an area of human settlements that span thousands of years, including the early Mimbres communities. From the historic period of western settlement beginning in the late nineteenth century, Silver City has been the principal supply center of a region that also includes: traditional Hispanic villages, most notably San Lorenzo; farming and ranching communities such as Gila/Cliff and Mimbres; small traditional towns that began with the mining era, including Hurley, Bayard, Santa Clara, Hanover and Tyrone; and homesteads that have been established across the county.

The Town of Silver City was founded in 1876, long after and far from the Hispanic agricultural settlements along the Rio Grande. In a geographical transition between mountains and grasslands, in remote and dangerous Apache territory, money was to be made by mining and so the settlers came. Isolation, topography, late settlement, and the extravagances of sudden wealth shaped the early character of Silver City. The original Townsite was platted on a grid, a typically American pattern that is distinct from the earlier Hispanic settlements of the Southwest. One of the town's unique features is its Territorial Charter. Signed into law in 1878, it was an act of incorporation that reflected official recognition by the Territory of New Mexico and granted rights and powers of self-government in perpetuity to Town citizens.

The sudden and occasionally extravagant wealth of mining fortunes was manifested in numerous houses modeled on the Victorian styles of the eastern seaboard. The general

prosperity of the community was also sufficient to accommodate an early ordinance requiring all construction to be of masonry to prevent fires. Adobe brick was a commonly used building material, especially in Hispanic neighborhoods, where traditional patterns occasionally overwhelmed the street grid. Many of these houses were built without the large front yard setbacks typical of Anglo dwellings, and the family compounds, built gradually by addition, sometimes spilled onto the streets.

Mining wealth also prompted the establishment of a thriving central business district that provided a convenient locale for trade and entertainment and that soon earned the designation of Silver City as the county seat. Isolation ensured at a degree of self-sufficiency. Together wealth and isolation became the basis for the town's future as a regional center for trade and services.

Historic Silver City: Downtown & Neighborhoods

Appendix 1 shows the Silver City Historic District and the adjacent historic districts that constitute Silver City's Historic Downtown: Chihuahua Hill, Black's Addition, and North Addition. The Brewer Hill neighborhood to the east of the Historic District is also part of the older downtown area—even though it is not part of the district. The Brewer Hill Neighborhood Plan (2001) provides one model for other neighborhood plans and area plans. In effect, the pattern is a central business district (CBD) surrounded by primarily residential neighborhoods. These residential neighborhoods are all relatively compact in size and close to the CBD.

Silver City today has a rich legacy of Victorian architecture in three historic districts. A fourth—Chihuahua Hill—has a distinctively Hispanic character. History and the geography of hills and arroyos of Silver City have formed natural boundaries for distinct neighborhoods, and the preservation and empowerment of these areas in planning activities is an important community concern. This kind of shared responsibility within distinct boundaries should also be fostered in new neighborhoods. In addition to architecture and historic neighborhoods, the multi-cultural heritage of Silver City has been recognized as an asset to be celebrated.

This multi-cultural heritage, combined with the town's beautiful natural setting and its special architectural character, help define a distinctive "sense of place" for the entire community that is widely admired. The citizens of the town recognize this unique legacy and support the protection of these historic assets. The Land Use Code was updated in 2010 to better reflect these patterns of development. The four districts have additional zoning overlays and the Historic Design Review Committee reviews development and construction in the districts.

Existing Land Uses

Current regulations regarding zoning and land uses are contained in the Silver City Land Use Code, adopted in 2010. The current zoning map is shown in Appendix 2. The most current inventory of land use within the Town has been updated from a New Mexico State University (NMSU) study in May 2000, which provides the basis for this section. The purpose of the study, which was conducted by students in the University's Department of Geography, was to provide

community leaders and planning staff an inventory of land use that could be used to assist in local land use and transportation planning efforts. All figures below, unless otherwise indicated, are updated 2017 figures.

The land use classification system for the Silver City study includes ten classes of land use. The uses that are mapped include: Industrial, Residential, Rural Residential, Commercial, Institutional, Open Space, Transportation, Mixed-Use, Manufactured Homes and Vacant. The total amount of land classified was approximately 5,420 acres. The updated mapping of land uses was accomplished on an aerial basis, as a result, there may be a limited number of misclassifications due to generalization. The aerial mapping program used in the 2017 update is much more accurate than the aerial data used in 2000.

Land Uses in Silver City: Types of Uses & Acreages

The land use categories and the amount of acreage in each category within the Town limits are as follows:

Open Space - undeveloped private and public lands - 2522 acres. The distinction between open space and vacant land: vacant land is land that is proximate to utilities infrastructure (sewer, water, electricity, telephone) and ready for development; open space is land that is not readily available for development and requires extension of utility infrastructure. No distinction is made between public and private open space, and the open space category should certainly not be understood as open space in perpetuity.

Vacant Land - land with infrastructure that is currently unused - 556 acres. Vacant land is land with infrastructure that is currently unused it also includes parcels with buildings that have fallen into disuse and/or disrepair. Vacant land along US 90 appears more problematic for extensive residential uses, but with infrastructure in place a mix of commercial uses and perhaps some residential uses are possible. Again, parcel specific mapping and subsequent analysis of benefits, opportunities and constraints is necessary before future land uses can be determined and development would be likely to occur.

North of US 180 there are pockets of vacant land available for development. Most of this land appears to be in areas where infill development would mean additional housing; however, the area also contains a substantial amount of land for retail, office and other commercial uses. Like everywhere else, opportunities for the entire area north of US 180 must be developed in the context of agreed-upon neighborhood and area plans before the extent and type of infill opportunities can be determined.

Residential¹- parcels of .5 acres or less - 980 acres. Of the 980 acres of land use classified as residential in Silver City, most is located in the older parts of the Town, Residential includes housing within older neighborhoods primarily south of US 180, and in the neighborhoods and residential areas above US 180 that were developed beginning after World War II. The

¹ Residential parcels of .5-1 acre in size are a very small portion of the Town covering only 34 acres.

residential category does not include rural residential (discussed below). The definition of residential included housing at urban densities of less than one-half acre.

This definition of residential is a very broad category and includes a variety of housing and patterns of development. Generally speaking, this broad definition of residential includes the more compact neighborhoods of the older Town as well as the relatively larger lot development that increases in acreage per dwelling as one moves north of US 180. The street grid pattern of the older Town continues immediately north of US 180 (Swan, Pine, Kimberly and Cottage San areas), but curvilinear streets and *cui de sacs* dominate in more recent development. The street grid is also warped and broken in areas of difficult terrain and topography.

In the northwest quadrant of the map, larger lots and vacant lots between and among homes causes a break in the fabric of development. In some cases, it appears that homes are randomly scattered on the land, with this pattern becoming more pronounced at the edges of the Town limits. In the north central part of the community, the residential areas immediately north of US 180 are also more compact, and the Gila Regional Medical Center and associated uses break the uniformly residential pattern.

The south and southwestern portions of the Town, which includes downtown and older neighborhoods, contains a much more variegated pattern of development with a mix of uses interspersed among the residences. The different categories of uses in these areas are commercial, institutional, vacant and industrial.

Rural Residential - parcels greater than 1.0 acre - 191 acres. One of the major land use categories found in Silver City is classified as rural residential. Rural residential uses are found on 191 acres of land, primarily at the fringes of the Town. The NMSU study is not altogether clear on the definition of rural residential, as it sometimes appears that the minimum lot size is one-half acre and in others a full acre. Nevertheless, the category clearly refers to homes on larger lots, mostly on the outskirts of Town and the fringes of the community, and almost exclusively in two areas:

- The northwest corner of the Town boundary, in the Cold Springs area primarily; and also Indian Hills, and N. of east 32nd St.
- The southeast fringes of the settled area of Town adjacent to large areas of open space. In the northwest, each of the home sites is a parcel of approximately 1/2 acre or more with a distinctly rural character.

These fringe areas of Town are the only areas defined as rural residential in the NMSU study. As the Town grows outward, these rural residential areas may well evolve into higher densities and/or include other types of land uses. However, demand pressures for more intense development may be mitigated by covenants and restrictions against further subdivision or more intense use of the land and topography.

Transportation - roads and parking areas - 806 acres. Transportation use occupies 806 acres within the limits of Silver City. This includes the Town's street and road network, including the major corridors and arterials. More information on the street network can be found in Chapter 4 Transportation and Circulation.

Commercial - retail, service & office - 660 acres. Commercial areas are those used predominantly for the sale of products and services, and for offices (including professional offices). Overall, there are 660 acres of commercial land, including: the central business districts; shopping centers, usually in suburban and outlying areas; and commercial strip developments along major highways and access routes to cities. While office uses typically locate at the intersection of major arterials and collectors, some did appear in residential neighborhoods.

The majority of commercial activity is located in the Central Business District (CBD) and along US 180 and NM 90. Most of the chain businesses (fast food restaurants, grocery stores, etc.) are located on or near US 180. Local independent businesses are more often found within or close to the CBD. Some commercial uses were found outside of the major commercial concentrations within residential neighborhoods and on the outskirts of Town (e.g. south NM 90).

In the northeast quadrant, most commercial activities are along US 180 and in areas predominantly surrounded by institutional uses and vacant land. In the northwest quadrant, there are only a few commercial uses that met the minimum mapping unit -- disbursed on the outskirts of Town. In the southwest quadrant, commercial uses are mostly found in the CBD and along NM 90 (Hudson Street) and along NM 90 heading out of Town. There are also some activities dispersed in residential neighborhoods. In the southeast quadrant, the commercial uses are located on the fringe and scattered among residences in this area.

Institutional - schools including Western New Mexico University, churches, hospitals, etc. - 412 acres. Institutional land uses include government buildings, schools, churches, libraries, cemeteries, legal services, hospitals and medical/professional offices. In Silver City, the 412 acres of land for institutions is dispersed with no visible pattern. Western New Mexico University is the largest institution in Town. Government uses include the Town Administration Building, Library, Silver City Museum, New Mexico Department of Labor and Grant County Courthouse. In the southeast quadrant there is little institutional land use, with the largest being Memory Lane Cemetery just south of US 180.

The largest concentration of institutional land use is north of U.S. Highway 180, and includes schools (La Plata Jr. High School, Silver High School, and Stout Elementary School), Gila Regional Medical Center and medical/professional offices, and a U.S. Forest Service facility.

Industrial - manufacturing, warehouse, trucking, and related uses - 95 acres. Most of the 95 acres of industrial land is dispersed, but can be found on relatively large parcels, most of which are located adjacent to major corridors such as US 180 and NM 90.

Mixed Use - retail and other commercial uses mixed with residential - 15 acres. Mixed uses include parcels of land that have more than one use co-located on a single parcel, either in adjacent buildings, or situated in a single building. An example would be a small retail establishment on the first floor and residential on the second floor.

Mixed use in town centers and neighborhood centers has been recognized as a desirable land use pattern because it can reduce the need for motorized transportation. Residents who make their homes within or adjacent to the CBD have immediate access to goods and services and most other activities in their daily lives. Most of the mixed-use land is within the Commercial Historic District and near Bennett Street.

A few additional retail/commercial uses within predominantly residential areas might be lost to the study because of generalization (discussed above), suggesting that a residual historic pattern of mixed use might exist in some areas. Conditional use permits and changes to the zoning map since 2010 contribute to the increase in mixed-use land.

The study shows that the Town's historic pattern of land use during the post-WWII period no longer conforms to the mixed land use pattern. During this earlier period, the pattern of development established was characterized by civic, government, religious, retail, office, residential and other uses that were proximate and within a compact walkable area that comprises the historic downtown and the immediate neighborhoods.

Manufactured Homes - approximately 961 units spread throughout the Town. The NMSU study also identified a specific type of housing, namely manufactured homes, which the study found to be ubiquitous in Silver City. There were some 961 manufactured homes within the Town in 2017. When covenants and restrictions of subdivisions do not prohibit these types of residences, manufactured homes are almost certain to be found. Even though the state statutes are liberal regarding the siting of manufactured homes, their location can be influenced through architectural standards or square footage minimums.

Silver City: Neighborhoods, Districts and Corridors

The physical structure and pattern of land uses within American towns and cities can be understood by reference to the categories of neighborhood, district and corridor. The neighborhood, the district, and the corridor are essential elements of development and redevelopment in cities and towns in the United States.

Silver City's early development reflected this pattern of the classic American town. Typically these towns have a central business district (CBD) that include a mix of retail, office, institutional, educational, religious and other uses - including housing above shops and in ground level residences within and adjacent to the CBD. Within these small towns, residents walk to the center for shopping, church, school, entertainment, recreation, and other amenities of urban life.

Residents of Silver City's older neighborhoods enjoyed this convenient access to the downtown area. But as new residential areas developed primarily north of the US 180 corridor and outward toward the Town limits, this historic neighborhood structure did not continue. In addition, the habits of downtown residents changed, as they increasingly joined residents of newer areas in using their automobiles for many activities of their lives - including shopping in stores along the corridor rather than the historic town center.

The changes in our lives occasioned by the automobile and conventional suburban development patterns have been dramatic during the past several decades. Today the typical American household makes as many as ten trips or more daily by automobile, and walking and bicycling has decreased. This has become true even in relatively small towns like Silver City.

Neighborhoods

Historically, neighborhoods in America's cities and towns were compact, pedestrian-friendly, and mixed use. Neighborhoods were primarily residential, but they had central areas where local residents found shops, offices, schools, restaurants, churches and other uses that provided for their daily needs. Because activities of daily living occur within walking distance, the elderly and the young who do not drive gain a measure of independence and freedom because they can access most of their destinations on foot or on a bicycle.

Interconnected networks of streets reinforce this pedestrian-orientation, as they are designed to encourage walking, reduce the number and length of automobile trips, and conserve energy. [New Mexico's recent Safe Routes to School calls for local communities to design streets and sidewalks within a pedestrian network that makes this possible.] Within neighborhoods, a broad range of housing types and price levels can ideally bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community.

Districts

Downtown areas in smaller towns in this county historically functioned as neighborhoods as well as urban and regional centers. Typically, in addition to the central business area, historic downtowns incorporated a variety of residential uses adjacent to and mixed within the commercial uses at the center (typically above and behind shops and offices). We also refer to downtown areas as districts (specifically, central business districts) because their role as urban centers makes them more than neighborhood-serving centers for surrounding residents. Other types of districts that emerge as towns and cities grow include industrial districts, entertainment districts, university/education districts, shopping (retail) districts, medical districts, etc.

Silver City has a large area within the Town limits that could be consciously shaped as a district, namely the area surrounding the Gila Regional Medical Center (GRMC). Many businesses related to and supporting GRMC are continually being located in the area surrounding the medical center, helping to establish the area, in effect, as a special use district. At the same

time, the area within walking distance of GRMC includes a substantial amount of housing. By creating a medical district for the area (Gila Medical District), future development can be shaped to meet the needs of the larger regional community for health care, while at the same time creating a neighborhood center with a mix of neighborhood-serving retail and services that addresses the daily needs of both daily workers and residents of the area. The center of this district would have intensive land uses (including perhaps some residential) and an appropriate mix of uses (including restaurants and cafes for workers and residents) surrounded by increasingly lower densities and primarily residential uses radiating out from the center.

Corridors

Corridors are regional connectors of neighborhoods and districts; they range from boulevards and rail lines to rivers and parkways. In Silver City, the two principal corridors are, of course, the historic highways that have always brought people in and out of Town: US 180 and NM 90. These major highways also serve as the principal means of traffic circulation within the Town, especially because parallel arterial roadways are difficult given the topography and limited development of east-west connectors, particularly above Highway 180. The 32nd Street Bypass, while it would not qualify as a corridor, is certainly a major connector within the Town.

In most towns and cities, corridors have usurped the traditional function of urban and neighborhood centers. Silver City is no exception. These highway corridors, providing land as they do on either side of the roadway convenient for access by automobiles, have displaced investment from existing centers. In their current state, these corridors are very difficult for pedestrians to cross safely; this serves to reduce opportunities for businesses located along such corridors. The large scale of current retail businesses has meant that these businesses often do not fit well into the traditional block structure and grid of traditional downtowns - and they prefer to be on large parcels with their buildings surrounded by large parking lots. For this reason, the typical pattern is the development of strip retail along major and even minor corridors.

The location of major retail and commercial businesses in Silver City along Highway 180 East is reinforced by the fact that this roadway connects Silver City with the mining district towns and Gila and Mimbres Valley communities where the majority of the remaining population of the county is located. Additionally, the location of new residential development along north-south drainages in the ETJ north of the Town limits has also provided another nearby customer base for commercial uses along this corridor. The Highway 180 East Corridor has established itself as the most important strip commercial corridor in the region. The NM 90 south corridor (Hudson Street) serves as a secondary strip commercial area, with Highway 180 West also playing a minor role.

Population and Growth Rate

Since its historical high in 1886 of 4000 people, the Town of Silver City's population has grown over time, alternating between times of rapid increase and periods of little to no growth, and even net loss. By the mid 1930's the Town surpassed its 1886 population peak of 4,000

residents. Today, Silver City has a population of approximately 10,407 people. (NM Economic Development Department 2016).

Silver City experienced a very high growth rate from 1940 to 1950 (39.2 percent). Yet, through 1950 to 1960, the rate of growth diminished (0.7 percent) and the population slightly decreased. After the 60's the growth rate rebounded with about a 2.3 percent increase per year until the 1980s. From 1980 to 1990, the population slowed significantly with an increase of 1.8 percent in total population throughout this 10-year period. The years 2000 to 2016, have experienced a total decrease in the population of approximately 1 percent over this 16-year period.

