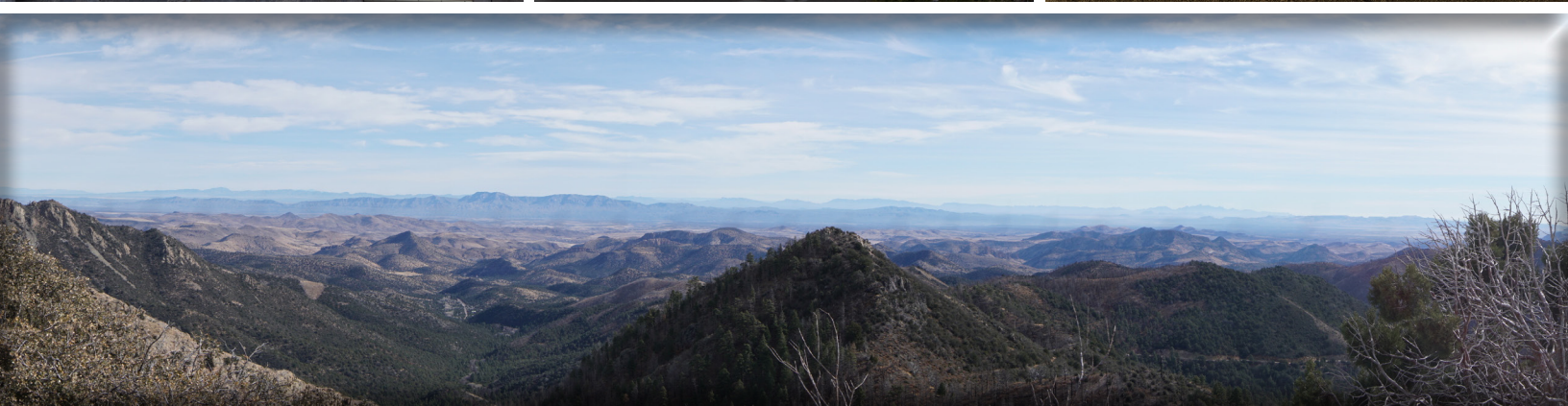


Grant County Comprehensive Plan

JUNE 2017



**GRANT COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

JUNE 2017

Prepared for:

GRANT COUNTY

Prepared by:

BOHANNAN HUSTON, INC.

**GRANT COUNTY, NEW MEXICO
RESOLUTION NO. R-17-27**

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2017 GRANT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, the Grant County Board of Commissioners is authorized to adopt a comprehensive plan for land use development pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 3-21-1 *et. seq.*;

WHEREAS, the 2017 Grant County Comprehensive Plan has been developed in accordance with NMSA 1978, Section 3-21-5, addressing the desires and needs of Grant County residents as expressed through a public outreach process that included stakeholder meetings and interviews; pop-up events at the City of Bayard Public Library, Albertsons grocery store, and the Chocolate Fantasia Festival; and an online questionnaire with more than 260 responses;

WHEREAS, the Grant County Board of Commissioners has reviewed and commented on the 2017 Grant County Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the 2017 Grant County Comprehensive Plan is an official public document that is intended to serve as a general guide, rather than a definitive plan, for policymakers in determining whether and why certain improvements or investments should be made.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Grant County Board of Commissioners that:

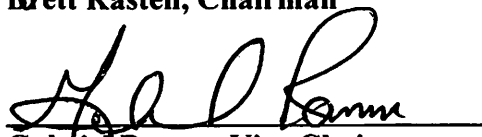
1. The 2017 Grant County Comprehensive Plan is hereby approved and adopted;
2. The action items of the 2017 Grant County Comprehensive Plan shall serve as general guidelines for land use decisions, and all county regulations affecting land use shall conform to these action items;
3. The 2004 Grant County Comprehensive Plan is hereby repealed; and
4. The 2017 Grant County Comprehensive Plan may be amended as conditions change upon recommendation of the County Manager and/or the Board of County Commissioners.

[signature page following]

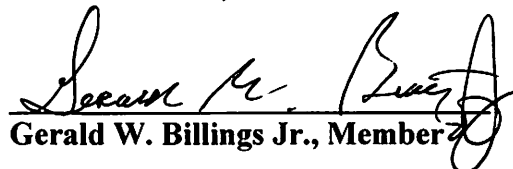
**PASSED, ADOPTED, AND APPROVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE
COUNTY OF GRANT, NEW MEXICO ON THIS 15TH DAY OF JUNE 2017.**

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS GRANT COUNTY, NEW MEXICO:


Brett Kasten, Chairman


Gabriel Ramos, Vice Chairman

Voted Nay
Alicia Edwards, Member


Gerald W. Billings Jr., Member

Voted Nay
Harry Browne, Member

[SEAL]

Attest:


Marisa Castrillo, Clerk

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Executive Summary

Residents and visitors alike cite the high quality of life, desirable climate, recreational activities and access to nature, and small community appeal as major advantages of living in Grant County. Grant County also benefits from institutions and infrastructure that are rarely shared by small town and rural communities. These include an institution of higher learning in Western New Mexico University; quality healthcare services; the Grant County airport, which provides essential passenger air services; and the Corre Caminos public transit system, which links various communities across the region. Collectively these resources engender a high level of civic pride and provide tremendous opportunities for area residents. Nevertheless, Grant County faces a number of challenges that must be confronted in the near future.

Major Challenges and Opportunities

Demographics: Though the population of Grant County is projected to remain mostly steady in the coming decades, the composition of the population is changing in meaningful ways. The number of young adults declined in recent decades and this trend is projected to continue as the population in labor force (considered to be 16-64 years old) will shrink from 59% to 54% by 2040. To address these population dynamics will require new ideas and new policies to attract and retain young adults, including the types of public services and housing options that must be provided.

Economic Development: Perhaps the most critical challenge is to further diversify the economy to ensure Grant County is resilient to changing market conditions and to respond to threats to population loss and out-migration. Grant County can complement traditional industries - mining and ranching continue to play an important role – and embrace emerging industries for which the area is particularly well-suited, including renewable energy generation. Particularly important will be workforce training opportunities that match local residents with the skills required by new industries. The same recreational opportunities that appeal to residents, along with a myriad of cultural and historic sites, also make Grant County an attractive tourism destination. The County experienced \$54 million in total visitor spending in 2015, an increase of more than 13% from the previous year, and strategies to further attract visitors to the region should be considered.


Regional Coordination: The challenges confronting Grant County are shared by other jurisdictions around the region, and investments can have broad benefits. The Comprehensive Plan discusses ways to expand upon the existing regional efforts to address economic development, transportation challenges, and to ensure adequate water resources over the long-term. Grant County can also improve its resiliency as an agency through cooperation across jurisdictions, including shared staffing efforts and the efficient provision of public services.

Transects and Plan Implementation

To complement the strategies and recommendations contained throughout the document, and as a means of providing guidance over land use and development practices, the Grant County Comprehensive Plan introduces a transect approach to land management. Rather than a regulatory tool, transects provide guidance on appropriate activities and development forms within a district. Since the focus is on appropriateness rather than allowable uses, transects are meant to serve as a reference for Grant County commissioners and staff in the development review process and in the prioritization of public expenditures. Identifying transect districts is also valuable for establishing expectations about available public services. The use of transect districts does not limit or preclude activities from taking place in a particular district. Rather, they provide guidance on the types of activities or services most associated with or best suited for different areas.

The Grant County Comprehensive Plan identifies five districts: Urban, Village, Transitional, Rural, and Natural. Although Grant County does not have jurisdiction over Urban and Natural districts, Grant County provides services in these areas and can coordinate with other agencies on appropriate activities. For more details see the Land Use and Transects chapter. The utilization of the transect district approach and the integration of future planning efforts with transect planning can guide the growth of Grant County in constructive ways and help ensure that public services and investments are provided in an intelligent and efficient manner.

Grant County Transects

		Description	Primary Locations
Urban		This transect includes Silver City and other incorporated communities. Urban transects are noted for small block sizes, small lots, a mix of land uses and occasionally multi-story buildings. Urban areas usually feature a grid roadway system or a clear hierarchy of roads. Public services are likely to be available.	Silver City Bayard Santa Clara Hurley
Village		Distinct but small communities, usually unincorporated, that are recognized as a Census Designated Place. The road network is less dense and block sizes are greater, and usually features a modified grid or an intersecting set of major roads. Villages feature small-to-medium lots and block size- areas, and tend to be mostly residential and with some locally-owned businesses. Some public services are available.	San Lorenzo Cliff/ Gila Tyrone
Transitional		These transects are less densely populated areas and located on the edges of urban zones and villages. Transition communities often developed as small housing clusters, sometimes near major industrial areas, such as mines. Lot sizes are larger and the roadway network is less dense than urban and village zones. Few public services are available.	North Hurley Urban/ Village Buffers Select Major Roads Grant County Airport
Rural		In this transect land uses are largely agricultural and often adjacent to natural areas. Individual residential and commercial sites are located along major roads rather than clustered together. Limited public services are available. The majority of privately-owned land in Grant County is classified as rural.	Redrock Mule Creek BLM
Natural		Open space or other undeveloped areas that have been unaltered by humans in a major way. Natural areas are usually federally-owned without any services or improvements.	Gila National Forest Conservation Areas

Introduction

Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan

The Grant County Comprehensive Plan is an official public document that serves as a guide for policy decisions and the investment of public funds. The Comprehensive Plan provides a vision for growth, but is meant to be a general guide rather than an exact set of improvements or investments. In other words, the Comprehensive Plan will help Grant County policymakers determine *why* certain types of improvements or investments should be made.

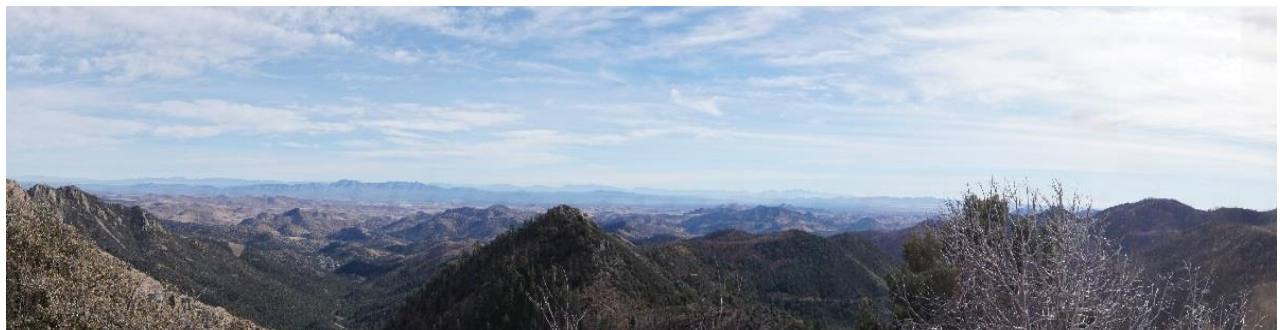
The Grant County Comprehensive Plan utilizes growth projections and population dynamics through the year 2040 to consider the long-term needs for residents, businesses, and visitors. In particular, it examines how Grant County is likely to change over time and the types of demographic, social, and economic challenges that will need to be confronted. By identifying and addressing these challenges and opportunities today, we can ensure that Grant County remains a great place to live for the foreseeable future.

Comprehensive Plans are to be re-evaluated every five years to consider changes in conditions, emerging needs, and to reevaluate priorities. The Plan itself must consider needs multiple decades into the future. This document replaces the 2004 Comprehensive Plan as the guiding policy document for Grant County. The Grant County Comprehensive Plan was funded by the Local Government Division of the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration.

Plan Development

The Grant County Comprehensive Plan was developed concurrent to the update to the Town of Silver City Comprehensive Plan. Efforts were made to ensure consistency and collaboration between the jurisdictions, including sharing of data and draft documents, and staff from Grant County served on the steering committee for the Town of Silver City planning process.

The plan development process involved the participation of Grant County staff from various departments, stakeholders from agencies across southwest New Mexico, and from the general public through in-person outreach activities and a questionnaire. This planning process therefore reflects input from a broad spectrum of area residents.



Plan Structure

The Grant County Comprehensive Plan contains nine chapters: 1) Community Background, 2) Regional Coordination, 3) Land Use and Transects, 4) Housing, 5) Environment and Natural Resources, 6) Transportation, 7) Capital Facilities and Community Services, 8) Economic Development, and 9) Funding Opportunities. In addition to describing a range of existing conditions, the first chapter, Community Background, assesses key demographic issues that Grant County must confront in the coming decades. Each subsequent chapter discusses challenges and opportunities, and provides goals and action items that specifically respond to the identified challenges and opportunities.

In addition to the action items identified in each chapter, the major implementation component of the Comprehensive Plan is the transect approach to land use planning and the provision of public services. There is no zoning in unincorporated areas of Grant County, making growth management and public investment decisions prone to subjectivity and inconsistency. Transects are not regulatory, and do not mandate particular actions on the part of the public or private sector. Rather, the transects approach contained in the Comprehensive Plan is a tool to assist Grant County policymakers and staff in determining the appropriate types of activities, development patterns, and public services associated with different districts (i.e. area types). Transect districts range from undeveloped (and undevelopable) natural areas to urban areas (i.e. the incorporated municipalities of Silver City, Santa Clara, Bayard, and Hurley). More information on the transect approach can be found in the Land Use chapter.

It is the intent of this Comprehensive Plan that the action items and the transect districts serve as resources for Grant County staff, elected officials, public policy professionals, and other stakeholders and members of the general public.

Notes on Data Sources

In addition to local policy documents and interviews, the primary data sources for the Grant County Comprehensive Plan are the 2010 Census and the 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is an on-going sample survey of about 2.5% of households per year that generates detailed profiles of household types, income, educational attainment, and other economic indicators. The 2011-2015 ACS is a rolling average of data collected over a five-year period. The 2010 Census, though slightly less recent, provides data on population and racial/ethnic composition based on a survey of all households in the country.

Data for unincorporated areas of Grant County from the 2010 Census can be derived by subtracting all incorporated areas from the overall Grant County total. The unincorporated data reflects the remainder. Due to the composition of ACS data, it is imprecise to apply the same methodology. Therefore, whenever ACS data is used, tables show conditions for Grant County overall. It is important to note that Silver City and other unincorporated communities are *included* as part of overall Grant County conditions in these data tables.

Outreach Process

The Grant County Comprehensive Plan featured a variety of outreach components, and the Plan benefited from the input and participation of leaders and members of the community. The effort was guided by a Project Team comprised of staff from Grant County, the Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments, and the New Mexico Economic Development Department, as well as Bohannon Huston, Inc. Additional outreach was conducted with representatives from the Town of Silver City, the Silver City Grant County Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Main Street, the United States Forest Service, and Central Arizona Project New Mexico, as well as other stakeholders and members of the public.

Public involvement is an integral part of any planning process. Primary outreach efforts included in-person pop-up events around Grant County, and a questionnaire that solicited input on the benefits and challenges of living in Grant County, as well as areas where Grant County should focus its resources in years to come. The questions themselves are based upon issues identified in previous planning efforts, as well as input from the Project Team. The questions also support the required content of the Comprehensive Plan, as dictated by the granting entity and partner, the New Mexico Finance Authority. Several of the questions provided the opportunity for open-ended feedback. A complete version of the questionnaire can be found in the Appendix.

The questionnaire was available in hardcopy and online, and was distributed widely by local agencies and organizations. More than 260 Grant County residents participated, and results of the questionnaire are interspersed throughout the document.



Community Background and Existing Conditions

Located in the southwest portion of the state of New Mexico, Grant County is marked by its economic, cultural, and geographic diversity. Known for its Wild West roots – mining and ranching continue to play an important role – Grant County’s identity is now complemented by cultures related to the arts and recreational activities. The geography is equally varied, with terrain across 3,968 square miles ranging from rugged mountains in northern portions of the County to high desert plains in the south.

The County seat, the Town of Silver City is home to Western New Mexico University (WNMU), which attracts students from across the southwest and ensures a steady stream of young adults in the community. The university also provides a range of cultural programs and amenities that appeal to residents and relocated retirees alike.

Like many rural places in New Mexico, Grant County is subject to two simultaneous population dynamics: an aging population and the pattern of many young professionals leaving the area for economic opportunities. These issues and other demographic considerations that shape the present and future of Grant County are discussed in this chapter.

Population and Demographics

With an estimated 28,609 residents in 2015, Grant County is the 15th most populous county in the state of New Mexico. There are four incorporated communities in Grant County, all located along a ten-mile stretch of US 180. Silver City is the largest town with slightly more than 10,000 residents. Other incorporated communities include Bayard, Hurley, and Santa Clara (see Table 1 for population estimates).

TABLE 1 - POPULATION BY JURISDICTION, 1960 TO PRESENT

Place	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015
Bayard	2,327	2,908	3,036	2,580	2,534	2,328	2,264
Hurley	1,851	1,796	1,616	1,442	1,464	1,297	1,256
Santa Clara	1,075	1,864	1,968	1,828	1,944	1,686	1,638
Silver City	6,972	8,557	9,887	10,984	10,545	10,315	10,004
Unincorporated Areas	8,802	9,813	12,733	13,422	17,049	13,888	13,447
Grant County	18,700	22,030	26,204	27,676	31,002	29,514	28,609

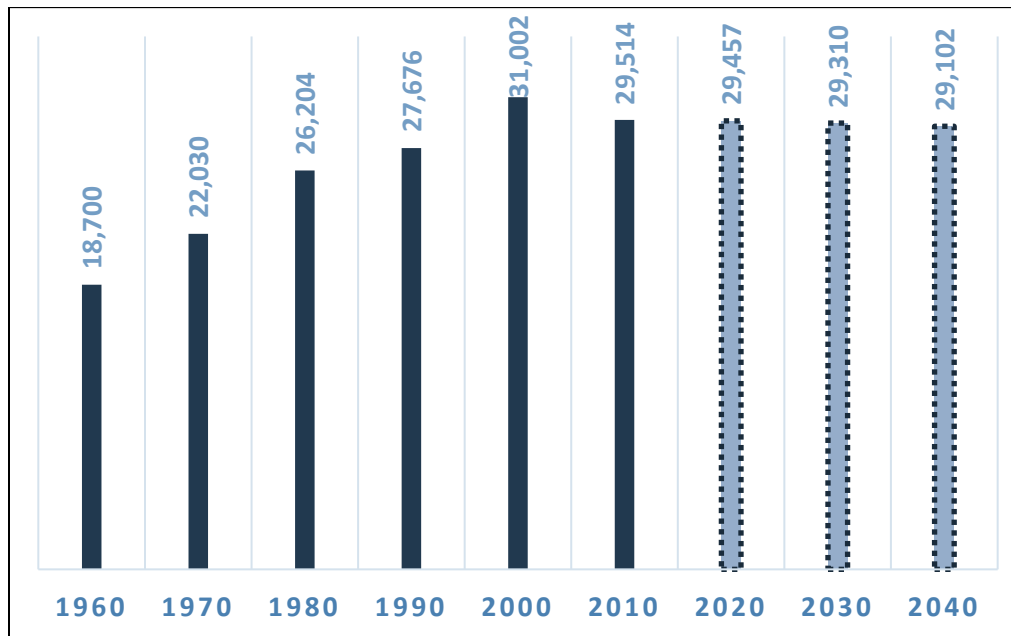
Grant County also contains more than two dozen unincorporated communities, including 18 Census-designated places for which basic population and housing data is available. Of the unincorporated communities, Arenas Valley is the largest, with more than 1,500 residents as of the 2010 Census.

TABLE 2 - POPULATION IN UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES, 2010

Community	2010 Population
Arenas Valley	1,522
Buckhorn	200
Cliff	293
Cobre	39
Faywood	33
Gila	314
Hachita	49
Hanover	167
Lake Roberts	53
Lake Roberts Heights	32
Mimbres	667
North Hurley	300
Pinos Altos	198
Rosedale	394
San Lorenzo	97
Trout Valley	16
Tyrone	637
White Signal	181
Other Unincorporated Areas	8,696

Population Trends

The population in the County grew steadily throughout the 20th Century, increasing from a 1900 population of 12,883 to more than 31,000 residents in 2000. This span included four decades of consecutive population growth beginning in the 1960s, before experiencing a decline in the 2000s, due at least in part to the Great Recession. This dynamic is also consistent with national trends of rural agricultural communities shrinking due to people moving to more urban areas search of economic opportunities. Another component of shifting population dynamics is the change in the amount of in-migration, where the extended period in which large numbers of out-of-state retirees moved to Grant County area appears to have ended.

FIGURE 1 - HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED POPULATION FOR GRANT COUNTY

The population of Grant County is projected to remain mostly steady in the coming decades, with an estimated 29,102 residents in 2040. However, the composition of the population is changing and is likely to continue to change. According to the Market Assessment component of the Grant County Economic Development Master Plan, the number of young adults between the ages of 25 and 44 declined by 22 percent from 1990 to 2011. The report observes:

(Young adults are) an important demographic for economic development, often recognized as a community's creative age group and generally responsible for innovation. In addition to the need for additional quality of life amenities such as nightlife, cultural, and recreational attractions, more employment opportunities are fundamental in retaining and attracting this key demographic.

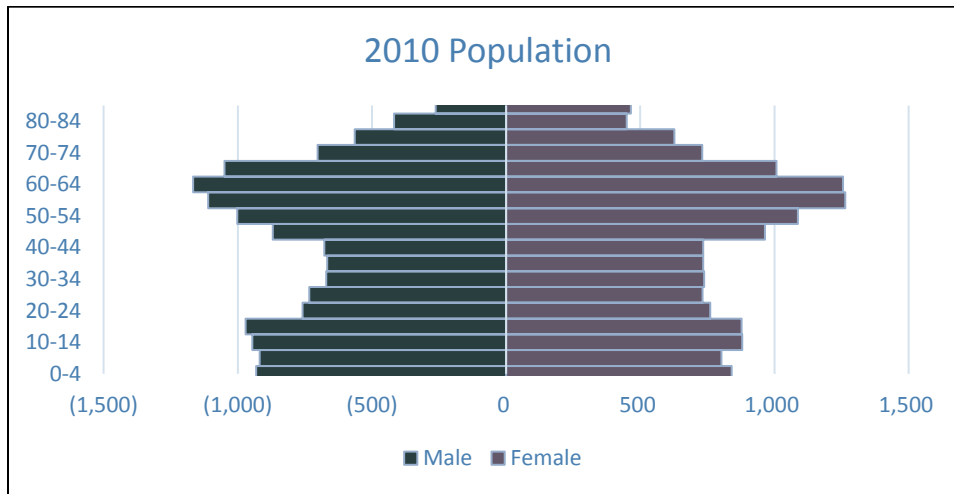
The flat or declining population growth over the long-term is due in part to age dynamics. Like many rural counties, Grant County has a growing number of senior citizens, and a shrinking percentage of the population of workforce participation age (i.e. ages 16-64). Many adults are relocating to other markets, while Baby Boomers, who are more likely to remain in Grant County over the long-term, will age out of the workforce. As of the 2010 Census, the largest age cohorts were under the age of 20 and between the ages of 45 and 64 (see Table 3 and Figure 2).

TABLE 3 - PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION IN LABOR FORCE

Age Group	2010	2040
15 or younger	19.4%	23.7%
16-64 years old	59.3%	53.6%
65 years and older	21.4%	22.7%

Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 5 depict projected age dynamics for years 2020-2040 based on birth rates, mortality rates, and migration patterns.¹ The 2020 population pyramid demonstrates the continued aging of the Grant County workforce, as the largest cohorts among adults are 65 to 74. The data also reflects the low levels of out-migration among established and older adults.

FIGURE 2 - 2010 POPULATION PYRAMID



Despite the fact that middle-aged adults form a smaller share of the population in 2030 and 2040, the largest cohorts of any age over time are projected to be young children; there remains a large share of senior citizens in Grant County over time as well. By 2040, the share of the population of working age is expected to shrink from over 59% to under 54%. As a result, there will be more individuals considered as dependents – or those outside the workforce – over time, and fewer workers to provide services to Grant County residents.

These population dynamics must be considered by Grant County stakeholders and decision-makers. Proactive policies will be necessary over the next 20 years to encourage residents to stay, as the trend in which many young adults leave the community is expected to continue over time. Among other things, age dynamics affect housing needs, economic development opportunities, and the types of public services that need to be provided.

¹ Population projections were developed by the Geospatial and Population Studies Group from the University of New Mexico in 2012

FIGURE 3 - 2020 POPULATION PYRAMID

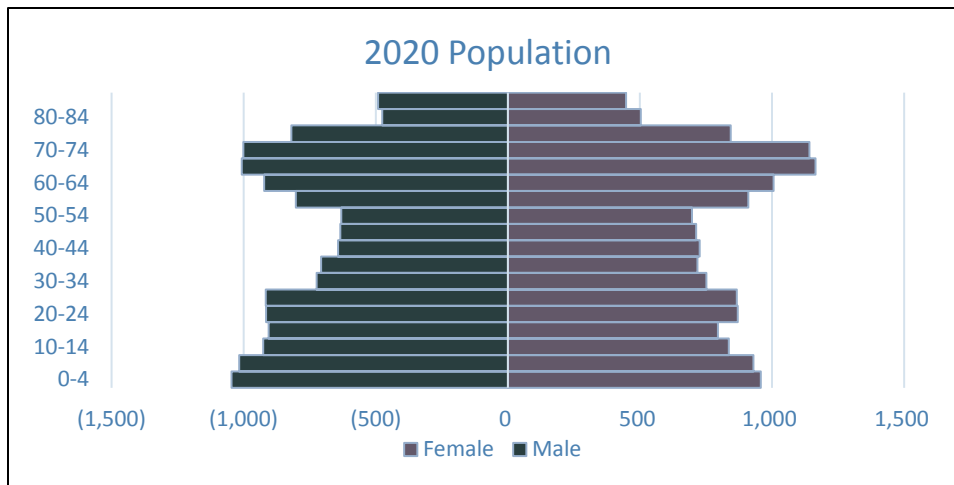


FIGURE 4 - 2030 POPULATION PYRAMID

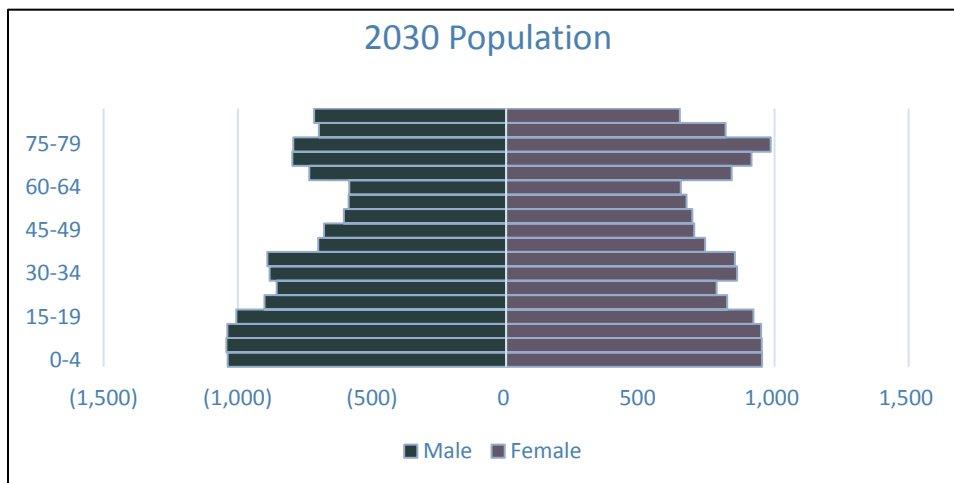
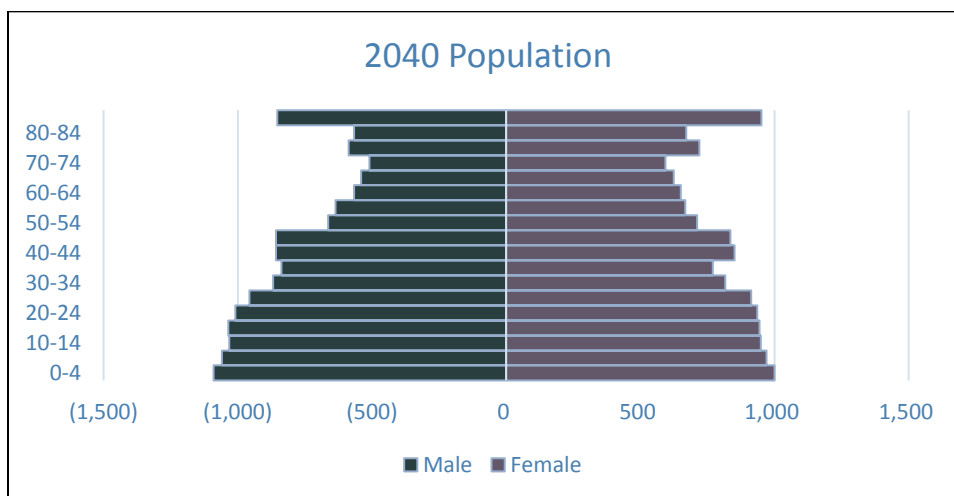


FIGURE 5 - 2040 POPULATION PYRAMID



Race/Ethnicity

According to the 2010 Census, the population is fairly evenly split among individuals who identify as “White Alone” or “Hispanic/Latino.” Grant County is home to a higher share of each group than the state of New Mexico, though there are relatively small populations of Native Americans, African Americans, or other races. Silver City is somewhat more diverse than the County as a whole, including a higher portion of Hispanic/Latino residents.

As in much of New Mexico, there is a large share of the Grant County population that speaks Spanish at home. About 28% of the population speaks a language other than English at home, of which 26.3% speak Spanish. Grant County is noteworthy in the small percentage of other languages (i.e. not English or Spanish) spoken at home.

TABLE 4 - RACE PROFILE OF GRANT COUNTY RESIDENTS, 2010 CENSUS

	Grant County	Silver City	New Mexico
Hispanic / Latino	48.3%	52.4%	46.3%
White Alone	48.6%	43.9%	40.5%
Black or African American	0.6%	1.0%	1.7%
Native American	0.7%	0.6%	8.5%
Asian / Pacific Islander	0.4%	0.8%	1.3%
Other / Two or More Races	1.3%	1.3%	1.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

TABLE 5 - PRIMARY LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME, 2011-2015 ACS

	Grant County	New Mexico
English	72.0%	64.3%
Spanish	26.8%	28.3%
Another Language	1.3%	7.4%

Educational Attainment

The current levels of educational attainment in Grant County are comparable with the state overall. About 85% of the adult population over the age of 25 has a high school diploma, while about 26% of the population has a bachelor’s degree or advanced degree. The population within Silver City displays the somewhat contradictory characteristics of both a higher share of adult individuals without a high school diploma *and* individuals with a 4-year college degree or greater than the state and County overall.

TABLE 6 - HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR PERSONS AGE 25+, 2011-2015 ACS

Level of Education	Grant County	Silver City	New Mexico
Less than High School (no diploma)	15.3%	18.1%	15.8%
High School Graduate	26.9%	21.8%	26.4%
Some College	31.6%	31.0%	31.4%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	26.2%	29.1%	26.3%

Economic Conditions

In 2016, Grant County had a civilian labor force of 12,243, with 11,466 employed and 777 unemployed and actively seeking work.² It is important to note that not all employed residents of Grant County work within the County itself. See the Economic Development chapter for additional information on employment patterns and jobs by industry.

Grant County had a seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 6.3% in December 2016 (the average annual unemployment rate for 2016 was also 6.3%). This rate is below the New Mexico level of unemployment at 6.7%, but above the national rate of 4.7%.

TABLE 7 - KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS, 2011-2015 ACS

	Grant County	New Mexico
Poverty Rate	20.8%	21.0%
Median Household Income	\$38,311	\$44,963
Per Capita Income	\$23,011	\$24,012

Wages in Grant County are relatively low, with the median household earning \$38,311 per year and a per capita income of \$23,011. By contrast, the median household income for the state of New Mexico is \$44,963, while the per capita income is \$24,012. About 20.8% of the population of Grant County lives below the poverty line, which is about equal to the statewide poverty level of 21.0% (see Table 7).

Colonias

Colonias are rural communities - both incorporated and unincorporated - located within 150 miles of the US-Mexican border. Colonias generally suffer from high poverty levels and many of these communities lack potable water supplies. Colonias may also lack adequate wastewater systems, adequate housing, well-maintained roads, or adequate drainage control structures. There are 39 colonias communities in Grant County recognized by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. The presence of Colonias is important to note as locations that may require additional public services, as well as the fact that additional funding sources are available for infrastructure investments in these communities.

² Source: New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions,
<https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/LMI/TA2016.pdf>

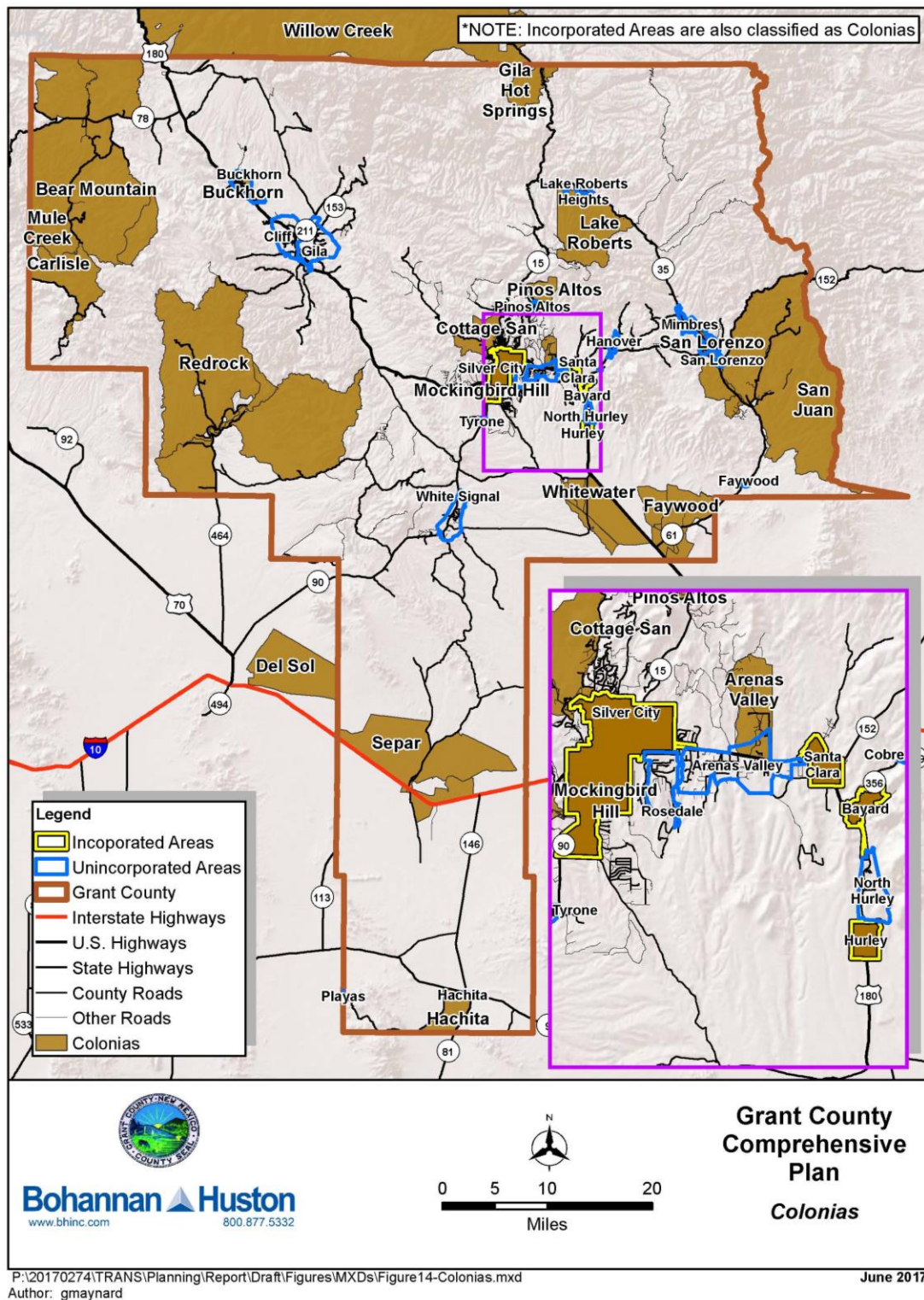


FIGURE 6 - COLONIAS IN GRANT COUNTY

Physical Features and Topography

Grant County has both geographic challenges and opportunities, which are discussed throughout the Comprehensive Plan. The topography makes Grant County particularly appealing for outdoor recreation activities, with hiking, camping, and hunting are among the most common. Though not in Grant County, other nearby attractions including the Catwalk National Recreation Area and the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, are easily visited from Grant County. Grant County is a place of great geographic diversity. The northern portion of the County is shaped by rugged mountains and the Gila National Forest, which is managed by the US Forest Service to ensure its long-term ecological sustainability. Nevertheless, forest lands are increasingly vulnerable to changing climatic conditions, including invasive species and the threats of forest fires; the threat of extreme fire events is expected to rise over time. The additional presence of vast tracts of State-owned land and large federally-owned parcels overseen by the Bureau of Land Management result in large amounts of open space and undeveloped land, much of which is accessible to the public for recreational purposes. The southern portion of the state is relatively flat and marked by grassland prairie suitable for low-intensity ranching activity. More information can be found in the Natural Resources and Environment chapter.

Natural Attractions in Grant County

- Trail of the Mountain Spirits National Scenic Byway
- Fort Bayard
- Birding Opportunities
- Dark Night Skies
- Hot Springs
- Hiking Trails

Location

The most heavily populated portions of Grant County are located in the Silver City area and along the ten-mile stretch of US 180 to the east of Silver City that include the towns of Hurley, Bayard, and Santa Clara. These areas are about a two-hour drive from the Las Cruces, NM metropolitan area and a three-hour drive from the El Paso, TX and Tucson, AZ metropolitan areas. Access to Grant County is primarily from NM 90 and US 180, which link the Silver City area to I-10 near the City of Lordsburg and the City of Deming respectively. The lack of direct roadway access to the Silver City area and other populated areas is a challenge. See the Transportation chapter for more details.

Land Ownership

A significant portion of the land within Grant County is owned and managed by federal agencies (see Figure 7); more than one-third of Grant County is comprised of US Forest Service land (38.4%, while the State of New Mexico and the Bureau of Land Management oversees 14% and 13.4% of Grant County land respectively. Only about 38.4% of the land in Grant County is in private hands. However, grazing permits allow private ranchers to utilize public lands across the County. The presence of multiple federal land management agencies creates the need for communication and coordination among regional stakeholders. See the Regional Coordination chapter for more discussion.

TABLE 8 - LAND IN GRANT COUNTY BY OWNER OR MANAGING AGENCY

Owner or Managing Agency	Square Miles	Percent
New Mexico Game and Fish	3.5	0.1%
Private	1,522.3	38.4%
State of New Mexico	556.7	14.0%
US Bureau of Land Management	530.6	13.4%
US Department of Defense	2.6	0.1%
US Forest Service	1,351.5	34.1%
Total Land Area	3,967.2	100.0%

Settlement History

The Grant County area has been occupied by Native American peoples for thousands of years. Perhaps the greatest mark on the landscape was left by the Mogollon culture, which occupied the region from around 200 BC to around 1500 AD. The Mimbres branch of the Mogollon culture occupied the Gila Cliff Dwellings and the surrounding area from around 1275 into the early 14th century. The Mogollon peoples became increasingly sedentary and agriculture-based communities over time. Apache groups, including the Mescalero Apache, were skilled hunters, gatherers, and horsemen who moved into southwest New Mexico in the 15th or 16th centuries. The Mescalero Apache were forced onto reservation lands in the 1800s.

In 1541, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado led an expedition of Spanish colonists and settlers through the area. Modern-day Grant County was part of New Spain until Mexican independence in 1821. Following the Mexican-American War, the area became part of Doña Ana County in the New Mexico Territory in the United States.

Gold and silver were discovered in the modern-day Grant County area in the 1860s and 1870s, leading to booming tent cities and eventually formal communities. Grant County was founded in 1868 and was named for Ulysses S. Grant, who would become the 18th US president the following year. The Town of Silver City was founded in 1870.

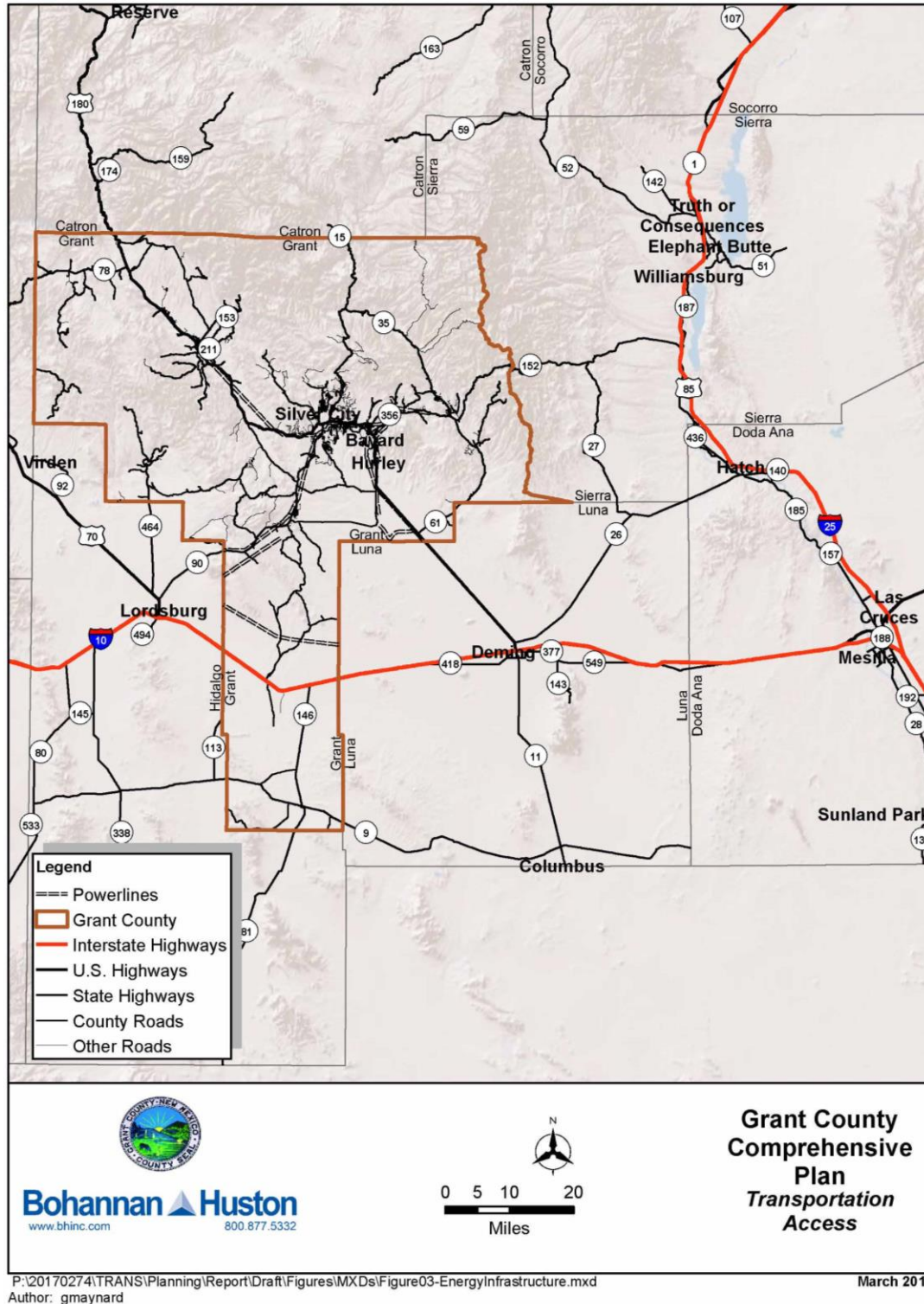


FIGURE 7 - TRANSPORTATION ACCESS IN GRANT COUNTY

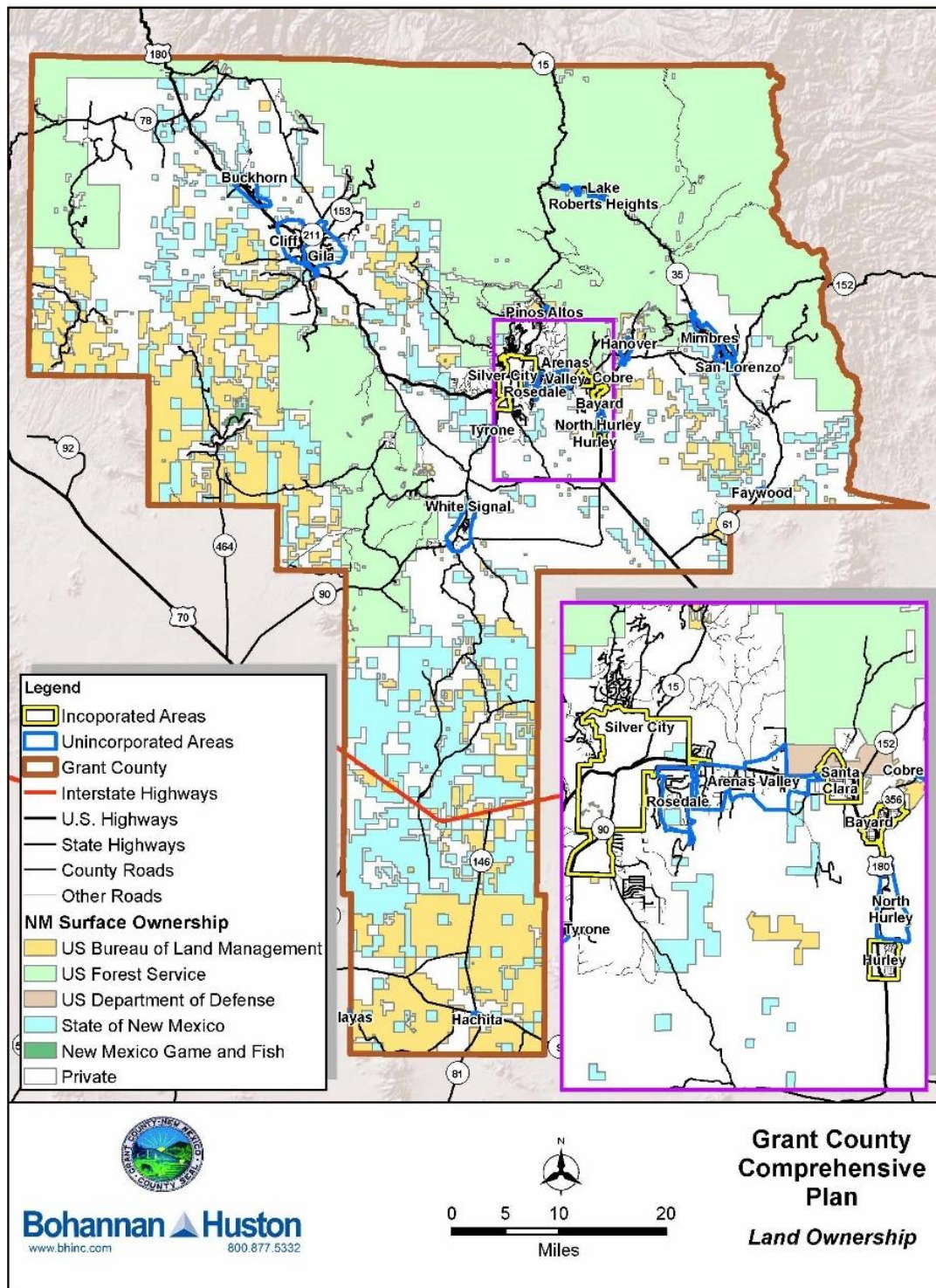


FIGURE 8 - LAND OWNERSHIP IN GRANT COUNTY

Public Feedback

The questionnaire contained two open-ended questions designed to encourage respondents to express their opinions freely regarding the positives and negatives of living in Grant County.