Land Use & Community Design: A Sense of Place

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes and celebrates Silver City's historic pattern of growth and development, and calls for a pattern of development, supported by revisions in the Land Use Code and planning initiatives (such as neighborhood and area plans) that promote best development practices. Land use and community design provide a framework for the use, organization, and planning of sites, as well as the design of the buildings and landscape that comprise Silver City's urban environment. In so doing, these land use and community design principles and programs offer a physical design direction to growth, conservation and change.

Land use and community design is the process for organizing and shaping physical form in the landscape. This means recognizing the inherent natural and cultural features of the Town and areas within the Town, and enhancing these elements through appropriate planning, development and design. The physical form, including land use and transportation networks, determines the appearance, character and image of a town and can influence the overall quality of life of a community. Generally, land use and transportation policies outline the locations and types of activities, while community design influences the character and quality of these places. To influence the design of places within a town, decision makers need a strong vision of what their town should look like as well as the ability to engage in a critical, day-to-day, site-by-site, decision making process. Furthermore, the town's decision makers need to ensure that they are implementing the town's vision through innovative, yet fiscally responsible and realistic solutions.

Some key land use and community design features that contribute to making the Town of Silver City a great place to live include the topography of the hills and arroyos, the distinctive architecture, immediate access to open space surrounding the Town, including Boston Hill, views of and from the high points surrounding the Town and extensive views of the mountains, the Big Ditch, Western New Mexico University, the historic downtown and many special neighborhoods and communities (Brewer Hill, Chihuahua Hill, Mountain View, Indian Hills, and others)-all of which make up the Town of Silver City. Local residents have identified these important community elements as the Town's treasures. The attributes of these treasures should inform the design of future community elements.

A major goal for land use and community design in Silver City is to implement a future growth strategy that maintains and enhances the existing sense of place. This can be achieved by strengthening and protecting those special qualities that make Silver City a unique community and a great place to live. By improving the aesthetic appeal of Silver City's streets, buildings, and public places, community design can serve to strengthen and protect important qualities and enhance the perception and experience of the Town.

In terms of land use, there are a number of design solutions suggested by the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) approach and the physical organization of the community within the structure of districts, neighborhoods and corridors. TND is another term used to describe the pattern of development organized around neighborhood structure described above. This approach supports such themes and patterns for Silver City as a "town of neighborhoods," a "pedestrian friendly community," and "activity centers;" all provide major organizational concepts and general principles to guide Silver City's future growth strategy. These community design trends build on Silver City's existing land use and development patterns and help to establish the policy direction for future development and design improvements for both the public and private sector.

A Pedestrian Friendly Community

A major community design improvement for Silver City is the focus on pedestrian friendly elements, including sidewalks and pathways, bike routes, and public transit throughout the community. Improvements should include an interconnected system of pedestrian-friendly streets, an emphasis on pedestrian-oriented buildings, pathways and open space, as well as slow vehicular traffic on residential streets. The community can in this way provide an overall attractive, pleasant setting for foot traffic and bicycles-with emphasis on families, children, seniors and the physically handicapped. Such elements will improve the quality of life for residents by making safer, more attractive, walkable places throughout the Town. It should be noted that in some of the more rural areas of the community, especially on unpaved streets and where traffic counts are relatively low, pedestrian access could be provided without sidewalks, often within the roadway itself.

All evolving neighborhoods should grow as pedestrian-friendly places. Of course, some areas can absorb more future growth than others. Downtown areas have few opportunities, fringe areas will become denser over time, and current vacant land can be developed according to an agreed-upon master plan. Ideally, future growth in all these areas will be governed by neighborhood and area plans, with future growth following the structure for neighborhoods and districts discussed in this chapter.

Silver City: A Town of Neighborhoods

One of Silver City's strengths has been and should continue to be its neighborhoods, and public policy and planning efforts should continue to support strong neighborhoods. Future planning efforts should focus on neighborhood planning initiatives and the creation of area plans and neighborhood plans to direct future growth for the different areas of the Town.

Existing and future neighborhoods, patterned after historic and walkable neighborhoods, include the several evolving neighborhoods outside the older downtown area. North of US 180 these areas include Cold Springs, Indian Hills, Cottage San, Swan, Pine, Kimberly, and the largely vacant area where a future 32nd Street Neighborhood could be created on several acres. South of US 180 there are opportunities for neighborhood centers for Rosedale and Mountain View (to the east) and Ridge Road/San Vicente (to the south). In the area north of US 180, there is opportunity also for a neighborhood plan in the proposed Gila Medical District.

Views of the surrounding mountain ranges, as well as the significant open space surrounding the Town, should be preserved in neighborhoods of the upland areas. Significant open space, parkland and trail systems should be protected and enhanced in each neighborhood. Finally, the intensity and density and mix of uses within these neighborhoods should reflect the vibrancy of the MainStreet District and other areas within the Town. We know that over time fringe areas of the Town have been increasing in density, radiating out from the center. The goal is to make certain that this pattern of development is managed in such a way that the quality of life of both existing and future residents is protected and enhanced. Ultimately, the housing types, land use and activities will reflect the character, scale and height of adjoining use and structures, as well as the important landscape features that have influenced the historical development of Silver City's original neighborhoods.

Area Plans and Neighborhood Plans

It was previously recommended to create or revise several area and neighborhood plans, including;

- Newer residential areas and neighborhoods; and
- District plans, such as the Medical District Plan

This approach reiterates an objective of the 2004 Plan, namely, to:

Define and acknowledge existing and new neighborhood subareas and develop a neighborhood planning process with broad public involvement that provides for the completion of more detailed neighborhood plans.

The Brewer Hill Neighborhood Plan (2001) may provide a model for future neighborhood plans as recommended here. The 2006 San Vicente Heritage Plan and 2013 Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan will also be useful guides.

These neighborhood, area and district plans (all referred to below as area plans), which would govern development in each of those respective areas, would be created by area residents working cooperatively with Town staff and elected officials. The advantage of neighborhood and area plans is that they provide the governing body and all residents of an area an agreed-upon framework for future development, ideally avoiding all the piecemeal disputes regarding development over time in the area. Areas plans should be subject to change over time; but if an area plan is developed in an inclusive and rigorous process it can provide strong guidance and controls for future development that protect the interests of all parties, establish orderly

review and development procedures, and promote the general interest of the Town as a whole. As indicated above, Town staff supports development of area plans but recognize that additional staff and financial resources are necessary if the goal is to be achieved.

Area plans offer the best way for area residents to consider future development in their area in a comprehensive way and to resolve major concerns regarding individual development proposals in an equitable manner.

Silver City: Downtown Neighborhoods and Infill Opportunities

The older neighborhoods in Silver City have fewer opportunities for new growth and development than the newer residential areas north of US 180 and elsewhere in the Town. Even where lots are already built out with homes and other structures in older residential areas, there are infill opportunities for infill development. An inventory of available land for new development in the downtown and older neighborhoods could be created as part of a future growth strategy.

In summary, there are many opportunities for infill development in older neighborhoods as well as on vacant land within newer residential areas of the Town. Some sites in the Town will be more expensive to develop because of terrain, problems with cost and access to utilities, and other factors. In addition, development must respond to market trends and new homes must be targeted to the needs and desires of households that are making their homes in the area - so that in-town development can compete with the ETJ.

Development of these sites also depends upon the ingenuity of landowners and developers in seeking and creating opportunities. Success also depends upon the Town creating conditions that encourage more and better development within the Town. A successful infill strategy will support the creation of livable neighborhoods and communities. The trend is for new growth in the ETJ to exceed growth within the Town limits.

Development in the ETJ

Most development in the ETJ and areas close-in to the Town have occurred to the north of Silver City, most notably in the Indian Hills Subdivision directly north of Town but also: along Cottage San Road and Bear Mountain Road; in Wind Canyon and other development to the north and west of Town (both east and west of the continental Divide); and in the Arenas Valley primarily east of Town. The upscale Dos Griegos Subdivision is located north of Indian Hills on relatively steep slopes and uplands above the Town. Development directly to the north has been more extensive than in other areas, and subdivisions in this area constitute an almost seamless extension of the Town.

Development in the Wind Canyon area (outside the ETJ) is primarily higher priced homes, although this area and others in the ETJ also include more modest homes and manufactured homes. This means that the ETJ and other close-in areas do have a mix of housing types and prices, reflecting a mix of incomes and housing choices.

Toward the south and east of Town development has occurred: along Ridge Road south of Town; along Mountain View Road to the east; and along the Bypass road connecting NM 90 South and US 180 West. In these areas, development is more likely to be modest homes and primarily manufactured homes.

South of Town within the Town limits, even with manufactured homes, one is more likely to find paved streets and modest landscaping, with most residents enjoying hook-ups to the Town's water and sewer systems. The contrast between town and county development patterns was seen as an example of the need for more cooperation between the Town and the county to help assure quality development in these areas. The goal is to raise standards for development in the urban area of the ETJ and to avoid water contamination and other problems associated with crowded homes on wells and septic systems.

The Town and county recognize that a strong real estate market and construction industry is one of the important foundations for a continuing strong economy. Public officials want to support this economic activity. The Town's goal is to promote policies that assure new growth is desirable for both the town and the region.

Growth Management in the ETJ: Town-County Cooperation

The preferred approach today for growth management is a common town-county strategy for managing growth in the ETJ. The most viable policy options include:

- Controls over sewer and water extensions into the ETJ
- Common agreements between county and town for growth management in the ETJ

Summary of Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures

Goal 1: Maintain Silver City's sense of place

Policy: Ensure the Land Use Code is updated to reflect current trends in Land Use Planning with consideration for Silver City's unique character.

Implementation Measures:

A. Comprehensive Plan Consistency Review

Review all public documents for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Ensure projects conform to the goals and policies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. The Town should revise any public documents and/or projects that do not conform to the plan.

B. Development Incentives

Chapter 16 of the Town of Silver City Code of Ordinances provides a guideline for public support of development projects to foster, promote and enhance the addition of base jobs to the region and, further, to allow for public support of projects that foster,

promote and enhance the development of culture and art within the town by the construction or renovation of facilities, and other projects.

C. Development Regulations - Zoning

The Town should coordinate land use and community design goals with the goals of other planning elements such as housing, community design, transportation and economic development. The Town's development regulations should reflect this integrated approach to planning, ensuring all new development has a beneficial influence on the quality of life to improve future opportunities for the community. The zoning map should be updated to reflect all categories and current uses.

D. Development Review

The development review process includes discretionary review by the Planning and Zoning Commission based on the goals and policies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, as well as criteria established by the Town's zoning and subdivision ordinances, and other Town regulations and adopted guidelines. Development review also includes administrative review of projects to verify compliance with regional, state and federal laws and policies, and standards set by the Town through adoption of building and fire codes, engineering standards, and other such regulations and ordinances. Development review should also assess the impact of new development on the demand for transportation and parking improvements both on- and off-site; demand for infrastructure and public services; adjacent land use impacts; and, to implement mitigation measures and other mechanisms to help finance needed infrastructure, transportation, and land use and community design improvements throughout the Town. Care should be taken to ensure new development supports walkability.

E. Growth Management Strategy & Land Use Category Review

The Town staff should review the Town's population growth rate every five years and revise the Comprehensive Plan's growth strategy accordingly. Ultimately, the Comprehensive Plan growth strategy should match infrastructure planning and should outline adequate and appropriate development to meet current and future trends.

F. Fiscal Impact Assessment

The Town should consider the development of a fiscal impact assessment process that would identify the economic and fiscal impacts of new development projects. The process should establish thresholds for the size and character of the development that triggers the assessment. Ultimately a fiscal impact assessment should evaluate the benefit of the new development in terms of land use and economic development as well as the infrastructure and public service costs.

Fiscal impacts of development also include impacts on the transportation system, and a traffic impact analysis should be required for new development that generates threshold levels traffic, so that the developer is held responsible for relevant

off-site improvements or makes the required in lieu payments to a transportation improvement fund.

G. Grant Funds

The Town should determine whether grant funds are available from federal, state and/or private sources for projects that will improve the appearance of the community and promote land use and community design goals. In addition, the Town should recognize the value of finding grant funds for environmental/open space protection and restoration, parks and recreation improvements, and preparation of design guidelines to enhance community character. Improving the quality of life in the area will ensure that citizens and businesses continue to locate in the Town because of its great quality of life features.

H. Impact Fees and Building Permits

The Town should reevaluate the current fee structure for developers and builders and increase fees as appropriate to cover actual costs of administration and impacts.

I. Intergovernmental Coordination

The Town should continue to collaborate with the adjacent jurisdictions including Grant County, particularly with regards to the ETJ, the Village of Santa Clara, the City of Bayard, the Town of Hurley as well as local and regional organizations, such as the Council of Governments, and state and federal agencies in implementing appropriate land use planning and community design for the Town and throughout the region. The Town should work closely with all applicable agencies and organizations to ensure that development projects meet the Town's interests and ultimately offer positive land use and community design solutions both on a local and regional scale.

J. Master Pedestrian Plan

The Town of Silver City has done exemplary work in this area (see Chapter on Public Facilities and Services) and should continue work related to creation and implementation of a Master Pedestrian Plan that identifies new roads and improvements to existing roads necessary to incorporate facilities for pedestrians. Ultimately, a Master Pedestrian Plan can complement efforts to revitalize areas in and around the Town of Silver City.

K. Special Districts

Working with the Town, property owners can form special districts to assist in financing desired area improvements such as street lighting, landscaping improvements, and other streetscape enhancements. Special Districts could include new development in the proposed Silver City Medical District and the 32nd Street neighborhood; the Western New Mexico University campus and adjacent sites for student housing and related commercial activity; and, other districts/areas throughout Town that are unique and serve a special role in the community. The Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan can be used as a guide for other plans.

L. Neighborhood, District and Area Plans

The Town should work with residents to adopt neighborhood, district and area plans that are appropriate to the different areas and sections of the Town.

M. Private/Public Partnerships

The Town should encourage local, regional and state private/public partnerships to address land use and community design issues. The Town should actively involve residents, landowners, not-for-profit organizations, and local businesses in local and regional community design initiatives and neighborhood safety programs. The Town should increase awareness among local citizens and businesses about the importance of land use and community design and elicit their support in maintaining and revitalizing important natural, cultural and historic treasures within the community. Working with local developers and businesses, the Town should invest in maintaining and enhancing existing streets, buildings and parks, while supporting future community design incentives and projects. In addition, the Town should partner with local citizens to develop a Neighborhood Watch Programs to assist residents in monitoring and maintaining the safety and well-being of the community.

N. Streetscape Design Guidelines and Signage

Ultimately, recognize and promote streets as important components of the Town's public realm. Signage is an important part of the Town's streetscape, and signage should be appropriate to the neighborhood or district, with special attention to the character of the historic downtown and adjacent historic neighborhoods. In addition to regulation of private sector signage, the Town should develop and implement an overall plan for signage at gateways to the Town and at other key points, in order to direct visitors and residents to points of interest throughout the Town.

O. Streetscape Improvement Program

The Town's major corridors including US 180 and NM 90 would benefit from street improvements such as signage, continuous sidewalks, designated bike lanes, and highly visible crosswalks. Other amenities to improve these important streets could include decorative lighting, landscaping and street trees. In addition, the Town can sponsor the design of entry monuments and landscape improvement projects to improve the appearance these important corridors and the entryways into the Town.

Through a Streetscape Improvement Program, residents, civic organizations, and local business could be actively engaged in creating new entry signs, monuments, landmarks and other basic street improvements at main entry points and key locations along these major corridors. The Street Improvement Program would help to prioritize improvements and outline a program for funding and implementation, and in so doing, assist in dramatically enhancing the Town's entryways and key streets.

Chapter 4 Transportation & Circulation

Accomplishments from the 2004 Plan

Since the 2004 Plan's adoption, the following Transportation Goals have been met:

- Master Bicycle Plan was completed in 2016.
- Design standards were updated in the Land Use Code of 2010.
- Several miles of sidewalk have been constructed, repaired or updated.
- Parking guidelines were updated in the Land Use Code of 2010.
- Traffic control has been reviewed and modified to enhance the flow of traffic.

Major Routes

Today US 180 and NM 90² remain the major routes connecting Silver City to destinations in southern New Mexico and provide access to points north within the Gila National Forest and beyond. US 180 is the main commuter corridor between Silver City and Deming, and also serves the municipalities of Bayard, Santa Clara, and Hurley. US 180 is the route to the communities north and west of Silver City, including Cliff and Gila in Grant County, and Glenwood and Reserve in Catron County. NM 90 is the main commuter corridor between Silver City and Lordsburg, and serves the community of Tyrone. NM 90 (Hudson Street) also serves as the primary north-south arterial through the Town of Silver City, terminating at US 180. Both highways are key conduits for school buses, emergency service vehicles, and commercial trucks.

Transportation Trends & Analysis

Town residents expressed the desire for well-maintained and safe streets. In public meetings, responses to survey questions, and elsewhere, citizens were vocal about installing traffic mechanisms and making neighborhoods streets safer and more pedestrian-friendly.

Alternate Modes of Transportation: Pedestrian and Bicycle

The 2017 Plan highlights walking and bicycling not only for recreation and health but also as alternative modes of transportation. Studies confirm that when communities such as Silver City, dominated by traditional roadway systems (interconnected grids and sidewalks), achieve connectivity with pedestrian/bicycle pathways they realize lower levels of obesity and other chronic diseases associated with inactivity and lack of exercise. These studies demonstrate that alternate transit modes also relieve traffic congestion, lower noise levels (vehicles are the primary source of noise pollution), promote cleaner air by reducing emissions and better health--not to mention diminished stress and attendant health problems associated with vehicular commuting.

² State Highways are owned and maintained by the State of NM Department of Transportation not the Town of Silver City.

Even relatively small towns such as Silver City can realize benefits from alternatives to the automobile. Alternative modes are linked also with small town urbanism and the sense of place that is an important foundation for economic development. Economic development planners today also emphasize the importance of attracting young 25-44 year old entrepreneurs who have been responsible for innovations in the new technology and telecommunications economy, and for this reason, bicycle trails and open space are not just amenities but infrastructure essential to supporting economic development (See Ch. 7 Economic Development).

Significant numbers of Silver City residents enthusiastically support policies that promote and sustain amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as access for physically challenged individuals and wheelchair users. The Silver City Walkability and Accessibility Advocacy Group is a vocal group of advocates for goals and policies that promote pedestrian safety, sidewalk construction and maintenance, accessibility, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Accessibility: Compliance with ADA Requirements

The 2017 Comprehensive Plan and the 2010 Town of Silver City Land Use Code both affirm goals and policies that promote compliance with federal and state laws regarding access for people with a disability.

Summary of Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures

Goal 1: Make the Town's transportation system more efficient and responsive to the needs of all residents

Policy: Ensure that all decisions made regarding transportation reflect the standards set forth in this chapter.

Implementation Measures:

A. Create a Master Pedestrian and Recreation Trails Plan, in conjunction with a Master Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan. This Plan would target new roads and improvements to existing roads necessary to incorporate facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as locations throughout the Town, in order to create an interconnected trail system (integrated with the parks, recreation, open space and trails system) for recreational purposes. These respective plans would build on the extensive work already done by bicycle and trails advocates and Town officials. Ultimately, a Master Pedestrian Recreation Trails Plan will complement efforts of the Master Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan and together serve to revitalize neglected areas of the Town and continue to improve the quality of life.

B. Utilize the Infrastructure and Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) to prioritize transportation projects and secure funding. The ICIP outlines cost estimates, phasing, and financing for proposed projects. The Town reviews the ICIP annually to ensure that current and future transportation needs, including public transit needs,

are being addressed. The Town should be strategic in finding funding sources for ICIP transportation improvements, including securing federal funds available through MAP-21 and similar federal and state funding.

C. Development Regulations - Zoning

Coordinate all street and transportation planning with land use planning. The Town's development regulations should reflect this integrated approach to land and transportation planning. To ensure that impacts of new development on transportation and parking conditions in and around the development site are addressed, the Town should continue to require developers to:

- Fund traffic impact studies that identify on-site and off-site effects and mitigation measures; and implement transportation improvements adjacent to property, where appropriate; and
- The Town should review each new project to provide sidewalks and other amenities for pedestrians and cyclists as a means to encourage alternative modes of transportation as well as improve the safety, efficiency and aesthetics of streets.

D. Development Review

Development review should also be employed to assess any new development impact on the demand for both on and off-site transportation and parking.

E. Funding for Transportation Projects

Determine whether grant funds are available from federal, state and/or private sources for transportation projects. In addition, the Town will continue seeking grant funds for alternative transportation modes including pedestrian, bicycle and/or public transit.

Funding possibilities include federal, state and local sources. Federal funds may be available from MAP-21 funding and Hazardous Route funds. State funding is available from a number of sources, including: special fuel tax; trip tax; weight/distance tax; motor vehicle registration; motor vehicle transaction fee; driver's license fee; oversize/overweight fees; state legislature designated funds; New Mexico Finance Authority Funds; energy, minerals and resources funds. Local funds include the general fund; gross receipts tax revenues, and special bond issues. Private funds include assessment districts, development impact fees, right-of-way dedications, including conservation easements, and private construction.

F. Intergovernmental Coordination

Continue to collaborate with adjacent jurisdictions, including Grant County, Santa Clara, Bayard and Hurley. The Town shall also coordinate with the Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments, New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT), the MainStreet Program, Western New Mexico University, and other applicable agencies

and organizations to ensure an effective and efficient transportation system for Town residents. The Town should work closely with NMDOT to ensure that regional studies, such as those reviewing highway relief or bypass routes, match the Town's interests and ultimately offer positive transportation and economic development solutions both locally and regionally. The Town should actively participate in the intergovernmental implementation plan that is created as part of the updated Corridor Study currently underway as part of the Transportation Plan being prepared by Engineers Inc., and set forth initially in the 1997 Transportation Plan (see "Recommended Action Plan" in Implementation Plan for The Transportation Plan of Grant County, Town of Silver City, City of Bayard, Village of Santa Clara, and Town of Hurley, August 1997).

G. Neighborhood Traffic Management Program

Design a Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) that is administered by Town staff but would focus on actively involving residents in identifying and addressing traffic issues in their neighborhoods. The NTMP would include a survey of residents to determine reasons for vehicle trips, the results of which would provide the basis for mixed-use zoning within neighborhood centers that would make possible pedestrian/bicycle alternatives. Participating neighborhoods will receive an NTMP handbook that outlines research and methods required to address local transportation issues, such as the type of traffic data that should be collected; examples of traffic calming measures; prioritization methodology; and, funding mechanisms.

H. Private/Public Partnerships

Proactively involve residents, landowners, not-for-profit organizations, and local businesses in local and regional transportation initiatives and bicycle and pedestrian safety programs. The Town should continue to increase awareness among local citizens and businesses about the importance of alternative transportation modes. Working with local developers and businesses, the Town should invest in maintaining and enhancing existing streets and parking lots, while supporting future streetscape design incentives and improvement projects. Private developers and businesses can help improve the transportation system and maintain it in the future. Developer contributions will be based on traffic impact studies.

I. Strategic Transit Service Plan

Maintain and increase current levels of service provided by Corre Caminos. Develop a Strategic Transit Service Plan (STSP) that identifies opportunities for improved transit service, including increasing the frequency, level of service, and the number of transit routes, as well as establishing future corridors for fixed route service within and around the Town. Ensure that the STSP promotes efforts to increase transit ridership region-wide as a means to reduce traffic congestion within the Town and throughout the region. The STSP should recognize and identify opportunities to collaborate with regional and state transit initiatives.

J. Streetscape Improvement Program

The Town's major corridors through Town and adjacent to the downtown area, US 180 and NM 90, would benefit from improvements such as signage, continuous sidewalks, designated bike lanes, and highly visible crosswalks. Other amenities to improve these important streets could include decorative lighting, landscaping and street trees.

Through a Streetscape Improvement Program administered by the Town, residents, civic groups, and local business could be actively engaged in creating new entry signs, monuments, landmarks and other basic street improvements at entry points and key locations along these major corridors. The Improvement Program would help to prioritize improvements and outline a program for funding (potential sources could include MAP-21, federal and state agencies and non-profit foundations) and implementation, and in so doing, assist in dramatically enhancing the appearance of Silver City's streets. Any development should examine all modes of transportation. A Town-wide signage design/program should be considered.

Chapter 5 Housing

Accomplishments from the 2004 Plan

Since the 2004 Plan's adoption, the following Housing Goals have been met:

- Vista de Plata Subdivision was created for affordable workforce housing.
- The Hillcrest Site was donated for affordable senior housing.
- Mixed-use zoning enabled infill development.
- Standards for manufactured home skirting and installation were included in the Land Use Code of 2010.

Population Demographics

The Town of Silver City's population has swung from rapid increase to little or no growth, and even net loss. By the mid 1930's the Town surpassed its 1886 peak of 4,000 residents. Silver City experienced a high growth rate from 1940 to 1950 (39.2 percent). Yet, through 1950 to 1960, the rate of growth diminished (0.7 percent), and the population decreased. After the 60's the growth rate rebounded with about a 2.3 percent increase per year until the 1980s. From 1980 to 1990, the population slowed significantly with an increase of 1.8 percent. Following past trends, the decade 1990 to 2000 saw a total decrease in the population of 0.01 percent.

Silver City's population has dropped from 10,683 in 1990 to 10,427 in the year 2016. Many of the population swings are actually rollercoaster unemployment caused by mine closures and layoffs due to copper price fluctuations. Other factors include occupancy of rental units by WNMU students, and seasonal residency by retirees who only winter in Silver City.

Based on NM Economic Development Department 2016 data, 38 percent of Silver City Residents are between the ages of 45 to 74 years. Approximately 18 percent of residents are 14 years or under, while 13 percent are teenagers and young adults, aged 15 to 24. Those between the ages of 55 to 64 years comprise about 14 percent of the population while those 65 to 84 account for 19 percent. Recent indicators of race/ethnicity show about a 50-50 split between Anglo and Hispanic residents.

Household Types³

The original Town plat acknowledged different income levels among residents by providing small inexpensive lots in the southwestern quarter of Town, and larger lots elsewhere for those with more money. The sole construction rule, enacted soon after adoption of the Town's charter, was that all buildings were to be of brick or other fireproof material. The provision's legacy is a stock of Victorian-styled brick homes constructed by miners and other prosperous residents. Less well known is the substantial inventory of smaller homes constructed of adobe, cobbled rock, and other local materials in vernacular styles, often by the tenants themselves.

³ See Appendix 7

Today, according to the US Department of Commerce 2015 Census Bureau, American Community Survey [hereinafter, "US Census Survey"], the Town of Silver City has a total of approximately 4,712 housing units, with an average household size of 2.25 persons per unit. Family households make up the majority (approximately 65 percent) of dwelling types in the Town of Silver City.

Types of housing in Silver City generally are found in the same percentages found elsewhere in New Mexico. Approximately 65 percent of the units are single family dwellings. Multi-unit housing (including duplexes, multi-family homes and small apartments) account for a little less than 15 percent of housing types, and about 20 percent of units are manufactured/mobile homes.

Household Income

According to the NM Economic Development Department, median household income in 2016 for Silver City was \$37,527. A portion of the population, 18.8 percent, had a household income within the range of \$15,000 to \$24,999, while 18.6 percent earned less than 15,000. According to the 2015 US Census Survey 23.8 percent of residents are below the poverty level.

Owner Occupancy Rate

According to the NM Economic Development Department, as of 2016, 50.9 percent of the housing units in Silver City were owner occupied. That year the median house cost in the Town was \$156,087.00. Renter-occupied housing makes up 30 percent of Silver City's total housing units. (US Census Survey). The median cost to rent a unit in Silver City is \$539, slightly higher than the median for Grant County \$500.

Affordable Housing

The lack of decent, affordable housing is not conducive to Silver City's healthy economic future. Affordable housing provides the foundation for sustainable economic development, leading to higher quality of life and higher standard of living. The Town has made progress over the years in creating the conditions necessary for affordable housing. More work on this complex issue is required.

In relation to homeownership the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines "affordability" as a household that pays no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing. Without subsidies families who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing can be considered financially burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. (US HUD 2017).

The shortage of affordable decent housing impedes local economic development. Business owners suffer because they cannot offer wages high enough for prospective employees to buy or rent acceptable housing. So-called support and entry level workers as well as members of

the “essential workforce” (nurses, teachers, police, etc.), and the “cost-burdened” (disabled, single parents, elderly) often do not earn enough to afford rent or mortgage payments.

Population Projections

	2010 Census <u>Projections</u>						2010–2040 Change	
	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040		Num.	Pct.
New Mexico	2,059,179	2,187,183	2,247,564	2,308,475	2,360,091	2,401,480	+342,301	+16.62
Bernalillo	662,564	715,115	740,500	763,571	783,612	799,465	+136,901	+20.66
Catron	3,725	3,333	3,109	2,875	2,641	2,418	-1,307	-35.09
Grant	29,514	28,505	27,449	26,407	25,371	24,365	-1,549	-5.25
Hidalgo	4,894	4,612	4,333	4,072	3,809	3,535	-1,359	-27.77
Luna	25,095	25,283	25,021	24,795	24,589	24,348	-747	-2.98

Source: Geospatial and Population Status, UNM, GPS Population Projections, Release Date February, 2017

Manufactured Homes

According to the updated NMSU Study (see chapter 3, Land Use) there were 961 manufactured homes within the city limits. They are not concentrated in specific areas or segregated into manufactured home parks/subdivisions or private lots outside of traditional residential areas. Instead, manufactured homes are located in every quadrant of the city. During recent decades, they have become one of the primary sources of shelter in Silver City, primarily because of price and readily available sources of financing.

Since the updates to the Land Use Code in 2010, single-wide manufactured homes have been restricted to fewer residential zoning categories; multi-section manufactured homes are allowed in most residential zoning categories. While state statutes are liberal regarding the siting of manufactured homes, their location can be influenced through local architectural standards or square footage minimums.

Housing Needs

Based on feedback at public meetings, the most pressing housing issue in Silver City is the lack of affordable rental units and senior housing. Much of the housing stock within the Town has not been well maintained and many residents expressed dismay over that. Other concerns regarding housing include:

- The shortage of housing stock designed for senior citizens: both owner-occupied and rental;

- The limited availability of affordable housing, both rental and for sale;
- The social problem created by higher housing costs that are making it difficult for long-term residents -- disproportionately Mexican/Hispanic -- to continue living inside the Town limits of Silver City.

Demand for housing has resulted in increases in home prices and rental costs. In 2002 the median home price was \$107,200. In 2015 the figure was \$143,559. Given the low average and median income for Silver City households, it is becoming more and more difficult for many to become homeowners or to find affordable rental housing. The high demand for housing continues to be aggravated by changes in the nature of the population; a substantial amount of local growth is attributable to migration by older retired people, who have smaller than average families, with the result being more houses are needed for fewer people.

In many cases, deterioration has continued to such an extent that rehabilitation is not a viable option, and dwellings need to be demolished and new homes constructed. Both public and private nonprofit programs, such as Habitat for Humanity and Neighborhood Housing Services, may be asked to assist with these serious problems.

Manufactured homes continue to supplant site-built homes throughout the community as an affordable alternative for scores of households. This preponderance of manufactured homes creates some community character issues and tends to compromise Silver City's distinctive "sense of place". To address this issue, the Comprehensive Plan calls for joint town and county efforts to manage growth in the ETJ where manufactured homes are abundant. Here poor site design, inadequate grading, improper water and sewer systems, and restoration practices, poorly designed and constructed roadways, and lack of adequate landscaping make for unsightly and often substandard living conditions, as well as unsightly neighborhoods.

Year	Population	Household Average Size	Owner Occupied Units	Rental Occupied Units	Median Household Income	Median Home Value	Median Age
2000	10,635	2.43	57.6%	31.5%	\$31,374	\$87,700	36.9
2010	10,315	2.25	52.7%	36.9%	\$33,108	\$118,600	39.7
2016	10,407	2.27	50.9%	35.6%	\$37,527	\$156,087	41.9
2021	10,427	2.93	49.9%	49.9%	\$38,244	\$193,214	42.6

4

⁴ Source: US Census Bureau, American Fact Finder for 2016

Summary of Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures

Goal 1: Prioritize safe housing for residents of Silver City.

Policy: Ensure the Town of Silver City pursues all avenues for a mixture of fair, affordable housing for all income levels.

Implementation Measures:

A. Comprehensive Plan Consistency Review

Review all public documents for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Ensure projects conform to the goals and policies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. The Town should revise any public documents and/or projects that do not conform to the plan.

B. Design Guidelines

Design guidelines are a tool for ensuring that development is appropriate to the area and that it functions well for the community. Design guidelines can help to ensure that a new housing development maintains and enhances the aesthetic quality and character of the community. Guidelines should serve to ensure that all new development reflects and enhances existing land use patterns, community design elements, and sustainability. Design standards, including landscape standards, can be effective in addressing the poor appearance of manufactured homes, e.g.

C. Development Incentives

Offering reasonable financial incentives to property owners and developers for construction of affordable housing can help to meet the existing shortage. Development incentives may be in the form of density and development intensity bonuses, and/or loosening of development regulations (i.e. reductions in parking requirements, height restrictions, setbacks, etc.) in exchange for the development of affordable housing allocations or community features/amenities that assist in achieving the Town's overall housing, community design and quality of life goals. Other incentives that could be used to encourage developers to accommodate low income housing in their projects include, but are not limited to:

- Lowering water and sewer hook-up fees for affordable housing developments;
- Reducing building permit fees for affordable housing developments;
- Reducing utility hook-up fees for affordable housing developments;
- Providing density bonuses in conjunction with inclusionary zoning provisions that require creation of a certain percentage of affordable homes.

D. Development Regulations - Zoning

Coordinate housing goals with the goals of other planning elements such as land use and community design, transportation and economic development. The Town's development regulations should reflect this integrated approach to planning, ensuring all new development has a beneficial influence on the quality of life to improve future opportunities for community growth and prosperity. The Town should incorporate those provisions of the Land Use Code that will require certain new projects to provide a percentage of affordable housing, as well as sidewalks, open space and/or other amenities for residents as a means to improve the overall affordability, safety, general appeal and aesthetics of the community.

E. Development Review

Includes discretionary review by the Planning and Zoning Commission based on the goals and policies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, as well as criteria established by the Town's Land Use Code, and other regulations and guidelines. Development review also includes administrative review of projects to verify compliance with regional, state and federal laws and policies, and standards set by the Town through adoption of building and fire codes, engineering standards, and other such regulations and ordinances. Development review should also assess the proposal in relation to the demand for housing; transportation and parking improvements both on and off-site; demand for infrastructure and public services; adjacent land use impacts; and, to implement mitigation measures and other mechanisms to help finance needed affordable housing, infrastructure, transportation, and land use and community design improvements throughout the Town.

F. Grant Funds

Determine whether grant funds are available to the community from federal or state sources for senior housing as well as affordable housing programs. Staff should make certain that the programs and policies, including grant and loan programs available, are fully leveraged.