Q1: What are the best parts about living in Grant County?

Q2: What are the challenges associated with living in Grant County?

Best Parts about living in Grant County

Respondents indicated there are many great things about living in Grant County, with culture, the outdoors, and high quality of life among the common themes. Many respondents specifically cited the arts and the unique and interesting small towns throughout the County. The quiet, slow-pace of life also holds much appeal to County residents. Cost of living is low and people are friendly. Many respondents discussed the weather, which is pleasant most of the year, and enables outdoor recreation and spending time in nature. There is little light pollution, lots of open space, and good air to breathe.

Selected comments:

- *“Peace, quiet, being close to great hiking and nature, ease of shopping with everything nearby. Friendliness of neighbors, mostly clear skies, great weather, WNMU and the activities associated with it.”*
- *“The small, interesting towns. Great people. Historic Downtown Silver City. The wilderness.”*

Challenges of living in Grant County

Respondents expressed a wide range of challenges associated with living in Grant County, some of which can be addressed, while others are a product of geography. Of particular concern is the limited job availability, while many of the jobs available are low wage and involve low-skilled work. Similarly, some respondents feel there is a lack of quality educational opportunities. Others identify a disparity in educational attainment in the County, with some asserting that residents lack access to education. These issues cause many to feel there is a general separation of the poor and the wealthy in the County.

There are also comments regarding education about the environment and the importance of environmental preservation. A desire for more information on what amenities and activities are available to them was also stated.

Many respondents struggle with issues of transportation access in the County, including a lack of access to other communities and to the Grant County Airport. Large cities, and the amenities that come from those place (e.g. groceries and shopping) are not readily available in Grant County. Despite the robust healthcare services in Grant County, some critical medical services and large hospitals are far away, causing challenges in emergency situations. From a general transportation perspective, there is a need for roadway improvements and enhanced walkability. Lack of reliable internet access was also mentioned.

Many residents have concerns regarding crime and law enforcement. However, responses were mixed. Some mention that stops by police were too frequent, while others indicate that there are problems with crime. Residents also expressed concerns over drug addictions, especially opioids. One proposed solution is to provide more opportunities for youth to engage in recreational and other activities. In general participants felt there is a lack of things to do, leading to restless youth.

Some residents cited the importance of environmental preservation and expressed concerns over fire hazards. Though increased land use regulation was not a high priority in other aspects of the questionnaire the lack of zoning in the County, as it can affect the value of homes and businesses. Finally, the lack of willingness to try new ideas and projects was mentioned as such attitudes can be prohibitive to development.

Selected comments:

- *“Maintenance and upkeep of county roads.”*
- *“Having enough volunteers for volunteer Search & Rescue and for all the volunteer Fire Departments and especially volunteers to be trained as EMTs in the rural areas of the county.”*
- *“Water rights and water availability for some rural subdivisions.”*
- *“Enough law enforcement to monitor rural roads in the county.”*
- *“Same drug abuse issues as other US rural areas which leads to dangerous behavior and crime.”*
- *“Aging in a rural area, especially getting around safely after you should no longer drive.”*

Regional Coordination

Grant County works cooperatively with the incorporated municipalities and various agencies and stakeholders across the southwest portion of New Mexico. Continued cooperation is critical to leverage local resources and meet the needs of Grant County residents. Coordination among agencies will also be important in addressing the long-term challenges confronting the County, including an aging workforce, stagnant population growth, and the need to diversify the economy. In an era of constrained funding and increasing competition for state and federal funding, coordinated efforts among multiple agencies and jurisdictions provides the best path toward resiliency as a community. This chapter discusses the agencies and jurisdictions across Grant County, the services they provide, and opportunities for these agencies to continue to work together collectively.

Regional Planning Agencies

Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments

The Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments (SWNMCOG) is a regional planning agency that encourages and facilitates cooperation around a multitude of needs and planning issues, including economic development, housing, transportation, water resources, and community development.

Councils of Governments can provide planning assistance that transcends jurisdictional boundaries, and are especially important entities in rural areas as individual jurisdictions often lack the resources to pursue large-scale programs and grant opportunities. The SWNMCOG provides services across Catron, Hidalgo, Luna and Grant Counties, and is overseen by a Policy Board comprised of elected officials from local jurisdictions, including Grant County.

SWNMCOG staff are active in a wide array of regional and community organizations and planning efforts. Services include but are not limited to assistance and participation in comprehensive planning, preparation of Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plans, grant writing and administration, organizing regional meetings, and legislative outreach, among others. SWNMCOG is also the designated economic development entity for the region.



Southwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization

Housed within the SWNMCOG, the Southwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SWRTPO) conducts transportation planning across the region and provides a forum where agencies can consider regional transportation challenges. The SWRTPO is served by a Technical Advisory Committee comprised of member agency staff, and program and policy decisions are approved by the SWNMCOG Policy Board. In addition to the four county-area, SWRTPO boundaries include two NMDOT Districts (District One and District Six).

Through the SWRTPO, agencies across the region, including Grant County, can submit their priority projects for federal and state funding to the NMDOT through the Regional Transportation Improvement Program Recommendations (RTIPR). Though the NMDOT ultimately determines which projects receive funding and are included in the State Transportation Improvement Program, the SWRTPO can present a unified set priorities to the NMDOT, increasing the likelihood of receiving funding. The SWRTPO also provides an opportunity for agencies such as Grant County to advocate for the improvements along NMDOT-owned and maintained facilities that would be of benefit to local residents.

Local Jurisdictions and Comprehensive Planning

Many services and resources available to Grant County residents are located within the incorporated municipalities, encouraging and necessitating a close relationship between the County and the Cities, Towns and Villages. Grant County contributes financially to many of these services, such as the City of Bayard Public Library. Grant County shares a particularly close relationship with the Town of Silver City, the County seat and the largest municipality. The jurisdictions regularly share data and coordinate on land use decisions; there are opportunities to share resources for staff positions as well.

Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

One of the greatest areas of coordination, and one where increased clarity in roles and responsibilities is required, is the management of the Silver City extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ), which comprises a 3-mile radius around the Town of Silver City municipal limits. The Town of Silver City Land Use Code establishes that the Town's subdivision ordinance is applicable within the ETJ.

The ETJ enables the Town of Silver City to exert influence over development outside of municipal limits, and ensures that the new development is consistent with the needs and land use objectives of the Town. In practice, if a development is 5 acres or less the Town of Silver City regulates the development; if it is larger than 5 acres, the County is responsible for development review. Some developers have struggled with the ETJ and have had to go to both the Town and County to pursue project approval.

Main Street Programs

Sponsored by Grant County and the Town of Silver City, the Downtown Silver City Main Street supports a range of programs and investments that are intended to attract private investment. Grant County recognizes that increased economic activity in downtown Silver City has benefits across the County through employment opportunities, supporting local businesses, and additional tourism.

The Village of Santa Clara and the Town of Hurley are also recognized as Frontier Communities, an initial step towards full designation as Main Street programs. Both communities have utilized their status as Frontier Communities to access funding for civic improvements. See the Economic Development chapter for more information on these programs.

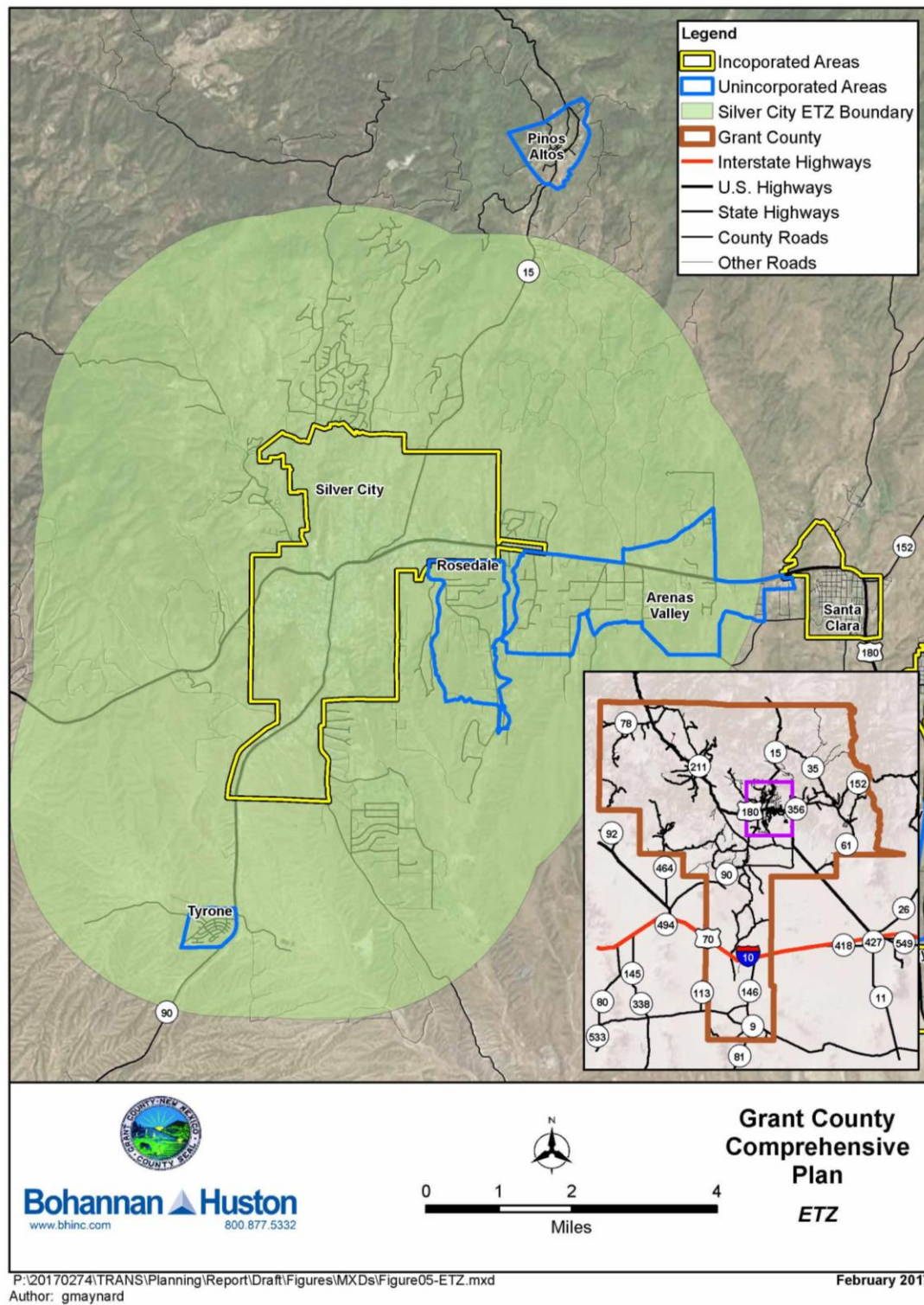


FIGURE 9 - TOWN OF SILVER CITY EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION

TABLE 9 - RELEVANT PLANS AND STUDIES FOR GRANT COUNTY

Grant County Planning Documents	
Grant County Comprehensive Plan	2017
Grant County Airport Master Plan	2015
Grant County All-Hazard Emergency Operations Plan	2014 (update in progress)
Grant County Hazard Mitigation Plan	Under development
Comprehensive Plans	
City of Bayard Comprehensive Plan	2012
Town of Hurley Comprehensive Plan	2005
Village of Santa Clara Comprehensive Plan	2013
Town of Silver City Comprehensive Plan	2017
Environmental Planning Documents	
Draft Assessment Report of Ecological/ Social / Economic Sustainability Conditions and Trends - Gila Forest, New Mexico	2016
Gila National Forest - Draft Needs for Change Statement for Existing Forest Plan	2016
Economic Development	
Grant County Economic Development Master Plan – Market Assessment	2012
Grant County Economic Development Master Plan – Target Industry Analysis	2012
Grant County Economic Development Master Plan – Strategic Plan	2012
Grant County Economic Base Study (NMSU)	2015
SWNMCOG – 2015-2020 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy	2015
Fort Bayard Historic Park - Business Plan	2016
Grant County Airport Industrial Park Plan	2005
Transportation	
New Mexico Department of Transportation 2040 Plan	2015
Southwest RTPO Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan	2015
Southwest Regional Transportation Pan	2015

Comprehensive Plans

Each municipality in Grant County has an approved Comprehensive Plan. These documents describe the issues and challenges confronting each community, and reveal opportunities for collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries.

Silver City Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Silver City updated its Comprehensive Plan concurrent to the Grant County document (the previous version was also written in 2004). Staff from each community served on the respective project teams, and both documents incorporate components of the other, in the spirit of ongoing coordination.

The Town of Silver City Comprehensive Plan is structured into the following chapters:

1. *Land Use and Community Design* looks at the importance of maintaining the traditional core of the Town, while allowing for appropriate growth and maintaining a sense of place.
2. *Transportation and Circulation* emphasizes the importance of traffic calming and safety for all modes of transportation, especially for bicyclists and pedestrians.
3. *Housing* highlights the conditions of the housing stock, both owner-occupied and rental, and the limited availability of affordable housing. The chapter also discusses the social problems created by higher housing costs that are making it difficult for long-term residents, who are disproportionately Hispanic, to continue living in Silver City.
4. *Public Facilities and Services* documents Town assets and lays out strategies for meeting the increased demand on these services.
5. *Economic Development* discusses employment conditions, highlights the excellent quality of life in the Town of Silver City, and asserts that Silver City is an ideal location for multiple age demographics. The chapter also discusses how the Town as a hub for regional economic development activity.
6. *Natural Resources and Hazards* discusses water resource issues confronting the Town, including flooding risks. The chapter sets a goal to coordinate with Grant County on land use decisions to promote resource efforts and address hazards.

City of Bayard Comprehensive Plan

Adopted in February of 2012, the City of Bayard Comprehensive Plan examines the strengths and weaknesses of the community. Among the assets are the school system, ballfield complex, and the quality of regional infrastructure. Public safety and emergency services are also considered important assets to the community. However, the document identifies several community needs, including addressing the impacts of fluctuations in the mining industry, lack of code enforcement, and waning community pride. Other issues include a lack of hotel and motel accommodations, which makes generating tourism activity difficult, and the fact that the City is land-locked, which makes new development challenging. The City used the plan to examine multi-modal transportation opportunities, a wastewater treatment plant, strategies for attracting new businesses, and housing and

services for the aging population. Many of the issues identified in City of Bayard are shared throughout Grant County.

Village of Santa Clara Comprehensive Plan

The Village of Santa Clara Comprehensive Plan emphasizes the multi-cultural history of the community, and identifies numerous strategies to sustain and enhance the Village's historic and cultural elements. The Plan also identifies strategies to confront population loss, including preservation and beautification programs, home rehabilitation, investments in the Santa Clara Industrial Park, and create additional parks and community services, among other possibilities. Goals and strategies are provided for each of the following areas: economic development, land use, housing, economic development, community services, transportation, infrastructure, and implementation.

Town of Hurley Comprehensive Plan

The most important issue that arose from the comprehensive planning process for the Town of Hurley was the need to ensure a sufficient water supply. The Plan also identifies the need to increase the amount of land available for development, redevelopment of existing buildings, and general enhancements to quality of life. The Plan focuses on economic development through regional coordination, beautification, and increased tourism to the area.

Water Resource Planning

Water resource planning is a critical long-term issue in southwest New Mexico and requires coordination not only across the region, but across state lines. The Central Arizona Project New Mexico office was recently created to administer the 2004 Arizona Water Settlements Act (AWSA), which entitles New Mexico users to an average annual allotment of 14,000 acre-feet of water from the Gila River. Grant County is among the jurisdictions that may be served by the CAP New Mexico project. Regional coordination will be critical to ensure the equitable distribution of surface water resources.

At present, the primary source of potable water for Grant County residents is groundwater. While much of rural Grant County is served by private wells and septic systems, the Town of Silver City provides water to several surrounding communities through agreements with water associations. Continued management of groundwater resources is critical to ensure long-term water resource availability.

Local governments across the region, including Grant County, also participated in the Interstate Stream Commission's Southwest Regional Water Plan. See the Environment and Natural Resources chapter for more information regarding water resource issues.

Federal Land Management Agencies

Several federal agencies own or manage land within Grant County, with the largest holdings by the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. The US Department of Defense also controls a small parcel of land between Arenas Valley and the Village of Santa Clara.

The following agencies coordinate on regional water issues:

- New Mexico Acequia Commissioner
- Grant County Farm and Livestock Bureau
- Gila Resources Information Project
- Nature Conservancy
- Freeport-McMoRan
- Alternative Forestry Unlimited
- Fort Sill Apache
- U.S. Forest Service
- Gila National Forest
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments
- New Mexico State Forestry
- New Mexico Department of Agriculture
- New Mexico Environment Department – Surface Water Quality Bureau
- NM State Land Office
- Grant County Food Policy Council
- Arenas Valley Water Association
- Pinos Altos Water Association
- Rosedale Water Association

US Forest Service

The United States Forest Service (USFS) oversees the Gila National Forest and plays an important role in the economy and management of the natural environment in Grant County. The mission of the USFS is to manage the long-term ecological sustainability of the National Forest, while providing access to public lands and balancing the needs of various users and stakeholders. Due to budgetary constraints, the USFS must also balance desired services and functions with available resources. Some decisions have been met with frustration by Grant County residents.

The USFS conducts a three-phase planning process that includes: 1) needs assessment; 2) plan development or revision; 3) implementation and monitoring. The USFS is currently updating the Gila National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, the first update since 1986. Agencies from across southwest New Mexico, including Grant County, participated in the planning process. The Plan follows the “Assessment Report of Ecological/Social/Economic Sustainability Conditions and Trends” for the Gila National Forest and the “Needs for Change” assessment, setting the framework for the Plan update.

The following Needs for Change were identified:

- Better recognize and enhance the Forest’s role in contributing to local economies through recreation and tourism, timber and forest products, livestock grazing, and other multiple-use related activities and products, while balancing these uses with available resource capacity and emerging opportunities.
- Reevaluate plan components based on new science, methods, and technologies.
- Include management approaches throughout the Plan as appropriate that consider the capacity of infrastructure, contractors, and markets when planning towards desired conditions.

Bureau of Land Management

The mission of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is to “sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America’s public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.” BLM manages over 530 square miles in Grant County, primarily in the central and southern portions. These lands are managed by the Las Cruces District Office. The Mimbres Resource Management Plan, last updated in 1993, informs decisions for the area including Grant County.

Among other uses, BLM land provides an important source of feed and grazing land for ranchers across Grant County. Coordination among the County, BLM, and private ranching interests should be ongoing, with communication from BLM on available grazing lands a primary concern for Grant County residents.

State of New Mexico

The State Land Office owns more than 550 square miles of land within the County, mostly in the southern portion of the county. The State of New Mexico Game and Fish Department also plays an important role in Grant County, as the agency is responsible for

managing wildlife populations, distributing and tracking hunting and fishing licenses, as well as the fish populations and lake and river ecosystems. New Mexico Game and Fish is responsible for conservation and safety practices, and provides recreational and educational activities to the public. The agency operates off the funds they collect from hunting and fishing licenses.

Public Feedback

Q1: Which of the following issues would be the most important for public agencies to work together to address?

The questionnaire allowed members of the public the opportunity to identify the issues around which coordination efforts are most critical. The question allowed for multiple responses, and the percentages are based on the number of respondents that chose that specific number.

The top priority area for coordination among local agencies is economic development (70% of respondents). The County understands the importance of this issue and numerous initiatives are underway. Nevertheless, it will be important to work with partner agencies and continue to focus on economic development issues, including ways to support new businesses and fuel new industries.

Renewable energy generation (48% of respondents) through the solar and wind industries and environmental preservation were frequently identified. The connection between economic development and renewable energy generation is obvious, and reinforces the public desire to see a diversified economy with increased reliance on more environmentally friendly practices. Environmental preservation, identified by 50% of respondents, is similarly important to economic development as the natural landscape in and around the County is a major attraction from a tourism perspective, not to mention imperative to the health and long-term sustainability of the County.

Other issues identified among the general comments include beautification and code enforcement, public safety, addressing domestic violence, and youth programs. Coordination with WNMU was also mentioned as an opportunity.

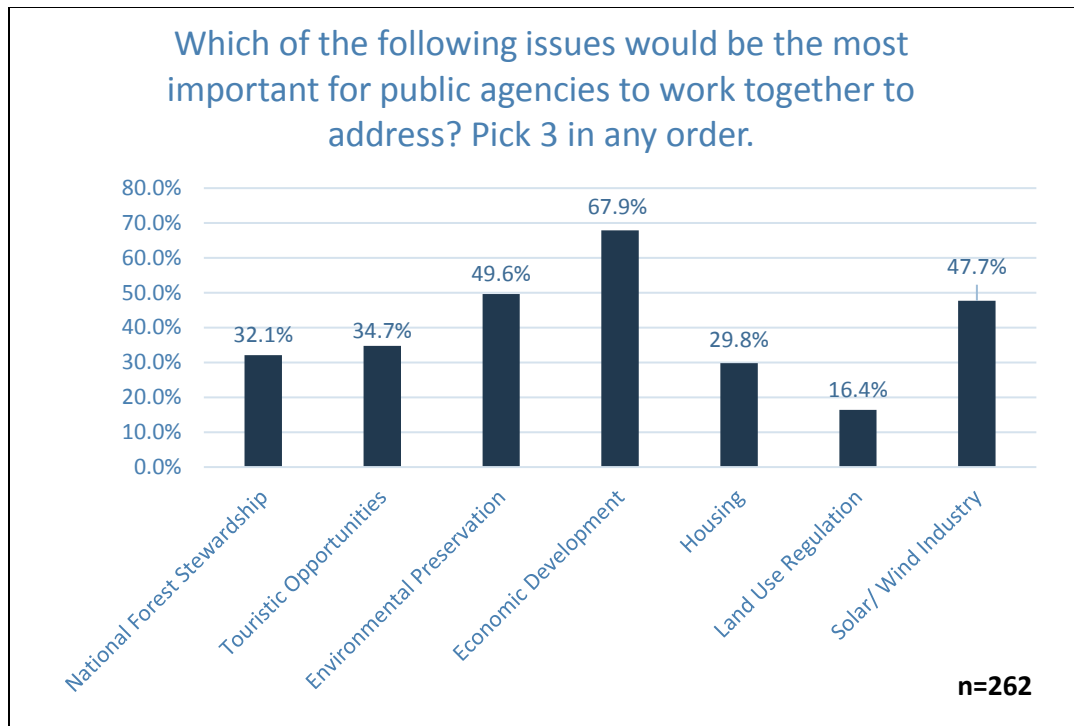


FIGURE 10 - QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM ON REGIONAL COORDINATION

Noteworthy responses

- *“Gotta protect the environment. Then it becomes a tourist draw. That means land use regs, solar/wind industry and econ dev. could all focus hard on those areas and use that to market to tourists and relevant business.”*
- *“I feel that many of these overlap: environmental preservation, national forest stewardship, solar/wind industry, economic development, and tourism opportunities all seem to go hand-in-hand and would be better addressed in a holistic fashion.”*

Opportunities

The concurrent planning efforts among the Town of Silver City and Grant County identified a number of overlapping needs and areas of interest. Grant County and the Town of Silver City are exploring means of improving their coordination efforts around the ETJ, including clarifying development standards and expectations related to public services. While some agreements and processes are in place, opportunities for improved coordination include:

- Proposed land use changes, including joint review of site development proposals.
- Shared resources in permitting and code enforcement. City and County codes differ in several areas, including the types of animals that can be kept on a residential property.
- Fire protection and emergency services, such as the existing mutual-aid agreements.