In addition, the Town should recognize the value of supporting and finding grant funds for land use programs such as open space/environmental protection and restoration, parks and recreation improvements, as well as the preparation of design guidelines to enhance community character. Implementing such measures to improve the overall quality of life in the area will inform and attract quality new housing development for the Town and will ensure Silver City remains a great place to live, now and in the future.

G. Intergovernmental Coordination

Continue to collaborate with the adjacent jurisdictions including Grant County, particularly with regards to housing development in the ETJ, the Village of Santa Clara, the City of Bayard, the Town of Hurley, as well as local and regional organizations and state and federal agencies in implementing appropriate affordable housing programs for the Town and throughout the region. The Town should work with applicable agencies

and organizations to ensure housing for the homeless, as well as variety of quality housing options for lower income families and individuals, and for the community's senior citizens. The Town should ensure initiatives that assist in meeting the Town's housing needs and ultimately offer a diversity of housing solutions both locally and regionally.

H. Private/Public Partnerships

Encourage local, regional and state private/public partnerships to address economic development. The Town should actively involve residents, landowners, nonprofit organizations, and local businesses in local and regional housing initiatives and neighborhood safety programs. This includes partnerships with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and Neighborhood Housing Services. The Affordable Housing Roundtable in Santa Fe is also a model for the type of public-private partnership that can be created in Silver City.

The Town should increase awareness among local citizens and businesses about the importance of affordable housing. Working with local developers and businesses, the housing through development incentives and private/public projects. In addition, the Town should partner with local citizens to develop a Neighborhood Watch Program to assist residents in monitoring and maintaining the safety and well-being of the community.

Chapter 6 Public Facilities & Services

Accomplishments from the 2004 Plan

Since the 2004 Plan's adoption, the following Public Facilities & Services Goals have been met:

- Radio-read meters were installed to better track water usage and enable faster leak detection.
- The Fire Department ISO Rating improved to a 4.
- The ICIP is used to prioritize and coordinate street and utility projects.
- The Scott Park Multi-Use Fields were built.
- A solar array was constructed to power the wastewater treatment plant.

Public Facilities and Services

Silver City's growth and development is dependent on its ability to provide adequate public facilities and services. In the comprehensive planning process the Town evaluates these items critically so it can identify opportunities and constraints as it seeks to meet future needs.

The Town provides essential services and facilities, including:

- Administrative services, including purchasing, billing, budgeting, and public relations;
- Police, fire and emergency services, including the Town's shared responsibility for the county jail;
- Community facilities such as the library and museum;
- Streets and sidewalks;
- Parks, recreation and open space facilities; and
- Sewer, water and stormwater infrastructure and services.

During the comprehensive plan process in 2016/2017, participants were most concerned with streets and recreation facilities. Speed control and activities for youth were priorities for many people at the meetings.

Costs of public services and facilities are high and increasing. When appropriate, costs should be shared with Grant County for services that benefit the region. Staff and public officials of both the Town and county agree that cooperative agreements for police, fire and emergency services are working well and equitably. Joint Town-County agreements should be developed whenever the benefits of such arrangements are apparent. Other partnerships should also be explored to increase cost effectiveness. These might include arrangements between the Town and the U.S. Forest Service and the Town and Western New Mexico University.

Silver City Police Department (SCPD)

The SCPD has 36 allocated positions, made up of 31 sworn officers and 5 civilian employees. The current operating budget is \$2.9 million. The SCPD service area, approximately 10 square miles, includes a number of communities and residential areas beyond the Town limits. As a

result the workday population is roughly twice the size of the 2012 Census number. This fact is crucial in establishing a realistic load for police and emergency services. The present police facility was built and dedicated in 1969 and has become dated for providing efficient service. Increased workloads and technological advances foretell the need for a new, larger facility. The passing by Town voters of an increase in the percentage of local tax paid on goods and services has created an opportunity to fund additional positions for a more responsive team concept. While the public safety tax revenue will ameliorate the deficiencies in the SCPD resources, there is still a need for added support. Since the time of the last Comprehensive Plan (2004), the SCPD staffing level has decreased by 4 people, a reduction of 4 sworn positions. This reduction has impacted the Department negatively and has caused a diminished capacity to respond to citizen needs. The shortage can be rectified by increasing the resources of the Department in the following areas:

- 2 officers
- One clerical person for transcription, investigative record keeping and evidence room processing
- Additional workspace through expansion of present facility or a new building

Silver City Fire Department (SCFD)

The SCFD employs at this time 21 shift personnel, 2 administration personnel, and 2 inspectors. SCFD is operating on a current annual budget of \$1.2 million; this includes the General Fund, Fire Fund and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Fund.

The SCFD has 6 paramedics, 12 Intermediate EMT'S and 4 Basic EMT'S. The SCFD services the Town of Silver City and the ETJ. The SCFD will respond to calls outside its service area if needed for major disasters or if otherwise specially requested. There are 9 fire departments in areas outside the Town limits.

Department facilities include:

- Station 1, located at 1011 N. Hudson St., which was built in 1970, and
- Station 2, located at 1835 E. 32nd St., which was built in the early 1990's.
- Administration is located at the Town of Silver City Annex Building at 1203 N Hudson Street.

The SCFD strategy in responding to fires that cannot be prevented is simple – get there fast and extinguish the fire while it is still small. When firefighters arrive before flashover, they usually find a low-intensity blaze that requires very little water and little effort to extinguish. However, once flashover occurs, ordinary fire suppression techniques have little impact on life and property loss in the immediate vicinity of the fire. After flashover, the smoke and heat generated by the fire dramatically reduce chances of safe evacuation in the remainder of the building. After flashover, the blaze also presents much greater danger to firefighters. The national standard for arrival at a fire scene as dictated by NFPA is 80% of calls within 7 minutes or less.

At this time, the SCFD does not meet the minimum NFPA staffing requirements for an engine company (which is 4 personnel on an engine and 6 personnel on an aerial apparatus). Medical alarms are the majority of the calls, estimated at approximately 80% of all calls. Most victims of medical emergencies in the Town of Silver City receive their first assistance from the fire department. Medical response is an integral part of the Town of Silver City firefighter's job. The American Heart Association established a standard response time of less than four minutes for basic life support to begin and four to eight minutes for advanced life support to begin for victims of cardiac arrest. Response times for trauma victims are also critical. Medical researchers have linked response times for EMS to survival of major trauma victims.

The gold standard for treatment of trauma is to have the patient in surgery within 60 minutes of the accident. We accomplish this goal by

- Rapid response times
- Efficient and skilled extrication technique (when required)
- Short scene times; accomplishing critical treatment quickly and efficiently
- Early notification to transport facility or receiving facility so that they may prepare for arrival of the patient
- Well established positive relationships with the medical personnel on the transporting agency, the helicopter transport and/or at the receiving hospital.

The SCFD's response time in the Town limits averages 2-4 minutes, in the ETJ it averages 4-6 minutes. These averages are for Fire and EMS response only. For public service alarms, which are not a life threat, the response averages 5-8 minutes. The SCFD is committed to maintaining a high degree of public confidence by exhibiting state-of-the art skills, dedication and professionalism in the provision of the fire and other emergency services.

The SCFD's other responsibilities include:

- Building pre plans
- Classes on fire safety, fire prevention, and use of fire extinguishers
- First Aid, CPR classes and safety classes
- Traffic light and crosswalk signal maintenance
- Vehicle and apparatus maintenance
- Hydrant maintenance of the 989 hydrants in the Town's water system.

With the adoption of the 2015 International Fire Code, as well as local ordinances, the Town of Silver City has set a high standard for fire protection and prevention. Continually updating the fire codes on a three year cycle will keep the city in the forefront of prevention and public safety.

The Fire Prevention Bureau is now performing business inspections with the goal to identify and inspect all business in the city. Present plans will ensure enough personnel will be hired to inspect every business in the city on a yearly basis. Because many commercial

buildings/businesses have life safety systems that must be maintained annually by code it is imperative that yearly fire inspections occur to ensure the life safety of our citizens.

The Town of Silver City currently has a Fire Chief who is the designated Fire Marshal and two fire inspectors that comprise the Fire Prevention Bureau.

The Fire Preventions Bureaus duties and responsibilities include:

- The Fire Prevention Bureau Plans review
- New and existing building inspections
- Fire Code Enforcement
- Operational and construction permits
- Fire Investigation
- Fire evacuation drills
- Public Education
- Inspections for pyrotechnics
- Enforcement of the Abatement of Dangerous Buildings Code.

Currently the department maintains an insurance rating of 4 which is good. The department's goal is to decrease this rating. The decrease in ISO (Insurance Services Organization) rating would greatly benefit commercial building insurance rates. Residential insurance rates for cities with ISO ratings between 1 and 4 are the same, based on similar structure, replacement cost and location. ISO rates cities/fire departments every 3-5 years. The Town of Silver City was rated two years ago and the rating was lowered from a 5 to a 4.

Public Works

The Public Works Department is committed to providing quality services and customer satisfaction to the citizens of Silver City. The objectives of the various divisions are as follows:

- Street Division: well-maintained streets and sidewalks that meet the needs of motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians within Town limits;
- Sanitation Division: reliable residential and commercial recycling and solid waste collection in a timely and courteous manner;
- Parks Division: clean, safe and well-equipped parks and ballfields for the enjoyment of everyone;
- Pool: provide an attractive, safe, and professionally run pool for use by all ages;
- Recreation Center: cost effective, safe, and enjoyable learning environment for local children, as well as recreational services for adults;

- Cemetery: well-maintained cemetery, that citizens are proud of and visit; and
- Maintenance Division: keep the Town's motor pool completely safe and functioning while minimizing maintenance costs and decreasing downtime.

The Public Works Department is responsible for securing and administering the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and other grants for improvements of roads, streets and trails, including chip seal for the roadways remaining unpaved within the Town.

The Department also has the duty to maintain sidewalks and streets in order to assure access not only for motorized vehicles but also for bicycles-within roadways-and for pedestrians and wheelchairs on the Town's sidewalks. The hilly terrain, combined with the poor condition of aging sidewalks downtown, makes it difficult to repair this infrastructure and to create new sidewalks where necessary. The task is further complicated because telephone poles and other obstructions exist within the pedestrian rights-of-way, and ADA-compliant access at street intersections is problematic because of higher than normal curbs to protect from seasonal flooding.

With limited resources, the Town supplies materials to property owners who agree to pay for labor to make appropriate repairs. This program works well, but would benefit from greater publicity to inform citizens of the opportunity. The necessity for such programs would be lessened if there were better coordination between the Town, public utilities companies and private contractors and property-owners.

Utilities: Water and Sewer

The Water Department, Sewer Department and Wastewater Treatment Plant currently employ fewer than 20 people. The Treatment plant has a capacity to treat on the average 2 million gallons per day and the average daily flow is 1.36 MGD. The Town updated its water conservation plan in 2016.

The number of new water taps has declined in the last decade, after a peak of approximately 200 in the period 1996-98. The average for the years 2012-2016 was only 13. New tap installation for areas outside the Town limits is also low, with an average of 4 for the years 2012-2016.

In response to the Town's concerns regarding management of growth within the Town and the ETJ, the Town now has an ordinance in place that regulates water and sewer extensions (Town of Silver City Code of Ordinances, Article N, Sec. 30-83). It is already standard procedure that when new subdivisions are approved, water contracts are included in the approval process that outlines water usage and the primary right to in-town users.

The Water and Sewer Departments are the only two agencies that generate revenue. Still, a thorough financial model would be necessary to determine more accurately the financial and

other benefits to the Town from extending water service to areas outside the Town limits. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town establish a full life-cycle cost accounting method that takes into account all costs for both systems and revenues, including initial capital costs, recurring capitals costs, and operations and maintenance costs. If this methodology is established, the Town will be in a better position to evaluate the relative costs and benefits of providing service to additional customers. This approach will help the Town to determine the point at which favorable marginal costs of extending service might end and the larger customer base might begin to present a burden on the system as a whole, now and in the future.

The Utilities Department of the Town of Silver City has implemented practices to reduce the amount of water unaccounted for over the past several years. The Town regularly performs meter testing at booster stations, individual wells, and large water users within the Town. The Utilities Department also performs leak detection surveys 1-2 times a year to identify subsurface leaks. The Meters Department recently installed radio read meters which help with leak detection. The Town reports dramatic decreases in the amount of water that is lost or unaccounted for in the system, and hopes to improve even more. The combination of recent conservation efforts by Town users and reduced losses in the system make policy-makers confident that an increase in service to utilities customers outside the Town will not compromise service to Town residents.

In 2016 Silver City participated in the updating of the regional water plan. This plan considered supply and demand for the entire southwest region of the State and has become part of an overall State Water Plan. The Town is currently updating the existing 40-year water.

Water extensions occur to individual homes within subdivisions, as part of an extension agreement with the developer of the property, or to water associations that are created by a developer or a legally organized group of residents within an area. Silver City has agreements in place to provide water on a wholesale basis to the following:

- **Arenas Valley Water Association**

Entered into agreement with the Town in 1986 for water delivery to residents of the Arenas Valley area. The agreement established a maximum amount of water to be delivered, or 200 acre-feet of water per year. In 2014, the association used a total of 124.5 acre-feet of water.

- **Pinos Altos Water Association**

Entered into agreement with the Town in May 1987 for water delivery to residents of Pinos Altos. The agreement established a limit, set not to exceed 75 acre-feet per year during the life of the agreement. The initial number of connections established by the agreement was 93. During 2014, the association utilized 25.94 acre-feet of water.

- **Rosedale Water Association**

Entered into agreement with the Town in April 1992 for water delivery to benefit residents living in the area of Rosedale Road. The agreement calls for no more than 35 acre-feet of water per year. In 2014, the Association utilized approximately 17.96 acre-feet of water and has imposed a moratorium on new connections to allow a "cushion" and to help assure that the association did not exceed the contracted amount. In addition, a boundary of the service area was established in the agreement.

- **Tyrone Water Association**

This was created by an agreement between the Town and Phelps Dodge Corporation in April 1967. The agreement provided for the delivery of water to the proposed Tyrone Townsite, which was then comprised of 212 individual residences, a community park, a fire and police facility, a company mercantile store, a service station and other minor installations. The agreement has since been amended and does not have a cap on the amount of water that can be used, nor does it have a termination date. It is believed that the Townsite now has 313 residential connections. In year 2014, the association utilized 76.08 acre-feet of water for the year.

Silver City Public Library

The Silver City Public Library currently has 9.25 Full Time Equivalent employees and 25 volunteers with an operating current budget of \$478,895. The Silver City Public Library Strategic Plan 2016-2019 was completed in 2016 and revised in 2017; the information from that study has been used to update the Comprehensive Plan. The Strategic Goals and Objectives 2017-2020, in the current Silver City Public Library: Strategic Plan should be consulted when making decisions about the library.

The Library's book collection includes 52,170 items; 8,011 patrons are currently registered. The library has a computerized card catalog which may be accessed both at the library and by patrons at home or elsewhere. The library also has computers for public use of the Internet. The number of sessions for the public use computers for FY 2015-16 was 19,660 and the number of wireless sessions provided was more than 5,200.

Silver City Museum

The Silver City Museum is located at 312 West Broadway in the historic Ailman House and has an operating budget of approximately \$283,900. The Silver City Museum creates opportunities for residents and visitors to explore, understand, and celebrate the rich and diverse cultural heritage of southwestern New Mexico by collecting, preserving, researching and interpreting the region's unique history. Museum events educate and entertain residents and visitors interested in the rich and diverse history of southwest New Mexico. A wide range of events draw the whole family to the Museum. The Ailman House and all it contains are preserved for the future. Museum exhibits present the collections as well as materials from other sources. The collection comprises well over 20,000 objects & approximately 17,000 photos. Unique

interactive exhibits bring the collection and the history of southwest New Mexico to life for adults and children. The museum focuses on public education including programming for adults and children. Exhibits illustrate the cultural heritage of southwestern New Mexico and the Town of Silver City through unique permanent collections. Events and activities link local residents and visitors to cultural events with historical significance.

Parks, Recreational Facilities, Trails & Open Space

In common with many other mining communities platted in the 19th century, the Silver City's original Townsite had no parks or plazas. But the Town's plat had definite boundaries, and escape to the surrounding open space of ranches, forests and unsettled land was sufficient respite from daily life.



In 2016, Silver City had 22 acres of neighborhood parks, a large swimming pool on Silver Street, and a recreation center in the old National Guard Armory. The 18-hole golf course is currently being managed by Western New Mexico University. Many acres of open space such as Boston Hill offer hiking within the Town limits. A new sports complex has been constructed at Scott Park. A very important community concern identified in the 1996 Comprehensive Plan, the 2004 Comprehensive Plan and the 2017 Comprehensive Plan was the provision of more and better recreational opportunities, especially for youth.

The Silver City 2016 Parks Survey completed by the Town's Community Development Department provides information for all parks facilities at the time of the 2017 Comprehensive Plan. This is attached as Appendix 4. Grants and donations, park dedications as required by ordinance, and the conversion of town property remain the principal strategies for developing new parks. In the first and second instances, the scope, timing, and location of recreational development are difficult to predict. An opportunity exists, however, to provide additional parks by converting portions of the town's large and dispersed properties to new and

appropriate recreational uses. A strategy for parks based on inventory and public inquiry, is the means by which the Town can chart the course for an uncertain future, the current tangible assets of the community, and identified need.

Summary of Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures

Goal 1: Maintain the current level of service while researching new and innovative ways to increase the level of services while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Policy: Ensure decisions are made with consideration paid to level of service, functionality, budgetary appropriateness and community needs.