Shared Resources and Staffing

The potential for Grant County and other local agencies to share resources emerged from stakeholder discussions during the Plan development process. In an era of limited funding, forming partnerships across jurisdictions to increase capacity and share resources can address common problems, and can also produce more competitive grant proposals. In particular, Grant County and the Town of Silver City could explore shared staffing arrangements whereby Town of Silver City employee salaries are funded in part by Grant County, or vice versa. Opportunities include administrative services such as GIS, code enforcement, and housing planning. Grant County can also look for opportunities to partner on community facilities including community/senior centers and healthcare resources including the Tu Casa substance abuse center.

Both the Town and County can plan for improved housing options, including the pursuit of tax credits and grants through the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority. As affordable housing and senior housing are critical needs across Grant County, these efforts could be coordinated to leverage resources from both jurisdictions. Some discussion has taken place on shared efforts to develop a homeless shelter, and to provide programming for the homeless.

Economic Development

Economic development is most successful when pursued at a regional level. This includes business recruitment and marketing efforts, as identified in the Grant County Economic Development Strategic Plan. An important consideration is that local jurisdictions should not compete against each other. New businesses and employment opportunities benefit residents of Grant County and southwest New Mexico, and incorporated and unincorporated communities alike. Economic development planning for the region is conducted via a memorandum of understanding by SWNMCOG, which receives notifications on potential recruitment opportunities and serves as the economic development district with respect to federal funding, along with local organizations including the Silver City Grant County Chamber of Commerce.

An intriguing opportunity that emerged from the stakeholder outreach process involves labor force development and local educational institutions. The USFS has developed relationships with the biology department at WNMU, Aldo Leopold High School, and is interested in collaborating with other schools to recruit competent people to work in the fields of biology and forestry. Such initiatives can also play a role in keeping young adults in southwest New Mexico after they graduate from university.

WNMU is an important regional partner that can play a key role in addressing long-term Grant County workforce needs. In addition to careers in the Forest Service, local businesses, homeowners, and new entrants into the workforce could benefit from targeted training programs in construction-related trades. This sort of effort would also help the county reap the greatest economic benefits from the steady expansion of the solar and wind industries.

USFS Coordination

Communication across agencies is critical, and it is imperative that the Forest Service continue to work with the County and its residents regarding resource management decisions, including decisions related to access to public lands and maintenance of Forest Service roads, recreational opportunities, and grazing timber-collection policies. While it will be impossible for the USFS to make decisions that please all stakeholders, the connection with surrounding communities to the National Forest Land is important, making cooperation on resource management something of a quality of life concern.

Throughout the Plan development process, the value of communication among Grant County residents, local government agencies, and the USFS emerged as a high priority, including as a means of reducing conflicts and identifying areas of common interest. Grant County and the USFS can focus on the following areas of coordination:

- Tourism and visitor services
- Recreational amenities
- Transportation access
- Preventing spread of invasive species

There exists some distrust among the general public over USFS objectives, including among ranching interests and some recreational users who feel that access to public lands is being limited unnecessarily. Part of the distrust stems from the simple reality that different stakeholders have different priorities. Opportunities to address this distrust should be pursued, including increased forums for regular communication and collaboration. Coordination should occur between agencies not just during the planning period, but during the subsequent management phases as well. USFS staff raised the possibility of a collaborative working group to consider ongoing issues. For such an initiative to carry weight, the support local jurisdictions and buy-in from elected officials is critical.

Two areas that particularly affect Grant County residents and visitors to the region are grazing allotments and roadway maintenance.

Ranching allotments: The USFS issues allotments to local ranchers to graze their cattle. The locations vary from year to year to allow restoration in desired areas, prevent overgrazing, and to ensure long-term ecological sustainability of the forest land.

Roadway maintenance: The USFS manages hundreds of miles of roads in the Gila National Forest, but is only able to maintain a small share due to budgetary constraints; over the last six years there has been a 50% reduction in the budget, a cut of about \$600,000 a year. As a result, the USFS has chosen to reduce the number of roads available for public use, while attempting to provide as much public access as possible. Grant County and the USFS can work to ensure the network of USFS and County and local roads collectively provide high levels of access across the region.

Tourism and Recreational Opportunities

Grant County could coordinate services targeting campers, hunters, birders, and hikers as part of a larger recreational tourism initiative. Other tourism-related opportunities involve campgrounds and visitor amenities, as the USFS does not maintain many developed campgrounds in the Gila National Forest.

The Forest Service maintains numerous trail systems in the County, though maintenance efforts often involve volunteers from the nearby communities. Previous planning efforts proposed volunteer programs for residents interested in trails maintenances. Grant County could facilitate an area-wide trail development and maintenance program, providing benefits to both residents and visitors, and increasing quality of life in Grant County. WNMU has also expressed interested in engaging in such a program.

Another recreation-related opportunity involves facilitating the use of off-highway vehicles (OHV), which are permitted on USFS roads but not on County-owned roads, per New Mexico state law. OHVs are a popular recreational activity in the Gila National Forest and could be marketed as a tourism opportunity. The use of OHVs on Grant County roads should be evaluated over time.

Public Infrastructure and Utilities

There are opportunities for coordination between Grant County and the public land agency such as the USFS regarding the siting of cell towers and communications infrastructure. The USFS and Grant County should also coordinate on the site selection process for administrative facilities as these decisions have impacts on municipal and County-owned infrastructure.

Goals and Action Items

Goal: Pursue economic development activities at the regional level.

- Action Item: Engage in shared tourism and marketing efforts for southwest New Mexico.
- Action Item: Engage in collective business recruitment activities to encourage new firms and industries to locate to Grant County, including the incorporated areas.
- Action Item: Work with the State of New Mexico and energy producers on the identification of potential transmission lines and suitable locations for wind and solar energy generation.

Goal: Engage in regional coordination activities related to water resource planning and environmental preservation.

- Action Item: Participate in regional planning efforts to ensure long-term availability of ground and surface water supplies to Grant County residents and businesses.
- Action Item: Conduct hazard mitigation planning efforts to understanding potential increases in flooding and forest fire risks associated with climate change impacts.

Goal: Promote inter-agency cooperation to leverage resources and improve public service provision.

- Action Item: Identify opportunities to share facilities and staffing resources with the Town of Silver City and other local jurisdictions.
- Action Item: Convene a working group of local jurisdictions to determine data collection needs and available resources to meet those needs.

Goal: Coordinate with the US Forest Service on recreational planning and forest management efforts.

- Action Item: participate in Forest Management Plan updates.
- Action Item: Identify recreational road network of County and Forest Roads and other opportunities to coordinate on transportation infrastructure and access issues.
- Action Item: Facilitate communication between USFS and the public, including ranchers, on grazing allotments and resource management issues.

Goal: Create and manage an authority to engage in land use decision-making and planning efforts for the ETJ.

- Action Item: Create an inter-agency committee for review of proposed development in the ETJ.
- Action Item: Develop a plan for the provision of public services, including funding arrangements, for communities in the ETJ.

Land Use & Transects

This chapter discusses current land use planning practices in unincorporated areas of Grant County, and outlines a transect-based approach that will inform County-level land use decision-making. Transects are a planning approach that helps organize subareas, or districts, ranging from natural or undeveloped areas to more urban settings, such as Silver City, around common characteristics. Through the transect districts, Grant County can identify the most appropriate locations for land use activities and opportunities for public investments, and provide support for projects and initiatives that advance County objectives.

Grant County does not currently have a zoning system and this Comprehensive Plan does not propose one. However, a means of guiding land use and development decisions, as well as the provision of public services, is desired. The transect districts were established through the Comprehensive Plan development process as a means of addressing issues and challenges identified by stakeholders and members of the general public, as well as long-standing issues identified in previous planning efforts and studies.

Table 10 provides the categories and definitions through which the transect districts are defined. The guidance by transect districts – provided later in this chapter – includes transportation and utilities infrastructure, parks and open spaces, development intensity, and whether certain land use activities are more appropriate in some areas than others. The sections below describe current land use patterns, defines the five transect districts, and provides guidance on how transects are to be applied in Grant County.

TABLE 10 - TRANSECT DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS

Category	Definition
Land Use	Types of activities most appropriate in a particular transect.
Adjacent Uses	Relationship between one transect to another, including whether transect districts should be adjacent to one another or separated by a buffer.
Lot Size	Size of the parcel or building lot.
Block size	Length between roadway intersections. As lots get larger and densities are reduced, block lengths will increase.
Public Spaces	Green or open spaces such as parks, community playgrounds, and civic spaces. Any outside area for public use.
Utilities (physical) Infrastructure	The physical infrastructure available for residents, such as water and wastewater.
Roadway Layout	The roadway capacity, style, and functional classification hierarchy associated with a transect.
Public Services	The services provided to citizens by the county such as emergency services and police.

Current Land Use Patterns

Unincorporated areas of Grant County are comprised of vast swaths of rugged forest lands in the north and high plains grasslands in the south, interspersed with small communities. Land use in Grant County is shaped by traditional uses, including agriculture and ranching. Agriculture plays a modest role in the local economy, but is historically an important industry, and the preservation of active agricultural lands remains vital to the cultural landscape. Ranching in Grant County depends heavily on the availability of land as the climate dictates a high number of acres per head of cattle. Ranchers utilize both their own land and access to land managed by the State of New Mexico, the BLM, and the US Forest Service to ensure sufficient feed and grazing grounds.

The landscape in Grant County is also marked by the presence of large mines. Mining activities spurred much of the growth in the County over the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and remains vital to the economy today. Several communities, such as the Town of Hurley, emerged as company towns adjacent to nearby mines. Both the need for and impact of this industry should be considered as new development decisions are made. Mining activities can be impactful to nearby communities, particularly from public health and groundwater supply perspectives, and both residential and industrial activities benefit from some form of coordinated land use decision-making.

Grant County Land Management

The two primary means by which Grant County exercises influence over land use activities are through code enforcement and subdivision standards. Code enforcement addresses blighting and public safety hazards among other aesthetic and safety considerations, but has little influence over the types of activities that take place on a given parcel.

The New Mexico State Subdivision Statute, which establishes the ability of County governments to regulate subdivisions within their boundaries, is the reference document utilized by Grant County for land division and development issues. The State Statute sets forth that certain issues must be addressed by the developer during the subdivision process, including preliminary and final subdivision plats, quantifying water requirements, and access and necessary easements. During the Plan development process, stakeholders indicated that the existing guidelines, which are intended to serve as a baseline for land management and can be superseded by local ordinance, lack “teeth” and that Grant County could benefit from additional regulatory capacity.

The most common form of land use regulation – zoning – is not applied in Grant County. Although increased land use control has been identified by stakeholders and in the previous Comprehensive Plan as an issue worthy of consideration, it is not considered a high priority at this time, and zoning is not a recommendation of this Comprehensive Plan. However, meeting evolving housing, transportation, and economic development needs could benefit from guidance related to appropriate activities and level of development by location. As a means of providing guidance over land use and development practices, the Grant County Comprehensive Plan introduces a transect approach to land management.

More than 1,350 square miles of US Forest Service land are utilized for recreational activities and cattle grazing in permitted areas, but much of the land is untouched each year. Of the 1,500 square miles of private land, much is devoted to low-intensity ranching activities (ranching also takes place on BLM land via grazing permits).

Transect Approach to Land Use Planning

Rather than a regulatory tool, transects provide guidance on appropriate activities and development forms within a district. Since the focus is on appropriateness rather than allowable uses or development expectations, transects are meant to serve as a reference for Grant County commissioners and staff in the development review process and in the prioritization of public expenditures, and for the general public in establishing expectations about available public services. The use of transect districts does not limit or preclude activities from taking place in a particular district. Rather, they provide guidance on the types of activities or services most associated with or best suited for different areas.

Transect Districts

There are five transect districts in Grant County that reflect the spectrum of conditions across the County, from developed urban areas to the wilderness of the Gila National Forest. Transects are defined based on the appropriate density of development, roadway layout, land uses, and other considerations. Public services are also an important consideration. For example, the presence of a school is an indication of a Village or Urban district, while the presence of a post office differentiates a Village or Transitional district from a Rural one. Transect districts and general characteristics are described below. See Figure 12 for transect district locations across Grant County, and Table 11 at the end of this chapter for guidance on appropriate activities and infrastructure by location.

Urban

Urban districts include the incorporated communities in Grant County, including the Town of Silver City, City of Bayard, Town of Hurley, and Village of Santa Clara.³ Urban transects are noted for small block sizes, small lots, a mix of land uses and occasional multi-story buildings. Urban areas usually feature a grid roadway system or a clear hierarchy of roads. Public services and community facilities are most likely to be readily available in Urban districts. Grant County does not have jurisdiction within these districts. However, public services funded by Grant County may be located in these areas as they serve all County residents.



Village

Distinct but small communities, usually unincorporated, that are recognized as a Census Designated Place (CDP); the boundaries for Village districts follow the US Census boundaries for CDPs. The road network in Village districts is less dense and block sizes are longer than in Urban districts. Roads generally follow a modified grid or feature an intersecting set of major roads. Villages districts feature small-to-medium lots and block sizes, and tend to be mostly residential and with some locally-owned businesses. Some public services are available, such as a senior center or a volunteer fire department.



³ Note that as an incorporated municipality, the Village of Santa Clara is an Urban district, despite the fact that the official name of the community is a "Village."

Transitional

Transitional districts generally feature low-density settlements on the edges of more developed areas or along major roadways where large-scale economic development activity occurs. Transitional communities often develop as small housing clusters, sometimes near major industrial areas, such as a mine. Lot sizes are larger and the roadway network is less dense than Urban and Village districts. Few public services are available.



Transitional districts are applied systematically across Grant County, including as a buffer around Urban and Village districts. Transitional buffer areas include the three-mile radius around Silver City (equivalent to the ETJ), a 1.5-mile buffer around other Urban areas, and 1-mile radius around Village districts. An additional buffer is applied along all roadways leading into the edges of Urban and Village districts. Linear Transitional districts are found along many state and US highways, including all major roads in southern Grant County, the stretch between Silver City and White Signal, US 180 from Silver City toward Deming, and NM 90 from White Signal to the border with Hidalgo County. Scenic byways and other areas where views along the highway are to be preserved are considered Rural districts. The Grant County Airport and surrounding area are also classified as a Transitional district.

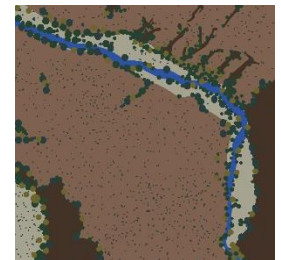
Rural

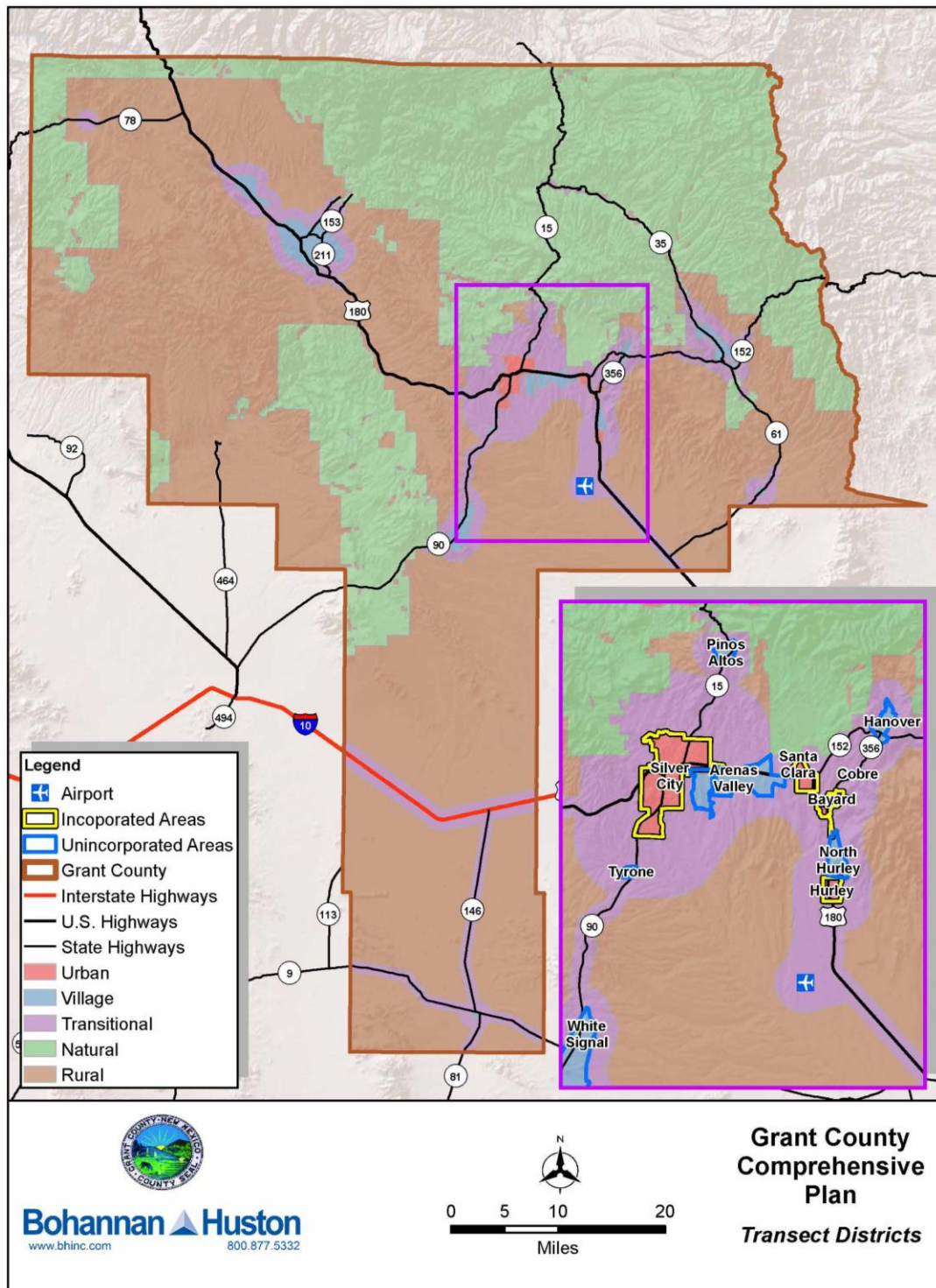
Rural districts include the vast swaths of low-density agricultural and ranch land that comprise much of Grant County. All privately-owned land is classified as a Rural district as default, unless it is located in an above designated area. BLM land is also classified as Rural. Land use in Rural districts is typified by individual residential and commercial sites located along major roads rather than clustered together.



Natural

Open space or other undeveloped areas that have been unaltered by humans in a major way. Natural areas are usually federally-owned without any services or improvements, except for recreational facilities and US Forest Service roads. All National Forest lands and other significant conservation areas are considered Natural districts. Grant County does not have jurisdiction over Natural areas; however, County staff and stakeholders may coordinate with the US Forest Service over appropriate activities and infrastructure.





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Author: gmaynard

FIGURE 11 - MAP OF GRANT COUNTY TRANSECT DISTRICTS

Other Considerations

Grant County Role in Urban Districts

The Urban transect best applies to incorporated communities, which follow their own planning practices and land use control measures. However, the County owns buildings and provides services within incorporated areas, and Urban areas may be the most appropriate location for certain community facilities.

Energy Generation and Economic Development

It is important to clarify that transects provide guidance rather than prescriptions, and because a land use is considered appropriate does not mean that a land use is desirable in all situations. Particularly relevant are potential renewable energy generation sites. Solar arrays and wind farms are most appropriate in Rural and Transitional areas, assuming the requisite transportation infrastructure and access are available. However, energy generation sites might be disruptive to daily life or to the natural environment and may not make sense immediately adjacent to or intermixed with residential areas.

Broadband

Broadband communications are provided privately across southwest New Mexico, and agencies such as Grant County typically do not have a role in providing necessary fiber. Broadband is desirable in as much of unincorporated Grant County as possible, particularly in Village and Transitional districts.

Telecommunications

Cell towers are most appropriate in Transitional districts, though the local context and aesthetics associated with a site must be considered. Locations are also subject to state permitting requirements.

Next Steps/Discussion

The transect districts described in the Grant County Comprehensive Plan provide an organizational tool and a structure to build upon over time. The tables and definitions in this chapter provide general guidance on appropriate infrastructure, but this document alone does not answer questions of whether individual developments offer benefits to the community, or how to tie infrastructure funding to new development. For the transects to be most useful, Grant County staff and stakeholders will need to return to the concept and develop supplemental policies to link issues such as code enforcement and new ordinances to the transect districts.

In particular, transect districts can play a role in the ongoing consideration of land use policies, as Grant County could face significant changes over time as economic activity evolves. There are many partially developed parcels, and there is the potential for high levels of growth in unincorporated area of Grant County, depending on the success of economic development efforts and the whims of the real estate market. Grant County can consider how to apply the transect approach as new ordinances are developed and as new economic development initiatives take place. Table 11 can serve as a template in the development of future ordinances and County policies.

Since the transect approach is a planning rather than a regulatory tool, the transect districts themselves are not currently subject to enforcement. However, transect district designations can provide guidance for Grant County on code enforcement issues as some household features, such as storage units or domestic animals, may be more appropriate in some locations than others. Transects can also apply to asset management and the prioritization of roadway maintenance.






The transect districts may also be linked to the pursuit of public and private funding opportunities as the Grant County Comprehensive Plan can be referenced to demonstrate that a planned project or investment is consistent with the County's overarching objectives and vision. Finally, transect districts can be referenced during discussions and negotiations with private developers, allowing Grant County to set expectations and desired services for its constituents.

Grant County Transects

		Description	Primary Locations
	Urban	This transect includes Silver City and other incorporated communities. Urban transects are noted for small block sizes, small lots, a mix of land uses and occasionally multi-story buildings. Urban areas usually feature a grid roadway system or a clear hierarchy of roads. Public services are likely to be available.	Silver City Bayard Santa Clara Hurley
	Village	Distinct but small communities, usually unincorporated, that are recognized as a Census Designated Place. The road network is less dense and block sizes are greater, and usually features a modified grid or an intersecting set of major roads. Villages feature small-to-medium lots and block size- areas, and tend to be mostly residential and with some locally-owned businesses. Some public services are available.	San Lorenzo Cliff/ Gila Tyrone
	Transitional	These transects are less densely populated areas and located on the edges of urban zones and villages. Transition communities often developed as small housing clusters, sometimes near major industrial areas, such as mines. Lot sizes are larger and the roadway network is less dense than urban and village zones. Few public services are available.	North Hurley Urban/ Village Buffers Select Major Roads Grant County Airport
	Rural	In this transect land uses are largely agricultural and often adjacent to natural areas. Individual residential and commercial sites are located along major roads rather than clustered together. Limited public services are available. The majority of privately-owned land in Grant County is classified as rural.	Redrock Mule Creek BLM
	Natural	Open space or other undeveloped areas that have been unaltered by humans in a major way. Natural areas are usually federally-owned without any services or improvements.	Gila National Forest Conservation Areas

FIGURE 12 - GRANT COUNTY TRANSECT DISTRICTS

TABLE 11 - TRANSECT GUIDANCE⁴

	Land Use	Adjacent Uses	Lot Size	Roadway Layout	Block Size	Public Spaces	Public Infrastructure	Public Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium to high density housing • Mix of residential and commercial • Commercial facilities and public institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitional with buffer required for high intensity industrial or mining activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small to medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grid system, high density of roads • Network of arterials and collectors • Pedestrian facilities; some bicycle facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short to medium block lengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails, parks, amenities, public art, ballfields. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water and sewer, garbage, broadband 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical centers • Schools, community/senior services • Police and fire department • Administrative buildings and services • Fixed route public transit
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small and Medium density housing • Some retail/commercial • Community facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitional with buffer required for high intensity industrial or mining activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small to medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grid system with low-to-medium density of roads • Limited set of arterials and/or collectors • Dedicated pedestrian facilities on major streets; wide shoulders for bicyclists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium block length 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks with limited amenities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water, garbage, broadband • Generally septic or private sewer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare clinic • Elementary schools • Community/senior center • Emergency response • Volunteer fire department • Inter-city commuter transit service
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-density housing • Industries include mining, renewable energy production, light manufacturing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban • Village • Natural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium lots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited grid: one or two major roads • On-street pedestrian and bicycle facilities • Not required: wide shoulders desirable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium-large irregular blocks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited water/sewer utilities • Broadband 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency response (sheriff's department, medical)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-density housing • Industries ranching, renewable energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural • Transitional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large lot sizes • Farms and ranches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major roads with local connections only • Wide shoulders for bicyclists and pedestrians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal public spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited utilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency response (sheriff's department, medical) • Recreational services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest land • Conservation areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural • Transitional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited roadway network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational trails and facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational services only • Forest management, wildfire suppression
	Urban/ Incorporated							
	Village/ CDP							
	Transitional							
	Rural							
	Natural							

⁴ A large scale version of this table is available on p. 124

Housing

Housing options are somewhat limited in the County. There has been a proliferation of housing in recent decades, but the available options may not match the needs of current or future residents of Grant County. In particular, there appears to be an over-supply of single family housing and an under-supply of alternative housing types (e.g. senior housing). Housing affordability is also an issue, with home prices relatively high compared to median income levels. This chapter examines housing conditions in Grant County and considers opportunities to make the County better-equipped to meet evolving housing demands.