Implementation Measures:

A. Annual Budget

The Town's Annual Budget continues to fund public facilities and services adequately. It places police and fire protection as a top priority. Also it places a high priority on sewer and water line maintenance and replacement. The Library and Museum should be considered valuable amenities that the Town provides for its citizens. The Annual Budget must ensure funds are available for the safety inspection and maintenance of public facilities. Defects resulting from deferred maintenance should be corrected as soon as possible so that replacement costs are avoided. All department heads have indicated that budget constraints make delivery of desired level of services difficult. Insofar as possible, the Annual Budget should also ensure adequate staff is hired to provide and oversee public services.

B. Asset Replacement Fund

This should be created to ensure that Town facilities are brought up to and/or maintained at current code specifications. The source of funding could include general fund reserves, state grants for upgrades, and voter approved special taxes. In addition, the Town should make annual contributions to the asset replacement fund equal to between 3 and 5 percent of the total replacement cost of all major civic facilities so that they can be rebuilt or significantly renovated within 20 to 30 years. Historic Preservation Grant funding should be pursued for these projects which include the Museum building and the Library.

C. Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan.

The ICIP is discussed at Ch. 4, Transportation & Circulation. The Town reviews the ICIP annually to ensure current and future public service and facility needs are included. The Town should ensure funding and long-range facility planning adequately anticipates future demands of growth and the lifecycle replacement of equipment and infrastructure. The Town should be deft in identifying funding sources for public service and facility improvements, including any relevant federal and state funds.

D. Development Regulations - Zoning

Coordinate public facility and service goals with those of other planning elements such as land use and transportation. The Town's development regulations should reflect this integrated approach to planning, ensuring that new development has a multiple benefits, not only for safety but also for the quality of life and social well-being. The Town should also incorporate provisions that will require each new project to provide park space and/or other public amenities as well as costs associated with police and fire services.

E. Development Review

Evaluate projects for their impact on parks and recreation services and facilities, and consider whether the project site would meet any community park and recreation needs. The safety and protection of new development must be evaluated in terms of existing resources. Recommendations such as the need for additional equipment, facilities, and adequate access may be incorporated as conditions of approval. Ultimately, the Town should approve new development only if the capacity of public infrastructure is in place or can be reasonably provided.

F. Fire Hazard Reduction Program

Continue to promote fire safety in Silver City through fire prevention and public information programs. Emphasis should be placed on very high Fire Hazard Severity zones in the Town as they relate to definable fire and fire safety hazards and on strengthening existing codes in relation to high hazard areas. Working with the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department - Forestry Division, and with federal agencies, the Town should review and implement fire prevention management strategies as outlined in EMNRD's Forestry Division implementation plan for communities at risk of fire.

G. Fiscal Impact Assessment

Consider the development of a fiscal impact assessment process that would identify the economic and fiscal impacts of new development projects. The process should establish size thresholds that trigger the assessment: for example development projects of more than 10 housing units should require a fiscal impact assessment. Ultimately, a fiscal impact assessment should evaluate the benefit of the new development in terms of land use and economic advantage as well as the infrastructure and public service costs. The assessment should undertake a full life-cycle analysis of the original capital, recurring, and operation and maintenance costs as they relate to required infrastructure for all new and retrofitted development.

H. GIS Data Base

The Town should ensure that an inventory with accurate records of existing infrastructure is maintained through a GIS data base and mapping system. The system should be used to:

- Map existing infrastructure;

- Assist in developing a maintenance and replacement schedule;
- Provide accurate, reliable, and readily accessible information on current infrastructure conditions;
- Assist in determining future infrastructure needs for the community; and,
- Map future infrastructure needs.

In addition, the Town should ensure that an inventory of existing parks, recreation, trails and open space conditions and use is maintained through a GIS data base and mapping system.

I. Grant Funds

Determine whether grant funds are available from federal, state and/or private sources for public service and facility maintenance and improvements. In addition, the Town should recognize the value of supporting and finding grant funds for environmental/open space protection and restoration, parks and recreation improvements, and preparation of design guidelines to enhance community character. The Town should continue to capitalize on CDBG funds for infrastructure improvements.

J. Intergovernmental Coordination

Many Grant County residents and residents of nearby municipalities benefit from the public facilities and services the Town provides. Accordingly, the Town should continue collaborative efforts with the adjacent jurisdictions as well as and other applicable agencies and organizations to maintain and enhance public facilities and services. In particular, the Town should continue to work with these agencies to ensure an effective and efficient fire and police service. In collaboration with these agencies, the Town should work to reduce the risk of fires in open space in and adjacent to the town. In addition, the Town should work closely with these agencies as the well as the Gila National Forest Service in establishing a park, recreation, trail and open space network system within the town limits and beyond.

K. Joint Response Agreements

Maintain and improve the Town's ability to participate in existing joint response agreements that enhance its ability to respond to fire, emergency or disaster needs. Town and county staff and public officials indicate that existing joint agreements are working well (e.g., emergency response), and that there are other opportunities for similar joint agreements between the Town of Silver City and Grant County.

L. Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Master Plan

Since completion of the last Comprehensive Plan, the Town has made progress in developing a Parks, Recreation, Trails & Open Space Master Plan. The following studies have been prepared: the 2002 Recreation Needs Assessment; 2002 Trails and Open Space Plan, San Vicente Arroyo Open Space Plan done by Trails and Open Space Committee; a recently updated Parks and Recreation Inventory for Silver City and the 2013 Silver City Greenways and Big Ditch Master Plan. It is fitting that this category of

Town assets is treated in the chapter on public facilities and services. In fact, trails straddle several categories, including transportation, natural resources, and economic development. But they are truly public facilities in that they are conducive to a healthy life style physically and mentally. They also reflect and embody the “sense of place” Silver City residents find so endearing and unique.

M. Area Plans

Though the Comprehensive Plan is important in informing the development of areas throughout the Town, many key areas need to be planned in more detail than can be done in the Comprehensive Plan. In 2002 the Brewer Hill Comprehensive Neighborhood Plan was prepared and adopted by Council Resolution 2002-08. It is a model for other more specific area plans.

Areas within the Town that could be considered for a specific plan include: the 32nd Street bypass area; and, the commercial corridor along Highway 180. These plans can include the character of development and integrate land use, design, transportation, utilities and parks, recreation and open space elements into a 20-year action strategy for neighborhoods and other key areas within the town. .

Chapter 7 Economic Development

Accomplishments from the 2004 Plan

Since the 2004 Plan's adoption, the following Economic Development Goals have been met:

- The process to obtain a Business License was streamlined.
- The 2010 Land Use Code includes a Use Table for all zoning categories.
- The Silco Theater was rehabilitated and opened.
- Local businesses were supported when applying for funds such as LEDA.

The Town of Silver City provides the kind of small town urbanism that attracts creative, innovative, and entrepreneurial individuals. The amenities of a vital downtown area that provide a gathering place for the interaction of creative individuals and creates a context in which innovative business opportunities are created and nurtured. Silver City residents emphasize that they live in a town as opposed to a city which emphasizes the value placed on the quality of small town life.

Silver City serves as the county seat and regional center for retail, commercial, institutional and government activity for Grant County. Silver City's economic health is a fundamental indicator of the state of the county's economy as a whole. Furthermore, while the workforce for the region is located across the county, the great majority of county's workers live in the greater Silver City area.

As Silver City and Grant County experience a decline in a traditional economic base founded on resource extraction and related industries and businesses, quality of place will increasingly become the most important driver of economic development for the region. This quality of place provides the basis for a thriving tourist industry that Silver City and the area enjoys, but research shows that towns and cities that rely too heavily on tourism often fail to create the kind of diversified economies with deep roots that promote lasting economic sustainability. Moreover, a newly emerging creative class of residents, which includes both existing residents and newcomers to the area, will provide the business expertise and savvy to help create a more diversified economy

The Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments has a formal MOU with the Town of Silver City to promote economic development. The Corporation for Downtown Development (Silver City MainStreet) has a MOU with the Town of Silver City to promote economic development in the downtown district. The Silver City Arts & Culture District has a MOU to promote tourism and manage the Silver City Visitor Center. Other partners that provide economic development support include the Silver City – Grant County Chamber of Commerce, Green Chamber of Commerce, and the Mimbres Region Arts Council.

Employment

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, the Town of Silver City's total population aged 16 years and over is estimated at 8,115. Of this population, 54.7% are recognized as being in the labor force. New Mexico Workforce Connection Annual Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment data for Grant County in 2016 shows an unemployment rate 6.5%.

Income

The U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey states that the median household income in 2015 for Silver City was \$36,227. The survey states that 23.8% of the population in 2015 is below the poverty level, similar to the 1999 level of 22%.

Number of Businesses

As of March 2017, there were 813 businesses registered with the Town of Silver City Utility Billing Department. Many businesses in Silver City are small owner/operator businesses comprised of one or more members of a single household.

Employment by Sector

The most recent comprehensive data for employment by sector in Grant County is provided by the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions QCEW Unit. The largest employment sector for Grant County is Healthcare and Social Assistance with 1,973 employees. Mining was second with 1,317 jobs and retail third with 1,115 jobs.

Mining

The mining sector has been historically a key employment sector for the county. Undoubtedly, the frequent loss of these relatively high-paying mining jobs is a significant drain on the overall economies of Grant County and the Town of Silver City.

Agriculture and Ranching

Agriculture and ranching have been a part of Silver City's traditional economic base. In spite of local, state, and federal government support, market conditions nationally and worldwide have resulted in declines over recent decades in the agricultural and ranching sector. Silver City has a strong commitment to support for this sector of the economy although all of the ranching households continue to choose living on traditional homesteads are outside of Silver City's Town Limits. Unfortunately, many ranching household incomes have declined, bringing at least one of the household members into Silver City to seek other types of employment.

Although much of the agricultural production happens in the county, Silver City has taken a proactive approach to market and promote local growers and food through the Silver City Farmers' Market, The Volunteer Center, Grant County Food Policy Council and the Southwest New Mexico Regional Food Policy Council.

Silver City as a Regional Economic Center

Silver City has a continuing role as the regional center for a market catchment area of over 50,000 people over a three-county area. Although Silver City's downtown is no longer the principal retail center for the area it is still important as the regional hub since most of the entertainment, hospitality, and art districts are located there. Many of the major businesses that serve the region have established themselves primarily along Highway 180 East. The anchors for regional retail are the local Wal-Mart Super Store, Walgreen's, CVS, Tractor Supply, Denny's, Dominos, Ace Hardware, Albertsons, and Bealls to name a few.

Silver City MainStreet Program

The Silver City MainStreet Project has served Silver City since 1985 and continues to play an important part in the economic development of Silver City. Historic downtown includes a wide assortment of historic architecture including: Victorian homes, brick commercial buildings, traditional adobe structures, and newer contemporary buildings. The MainStreet Project has promoted downtown infrastructure, economic development and revitalization activities that include infrastructure improvements in cooperation with the Town of Silver City, special events, historic preservation and design support, beautification and litter control, and business retention and recruitment. The MainStreet project encouragement of business retention and recruitment has enabled downtown businesses to grow. MainStreet understands that 80% of all jobs created come through expansion and startups underscoring the importance of retention and support for local businesses and potential clusters of businesses.

The MainStreet Mission Statement: "To encourage a vibrant, historic downtown Silver City which is recognized as the heart of our diverse community."

Downtown does still attract retail stores that serve the shopping needs of the local area, including a furniture store, and the Food Co-op. However, as indicated above, downtown is increasingly becoming a center for arts, restaurants, entertainment and related venues, as opposed to a regional center serving all basic shopping needs of area residents. The pedestrian-friendly environment encourages person-to-person interaction.

Western New Mexico University

Western New Mexico University (WNMU) continues to be an important part of Silver City's economy. WNMU recently turned 124 years old and has been offering associate, baccalaureate and master's degrees from its main campus in Silver City and online to thousands of students. Faculty make their homes here part-time and full-time. Western New Mexico University has been deemed the Liberal Arts and Sciences University in the State of New Mexico. WNMU is also actively involved in creating educational and training programs that help support workforce training, entrepreneurial development, and other activities that support economic development within the region along with other strong programs such as nursing, applied technology, and education.

One of the main attractions for relocating residents is that Western New Mexico University

provides many cultural benefits to local residents. There is strong evidence that retirees who are educated and affluent are very attracted to the combination of small town urbanism and the university. One of the important WNMU partners is WILL, Western Institute for Lifelong Learning. WILL provides ongoing learning outside the traditional classroom; this program offers continued intellectual and personal discovery in a supportive, expansive, and informal environment. Members bring talents and life experiences to WILL making their courses and social events lively places to learn by encouraging eager learners of any age to join.

Arts and Creative Economy

Silver City has an active arts scene which includes year-round events of performing local musicians, theater, museums, preservation of historic architecture, galleries and art studios. Special events, weekend performances downtown at shops, restaurants, and venues are becoming more common. Silver City has embraced the art and creative economy through partnerships with groups such as the Silver City Arts and Cultural and Mimbres Region Arts Council.

Silver City Arts and Cultural District

The Silver City Arts and Cultural District (SCSCD) is a defined geographic area in Silver City which includes historic downtown and extends up to the campus of Western New Mexico University. Within these boundaries exists a mix of historic buildings, cultural activities, galleries and creative entrepreneurs that contribute to a unique, authentic, and stimulating experience for residents and visitors.

The Silver City Arts and Cultural District is a dynamic, multifaceted organization that promotes community collaboration and partnership, historic preservation, cultural economic development, and cultural tourism. From its signature event, The Silver City Clay Festival, to the organization's statewide involvement with tourism, the SCACD continues to recognize the multi-cultural heritage of Southwest New Mexico as essential to our community's identity.

Mimbres Region Arts Council

The Mimbres Region Arts Council (MRAC) provides quality programs that foster an appreciation and understanding of the arts, serve as a resource for artists and cultural entrepreneurs, and positively impact the area's economy by creating and supporting events and experiences that enhance the region's appeal as a premier destination. MRAC reaches out to residents of all ages in the Mimbres region communities: students, and educators in the Silver, Cobre and Deming schools, local artists, arts organizations, cultural entrepreneurs, tourists, and business owners. Most of the murals seen throughout Silver City have been sponsored and created by MRAC and local artist Diana Ingalls-Leyba.

Tourism

Because of Silver City's great downtown area, a growing arts scene and access to the Gila National Forest in Grant County, tourism is popular. The rugged, majestic mountains and landscapes, extensive forests and open spaces already attract vast numbers of people to the

area. That with conscious planning and protection strategies these natural wonders are the basis of the Southwest's premier locations for tourism.

Cultural Tourism

Silver City's rich history offers wonderful opportunities for developing a comprehensive strategy around what is now being called cultural tourism. Cultural tourism includes the attraction of Silver City's historic architecture and downtown district, the mines and mining culture, ghost towns, portions of the Butterfield Trail and early American settlements, Hispanic Culture, history of Billy the Kid, Mimbres Cliff Dwellings and other interests associated with Native American peoples such as the Mogollon and Apache. Various facets of the regional heritage have been developed and interpreted as the displays at the museums and special events.

Recreational Tourism

Silver City's scenery provide a perfect setting and the considerable amenities that attract the recreational tourist and outdoor sports enthusiasts. The traditional recreational pursuits of fishing and hunting can be found in the area, as well as hiking and camping in the forests and wilderness areas. Recreational tourism opportunities still include fishing, hunting, hiking, and camping, other opportunities include attractions for sightseeing, birding, backpacking, climbing and bicycling, as well as opportunities for off-road vehicles on designated trails. Silver has recently become a Gateway Community for the Continental Divide Trail.

Quality of Place/Quality of Life

The most important asset for economic development that Silver City possesses is its quality of place. It is what that continues to attract people to Silver City. The town has both the natural and built environment and the people that in combination contribute to an overall high quality of life that creates a hospitable environment for economic development. It is further enhanced by a rich variety of historic and natural landscapes that offer scenic beauty as well as recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike, including the Gila Wilderness which was the first designated wilderness area in the nation, along with a unique heritage and special territorial assets that help define the authenticity of Silver City.

Summary of Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures

Goal 1: Encourage a diverse mix of economic development and new employment opportunities that balance social, economic, cultural, and environmental values.

Policy: Encourage existing local business retention and expansion through technical, managerial, and financial planning to help ensure businesses remain viable and grow.

Implementation Measures:

A. Create business, government, and educational partnerships to generate new economic activity that develop new high paying jobs with job training programs. Encourage a diversified employment base consistent with the present skills in the community that accommodates a range of occupational skills as well as wage, salary and

benefit levels. Promote public awareness of current economic development services and policies. Support the development and evaluation of strategies to maximize economic opportunities provided by tourism. Encourage the coordination of local economic development activities with Grant County and regional efforts.

Goal 2: Complete an Economic Development Plan for the Town of Silver City.

Policy: Adopt an Economic Development Plan using current information and best practices.

Implementation Measures:

A: Create a Economic Development Plan that identifies businesses that are suitable for the community to attract. Develop a list of Silver City's competitive advantages and seek economic activities with these advantages. Coordinate economic development polices of the comprehensive plan with other efforts to create effective partnerships for regional economic development. Enact legislation providing rules and regulations as appropriate to implement the goal and specific policies.

B. The Town and county should continue cooperating in the creation of economic development.

C. Continue encouraging local, regional and state public/private partnerships to address economic development. Focus on retaining and recruiting young families to Silver City.

D. Increase awareness by actively involving residents, landowners and non-profit organizations in local and regional economic development initiatives and planning projects through an extensive public outreach process.

E. Work with local developers, businesses, and entrepreneurs to encourage further diversification and rich mix of innovative businesses that constitutes the foundation for a growing and sustainable economy.

Chapter 8 Natural Resources and Hazard Mitigation

Accomplishments from the 2004 Plan

Since the 2004 Plan's adoption, the following Natural Resources and Hazard Mitigation Goals have been met:

- A regional water supply project is underway.
- Drainage and grading plans are required for development.
- Radio-read meters were installed to detect leaks and water loss.
- New irrigation systems were installed on many Town properties to minimize water waste.
- A list of drought tolerant plants is available for required landscaping.
- A new recycling program was initiated.

Geography

At an elevation of nearly 6,000 feet, Silver City lies a few miles east of the continental divide. Nestled in the foothills of the Silver City and the Pinos Altos Ranges, the Town is located on a geographical margin, where mountainous prongs from the Mogollon-Datil section of the Colorado Plateau physiographic province abut broad plains of the Basin and Range province. In the east, the high ridge of the Black Range separates the area from the rift valley of the Rio Grande. West of the continental divide, beyond the Silver City Range, the Gila River flows through a series of box canyons and occasional valleys. Elevations in Grant County range between 10,165 feet at McKnight Peak in the Black Range and slightly below 4,000 feet at Red Rock, on the Gila River.

The mineral-rich mountains north, east, and west of Silver City are primarily the product of volcanic activity in the Oligocene epoch. To the south are thick deposits of sand and gravel that washed down from the mountains, filling the basins and forming extensive plains. These loosely consolidated deposits hold deep reservoirs of underground water. Straddling the border between the two physiographic provinces is a broad transition zone, characterized by extensive faulting, the intrusion of igneous rock, and the furrows of many dry washes. The San Vicente Arroyo which traverses the center of Silver City is a major local drainage feature, rising in the mountains north of Town and east of the divide from two major tributaries, Pinos Altos Creek and Silva Creek. Approximately 25 miles to the south, the arroyo joins the Mimbres River. Usually dry at this confluence, the Mimbres continues underground, carrying water into a deep closed basin that also captures subterranean waters of three Mexican rivers: the Rio Casas Grandes, the Rio Santa Maria, and the Rio Carmen.

In the immediate area of Silver City, the soils are clustered in the Santa Fe Rock outcrop-Encerreo category, which is characterized as nearly level to very steep, with well-drained shallow and deep soils, and rock outcroppings on hills. The abundant springs of La Cienega de San Vicente and the deep soil of the bottomland were the first enticement for settling in the immediate area, just a few years before the discovery of silver. The former marsh is now the

most densely constructed area in Silver City, and deep entrenchment of the San Vicente Arroyo at the turn of the century has lowered the water table, undoubtedly drying up the many springs. Curbs up to three feet high to contain flooding in the streets, and the perennial waters that run in portions of San Vicente Creek, are all reminders of the modified but continuing hydraulic function of the bottom land. Floodplain, rock outcroppings, and occasionally steep slopes are the principal topographical constraints to construction and future development.

In keeping with its geological edge status, Silver City also lies at the intersection of several biogeographical or floristic provinces: pinon-juniper woodlands, outliers of the Sierra Madre encinal or Mexican oak forest, and semi-arid grasslands that gradually merge in the south into the Chihuahuan desert. In the higher reaches of the mountains north of town are ponderosa pine forests with stands of mixed conifer on the peaks.

Climate

Silver City, New Mexico has a cold semi-arid steppe climate. Over the course of a year, the temperature typically varies from 27°F to 92°F and is rarely below 20°F or above 98°F. Based on records kept for the locale from 1914 to 1964, the average precipitation is 16 inches. Evaporation loss in Grant County has been estimated to average 64 inches a year, exceeding the rate of precipitation by a ratio of four to one. Again, Silver City lies on a margin: in Pinos Altos, five miles to the north, the average annual precipitation is 21 inches; and in White Water, a dozen miles to the southeast, the average is 11.5 inches. It is important to qualify these statistics with the observation that few years are actually average and that the annual precipitation has ranged locally from a high of 31 inches to a low of 5 inches. The record also shows long periods of below average rain and snowfall, interrupted by shorter intervals of much higher than average. This pattern, which may be linked to El Nino events, is not sufficiently understood to be useful for accurate long-range weather forecasting.

Most rain falls in the monsoon months of July, August and September, when warm moist air from the Gulf of Mexico generates intense thunderstorms. To a lesser degree, rain and sometimes snow occur in November through January, the result of moist air from the Pacific, with occasional tropical storms moving in from the Gulf of California. In Silver City, spring and fall are usually dry seasons.

Because of its high elevation, Silver City is cooler than most areas of similar latitude. The summer temperatures average a high in the 80s, with less than 30 days of temperatures exceeding 90 degrees. The record high temperature is 110 degrees in July, 2005. In the evenings, the air cools off rapidly, and the onset of the monsoon season cools daytime temperatures as well. Winter days are moderately warm, with temperatures commonly near 50 degrees. Nights are cool, and temperatures can drop below freezing from mid-October until May. The record cold is -13 degrees in 2011. The growing season reliably lasts a minimum of 180 days.

The sun shines an average of 80 percent of the time, a little more in the spring and fall. In the lee of the mountains to the west and north, Silver City is relatively sheltered from the intense

winds of spring.

The nearest National Weather Service weather observation system is at the Grant County airport, 20 miles southeast of Silver City. Placement of a NOAA weather station in Silver City would provide more site-specific data because Silver City is slightly higher in elevation and has more topographic relief. However, through the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network (cocoahs.org), a community-based network of local individuals and organizations collects precipitation data throughout Grant County with several stations located in Silver City.

Climate change has been a concern that could affect the Town's resiliency and sustainability in the future, as the climate is predicted to become hotter and drier by the state climatologist. The mayor formed a climate advisory committee in 2007 that developed a climate action plan. As part of the plan, the Office of Sustainability was formed in 2011. The Town recently adopted the Sustainability Plan 2030 (2013) that was the result of months of research by the Town's Office of Sustainability and a task force made up of key municipal departments, leaders from nonprofit organizations, Western New Mexico University and local citizens with expertise on issues of concern. The Sustainability Plan and the Risk and Vulnerability Analysis that provided the bones for the plan provide a wealth of information and important goals and recommendations to increase Town resiliency and sustainability, with or without the predicted changes to the climate. Recommendations concerning emergency services, public health, transportation, and the natural resources covered in this section are included in the plan.

Water Supply

Silver City currently owns the rights to 4801.84 acre-feet of water per year, or approximately 1.568 billion gallons (an acre-foot of water equals 326,588 gallons). These rights are for water in both the Gila-San Francisco Basin and the Mimbres Basin combined.

Water for use by the Town is supplied by Frank's wellfield (three wells in production), the Gabby Hayes well, the Anderson well and the Woodward wellfield (five wells in production) with a total permitted supply of 4566.64 acre-feet per year. As part of the Grant County Regional Water Supply Project, a new well is being developed at the Grant County Airport that will be permitted to pump up to 940.2 acre-feet per year (193.2 acre-feet per year water right located at the airport plus 747 acre-feet per year in return flow credit from the Wastewater Treatment Plant). Another 42 acre-feet per year of water rights are located within the Town limits, but are not currently associated with a diversion permit.

As per recommendations in the Sustainability Plan 2030 (2013), the Town is exploring the possibility of the installation of a solar array to offset the electricity costs for pumping water from the Town wells.

The Town of Silver City supplies water to about 10,000 residents within the Town and to additional customers outside of Town, serving a total of about 5,300 homes and 600 commercial accounts (2013 Water Conservation Plan). Additionally, the Town water system sells water to five water associations (the Arenas Valley Water Association, Pinos Altos Mutual Domestic Water Consumers' Association [MDWCA], Rosedale MDWCA, Tyrone Property

Owners Association (TPOA), and Tyrone MDWCA), resulting in a total population receiving water from the system of about 20,000. A SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) system remotely monitors and manages well and booster station pumping for optimum control.

Over the past decade, the Town and the adjacent water associations on the distribution system have reduced water use by more than 25%: down to 1,998 acre-feet in 2012 from 2,724 acre-feet in 2004. There has been a downward trend in annual total production of water due to the Town's leak detection and repair program, inverted block rate pricing structure to encourage water conservation, smart irrigation system implementation at town ball fields, and more recently the installation of smart meters.

Periodic studies of groundwater levels in the town's wells are commissioned to provide estimates of groundwater recharge and drawdown, projections of future water supply and demand, and recommendations for ensuring future water security. The Supplement on Water Use and Well Field Service (2006) provides additional information to the Town's 1993 40-Year Water Plan. As presently configured, the Town's wells can supply a medium growth rate of 1.45 percent annual growth without any loss of yield for the next 40 years. With deepening of the Town's well fields, a sustainable supply of 6,600 acre-feet per year can be provided in perpetuity. However, given that Silver City's *permitted* water supply is 4800 acre-feet per year, the Town would need to acquire additional water rights in order to use this annual quantity of *wet* water.

The report also recommends the following actions to ensure a secure future water supply:

- Begin a water rights acquisition program that involves seeking potential rights for transfer into the Town water system.
- Prepare to deepen the wellfields in future years to extend the service lifetime to meet required levels of demand.
- Planned wells should be constructed, developed and maintained to maximize efficiency. Incorporate a plan of field testing for wellfield expansion or replacement wells so that observed field conditions and as-built well conditions can be applied to wellfield simulations.
- Identify wellfield capture zones so that areas that contribute water to the wellfield can be part of a wellhead protection program.
- Track adjacent wellfield withdrawals to intervene with large-scale changes that could impact the Town sources.

The population in Silver City has remained steady over the last twelve years, and the water consumption has been declining, especially since a high in 2011. The 2012 per capita consumption was estimated to be 116 gallons per capita per day. With continued water conservation practices and the current downward trend of water consumption, water security appears to be greater than the Supplement's projections.

The Town has been working with the state and Mining District communities to develop and implement the Grant County Regional Water Supply Project to improve and augment access to

public water supplies that currently serve 26,000 people in central Grant County. As part of Phase 1 implementation, the Town is leasing to Hurley water it owns at the Grant County airport. A new well field at the airport will develop and convey this water through a new inter-community pipeline to Hurley and other Mining District communities. Grant funds have been awarded to Mining District towns to develop and implement parts of the plan. Given return flow credit, this project results in no net increase in groundwater pumping from the aquifer.

Water Quality

The deep water aquifers tapped by the Town is of good quality. It is relatively low in mineral content, moderately hard and slightly alkaline. The only treatment needed is the addition of chlorine gas for purification at the booster pump stations before the water enters the distribution system. Regularly scheduled water tests for metals, nitrate/nitrite, total trihalomethanes, and volatile organic compounds have consistently met drinking water standards. Microbiological testing is conducted monthly on samples from throughout the system.

Water quality in the waterways that run through town is affected by stormwater runoff that carries pollutants into the streams, which is called nonpoint source pollution. The New Mexico Environment Department has listed San Vicente Creek as an impaired stream through its Clean Water Act, Section 303(d) listings. Implementation of the recommendations in the Sustainability Plan 2030 (2013), including those on stormwater and floodplain management would improve water quality in the local streams.

Groundwater Contamination – There are no currently known groundwater contaminated sites in Silver City. Contamination from on-site liquid waste disposal systems, leaking underground storage tanks and improper disposal of hazardous materials needs to be avoided. These issues need to be considered when reviewing new development proposals and regulating current commercial businesses. In addition, residential areas that are still using septic tanks and fields with the potential for groundwater contamination should be tied into the wastewater treatment system and the wastewater diverted to the waste water treatment plant. These conversions are happening as funding allows.

Water Conservation

The Town of Silver City adopted a Water Conservation Plan in 2013 that includes an in-depth water audit and recommendations for water conservation. The water audit showed a marked decrease in unaccounted water, water that has been produced but not billed, and included analyses of historical and current water use and evaluation of the meters and billing system that are used to record water use. Conservation measures are outlined in the plan to reduce outdoor water use, reduce water waste, reduce peak summer demands for more efficient system operation and reduced energy use, reduce pumping and treatment costs, ensure a revenue-neutral program that can be financed by the Town, strengthen ordinances and policies relating to water conservation, minimize nonpoint source pollution by integrating stormwater management into the water conservation program, educate the public about water conservation, and incentivize conservation behavior. Implementation of the recommendations

is ongoing; the installation of automatic meter reading water meters on all Town meters is a recent example. The new meters increase data accuracy and provide more detailed data on daily, even hourly water use for each account.

The Town contracts with a leak detection firm to conduct week-long leak detection projects twice per year, during the spring and fall. Additionally, Town personnel routinely look for leaks when they are conducting other business, and utility personnel aggressively respond to leaks, digging up and replacing water lines. If a meter reading suggests that there is a leak, Town staff will investigate and repair it as needed.

Block rate water bill structure - All of the water users on the system have an inverted block rate structure, including the water associations, to encourage water conservation by charging higher unit rates for greater usage volumes. The rates are reviewed each year during budget formulation to ensure that rates are covering the needed infrastructure maintenance costs.

State and Regional Water Plans

The New Mexico Office of the State Engineer and Interstate Stream Commission are required to undertake a review of the New Mexico State Water Plan every five years and to subsequently update the plan as needed. The last review, finalized in 2017, provides a summary of the current status of key water management issues in the state and a review of the directives set forth in the 2003 State Water Plan.

The State Water Plan is a management tool designed to promote stewardship of the state's water resources, protect and maintain water rights and their priority status; protect the diverse customs, culture, environment and economic stability of the state; protect both water supply and water quality; promote cooperative strategies in order to satisfy the basic needs of all New Mexicans; meet the state's interstate compact obligations; provide a basis for prioritizing infrastructure investment; and, provide statewide continuity of policy and management relative to our water resources. As such, the State Water Plan is a strategic management tool to assist those entities responsible for its execution.

The Town of Silver City participated in the recent development of the Southwest (SW) Regional Water Plan, finalized in 2017. The water planning region encompasses Catron, Grant, Hidalgo, and Luna Counties. The principal river basin is the Gila River, tributary to the Lower Colorado River. Principal aquifers are associated with the Gila River Basin and the Mimbres Basin. The region is bounded on the north by Cibola County, on the west by Arizona, on the south by Mexico, and on the east by Socorro, Sierra and Doña Ana Counties. A draft SW Regional Water Plan was completed in 2016, and finalized in 2017.

Wastewater

The Town recently applied for and received return flow credit of 750 acre-feet from the Office of the State Engineer that officially recognizes the value of the wastewater discharge from the wastewater treatment plant recharging the aquifer. This water right is being applied to the drilling of a well at the Grant County airport that will be used to provide water to the mining

district through the Grant County Regional Water Supply Project. In addition, the Town of Silver City golf course uses reuse effluent from the wastewater treatment plant to irrigate the grounds. The amount of reuse effluent provided to the golf course is currently limited by the availability of reuse water. Scott Park was previously watered with wastewater, before the grass was replaced with artificial turf. A solar array was installed and now provides the power to run the wastewater treatment plant. Residential areas that are still using septic tanks and fields for wastewater treatment are being added to the wastewater treatment system and the septic tanks and fields are being deactivated.

Air Quality

The closest federal/state air monitoring site is located at the Deming Airport. This site collects meteorological data, as well as measures air pollutant concentrations for ozone, PM10 (particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter), nitrogen oxides, nitrogen dioxide and nitrogen oxide. Southwest New Mexico including Silver City meets all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (ozone, particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, lead and carbon monoxide).

Hazardous air pollutant air quality in Silver City, New Mexico is 85 on a scale to 100 (higher is better). This is based on new measures of hazardous air pollutants from the EPA, called the National Air Toxics Assessment. This analysis models respiratory illness and cancer risk down to the zip code level, providing better detail and insight than the previous analysis based solely on results from air monitoring stations.

Air quality in Silver City can be affected by the use of wood burning stoves and burning garbage or yard waste. Wildfires and prescribed or controlled burns in the National Forest can also affect air quality, depending on wind direction. The U.S. Forest Service provides public announcements when a prescribed burn is planned, and monitors air quality during wildfires. The Forest Service alerts local agencies when people that are smoke-sensitive due to health issues may be affected. Mining operations east and south of town can also affect air quality, mostly from wind-blown dust from tailings piles, earth moving activities and truck traffic on haul roads. Mining operations are regulated by the state of New Mexico to meet federal National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Additionally regional transport of air pollutants from urban areas can affect Silver City's visibility.

Floodplain and Stormwater Management

The Town has a Floodplain Management Plan dated January 30, 2002, developed by a Floodplain Management Planning Committee. This plan needs to be updated to include current flood hazards and problems and other natural hazards. Land Use Code should be updated to include the recommendations in the updated Floodplain Management Plan.

Stormwater management is addressed in the Sustainability Plan 2030 (2013) with goals and recommendations. It is recommended that stormwater be managed by maintaining, repairing and upgrading infrastructure to meet a variety of objectives - to mitigate soil erosion, downstream flooding, stream bank and channel erosion, water quality degradation and

infrastructure damage, and to provide landscape irrigation and improved soil moisture. Floodplain management recommendations include the preservation, management and restoration of the natural and beneficial function of the floodplain, where possible, to reduce the threat to health and safety caused by flooding, decrease channel erosion and prevent damage to infrastructure and properties from flooding during large storm events, and to infiltrate small events into the soil. Much of the floodplain throughout Silver City is privately owned; therefore it would be beneficial to purchase floodplain easements that would allow more comprehensive and completed management.