Housing Characteristics in Grant County

There are over 14,000 housing units in Grant County, about half of which are located in unincorporated areas, and more than 12,500 occupied households. Unincorporated areas of Grant County are particularly noteworthy for the lowest housing occupancy rates of all jurisdictions; slightly more than 83% of housing units in unincorporated areas are occupied (see Table 12). Silver City has the highest occupancy rate of any jurisdiction at about 90%. By contrast, the occupancy rate across New Mexico is about 88%.

Unincorporated areas are also noteworthy for smaller household sizes relative to other jurisdictions, reflecting the higher number of retirees and lower number of families with children outside of the incorporated communities. Among the incorporated communities, Silver City has the lowest household size (2.25), which is close to the average size of households in unincorporated areas. The average household size for the state of New Mexico is 2.55.

TABLE 12 - HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS BY JURISDICTION – 2010 CENSUS

	Unincorporated Areas	Silver City	Bayard	Hurley	Santa Clara	Grant County
Total Population	13,888	10,315	2,328	1,297	1,686	29,514
Household Population	13,732	9,890	2,328	1,297	1,677	28,924
Group Quarters	156	425	0	0	9	590
Housing Units	7,263	4,900	1,087	645	798	14,693
Households	6,045	4,389	928	549	675	12,586
Household Size	2.27	2.25	2.51	2.36	2.48	2.30
Occupancy Rate	83.2%	89.6%	85.4%	85.1%	84.6%	85.7%
Vacancy Rate	16.8%	10.4%	14.6%	14.9%	15.4%	14.3%

The housing stock in Grant County – and the unincorporated areas in particular – is comprised primarily of single family units and mobile homes. These housing types comprise more than 94% of all housing, while less than 6% of the housing stock is

comprised of multi-family units. Mobile homes comprise over 30% of *all* housing units in Grant County, and make up an even larger share in *unincorporated* areas.

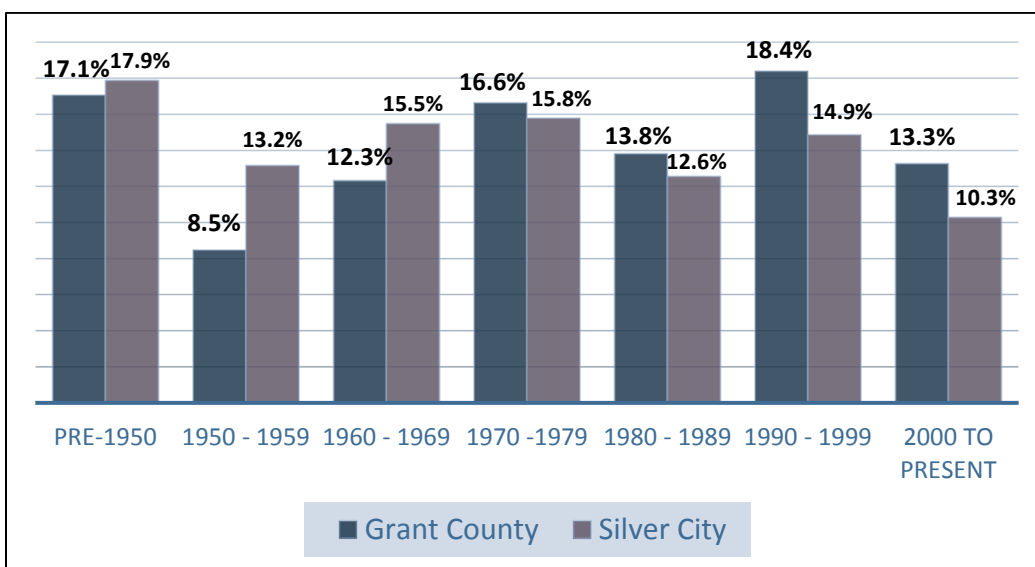
TABLE 13 - HOUSING TYPES BY PERCENTAGE – 2011-2015 ACS

Housing Type	Grant County	Silver City
Single Family	63.5%	66.1%
Multi-Family	5.6%	14.5%
Mobile home	30.8%	19.3%
Other	0.1%	0.0%

A relatively large share of the Grant County housing stock was constructed before 1950, reflecting the historic nature of the community. One challenge associated with an older supply of housing is the required maintenance and upgrading. Some homes may need improved insulation, window technology, and other modern adaptations. Ensuring these homes remain desirable places to live will be an important part of preserving the historic nature of Grant County.

The age of the housing stock also reflects the construction dynamics and general housing patterns across Grant County in which many new homes were built in outlying areas near Silver City but outside of municipal limits (see Figure 13). The housing stock in Silver City is older on average than other parts of Grant County, as almost half of the homes in Silver City (46.5%) were built prior to 1970 (compared 37.9% of the County overall). Almost one-third of all homes in Grant County – and even higher share of the homes in unincorporated areas – have been built since 1990.

FIGURE 13 - YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT, 2011-2015 ACS



Starting in the 1970s, a disproportionate share of new housing was constructed in unincorporated areas. Figure 13 also demonstrates the effects of the Great Recession of 2008 and the decline in the housing market as the number of new homes constructed

between 2000 and 2014 was smaller than any period since the 1960s. In short, unincorporated areas have a newer supply of housing, with a higher rate of vacant homes, while the housing stock in Silver City is older than other parts of the County with fewer vacancies.

About 81% of homes in unincorporated areas of Grant County are occupied by their owners, the highest rate of any jurisdiction in the County (see Table 14). By contrast, less than 60% of homes in Silver City are occupied by their owners. Housing expenditures by tenure (i.e., owner versus renter-occupied) are displayed in Table 15 and Table 16.

TABLE 14 - OWNER VERSUS RENTER STATUS BY JURISDICTION, 2010 CENSUS

	Unincorporated Areas	Silver City	Bayard	Hurley	Santa Clara	Grant County
Owner Occupied Homes	4,895	2,581	623	429	491	9,019
Population in Owner Occupied Homes	10,981	5,968	1,524	978	1,239	20,690
Renter Occupied Homes	1,150	1,808	305	120	184	3,567
Population in Renter Occupied Homes	2,751	3,922	804	319	438	8,234

Housing Income and Affordability

During the Plan development process, stakeholders identified housing affordability as an issue in Grant County. Per real estate listings sites, the median home price for the Silver City area is about \$154,000.⁵ The discussion below contrasts median household income and annual housing expenditures, a standard means of assessing housing affordability.

Median monthly housing costs are about \$1,000 a month for owners (including mortgage, utilities, taxes, and fees), compared to about \$635 a month for renters. However, median household income for renter-occupied homes is about half as much as the median household income in owner-occupied homes (see Table 15 and Table 16). As a result, households that rent pay a higher share of their income on housing than households that own the home in which they live. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development

⁵ <https://www.zillow.com/silver-city-nm/home-values/>, Accessed March 15, 2017. It is worth noting that the median home value provided in the ACS data for Grant County (against which income data is contrasted in the section below) is considerably lower at \$132,800.

(HUD) generally considers a household to be cost-burdened if it spends more than 30% of its income on housing. The data reflects that renter households in Grant County are generally cost-burdened, while owner-occupied households on average are near the HUD threshold. Table 15 and Table 16 also demonstrate that housing costs compared to income are slightly higher in the Town of Silver City than Grant County overall.

TABLE 15 - HOUSING EXPENDITURES – GRANT COUNTY, 2011-2015 ACS

	Owner⁶	Renter
Median Household Income	\$43,090	\$23,156
Median Monthly Housing Costs	\$994	\$635
Annual Housing Costs	\$11,928	\$7,620
Housing as Share of Income	27.7%	32.9%

TABLE 16 - HOUSING EXPENDITURES – SILVER CITY, 2011-2015 ACS

	Owner	Renter
Median Household Income	\$44,438	\$21,250
Median Monthly Housing Costs	\$1,035	\$593
Annual Housing Costs	\$12,420	\$7,116
Housing as Share of Income	27.9%	33.5%

⁶ The “Owner” data in Tables 15 and 16 reflects the conditions for homes with a mortgage.

Public Feedback

The questionnaire included two questions related to housing affordability and housing needs in Grant County.

Q1: Do you feel that the housing options in Grant County are affordable?

Q2: Which of the following types of housing are needed in Grant county?

Housing Affordability

A slight minority of respondents (45%) indicate that housing in the County is affordable. Many comments pointed out that the affordable housing is limited and of low quality, and that housing costs are quite high compared to incomes in the County. Overall the comments reflect a sentiment that it is hard for the working class and poor to find quality housing that is reasonably priced.

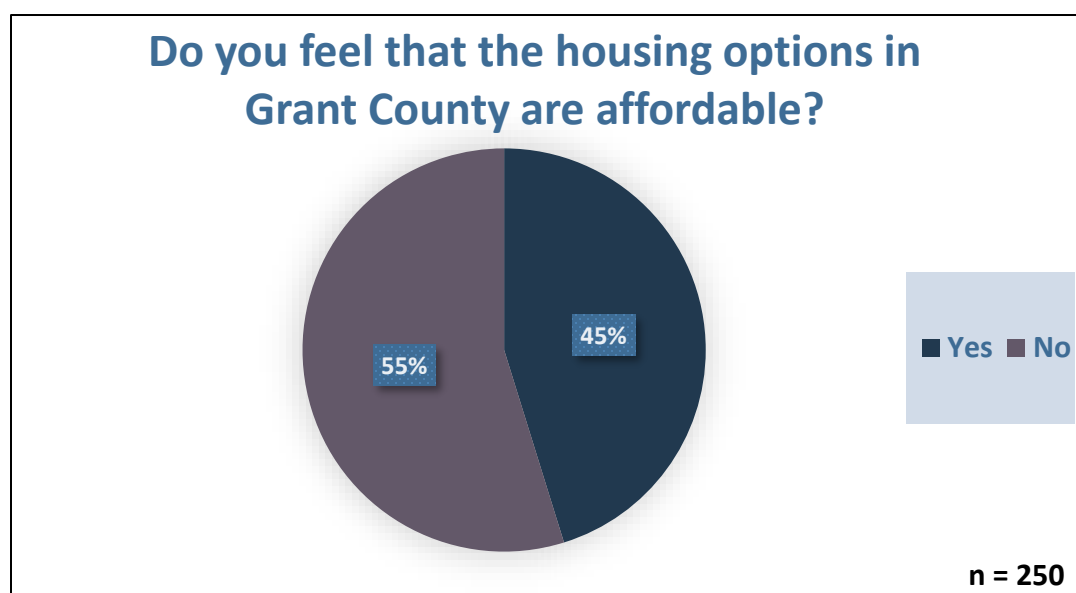


FIGURE 14 - QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM ON HOUSING, PART 1

Noteworthy responses

- *“There is plenty of affordable housing, but not all is desirable (such as run-down houses in ‘iffy’ neighborhoods and noisy and low-income apartments).”*
- *“...we need more affordable assisted living facilities”*
- *“Absolutely not. The disjunct (sic) between the economic health and the real estate market is absurd! It makes it very challenging for younger people/families to own. And rent is also challenging. This seems to go against supporting young people to stay in the community. Not to mention the great need for more affordable housing for the low socioeconomic population in Grant County. ”*
- *“Housing cost is way above living wages in this town.”*

Housing Needs

Even though 55% of respondents said no to the question “Do you feel that the housing options in Grant County are affordable,” more than 73% of respondents feel that affordable housing is the greatest issue. This was supported by the comments for the housing affordability question. The next greatest needs are senior housing (60%), additional single-family housing (38%), and multi-family housing (17%). The expressed need for single-family housing may be due to the fact that most of the existing housing stock is relatively old. Perhaps unsurprisingly, very few respondents felt there was a need for more luxury housing in the County. Several public comments indicated that quality of housing is an issue. However, this can be hard to address without zoning and strict code enforcement.

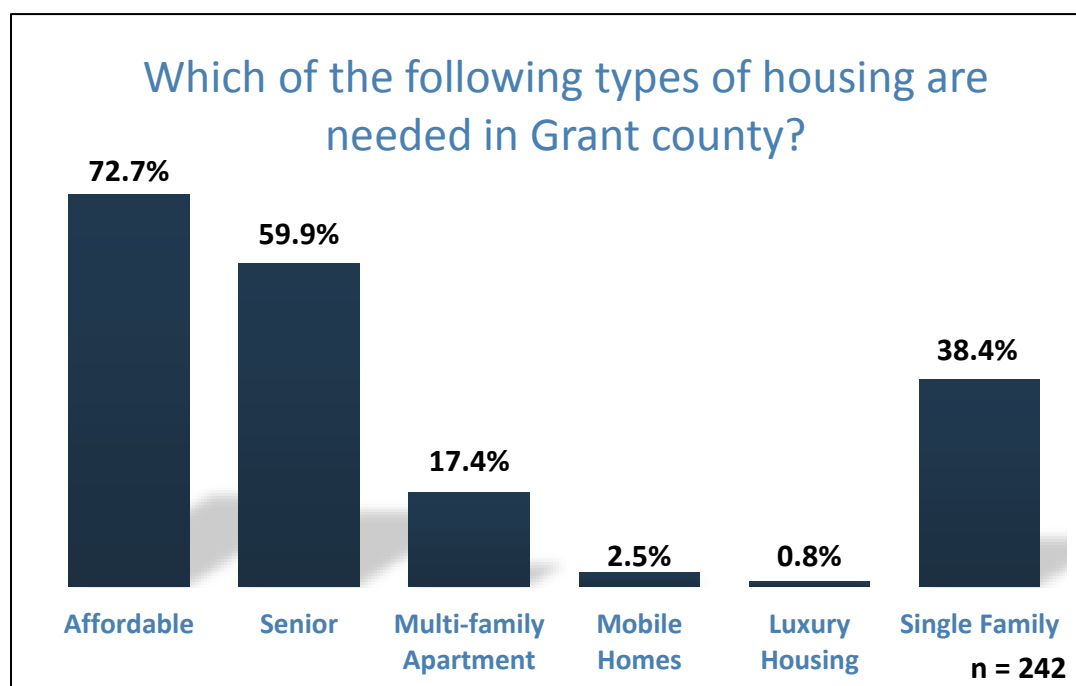


FIGURE 15 - QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM ON HOUSING, PART 2⁷

Noteworthy responses

- “YES. Intergenerational affordable living communities. We could be THE NM community which develops an outstanding example of this.”
- “I think we need some of everything...more of everything but mobile homes. Fewer luxury homes than affordable, senior, apartments and single family.”
- “I would not frame multi-family housing as “apartment.” There are co-housing models, small space models (e.g. less than 400 sq ft), types of multi family with

⁷ Since respondents to this question could select multiple housing needs, the sum of the responses is greater than 100%.

common space.....I fear that in Grant County apartment has become synonymous with "crime-ridden."

Discussion

Grant County faces an unusual set of housing challenges: there is an over-abundance of single-family housing, room to absorb additional growth (which was anticipated but has not materialized), vacancy rates are high, and the housing stock is homogenous with few options apart from single-family and mobile homes. During the plan development process, stakeholders identified a lack of diverse housing options and affordability issues as pressing housing concerns. The over-development of higher-end housing options and a lack of clarity in the development process, particularly in the ETJ, were identified as contributing factors to the housing challenges in Grant County.

Another significant factor is the Great Recession of 2008, from which Grant County and New Mexico are still recovering. Prior to the crash in the housing market, a glut of large, expensive homes were built in anticipation of a continued influx of retirees and individuals and families seeking vacation homes. However, many of these homes were never purchased and remain unoccupied. Similarly, there are large tracts of land that were sold but never developed and currently remain off the market.

The principal issue of affordability can be addressed from two perspectives as housing costs are both an economic issue and a housing supply issue. Incomes are relatively low, making even modest housing prices a financial strain for many households. Economic development initiatives that raise the standard of living would undoubtedly have an effect on housing affordability issues, though this is far easier said than done. From a housing supply perspective, it is clear that while Grant County has a relatively high vacancy rate (14%, compared to a standard rate of 5-10%), the available housing stock does not always meet existing or future demands. Affordability in many communities is a supply-side issue. But the fact that vacancy rates are so high indicates that the supply in terms of quantity of housing is not the issue. Rather, it appears that there are issues related to the type of housing being supplied. In response, Grant County could look for targeted opportunities to increase the housing supply for certain population groups, such as senior citizens.

Opportunities

Affordable housing is needed for both renters and prospective owners. Both the Town of Silver City and Grant County can plan for improved affordable housing options, including the pursuit of tax credits and grants through the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority. As affordable housing and senior housing are critical needs across Grant County, these efforts could be coordinated to leverage resources from both jurisdictions. The Town of Silver City has an Affordable Housing Plan, which allows the dedication of land for affordable housing purposes without violating the state's anti-donation clause. Silver City is currently developing a subdivision of affordable units, and some discussion has taken place on shared efforts to develop permanent supportive housing units. Grant County could pursue an Affordable Housing Plan to advance its own initiatives and enable public-private partnerships in unincorporated areas. In the meantime, Grant County can partner

See the Funding chapter for discussion on available housing programs and funding opportunities.

with the Town of Silver City and leverage the existing Affordable Housing Plan to further create dedicated affordable units.

Grant County can also seek opportunities to **share resources related to housing development**, as diverse housing options in incorporated communities would be of benefit to Grant County residents. It is likely that some vacancies are the result of older homes that lack proper insulation, window technology, and other modern adaptations. There is therefore a need for redevelopment and upgrades to these older homes, which would have the added benefit of preserving the historic housing stock and preserving the historic identity of the region. Grant County can continue to promote state and federally-financed **weatherization and home rehabilitation** programs. See the Funding chapter for additional details.

The data contained in this chapter attests to a need for **additional housing for young adults**, who desire single-family homes and home ownership at lower rates than previous generations. Students at Western New Mexico University, for example, live both on and off campus. Several dormitories were recently updated, but there is a need for additional housing for students, as well as non-students in other parts of Silver City and Grant County. Communities across Grant County could create incentives for improved housing options for young adults, in part as an effort to encourage recent graduates and young professionals to remain in the community rather than move to larger urban areas.

Goals and Action Items

Goal: Ensure housing options for all Grant County residents of all ages.

- Action Item: Work with WNMU to develop additional housing options for students and young adults.
- Action Item: Provide incentives for additional senior and multi-family housing.

Goal: Provide safe, affordable housing options.

- Action Item: Increase the stock of dedicated affordable housing units through incentives for affordable housing as part of new subdivisions.
- Action Item: Coordinate with the Town of Silver City and the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority to leverage the Town's affordable housing plan and generate additional dedicated affordable housing through public-private partnerships and incentives programs.
- Action Item: Pursue an Affordable Housing Plan for Grant County.
- Action Item: Provide permanent supportive housing and support services for homeless residents.

Goal: Rehabilitate existing housing stock and encourage maintenance of occupied homes.

- Action Item: Create inventory of historic homes across Grant County.
- Action Item: Coordinate with the Town of Silver City on housing rehabilitation programs; provide resources and support for housing maintenance and upgrades.
- Action Item: Promote state and federally-financed weatherization and home rehabilitation programs.

Environment and Natural Resources

Grant County is noteworthy for its range of topography, landscapes, and habitats. While the access to mountains and the Gila National Forest are among the reasons living in Grant County is so appealing, the preservation of these lands and wildlife habitats in southwest New Mexico is imperative from both an ecological perspective as well as the quality of life and touristic appeal of the area. However, the landscape and the areas natural resources also require careful management as there are risks to the built environment associated with this proximity, as well as impacts that modern development has on the natural environment. This chapter discusses the environmental and natural resource challenges confronting Grant County. See the Community Background chapter for additional discussion on landmarks and the topography of Grant County.

Natural Resource Analysis

The following are datasets and references related to natural resource issues in Grant County and that should be reviewed as new development occurs. The resources below provide guidance on how to minimize or avoid sensitive areas during the planning phase of any development, and can save the County time and money by addressing these issues prior to planning, design, or construction. It should be noted that these tools are not regulatory and do not replace state or federal approval processes that may be required for development.

Vegetation Areas

The Earth Data Analysis Center at the University of New Mexico maintains an inventory of vegetation areas across the state through its Resource Geographic Information System (RGIS) database. The vegetation areas reflect the types of plants, soil, and weather patterns found in each area, and shed light on the types of plants and crops that are most likely to grow. The different vegetation areas in Grant County are listed in the side panel and displayed in Figure 16.

Conservation Areas / Public Lands and Areas of Interest

In addition to National Forest land, portions of Grant County have been set aside by public agencies and private land owners. Figure 17 contains information provided by the Protected Areas Database of the United States (PAD-US), which is comprised of public land ownership, management and other conservation lands, including voluntarily protected private lands. PAD-US is managed by the US Geological Survey as part of its Gap Analysis (GAP) program, which identifies unprotected but important habitat areas for plant and animal species, in addition to the protected conservation areas. Grant County can consider the impacts of development near conservation areas, and other locations identified through the GAP program. See Figure 17 for public lands and other areas of interest in Grant County.

Vegetation Areas in Grant County

- Chihuahuan Desert Scrub
- Coniferous and Mixed Woodland
- Desert Grassland (Ecotone)
- Montane Coniferous Forest
- Montane Scrub
- Subalpine Coniferous Forest
- Urban

Critical Habitats

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) provides data related to Federally-listed endangered and threatened species and their ranges and habitats. Each of these species hold a special niche in the ecosystem and their loss would be a loss for the environment. Critical habitat areas for the species listed below are shown in Figure 18 (the figure focuses on the populated northern areas of the County). For more information on the FWS endangered and threatened species dataset, see the ECOS Environmental Conservation Online System.⁸

Crucial Habitat Areas

The Western Governors' Association's Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT) applies a ranking to one-square mile hexagons based on the type and magnitude of risks placed upon the native species, as well as the vulnerability of the local habitat. CHAT considers a range of criteria, such as species of concern, freshwater integrity, and natural vegetation areas of concern.

Grant County can use the CHAT tool in combination with the FWS critical habitat areas assessment to consider the impacts of land uses and potential development on the natural environment. Crucial habitat areas are spread throughout the County. See the side panel for definitions for crucial categories and Figure 19 for CHAT locations. See the Western Governor's Association website for additional information on the CHAT rankings and methodology.⁹

Strategies for addressing crucial habitat areas include:

- Minimizing new development in areas with high CHAT rankings
- Providing green space in the form of urban parks and open space where development occurs in or near high priority CHAT area
- Maintaining wildlife corridors and buffers between built environment and crucial habitat areas

Flood Risks

Areas along the Gila River and locations from downstream are subject to flooding, as well as Downtown Silver City and the Village of Santa Clara. As a key component in planning for hazard mitigation, it is important to understand and appreciate the magnitude of potential impacts associated with developing any type of public/private infrastructure or structures within flood plains. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) completes comprehensive mapping to indicate areas of risk (see Figure 20). Associated with this mapping and flood plain delineations, there are certain federally-mandated requirements around construction which should be referenced in all County ordinances. This helps address construction concerns proactively, and minimize

Federally-listed Endangered and Threatened Species in Grant County

- Chiricahua leopard frog
- Loach minnow
- Spikedace
- Gila chub
- Southwestern willow fly catcher
- Yellow-billed cuckoo
- Northern Mexican garter snake
- Narrow-headed garter snake
- Mexican spotted owl

CHAT ranking levels

Rank 1 – Rare or fragile habitat that are considered “irreplaceable” in that the environmental conditions are unique and only found in limited areas

Rank 2 – Habitat locations are considered “essential” and without which species could be subject to serious population decline

Rank 3 – Important for the maintenance of aquatic or wildlife populations, though impacts could be managed and habitats can be restored over time.

⁸ <http://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html>

⁹ <https://www.westgov.org/wildlife-corridors-and-crucial-habitat>

risk. FEMA also provides funding opportunities to help support the additional costs associated with developing public infrastructure within floodplains.

Fire Risk and Wildland Urban Interface

Fire is nature's way of regulating growth and species proliferation and is important to the long-term resilience of the landscape. However, it also poses a significant risk to residents. Conversely, regular fire suppression efforts over time lead to the build-up of fuel and can exacerbate the risks and consequences of naturally-occurring fires.

The wildland-urban interface (WUI) is a common tool for evaluating the extent to which the built environment is at risk due to forest fires. WUI is defined as the "area where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland."¹⁰ There are two categories within the WUI: intermix and interface areas (see the side panel for definitions). According to the *Draft Gila National Forest Assessment Report* and based on a 2015 analysis, about 4% of the total housing in Grant County, including 18% of second homes, is located in either intermix or interface areas (see Table 17).¹¹

TABLE 17 - WUI HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Total Dwelling Units in Grant County	14,693
Dwelling Units in WUI	602
Secondary Homes in WUI	108
WUI homes as percent of Total Dwelling Units	4.1%
Secondary Homes as percent of Total Dwelling Units	17.9%

According to the *Draft Gila National Forest Assessment Report*: "In recent years, the Forest Service, including the Gila NF, has planned and implemented many projects that specifically decrease the potential undesirable effects of wildfires within these areas (e.g., prescribed burning and mechanical treatments to reduce fuels)."¹² Nevertheless, Grant County must take fire risks into consideration as part of land use decisions and emergency management, as new developments and vacation homes are often subject to increased risks.

Wildland Intermix and Interface Area Definitions

Intermix communities are places where housing and vegetation intermingle. In intermix areas, wildland vegetation is continuous, more than 50 percent of the land is vegetation, and density is greater than 1 house per 16 ha.

Interface communities are areas with housing in the vicinity of contiguous vegetation. These areas have more than 1 house per 40 acres, have less than 50 percent vegetation, and are within 1.5 mi of an area that is highly vegetated.

Source: SILVIS Lab

For more information on the role of the US Forest Service in the region, see the Regional Coordination chapter.

¹⁰ V.C. Radeloff, et al. "The Wildland-Urban Interface in the United States," *Ecological Applications*, 2005, p. 799

¹¹ *Draft Assessment Report of Ecological/Social/Economic Sustainability Conditions and Trends* - Gila National Forest, New Mexico, p. 495

¹² *Draft Assessment Report of Ecological/Social/Economic Sustainability Conditions and Trends* - Gila National Forest, New Mexico, p. 495

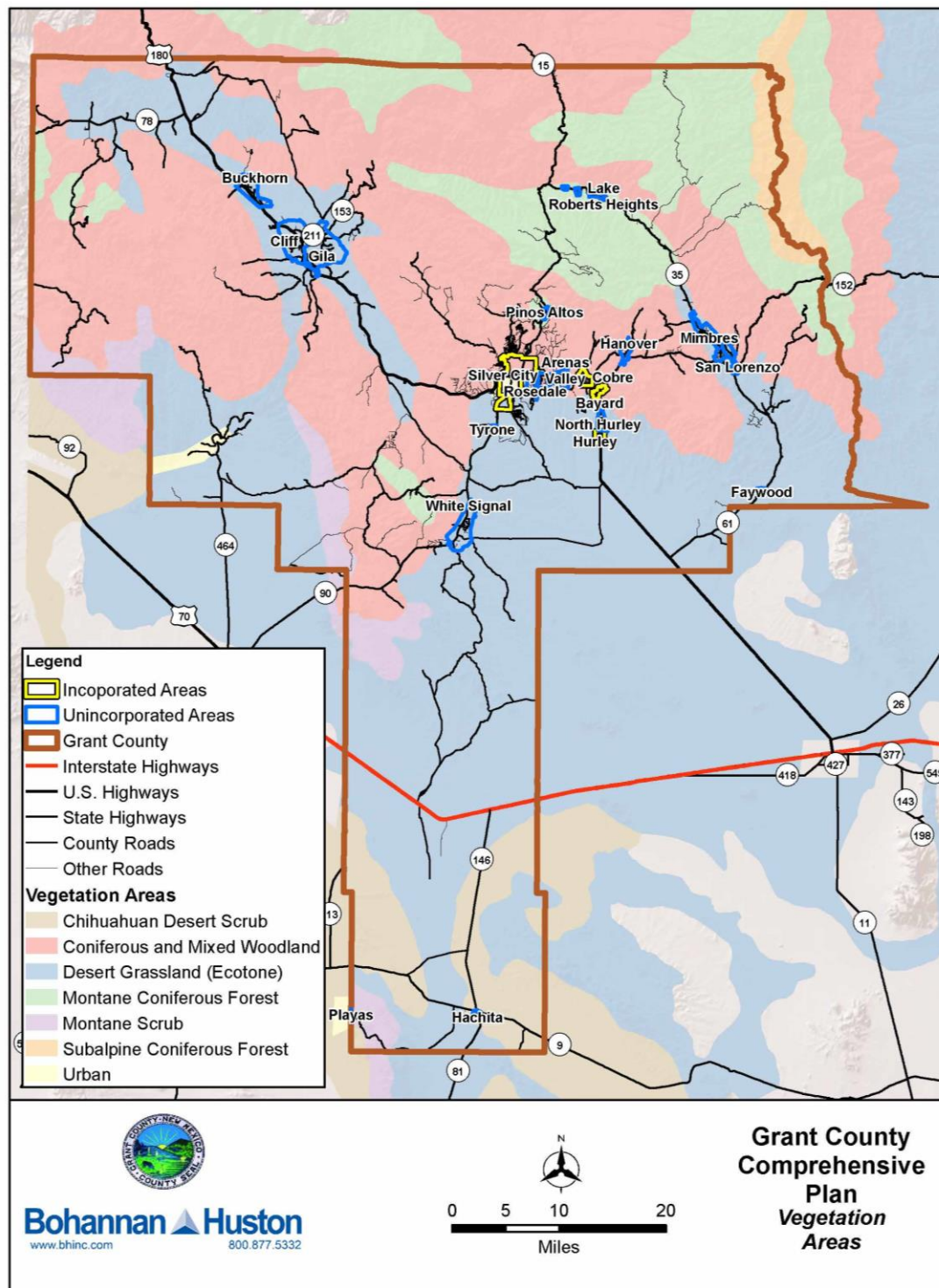
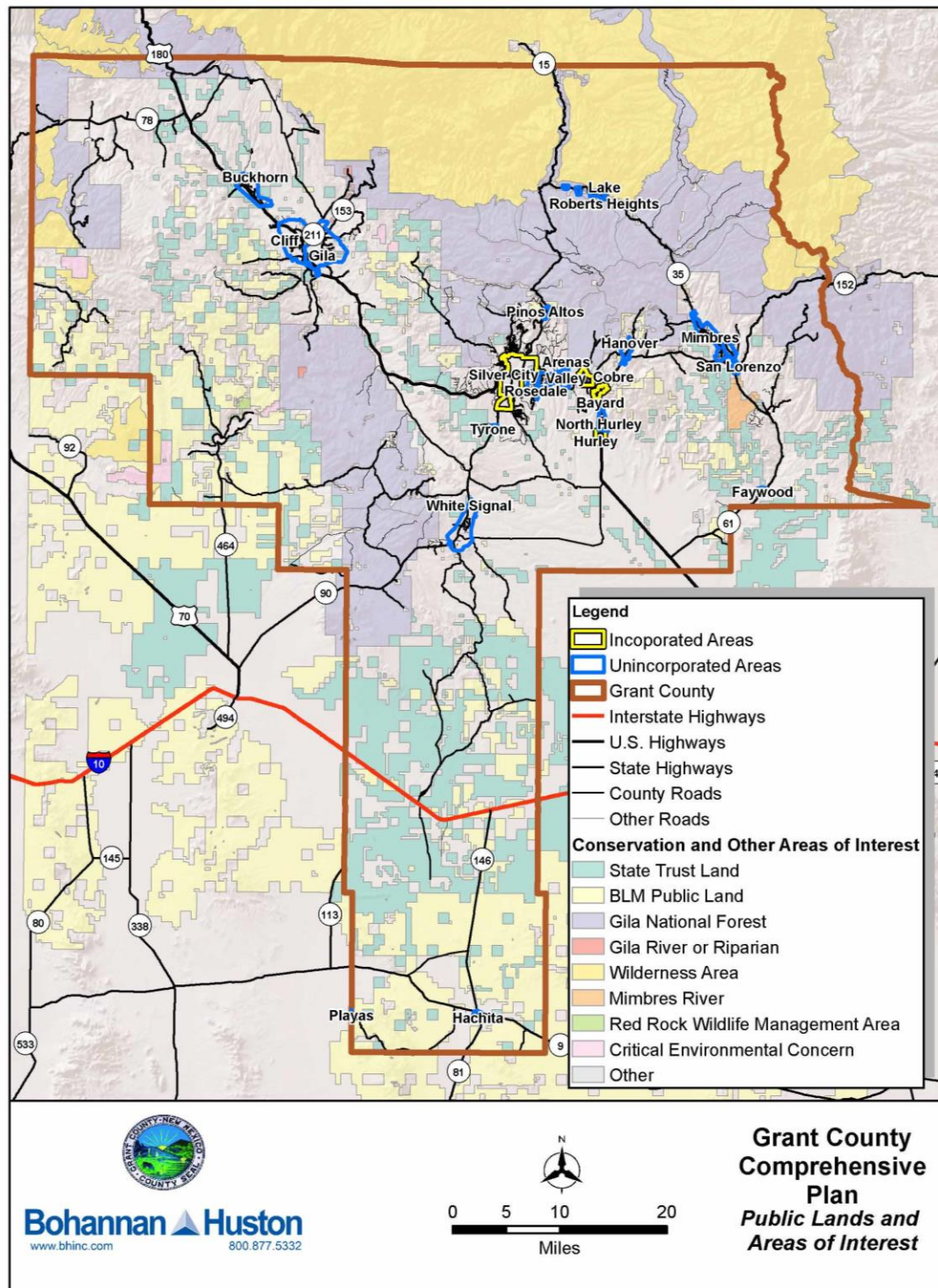


FIGURE 16 - VEGETATION AREAS



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Author: kwoods

April 2017

FIGURE 17 - PUBLIC LANDS AND AREAS OF INTEREST

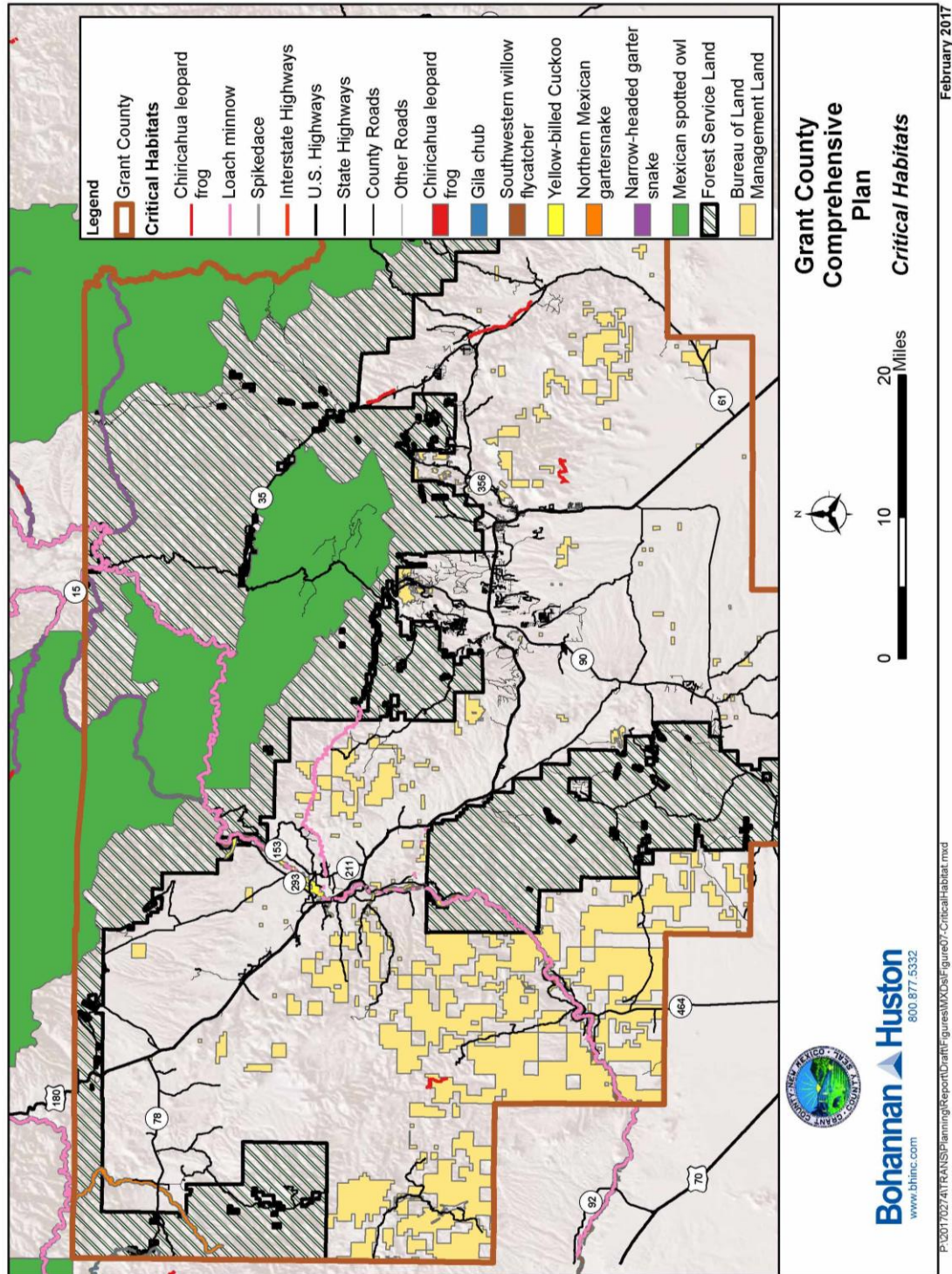
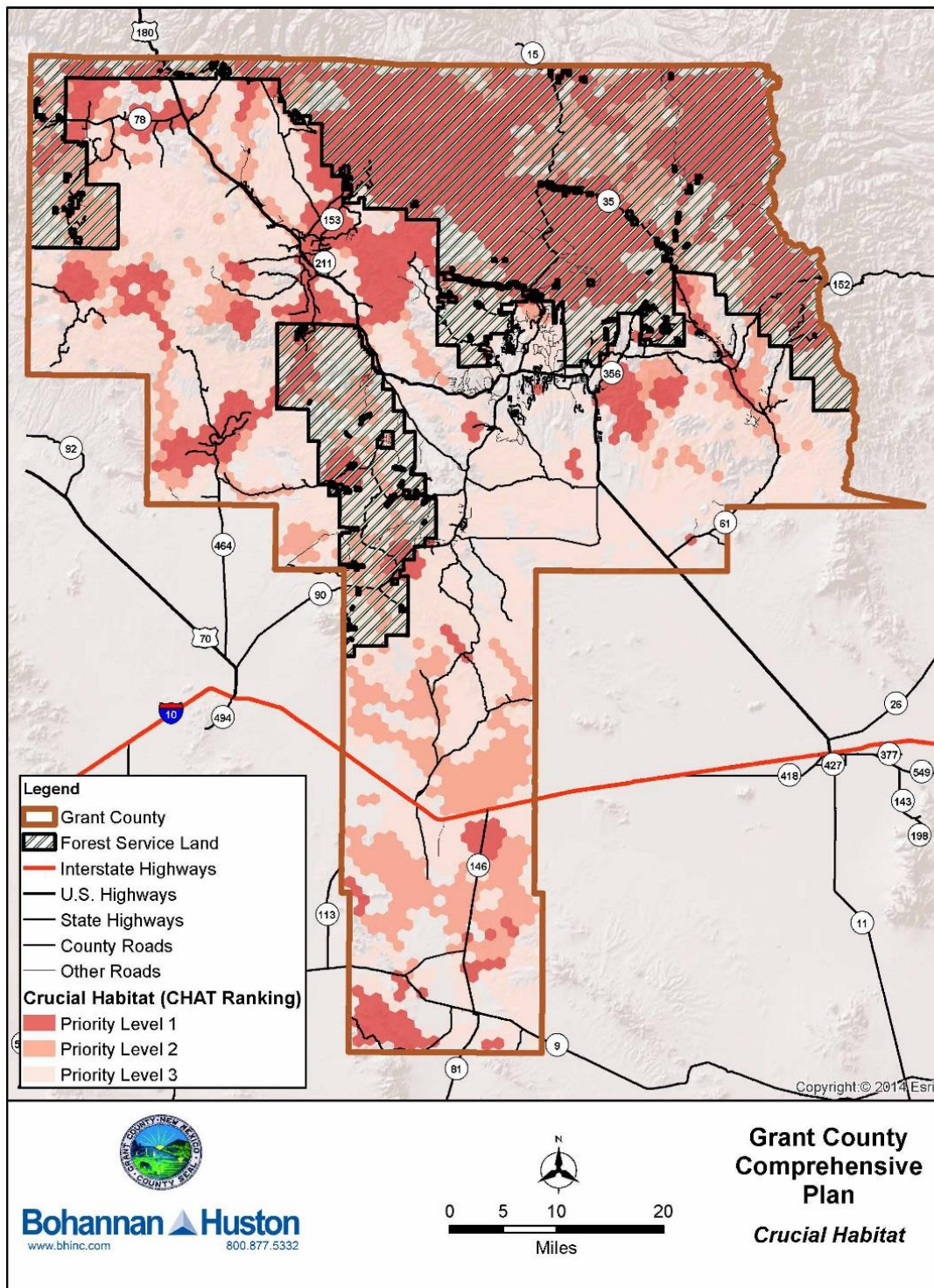