Soils, Slopes & Vegetation

The natural topography of the area provides an aesthetically pleasing place to live and adds to the quality of life in Silver City. However, the soils, slopes and vegetation need to be protected in order to maintain this aesthetic. The Town developed a Community Forestry Plan in 2013 that inventoried the Town-owned trees and provided recommendations to maintain this resource in good condition. The Sustainability Plan 2013 also provides many recommendations concerning soils, slopes and vegetation.

There are dozens of soil types found in Silver City and the ETZ. Most soils in the area are rocky and somewhat alkaline, but are considered productive. Generally, these soil types are well drained, with slow to moderate permeability and slow to medium runoff. The 2010 Silver City Code of Ordinances establishes policies, procedures, criteria, and requirements for control of stormwater runoff, including the regulation of commercial development to maintain the same runoff after construction as prior to construction.

The uplands in and around Silver City are vegetated with oak varieties, pinon, juniper, yucca, prickly pear cactus and agave, interspersed with open grasslands. The riparian areas along the creeks are vegetated with native trees such as cottonwood, box elder and New Mexico locust, but dominated by non-native trees such as Siberian elm and tree-of-heaven. Vegetation provides shade and wind breaks; decreases soil erosion and manages stormwater through rainfall interception with tempered release into waterways, recharging groundwater; improves air quality by up taking carbon and outputting oxygen; increases property values and attracts tourists; creates visual and sound buffers and provides wildlife shelter and food (habitat). The benefits of preserving, managing and restoring vegetation are multi-faceted and pervasive. Periodic droughts and violent rainstorms contribute to the degradation of these resources through plant and tree death and soil erosion. Wildfires could have a catastrophic effect on tree health. Maintaining healthy vegetation is important as replacing it when it is gone is expensive and difficult due to harsh growing conditions.

The 2013 Water Conservation Plan, the 2013 Community Forestry Plan and the 2013 Sustainability Plan 2030 have goals and recommendations specific to promoting health, longevity and maximizing the benefits of a diversity of plant species. Exploring and promoting green infrastructure projects on all Town-owned land would help maintain these important resources, working toward keeping the moisture in the soil. Controlling grading and clearing for

construction projects needs to be continued through Town regulations and policies. Restricting development or construction in riparian zones and waterways should be continued.

Various Town departments have responsibilities pertaining to maintaining healthy soils and vegetation within the Town. Intergovernmental coordination is key to managing these resources in a successful manner.

Fire Hazards

Wildfire is a constant threat to the Town and surrounding area. Periodic years of drought increase the danger. The Quail Ridge fire in 2013 and the Gila National Forest fires - Whitewater-Baldy, Silver and Signal Fires – were reminders that wildfire can have devastating effects on Town residents as well as contributing to watershed destabilization. The Town of Silver City, Grant County, the U.S. Forest Service and the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (ENMRD) have worked together to develop a draft Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), dated December 2014. The goal of the CWPP is to reduce the wildfire vulnerability of Silver City and the extra-territorial zone. Nine high-risk communities in and around Silver City were identified but still need to be assessed for fire hazards and steps taken to reduce the hazards. These are Wind Canyon Estates, Indian Hills, Sunrise Estates, Oakwood Estates, Dos Griegos, Silver Acres, Greater Cold Spring Park (Lower Little Walnut Road), Pinos Altos and Boston Hill. To protect life, property and community assets, the following priorities were identified in the draft CWPP for fuel reduction, in no particular order, 1) high risk communities; 2) highway/evacuation route right-of-ways; 3) critical infrastructure (evacuation routes, municipal water supply structures and major power lines and communication systems); and 4) the Silver City upper watershed. The issue of slash management is an important component, involving when and how to use the following: reduced or waived landfill fees; credentialed, supervised post-monsoon burning; permitted, open burning by property owners; and chipping. The committee recommends that the CWPP be finalized in the near future.

Solid Waste

Solid waste management is currently contracted with the Southwest Solid Waste Authority (SWSWA). The Town established a pay-as-you-throw sanitation program in 2007, with an incrementally priced selection of three bin sizes available to residents. The cost of solid waste pickup is included in the monthly water/sewer/solid waste charges for Town businesses and residents.

In order to extend the lifetime of the landfill and avoid the astronomical costs of creating new landfill area, the Town is always seeking ways to reduce the amount of solid waste that is put into the landfill. Recycling is one way to reduce landfill waste and increasing recycling has been an important goal. The Strategic Recycling Plan adopted in 2012 provides guidelines in reducing and handling recyclable waste for the Town. Scrap metal is diverted from the landfill and sold to a metal recycler from Hobbs. Tires are also diverted. There are special collection areas to collect and recycle motor oil, antifreeze, lead-acid batteries and household hazardous waste. In the past, limbs and brush are diverted, chipped and made available to the public as mulch. The

town's recycling committee has been exploring the viability of a commercial composting system that would divert organic waste from the landfill and turn it into a usable product. Electronic waste is also diverted from the landfill and sold on the market.

Illegal dumping is an issue for the Town, with dumping of solid waste in arroyos and waterways being most common. Code Enforcement Officers have a role in policing the dumping, but more effort should be made to move from a reactive to a preventive mode through a public education program.

Education and Outreach

Education and outreach is provided by the Town and local nonprofits on all of the natural resource issues. The Town's Sustainability Planner and Trails Coordinator, the Utilities Department, the Fire Department and other offices all have programs to educate the public on the importance of maintaining a good quality of life through maintaining and restoring our valuable natural resources. Providing outreach, education and support for the municipality and the community on a unified (public/private) ongoing basis is an endeavor that the Town should always be involved in and seeking to improve.

The goals and policies adopted in this Plan provide substantial updates from the 2004 Comprehensive Plan. The Town now has a Sustainability Plan (2013), a Water Conservation Plan (2013), a Strategic Recycling Plan (2012) and a Community Forestry Plan (2013) that provide guidance and recommendations to conserve natural resources.

Regulatory authority on some of the natural resources issues resides with state or federal government rather than local government. Intergovernmental coordination is key. For example, federal air quality standards are currently enforced by the New Mexico Air Quality Bureau of the New Mexico Environment Department, and the Town has no air quality goals or standards. With regard to water quality, the New Mexico Environment Department has enforcement authority for surface and groundwater quality, such as groundwater contamination resulting from on-site liquid waste disposal systems; leaking underground storage tanks; improper disposal of hazardous materials; and non-point source pollution.

Water issues are covered in depth in this Comprehensive Plan as water quantity and quality is essential to the sustainability of the Town. The Town of Silver City has access to a substantial groundwater supply that is estimated to be stable well into the future, if water consumption remains conservative. The aquifers provide good quality drinking water for the Town. Water quality in the local waterways could be improved through implementation of recommendations in the Sustainability Plan 2030, especially those concerning stormwater and floodplain management. Water conservation is necessary if the region is to reduce the rate at which aquifers are mined. Approximately 78% of New Mexicans depend upon groundwater for drinking water. In the Southwest Region, municipalities and individual users rely almost exclusively on groundwater. Some wells in the Silver City area show measurable losses in water levels each year. Because aquifers recover from over-mining only over hundreds if not

thousands of years, they are essentially non-renewable resources. Therefore, conservation and other measures to reduce consumption can extend the life of the aquifers upon which this region depends. Implementation of the recommendations in the 2013 Water Conservation Plan would help maintain the existing groundwater supply well into the future. Continued upgrading of water delivery infrastructure and testing for water leaks contributes to the overall sustainability of the water system and supply. Block rate water rates are contributing to the decrease in water use.

Participation in state and regional water planning is an essential part of Silver City's intergovernmental coordination, so that access to water resources for the Town and the surrounding areas is preserved. Groundwater contamination is prevented through state regulations and programs, with further local control through the Town's land use codes and development criteria.

Stormwater and floodplain management is addressed in the Sustainability Plan 2030 (2013), and it is important that the goals and recommendations be implemented. Maintaining, repairing and upgrading infrastructure to meet a variety of objectives is ongoing and needs to be continued.

The Town should continue the practice of providing treated wastewater to the Golf Course for irrigation. In addition, the Town should continue to decrease the number of septic tanks and fields in residential areas that could contribute to groundwater contamination.

Air quality in the Town is generally good, but there are no local regulations or ordinances that pertain to maintaining air quality. A no-burn ordinance could provide regulatory authority for the Town to restrict burning in woodstoves and debris piles during times of poor air quality.

The natural topography of the Town provides an aesthetically pleasing place to live. However, the soils, slopes and vegetation need to be protected to maintain this aesthetic, so that soil erosion is reduced and vegetation remains healthy and productive. Working together, the Town departments can preserve, maintain and restore these resources in good condition for a healthy environment.

Wildfire is a constant threat to the Town and surrounding area. Periodic years of drought increase the danger, with recent fires in Town and in the national forest providing reminders of the devastation that fires can cause. Finalizing the draft Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), dated December, 2014 and implementing the recommendations is important to reduce the risk of fire in the town and surrounding area.

The Town has a Power Purchase Agreement with PNM and Affordable Solar to use the power from a solar array to run the wastewater treatment plant at the low rate of \$0.06 per kilowatt hour for 20 years (until 2033). The Town saves \$94,000 per year in electricity costs, and this savings will increase as electricity prices increase. In addition, the Town is saving dollars from a solar array that provides power to run the Visitor Center as well as providing covered parking.

The feasibility of using solar power to run pumps on the municipal water well system are being explored. The Town should continue to explore opportunities to use solar energy to save money and contribute to decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.

Education and outreach is provided by the Town and local nonprofits on all of the natural resource issues. The Town's Sustainability Planner, the Utilities Department, the Fire Department and other offices all have programs to educate the public on the importance of maintaining a good quality of life through maintaining and restoring our valuable natural resources. Providing outreach, education and support for the municipality and the community on a unified (public/private) ongoing basis is an endeavor that the town should always be involved in and seeking to improve.

Summary of Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures

Goal 1: Review Town plans for projects which need completed. The current town-adopted plans, such as the 2006 Supplement to Water Use and Wellfield Service, 2013 Water Conservation Plan, the 2013 Sustainability Plan 2030, the 2012 Strategic Recycling Plan and the 2013 Community Forestry Plan are major tools in outlining the rationale and need for natural resource protection and providing the goals and policies needing implementation.

Policy: The Town can implement several of its natural resource policies by making changes in its internal operating policies, assuming these changes would be within budget limits. Funding for these projects can come from a variety of sources, including the Capital Improvement Program. Pursuing and receiving grant funding is key to achieving the Town's goals.

Implementation Measures:

A. Design Guidelines

Design guidelines are a tool for ensuring that development is appropriate to the area and that it functions well for the community. Design guidelines can help to ensure that new development maintains and enhances aesthetic quality and character of the community while designing around natural features and hazards. Design guidelines can also outline appropriate stormwater drainage techniques as well as appropriate development and maintenance practices to ensure minimal impact to existing resources. Guidelines can provide a means to maintain and enhance natural resources in the face of new development.

B. Development Incentives

Offering development incentives to property-owners and developers can help to achieve quality design and development for a community. Development incentives can be in the form of density and development intensity bonuses, and/or lessening of development regulations (i.e. reductions in parking requirements, height restrictions, setbacks, etc.) in exchange for the development of natural features or amenities that assist in achieving the Town's overall community design and quality of life goals. Features could include creative design of off-street parking, planting of trees along

streets and in public spaces, other enhancements to public facilities, and/or environmental benefits such as watershed restoration, tree preservation or other similar benefits to the community.

C. Development Regulations - Zoning

The Town should coordinate natural resources goals with the goals of other plan elements, such as land use and transportation. The Town's development regulations should reflect this integrated approach to planning, ensuring all new development has a beneficial influence on the quality of life and social wellbeing and safety for citizens, as well as the natural resources of the community. The Town should incorporate into the zoning ordinance those provisions that will ensure the protection of important habitat and natural resources in light of new development. Ultimately effective development regulations can ensure that the environment and natural resources are maintained and even enhanced with new development. Protection of environmentally sensitive areas including waterways/river corridors is an important step in protection of the community's natural resources. Development regulations can ensure that these important systems are maintained.

D. Development Review

The development review process includes discretionary review by the Planning and Zoning Commission based on the goals and policies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, as well as criteria established by the Town's zoning and subdivision ordinances, and other Town regulations and adopted guidelines. Development review should also be used to assess the impact of new development on natural resource and open space. In terms of hazard mitigation, require appropriate studies to assess identified hazards and ensure that impacts are adequately mitigated.

E. Education and Outreach Programs

Continue and expand public information/education programs to enhance public knowledge about environmental protection and water conservation measures.

F. Fire Hazard Reduction Program

Promote fire safety in Silver City through fire prevention programs by continuing existing (and creating new) public information programs. Emphasis should be placed on dealing with very-high Fire Hazard Severity zones in the Town as they relate to definable fire and fire safety hazards and on strengthening existing code in relation to high-hazard areas. Completing and implementing the Community Wildfire Protection Plan would decrease the risk of wildfire.

G. Floodplain Management Plan

Updating the 2002 Floodplain Management Plan would identify the problem areas and provide recommendations on the best ways to convey large storm events, and infiltrate small events and/or re-use stormwater as a resource within the system's watershed. Integrated stormwater management planning and design solutions for the Town should

include conventional, detention, infiltration and re-use approaches for rainfall capture,

H. Intergovernmental and Intragovernmental Coordination

Recognizing that the preservation and protection of natural resources that lie within the Town benefits the regional environment, the Town should continue collaborative efforts with the adjacent jurisdictions including Grant County, Santa Clara, Bayard and Hurley as well as other applicable state and federal agencies (e.g., the U.S. Forest Service and NM Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department) to protect, maintain and restore its natural resources. In addition, coordinating efforts between Town departments is important to achieving success in these efforts.

I. Public/Private Partnerships

The Town should continue to work through and enhance local, regional and state public/private partnerships to address community natural resource management, protection and enhancement. The Town should actively involve residents, landowners, and not-for-profit organizations in open space and natural resource preservation. Working with local organizations, developers, businesses and residents, the Town should invest in maintaining and enhancing existing open space systems, while supporting future acquisition programs. Working with the private sector, the Town should also promote and support watershed restoration and environmental education programs. These partnerships help create and support natural amenities and the overall "quality of place" that is directly related to economic development for the region.

Chapter 9 What is Next?

Putting the Plan to Work

The Comprehensive Plan is useful only if it actually leads to achievement of its goals and policies. Once adopted, it should serve as a guide for planning and decision-making with regard to land uses and other municipal policies and procedures. However, the Plan is not regulatory. For the implementation of goals and policies outlined in the Plan, the Town relies on tools and regulations such as the overall municipal code, the Land Use Code, a design review process, and other ordinances and programs.

To assist in achieving each goal outlined in the Silver City Comprehensive Plan, implementation measures have been identified for each goal which are summarized at the end of each chapter. The review, refinement and utilization of these implementation measures by Town staff and public officials are the keys to effectively put the plan to work.

It is also important to consider how the Comprehensive Plan meets the state's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) requirements, as well as how it can be maintained as an effective management tool after it is adopted. The Comprehensive Plan is only the first, yet critical step, in achieving the type of future growth and development that the town desires.

Other Government Actions

The Town makes many decisions each year, such as adoption of budgets that affect the public health, safety and welfare. As these decisions are made, the Comprehensive Plan should be consulted to see if the proposed action or actions are consistent with the Town's expressed goals and policies.

In addition, other government agencies and organizations develop plans and engage in decision-making processes that can influence policy planning in the Town of Silver City -- such as transportation, public services and facilities, housing and land use. The Silver City Comprehensive Plan should be distributed to the local governments, agencies, and organizations and all major planning goals and policies should be highlighted so that these agencies are aware of the Town's plan of action for the future. Efforts should be made to coordinate with other local governments, organizations and agencies to ensure that their actions and plans do not undermine, but rather support and complement, the goals and policies of the town's Comprehensive Plan.

Land Use Code & Zoning Ordinance Consistency

To implement the plan's goals and policies, the Town's Land Use Code and Zoning Map should be consistent with the goals and policies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. It is recognized that the Land Use Code has a provision that any decisions made pursuant to it cannot be challenged "on the basis of any alleged non-conformity with any planning documents." Nevertheless, the Land Use Code should be reviewed upon adoption of the plan to ensure

consistency. Generally, the Land Use Code can be more prescriptive and restrictive than the Comprehensive Plan, but should not allow significant deviation from the type or intensity of development that is outlined in the plan.

Consistency means that various land uses authorized by the Land Use Code, and the distribution of these permitted land uses, must serve to implement the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Specific zoning districts, ideally based on neighborhood and area plans, should correspond with the land use designations in the Comprehensive Plan. Just as important, the policies in the Comprehensive Plan should be used when making discretionary decisions called for in the Land Use Code.

Making the Plan Available

The Comprehensive Plan, all amendments, and all related products should be accessible to the public. The Comprehensive Plan should be made available, when possible, on a Town website. It is especially important that Town officials have the most up-to-date version of the plan for their use in day-to-day decision-making.

Capital Improvement Programs

An Infrastructure and Capital Improvement Plan, ICIP, is a description, by year, of all infrastructure and capital expenditure projects recommended for engineering, design, or construction in the immediate future. This list should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan in order to ensure that public monies are spent in an efficient manner and in a way that leads to implementation of the goals of the plan. The importance of ensuring that the ICIP is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan cannot be overemphasized, especially in a growing community. Experience in other communities has shown that an effective ICIP, combined with comprehensive plan guidance, is the most effective way of ensuring the adequacy of public facilities and services, and promoting a public perception of good government.

Maintaining the Comprehensive Plan

Traditionally, comprehensive plans were viewed as static documents that required updating about every 20 years. The more contemporary view of comprehensive plans is that they are management tools that must be kept up-to-date to provide useful guidance for evolving communities. The Town of Silver City should carry out a review and update process for its Comprehensive Plan every five years, or even more frequently. During each review, the Town should ensure the Plan is consistent with state requirements as well as the evolution of land use patterns as the community continues to develop. Yearly reviews of the plan should be done by staff to remove projects that have been completed and to update the data in the plan.

Amending the Comprehensive Plan

Town officials and staff as well as residents can initiate Comprehensive Plan amendments by submission of a written proposal to the governing body. As noted in the section above, the plan should be kept up-to-date or else it becomes less and less useful as a management tool. On the other hand, frequent amendments to the Comprehensive Plan often indicate that it is not being

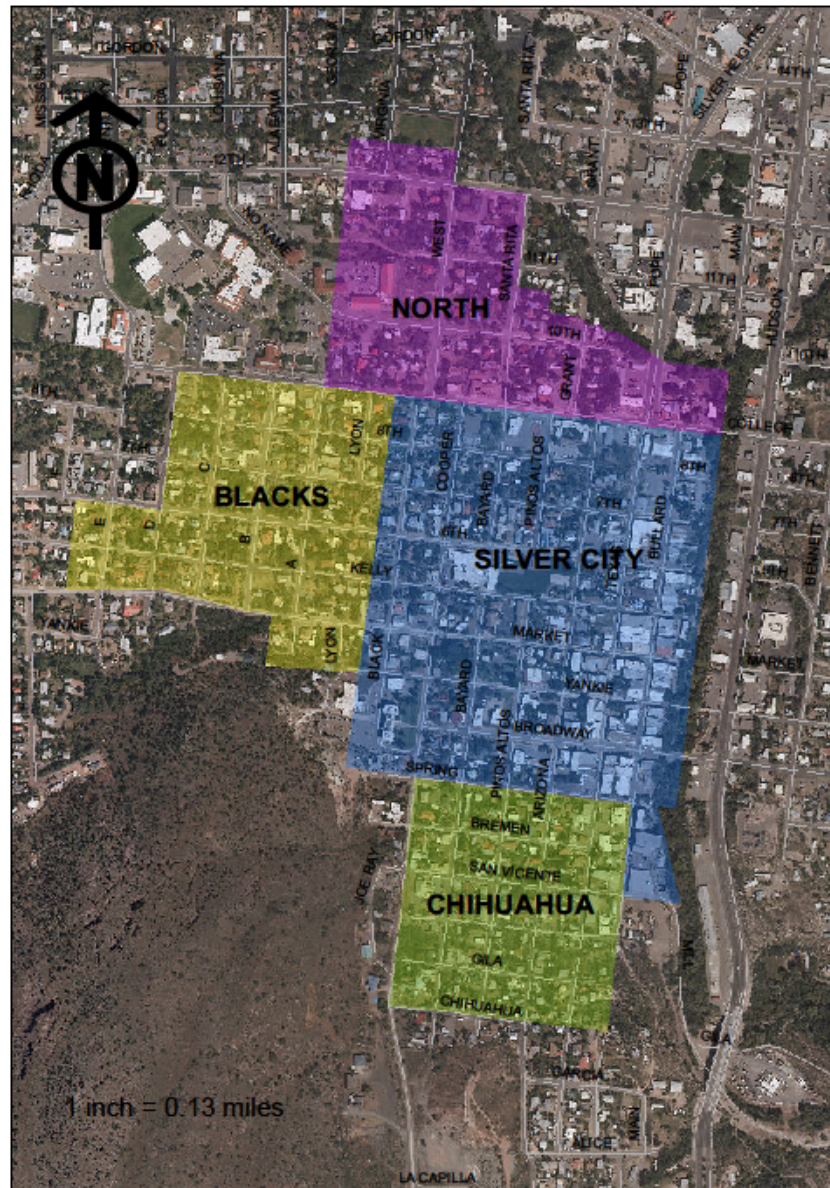
used properly as a long-range guide to the future. Some states allow amendments only two times per year in order to provide a sense of stability to local plans.

MISSION STATEMENT of the TOWN OF SILVER CITY

Silver City is the hub of an inclusive community settled within a small town that through guided growth, honors and preserves its historical, cultural, and natural heritage while facilitating jobs, health, and educational resources such that the residents and visitors may enjoy and protect the recreational opportunities of the area and high quality of life.

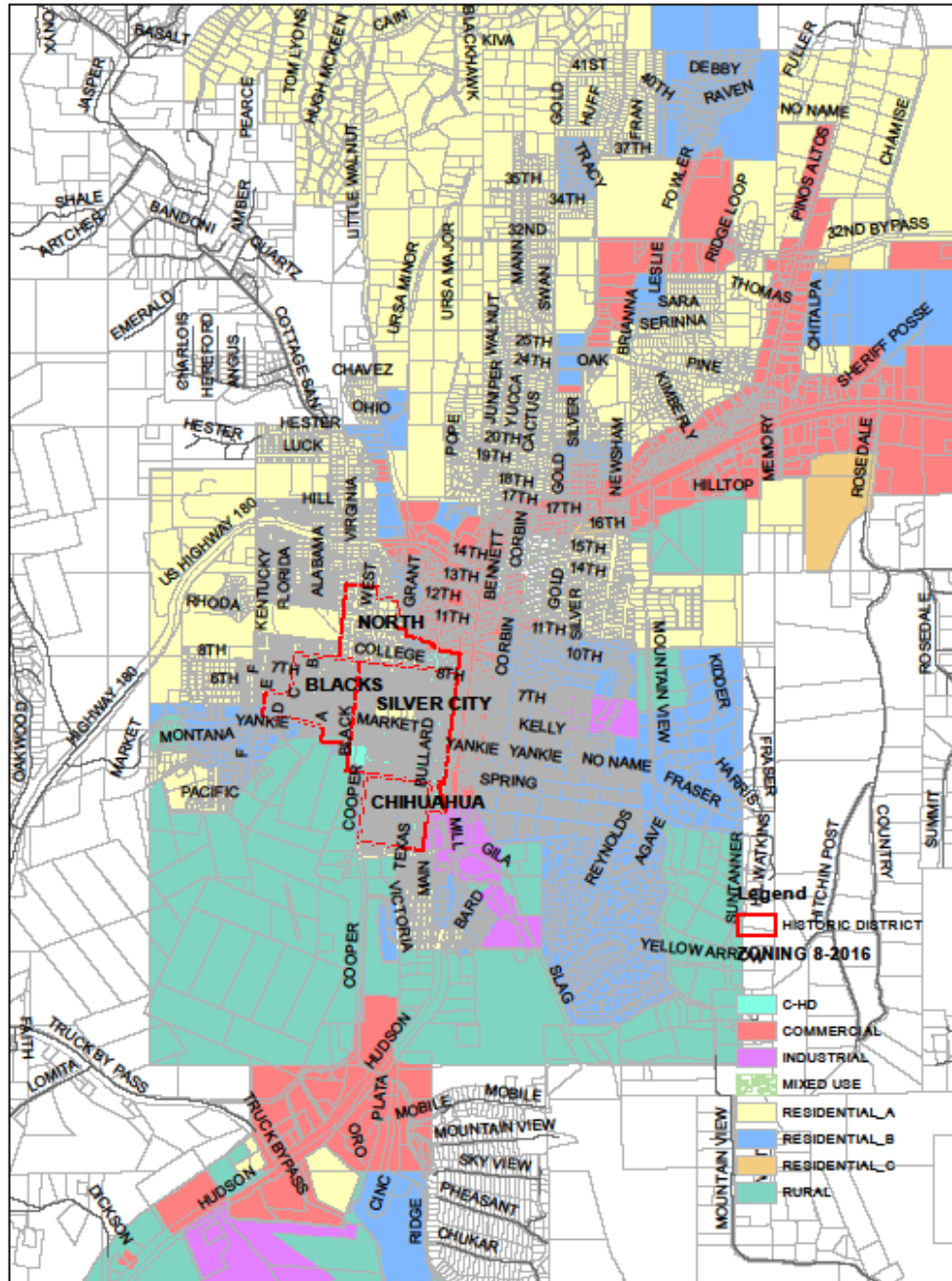
Approved by the Town Council on May 25, 2010.

HISTORIC DISTRICTS





ZONING MAP



1 inch = 2,428.09 feet

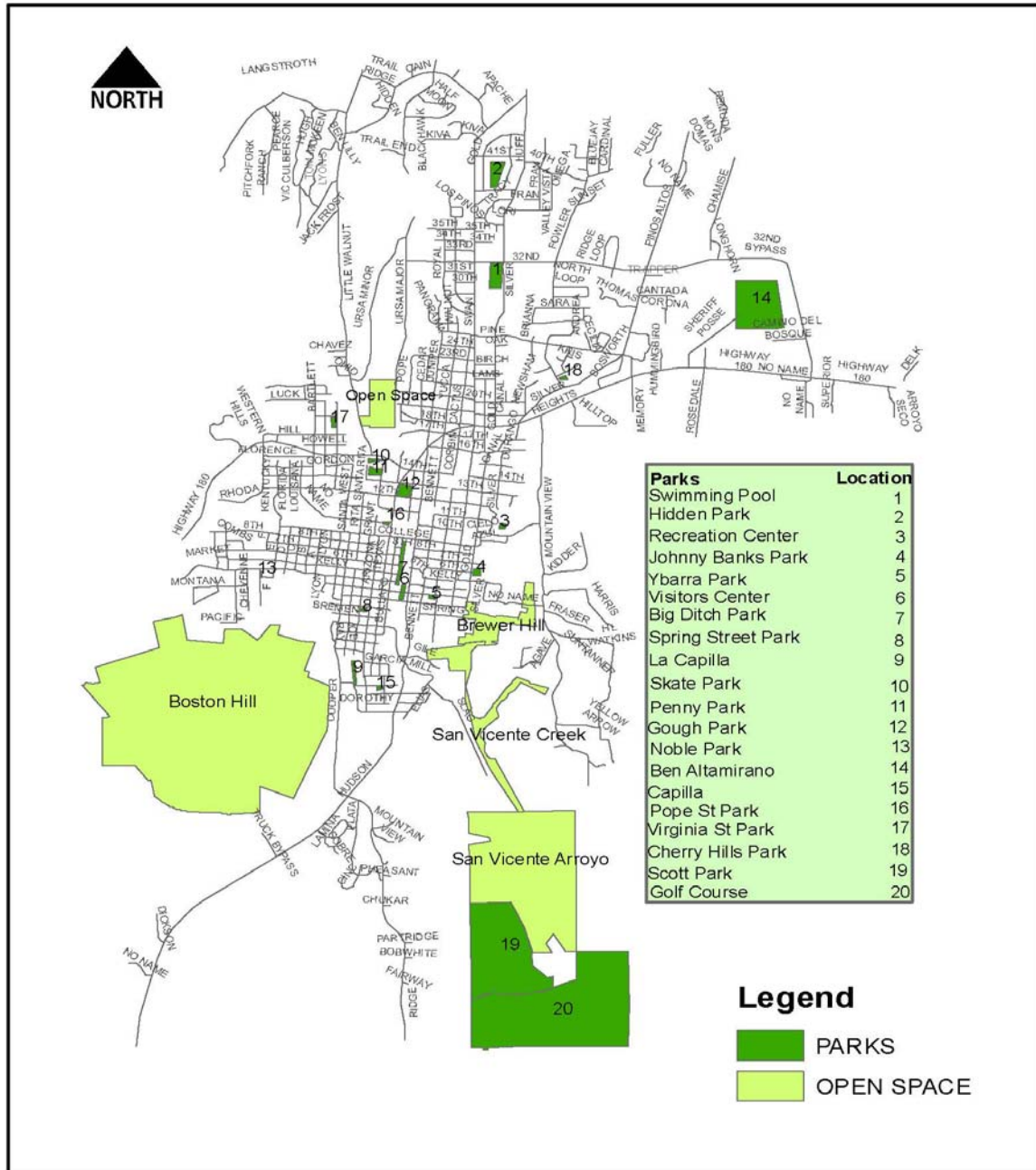
APPENDIX 3

LIST OF TOWN PLANS

Brewer Hill Comprehensive Neighborhood Plan, 2002
Floodplain Management Plan, 2002
Silver City Trails and Open Space Plan- February 26, 2002
Town of Silver City Comprehensive Plan 2004
Big Ditch Project, 2004
New Mexico 2025 Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan, NM Dept. of Transportation, 2004
San Vicente Heritage District Plan, 2006
Silver City Wetlands Action Plan, March 2008
Arts & Cultural District Cultural Plan- June 2009
Town of Silver City Climate Action Plan-January 13, 2009
Silver City Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan- October 12, 2010
Silver City Housing Analysis and Strategic Plan- August 15, 2010
Town Pavement Management Plan-September 2011
Silver City Greenways and Big Ditch Master Plan, 2013
Silver City Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan/Downtown Action Plan, 2013
Water Conservation Plan-August 12, 2013
Town of Silver City Sustainability Plan- October 2013
Town of Silver City Community Forestry Plan-October 2013
Town of Silver City Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan for Facilities and Parks Accessibility, 2013
Silver City Greenways and Big Ditch Master Plan- May 14, 2014
Bicycle Master Plan-August 22, 2016
Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan-August 6, 2015
The Silver City Public Library Strategic Plan, 2016
Vector Management Plan
Silver City and ETZ Community Wildfire Protection Plan

APPENDIX 4

CITY PARKS/OPEN SPACE SILVER CITY



APPENDIX 5

District 1 – August 8, 2016 – SHS Little Theater

- Swan and 22nd Streets need a street light.
- Drivers speed near 40th and Fowler.
- Drivers speed near 25th and Juniper.

District 2 – August 17, 2016 – WNMU Student Memorial Building

- The Town should consider annexing more property.
- College Avenue needs traffic calming to address speeding.
- Alabama Street needs to stay narrow.
- The quality of Town streets is bad.
- Traffic is bad on Ohio and Ursa Major.
- More proactive code enforcement is needed.
- Wild animal control is needed.
- The Land Use Code is too complicated.

District 3 – August 29, 2016 – Silco Theater

- Noisy traffic and reckless drivers on Market Street are a problem.
- Speed bumps are needed.

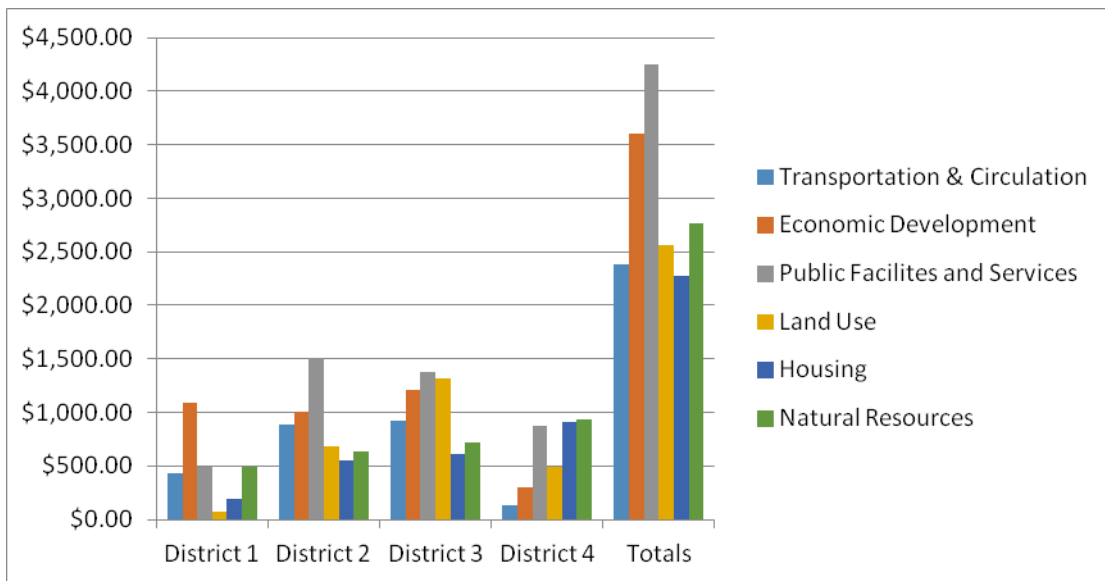
District 4 – August 11, 2016 – Recreation Center

- Gold and Swan Streets needs speed bumps.
- Speeding is a problem on Kelly Street between Gold and Durango.
- Pine Street between Swarthmore and PA Road needs traffic control and street lights.
- The public pool should be updated for competitive swimming and a bigger aquatic center.
- The Recreation Center should be a full sports complex.
- The sidewalks on Brewer Hill are in bad condition.

APPENDIX 6

INITIAL PUBLIC MEETINGS - AUGUST 2016⁵

	Trans. & Circulation	Econ. Dev.	Public Facilities and Services	Land Use	Housing	Natural Resources
Dist. 1	\$433.00	\$1,090.00	\$490.00	\$67.00	\$189.00	\$493.00
Dist. 2	\$891.00	\$1,006.00	\$1,507.00	\$684.00	\$557.00	\$632.00
Dist.3	\$922.00	\$1,211.00	\$1,382.00	\$1,319.00	\$611.00	\$716.00
Dist. 4	\$131.00	\$301.00	\$870.00	\$497.00	\$915.00	\$930.00
Totals	\$2,377.00	\$3,608.00	\$4,249.00	\$2,567.00	\$2,272.00	\$2,771.00



⁵ Residents who attended the District Meetings all received money to “spend” on the categories which were most important to them.