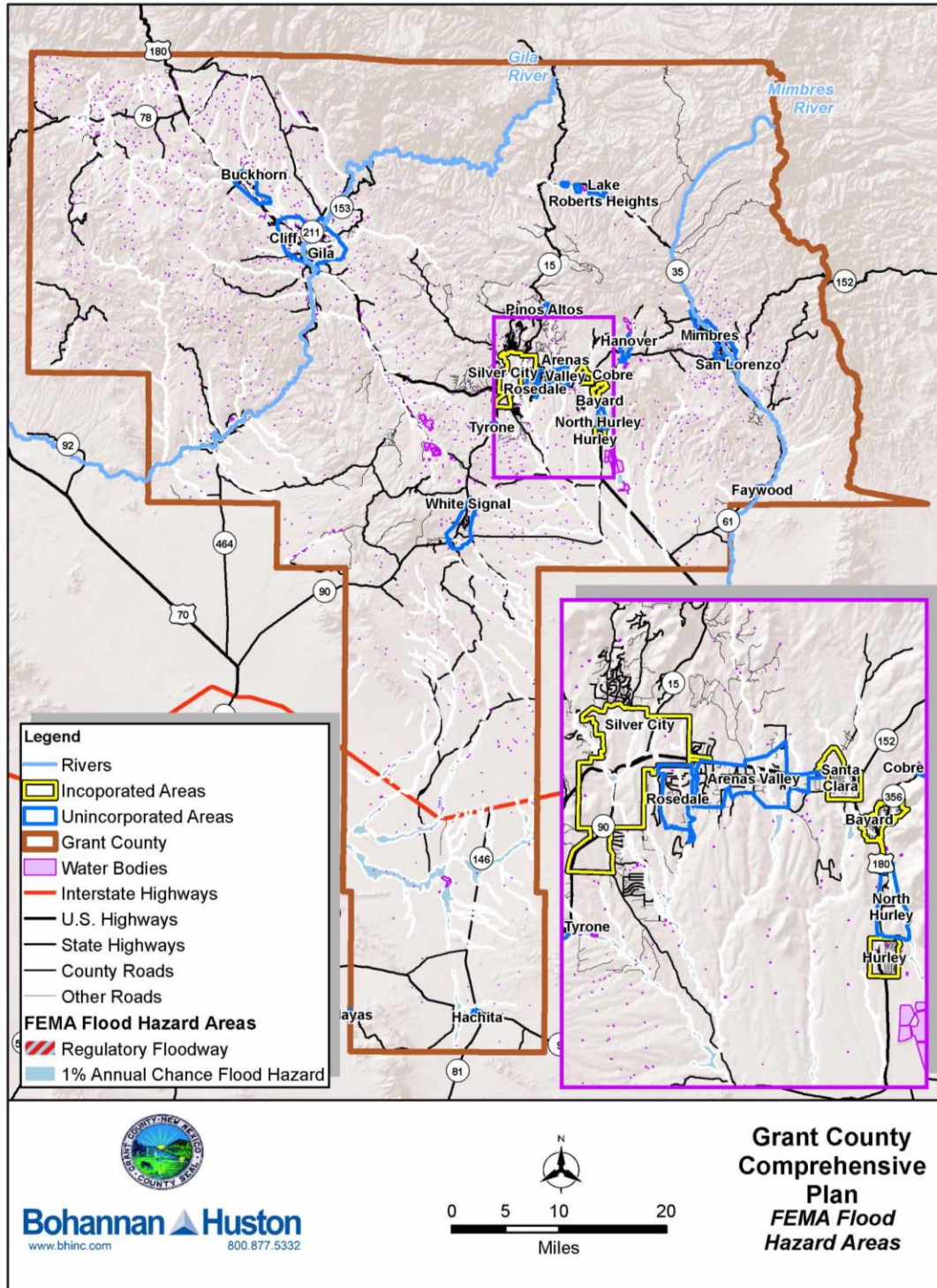
FIGURE 18 - CRITICAL HABITATS



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Author: gmaynard

February 2017

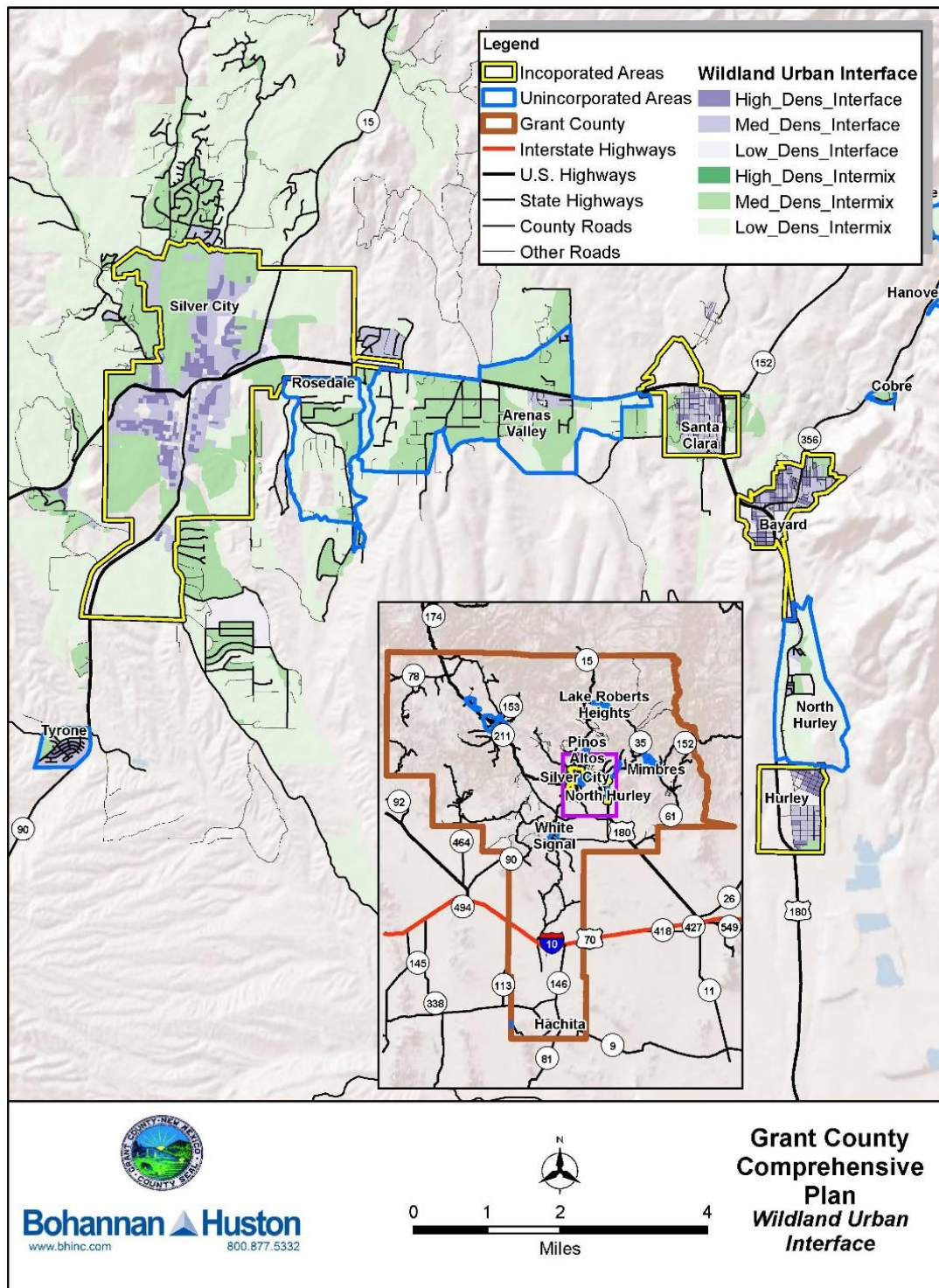
FIGURE 19 - CRUCIAL HABITAT AREAS



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Author: gmaynard

May 2017

FIGURE 20 - FEMA-DESIGNATED FLOOD PLAINS



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 Author: gmaynard

FIGURE 21 - WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE AREAS

Water Resources

Water resources in Grant County are derived from a combination of surface sources, including the Gila and Mimbres Rivers, and groundwater sources. The majority of water in southwest New Mexico is utilized for agricultural purposes, while Freeport-McMoRan also holds large water rights as part of its mining operations. Residential consumption is primarily from groundwater surfaces, including many rural drinking water systems, and constitutes a small share of overall water consumption in Grant County. Per capita residential water consumption has fallen steadily across New Mexico, including in Grant County.

Grant County has long held an interest in securing additional water rights to meet residential and commercial needs and support potential economic development efforts. Securing long-term water resources will require a two-fold approach: obtaining additional water rights and reducing consumption through conservation efforts.

Southwest New Mexico Regional Water Plan

Prepared by the State of New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, the Southwest Regional Water Plan (RWP) outlines future water supply and demand based on different growth and consumption scenarios and documents current available resources. The major issues and challenges identified in the RWP include drought, wildfires and threats to watersheds, protection of natural environments of rivers, and declining groundwater levels in the Animas, Mimbres, and Nutt Hockett basins.

Long-term supply issues are a primary concern. Surface water provides 40% of the regional supply, though long-term availability is threatened by increased drought and decreased snowpack in mountainous areas. Groundwater recharge has not kept pace with extraction, leading to falling water levels in the region's aquifers. Southwest New Mexico is also subject to environmental challenges as the streams and rivers in the region suffer from contamination and other quality issues due to fires and industry.

The RWP anticipates low to moderate growth in demand; however, due to changes in climate conditions, supply is expected to fall. According to the RWP, if the region experiences a 20-year drought with limited groundwater recharge, "the estimated shortage in drought years, considering both surface water shortages and declines in existing groundwater supplies, is expected to range from 122,000 to 149,000 acre-feet in 2060."¹³ Thought of another way, the supply in 2060 may be only 41% of the 2010 amount (see Table 18).

¹³ Southwest Regional Water Plan, p. ES-3

TABLE 18 - WATER USE AND ESTIMATED AVAILABILITY IN THE SOUTHWEST NEW MEXICO WATER PLANNING REGION¹⁴

Source Type	Basin Area	2010 Estimated Water Use (acre- feet/year)	2060 Estimated Water Availability (acre- feet/year)	
			No Drought	One 20- Year Drought
Groundwater (closed basins)	Animas	15,291	11,288	10,560
	Lordsburg	16,477	15,481	15,432
	Mimbres (Grant County)	10,928	7,142	5,881
	Mimbres (Luna County)	40,164	34,355	32,419
	Nutt-Hockett (Luna County)	16,084	3,754	1,824
	Playas Valley	20,595	0	0
Surface Water	Six closed basins	29,617	29,617	2,962
Groundwater	All diversions outside of six closed basins	15,303	15,303	15,303
Surface Water		58,076	58,076	5,808
Total		222,535	175,016	90,188
Water use as a percentage of 2010 administrative water supply			79%	41%

To address the anticipated shortfall in resources, the RWP offers a number of strategies, including drought contingency planning, a range of watershed management and restoration programs, improved efficiency in use by agricultural and industrial users, conservation efforts, and creative water storage techniques. The RWP also discusses utilization of Gila River surface water, in accordance with the Arizona Water Settlements Act (see below). Policymakers, stakeholders, and the general public should consult the Southwest Regional Water Plan for a detailed set of conservation and resource management strategies.

The Grant County Regional Water Supply Project is a specifically identified improvement in the RWP as investment that would improve access to public water supplies that currently serve approximately 26,000 people in central Grant County. The project includes developing a new well-field and a pipeline to the Town of Hurley, and is driven in part by

¹⁴ Recreated from Southwest Regional Water Plan, Table 7-1, p. 173.

the fact that the current contract supplying water to the Town of Hurley expires at the end of 2018.

Central Arizona Project New Mexico Unit

A major stakeholder for the long-term sustainability of water resources in the region is the Central Arizona Project New Mexico (CAP New Mexico) office. CAP New Mexico was created following the 2004 Arizona Water Settlements Act (AWSA), which entitles New Mexico users to an average annual allotment of 14,000 acre-feet of water from the Gila River.

The RWP does not consider the AWSA in great detail as the settlement remains controversial and there is some uncertainty over whether the water entitled to New Mexico in the settlement will become available. Nevertheless, CAP New Mexico programs may prove critical in securing additional water resources for Grant County and southwest New Mexico. CAP New Mexico is currently utilizing funds from the AWSA to undertake a series of diversion and ditch improvements and water conservation projects to convey water in a more efficient manner. CAP New Mexico is also engaging in negotiations with Freeport McMoRan for a lease agreement for water rights that could result in additional water for non-industrial users in Grant County.

Mutual Domestic Water Consumer Associations

A number of mutual domestic water consumer associations (MDWCA) established within Grant County manage water supplies for unincorporated communities in Grant County. They range in size, but are publicly-held water providers. MDWCA's are prevalent in New Mexico with over 300 state-wide, and approximately 20 within Grant County. There is often a financial strain to maintain and operate these public systems, but they do provide a necessary water source for many residents. Several of these MDWCAs have entered into agreements with the Town of Silver City as an additional water source, in support of their efforts to provide a consistent water supply to local residents, as identified below:

Arenas Valley MDWCA

Maintains an agreement with the Town of Silver City for the current delivery of no more than 200 acre-feet of water per year.

Pinos Altos MDWCA

Maintains an agreement with the Town of Silver City for the current delivery of no more than 200 acre-feet per year.

Rosedale MDWCA

Maintains an agreement with the Town of Silver City for the current delivery of no more than 35 acre-feet of water per year.

Tyrone MDWCA

The Town of Silver City has an agreement with the MDWCA to support water and wastewater services for a small number of users in the area.

Water Associations in Grant County

- Arenas Valley MDWCA
- Casas Adobes MDWCA
- Hachita MDWCA
- Hanover MDWCA
- Lake Roberts Heights MDWCA
- Lake Roberts Water Uses Association
- North Hurley MDWCA
- Pinos Altos MDWCA
- Rosedale MDWCA
- Tyrone MCWCA
- Tyrone Property Owners Association

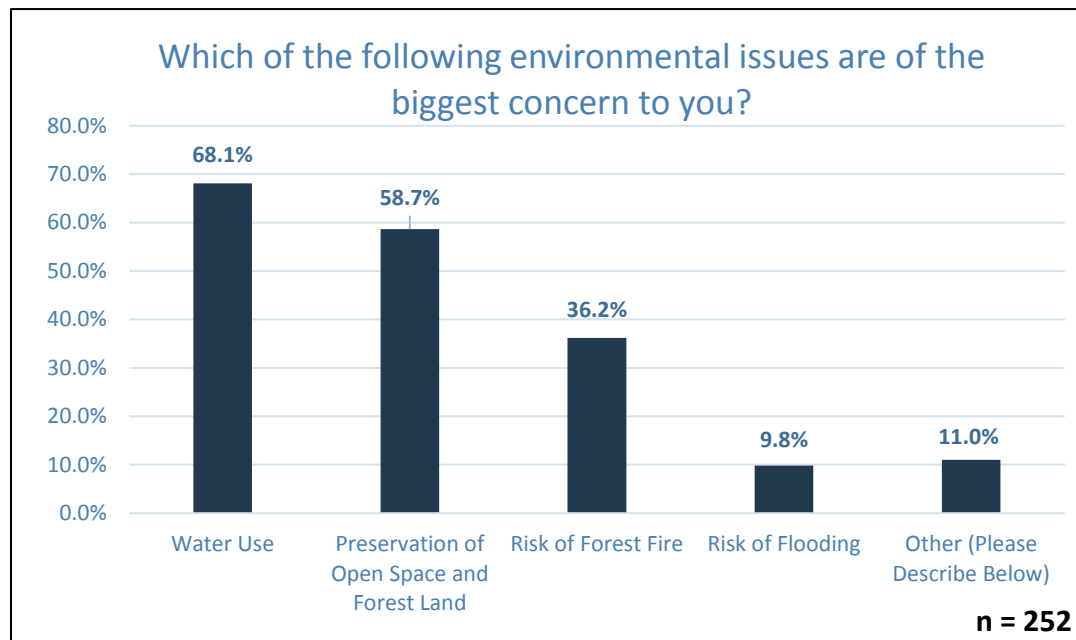
Tyrone Property Owners Association (TPOA)

The TPOA was created in 1967 by the Phelps Dodge Corporation to deliver water to the town site and its residences, a community park, a fire and police facility, a company mercantile store, a service station and other minor installations. The TPOA is noteworthy in that it is eligible for certain US Department of Agriculture funding programs.

Public Feedback

The issues of greatest concern, as they relate to the environment are: water use (68% of respondents) and preservation of open space and forest land (59% of respondents). The risk of forest fire is also a common concern.¹⁵ Among the written responses, water use and water quality were frequently identified, including impacts related to mining and concerns about the implications of diverting water from the Gila River.

FIGURE 22 - QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL CONDITIONS



Noteworthy responses

- *“Protect the Gila River and the wilderness.”*
- *“Water is so precious in this age and location. We must make good use of it and take good care of its sources. The rest is irrelevant [sic] without safe, clean, sufficient water. Preserving open space and forest, then, protects us from fire and flood.”*

¹⁵ Respondents could select more than one response meaning the percentages sum to more than 100%.

Opportunities

Regional water planning efforts are ongoing and reflect the need for long-term water resource management in southwest New Mexico. Grant County can continue to work with regional stakeholders to **secure additional water resources** and to pursue economically feasible projects and strategies to **conserve existing water resources** through improved efficiency and lower domestic consumption. In particular, Grant County can support CAP New Mexico in lease agreements and identifying infrastructure improvements. Other steps could include working with the Office of the State Engineer and the Interstate Stream Commission to develop water budgets for the water basins in the County, and developing a strategic water action plan to outline concrete steps that can be taken to address water supply and demand issues.

To accompany water resource management efforts, Grant County can develop policies to **consider water availability and natural resource issues during land use planning**. At present, there is little connection between development patterns and water needs, and the subdivision regulations do not contain language related to water resources. Frequently, new development takes place in such a way that each parcel must have its own well, unless a private water association is created. It is then important to recognize that each well affects the overall supply and the conditions of the aquifer.

Continued emphasis on **emergency operations and hazard mitigation planning** will ensure that Grant County remains resilient and prepared for unforeseen events in the decades to come. Grant County is in the process of updating its All-hazard Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), which outlines how the County is going to respond to an emergency or disaster, and was last produced in 2014. The Plan is a living document and changes to the Plan occur when necessary, usually after an incident, using information from incidents' after-action-report and improvement plans. This document complements the All-hazard Mitigation Plan, which is also under development. The All-Hazard Mitigation Plan provides an opportunity to assess the risks associated with flooding, forest fires, and other natural phenomena. These hazards endanger the health and safety of the population of the community, jeopardize its economic vitality, and imperil the quality of its environment. Because of the importance of avoiding or minimizing the vulnerabilities to these hazards, the public and private sector interests of Grant County have joined together to create the plan. This multi-jurisdictional planning effort has been conducted through the coordinated, cooperative effort of several local governments including Grant County, Silver City, Bayard, Hurley, and Santa Clara. Public involvement has also been an integral part of the plan development process.

Goals and Action Items

Goal: Preserve the natural landscapes and delicate habitats of the region.

- Action Item: Consider sensitive habitats, wildland-urban interface, and other natural resource datasets as part of land use decision-making.
- Action Item: Discourage new development in at-risk locations, and encourage new housing in the appropriate transect districts.
- Action Item: Participate in USFS planning and conservation efforts.

Goal: Provide sustainable long-term supply of water for residential, commercial, and agricultural needs.

- Action Item: Participate in regional water planning efforts, including CAP New Mexico committees and initiatives to secure additional water rights, improve efficiencies among agricultural users, and increase water supply.
- Action Item: Pursue lease agreements with industrial users to obtain water for residential and agricultural users.

Goal: Reduce water consumption through conservation and resource management practices.

- Action Item: Encourage irrigation techniques and efficient irrigation water transport methods.
- Action Item: Encourage residents to adopt water conservation practices such as using native plants in landscaping, upgraded water systems, and water-saving fixtures and appliances.
- Action Item: Encourage the use of reclaimed water for landscaping, irrigation, and other activities that do not require potable water.
- Action Item: Introduce a water action plan with strategies to reduce consumption and improve conservation efforts.

Goal: Manage the risks associated with natural and man-made disaster.

- Action Item: Maintain and update an all hazards EOP that considers forest fires and flooding risks, and outlines strategies for responding to emergencies.
- Action Item: Maintain and update a Hazard Mitigation plan.
- Action Item: Engage in forest management practices to reduce risk of forest fires and coordinate with incorporated communities and the USFS on controlled burn schedules.
- Action Item: Discourage new development in at-risk locations, and encourage new housing in the appropriate transect districts.

Transportation

Grant County is served by a system of transportation that includes roadways, public transit, rail, and multiple airports including commercial air service. However, transportation connections into and out of Grant County are somewhat limited with effects on economic development opportunities and local quality of life. Existing services and opportunities to improve the Grant County transportation system are discussed in this chapter.

Transportation providers include the incorporated municipalities of Silver City, Bayard, Hurley, and Santa Clara, which maintain roadways within their municipal limits. The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) manages state and US highways, which include all major roadway connections into the region. Grant County manages roads that provide access to and within rural and unincorporated communities.

Transportation planning in Grant County is largely conducted at the state and regional levels. The SWRTPO administers the Regional Transportation Improvement Program Recommendations (RTIPR), a list of desired transportation projects that are submitted to NMDOT for potential funding and inclusion in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. The SWRTPO, along with NMDOT, produced the Southwest Regional Transportation Plan. The Regional Transportation Plan, adopted in 2015, contains a series of goals and strategies for addressing transportation infrastructure needs across Southwest New Mexico. Table 19 documents the relevant transportation plans for the region.

TABLE 19 – RELEVANT TRANSPORTATION PLANS

Agency	Plan	Purpose
NMDOT	New Mexico 2040 Plan	Provide a framework for NMDOT investments and decision-making, including prioritization of roadways for maintenance
SWRTPO	SWRTPO Long Range Regional Transportation Plan	Identify regional transportation needs and priorities for four counties in SW New Mexico
SWRTPO	Southwest RTPO Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan	Document available public transit services in the southwestern portion of New Mexico

Functions of SWRTPO

- To serve as a forum and to generate recommendations for multimodal transportation and enhancement projects.
- To prioritize and submit projects under certain funding categories to NMDOT.
- To promote the implementation of an efficient transportation network in the four county southwest region of New Mexico.
- Provide transportation planning services for agencies across southwest New Mexico, including Grant County and Corre Caminos.

Source: SWNMCOG website

Existing Conditions

Major Roadways

Surface transportation connections to Grant County are somewhat limited. Most of Grant County is about a two-hour drive from Las Cruces, NM and a three-hour drive from the El Paso, TX and Tucson, AZ metropolitan areas. Access to these larger metropolitan areas are

important since many services and shopping opportunities are limited in Grant County. The most critical access route is US 180, which traverses Grant County from northwest to southwest, and connects Silver City and the tri-cities area to Deming. US 180 also provides the most heavily utilized access route to I-10, and is noteworthy for the heavy amount of truck traffic between Deming and Silver City. The highway is a two-lane facility to the west of Silver City and between Hurley and Deming, with occasional passing lanes. Between Hurley and Silver City, US 180 is a four-lane facility with median cuts and center turn lanes.

Other important roadway connections are listed below:

- NM 90 links the Silver City area to the town of Lordsburg along I-10
- NM 152 connects US 180 near Santa Clara to I-25 through the mountainous Emory Pass
- NM 61 connects US 180 to the unincorporated communities of Faywood, Mimbres, and San Lorenzo
- NM 15 connects Silver City to the community of Pinos Altos and to the Gila National Forest and Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument
- NM 146 provides a north-south connection from I-10 to Hachita through rural southern Grant County

Grant County manages a network of 699 miles of roads. Nearly all County-owned roads are two-lane facilities that provide local access, including to agricultural areas. Many roads, both paved and unpaved, could use maintenance; Grant County is pursuing an Asset Management Plan to assist in roadway maintenance decision-making efforts.

Rail

Rail service in Grant County is limited, with major rail activity in the region centered in Lordsburg in neighboring Hidalgo County and in Deming in Luna County. The trans-continental Union Pacific line passes through the southern portion of Grant County as part of the “Sunset Route,” but there are no stops or stations within County limits.

Rail service in Grant County is provided by Southwest Railroad (SWRR). SWRR is a Class 3, or shortline railroad that connects Whitewater and Deming, with an additional line from Deming to Rincon in Luna County. The track has a maximum speed of 30 MPH. The SWRR system includes 57.1 miles of track, including 30.6 miles from Whitewater to Deming, and hosts a railyard in Hurley. There is an additional 16.3-mile rail spur operated by SWRR from Whitewater to Santa Rita via Hanover, also in Grant County. Other rail spurs include a 6.5-mile Fierro Spur from Hanover to Fierro and a 3.7-mile spur from Whitewater to Burro Mountain Junction, referred to as the Tyrone spur.

The nearest access to interstate passenger rail service is in Deming and Lordsburg. Both communities are served by the Amtrak Sunset Limited, which operates three lines per week linking Los Angeles, Tucson, El Paso, Houston, San Antonio and New Orleans.

Public Transit

Corre Caminos provides public transportation service in and between Grant, Luna, and Hidalgo Counties, with Grant County serving as the fiscal agent and administrator for the service. The program began in 2001 based out of Silver City and expanded in 2008 to provide service to Deming and Lordsburg. Connections are also available from Deming to the Town of Columbus near the Mexico border. The program offers fixed route, modified fixed route, and demand response services.

In addition to routes within the Silver City area, Corre Caminos operates three intercity routes: two express routes provide non-stop service to Lordsburg and Deming, and one shorter route provides service to Hurley and intermediate points. Corre Caminos also provides connections to the communities of Cliff and Gila. Corre Caminos carried a total of 114,636 passengers in FY 2015 (about 9,500 per month), an increase in ridership of 4.6% over the previous year. The increase in ridership is particularly noteworthy as public transit usage across the state of New Mexico *fell* by 5.1% from FY 2014 to FY 2015.

TABLE 20 - INTER-CITY CORRE CAMINOS ROUTES, SPRING 2017

Route	Service Begins	Service Ends	Frequency
Copper Route – Silver City to Hurley	5:55 AM	4:55 PM	Every Two Hours
Deming Route – within City limits	8:00 AM	4:51 PM	Every Hour
Deming to Columbus Route – Weekdays	6:50 AM	4:10 PM	Every Four Hours
Deming to Columbus Route – Weekends	9:00 AM	3:05 PM	Every Four Hours
Silver City to Deming	5:35 AM	4:30 PM	Nine Hours Apart
Silver Route – within Town limits	6:30 AM	5:30 PM	Hourly
Deming to Silver City	7:30 AM	5:30 PM	Nine Hours Apart
Lordsburg to Silver City	8:50 AM	4:35 PM	1.5 Hour Break
Gila Route	1:45 PM	5:10 PM	One run per day

Corre Caminos and Grant County partnered in 2006 to provide on-demand rides between restaurants, bars and residences on Friday and Saturday nights from 6:00 PM to 2:30 AM as a means of addressing incidences of driving while intoxicated. Since the implementation of the Corre Cantinas program, the DWI rate fell by 37%.¹⁶ The service has also expanded to include the Deming area.

Funding for Corre Caminos comes from the Federal Transit Administration in the form of a rural transit operations grant, along with a funding match by local communities. Corre Caminos is administered by Grant County and the Area Transportation Authority Board, which meets on a quarterly basis.

¹⁶ Source: Corre Caminos website.

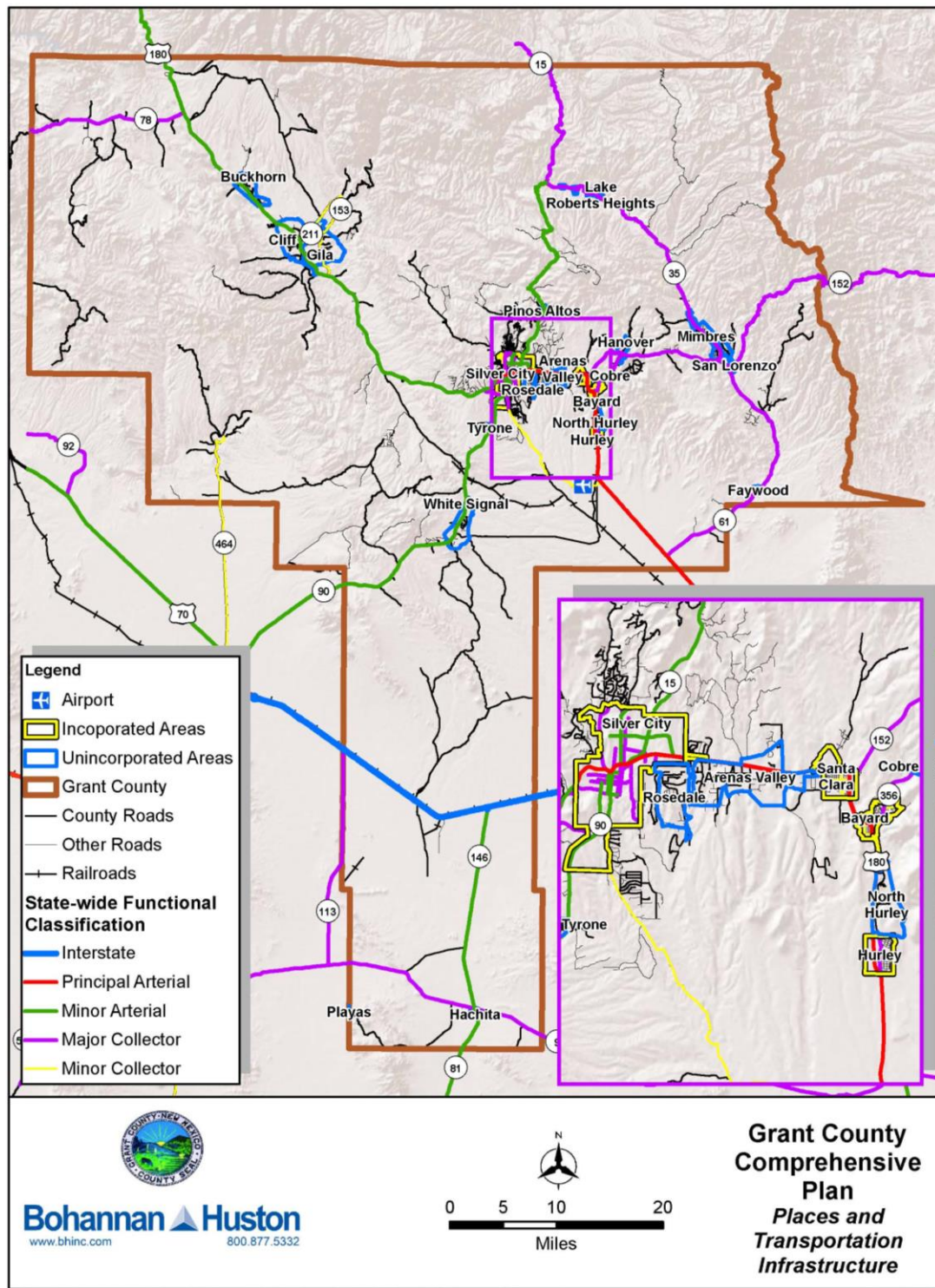


FIGURE 23 - ROADWAY SYSTEM IN GRANT COUNTY

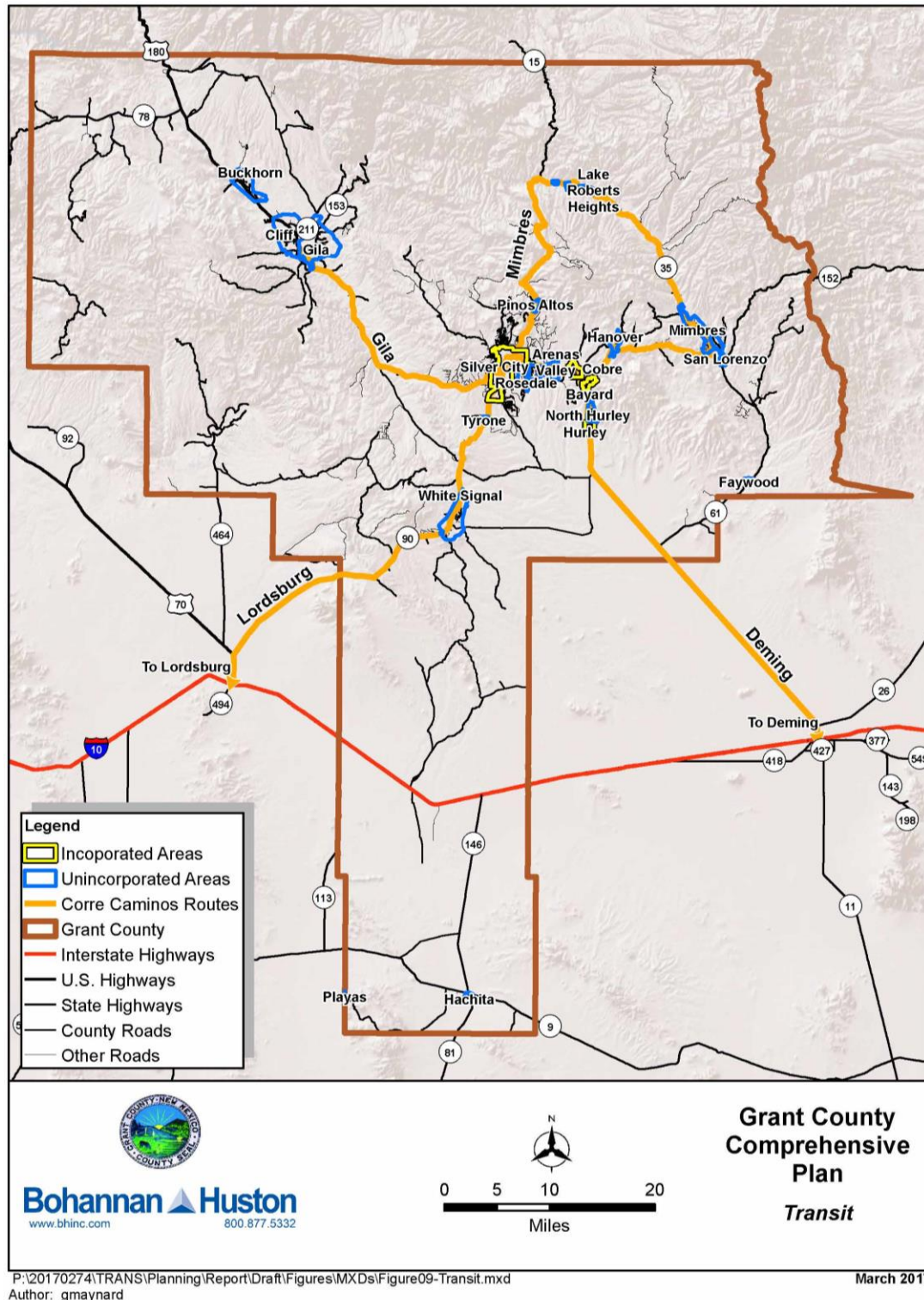


FIGURE 24 - PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE IN SOUTHWEST NEW MEXICO

Air Travel

The Grant County airport, known as SVC, started offering commercial service in 1951. The airport serves general aviation purposes, as well as one commercial airline, and is considered an essential air service facility that provides critical connections to rural parts of the country. The airport is owned and operated by Grant County and is located about ten nautical miles to the southeast of Silver City. In addition to “touch-and-go” operations from nearby air force bases, the airport has the following tenants:

- Blue Sky Aviation
- Boutique Air
- Gila National Forest Aerial Fire Base
- Grant County Fuel

As of 2016, there were 22 total based aircraft count at SVC, including 20 single engine (SE) and two multi-engine (ME) aircraft.¹⁷ The number of based aircraft has remained consistent over the years with annual operations (i.e. a takeoff or a landing) estimated at 8,750 (see Table 21). The Airport is served by a four-runway system, has two terminal buildings, with a waiting lobby, ticket counter, waiting area and office/operations spaces. T-hangar space is rentable and is fully utilized at present. The peak use for the airport is during the summer, especially July, due to fire-related operations.

There are two other private airports located in Grant County: Casa Adobes and Whiskey Creek airports. Whiskey Creek and Casas Adobes are privately owned and have some based aircraft.

TABLE 21 - ANNUAL AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS BY TYPE AT SVC

Type	Flights per Year
Air Carrier (commercial services)	2,496
Air Taxi (USFS contracts, medical flights)	1,200
General Aviation - Local	1,572
General Aviation - Itinerant	2,794
Military	750
Total	8,750

¹⁷ Airport Action Plan, 2016

Passenger Service

Boutique Air provides essential air service passenger travel from Silver City to Albuquerque and Phoenix, and connections from those hubs to markets across the western United States. The presence of Boutique Air provides a unique opportunity since few communities the size of Silver City and Grant County have regular commercial air service. In 2015, the year Boutique Air began commercial service from Silver City, there were 3,945 enplanements (i.e. passengers that board departing commercial service). This represents a 250% increase from 2014 when there were 1,128 enplanements. The schedule as of spring 2017 can be seen below.

TABLE 22 - SVC BOUTIQUE AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE, MARCH 2017

Flight Number	Origin	Destination	Departure Time (local)	Arrival Time (local)	Schedule						
					M	T	W	T	F	S	S
612	ABQ	SVC	06:00	07:00	X	X	X	X	X	X	
611	SVC	ABQ	06:30	07:30	X	X	X	X	X	X	
641	SVC	PHX	07:30	08:55	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
614	ABQ	SVC	16:15	17:15	X	X		X	X		X
613	SVC	ABQ	17:45	18:45	X	X		X	X		X
616	ABQ	SVC	19:15	20:15	X	X	X	X	X		X
642	PHX	SVC	19:55	21:05	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
615	SVC	ABQ	21:35	22:35	X	X	X	X	X		X

Airport Action Plan

The Grant County Airport Action Plan was completed in 2016 by WH Pacific. The Plan examined the following issues:

- Airport user needs, including fire base, airline(s), small general aviation, corporate general aviation, other businesses
- Hangar demand
- Runway and taxiway system improvement needs, including runway length, airfield configuration changes (multiple runways), and taxiway connector alignment (eliminate direct access from apron to runway)
- Pavement maintenance
- Terminal improvements
- Environmental considerations
- Infrastructure improvements to support future development

Airport leadership are looking to the following improvements for the future of the airport:

- Enhance safety and security
- Support economic growth
- Accommodate demand
- Preserve/protect investment

Commuting Patterns

An examination of commuting patterns reveals a fair amount of travel across county lines in southwestern New Mexico to access job sites. According to the US Census-based On The Map tool, about 66% of the jobs in Grant County are filled by Grant County residents, while about one-third of all jobs are filled by residents of other Counties. Conversely, many jobs located within Grant County are filled by residents of other places (about 34%). These commuting patterns are not uncommon; they do, however, demonstrate the benefits of inter-city transit services provided by Corre Caminos.

On The Map also reveals that there are more employed people in Grant County than there are jobs in the County. Nevertheless, of the approximately 11,000 employed residents, only about 57% of people stay in the County for work, while almost 43% of Grant County residents hold jobs in other counties (see Table 23). Although the data indicates a higher level of independence – or the rate at which jobs are filled by local residents – than many communities, the large number of residents travelling for work speaks to the benefits of inter-city transit services and the need for quality transportation options.

TABLE 23 - WORK AND HOME LOCATIONS FOR GRANT COUNTY RESIDENTS AND EMPLOYEES, ON THE MAP

Home Locations for Employed Persons in Grant County		Work Locations for Employed Residents of Grant County	
Live outside Grant County	34.3%	Work Outside of Grant County	42.8%
Live inside Grant County	65.7%	Work inside Grant County	57.2%

Figure 25 shows the concentration of job sites across Grant County, with darker colors reflecting locations with higher levels of employment, according to the tool On The Map.¹⁸ Outside of the incorporated communities, the majority of jobs are concentrated along US 180, as well as the communities of Cobre and Tyrone. Mining sites are among the areas of greatest employment activity.

¹⁸ On The Map is a Census-based tool that utilized Quarterly Census of Earnings and Wages (QCEW) data to shed light on employment conditions and commuting patterns. The data provided in Table X and Figure X are from 2014.

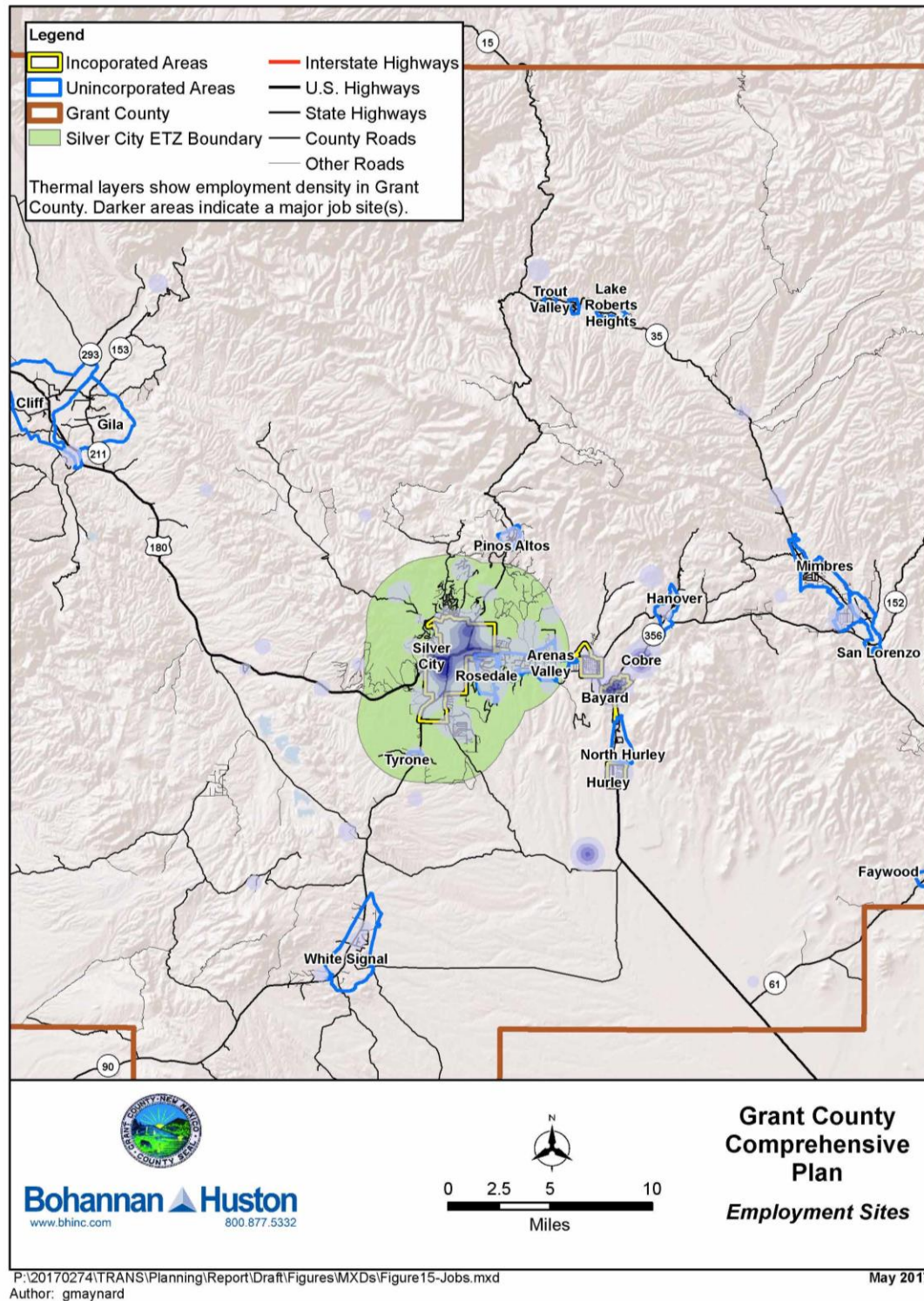


FIGURE 25 - EMPLOYMENT CONCENTRATIONS IN GRANT COUNTY

Commuting in Grant County is primarily performed by private vehicle, with 80% of employed residents driving alone to work and 10% carpooling. Almost 6% of employed persons work at home. The county-wide commuting share for walking and public transit is 3% and less than 1%, respectively, though the shares for both modes are higher for residents of the Town of Silver City.

The average travel time to work for Grant County residents is 18 minutes, reflecting the fact that most residents and jobs are located along the stretch of US 180 from Hurley to Silver City, or in the Town of Silver City itself. Only about 15% of residents commute longer than 30 minutes to work.

TABLE 24 - MEANS OF COMMUTING TO WORK, 2011-2015 ACS

Mode	Percent
Private Vehicle	90.2%
Drove alone	80.2%
Carpooled	10.0%
Public Transit	0.4%
Walked	3.1%
Bicycle	0.3%
Other	0.2%
Work at Home	5.8%

TABLE 25 - TRAVEL TIME TO WORK, 2011-2015 ACS

Travel Time	Percent
Less than 10 minutes	26.4%
10 to 19 minutes	40.5%
20 to 29 minutes	17.5%
30 to 44 minutes	8.7%
45 to 59 minutes	3.4%
60 or more minutes	3.5%

Public Feedback

The questionnaire included two questions related to transportation options and desired improvements in Grant County.

Q1: Do you use the Corre Caminos public transit system?

Q2: Given that funding is limited, on which two of the following should the County focus its efforts?

Public Transit

About one-fifth of respondents indicated they utilize public transit, though many other respondents recognized the value of the Corre Caminos system. Among irregular users, the Corre Cantinas program appears to be particularly popular. Other respondents indicate the system does not serve outlying areas or that the schedule is not as convenient as they would prefer, though these issues are difficult to address in a largely rural county with modest population.

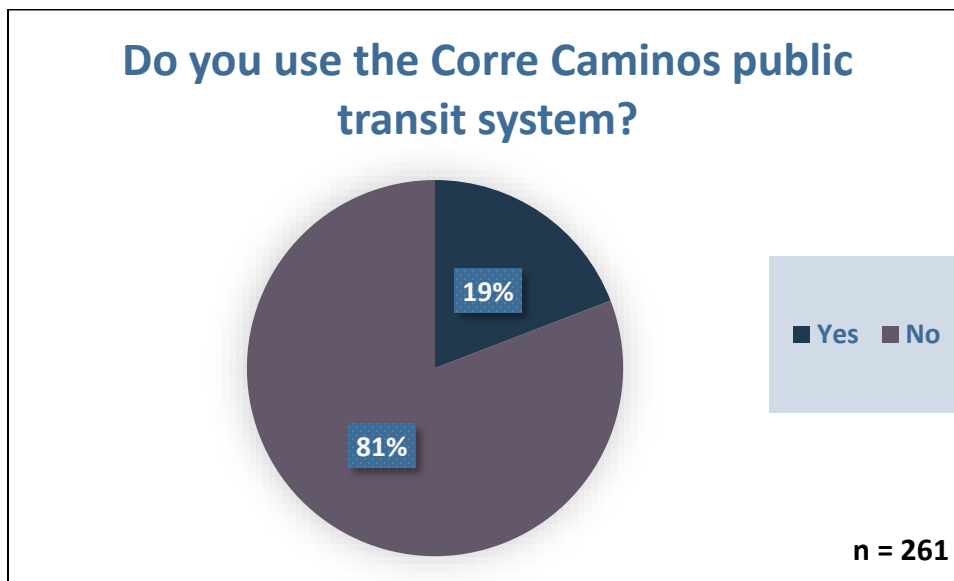


FIGURE 26 - QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM ON TRANSIT, PART 1

Desired Improvements

Among the desired transportation improvements, roadways are highest on the list. This is unsurprising given the high driving mode share. A sound Asset Management Plan will therefore be key in meeting the public's expectations regarding roadway improvements and the quality of local roads.

Improved walkability, recreational opportunities, and bicycle infrastructure received a fair amount of support as well, and the collective support for these investments indicates a general demand for improved transportation options. Increased opportunities to walk and utilize public transit are particularly important for both young and elderly populations.

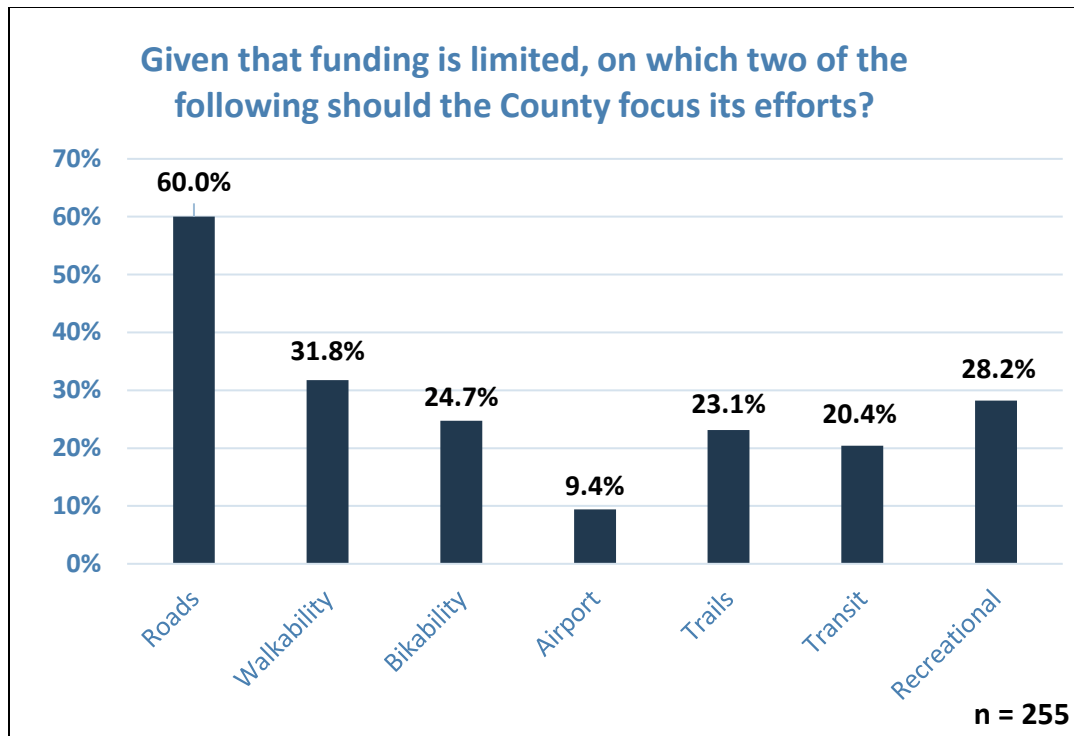


FIGURE 27 - QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM ON TRANSIT, PART 2

Noteworthy responses

- *“Trails for hiking/walking/biking enhance recreation. Roads are no worse than in many other areas of the country I've visited.”*
- *“Our roads need to be a high priority.”*
- *“Boutique Air is doing a great job and we need to promote our accessibility by air.”*
- *“Many roads in the county are absolutely horrible and in dire need of repair.”*
- *“There is a lot of commuting from Silver City to Deming and Las Cruces. These two destinations could be considered for some kind of transit options.”*
- *“Biking in Grant County is very dangerous - yet inviting cyclists to the area is a major tourism draw.”*
- *“Creating bike lanes is a low cost, high visibility action that would positively impact the community.”*

Opportunities

Roadways

Improvements to US 180

The issue of improvements to US 180, including potential roadway widening, has been identified in previous planning efforts as an economic development strategy. Given the role that US 180 plays in linking Grant County and the Silver City area to the rest of New Mexico, the performance and functionality of the highway is critical for residents and businesses. However, due to budgetary constraints and rising maintenance obligations, the need to widen a roadway has to be fully demonstrated. Since US 180 is a state highway, a regional approach including NMDOT, Grant County, Silver City, and the NWNMCOG, could result in a corridor study to consider alternatives to improve operations, economic-development opportunities, and multi-modal access, as well as determine costs and impacts/benefits associated with proposed improvements along US 180.

Grant County Roadway Maintenance

Funding to support roadway improvements on these facilities is generally provided through the infrastructure capital improvements program, as well as the Local Government Road Fund. The decision-making process for projects to include in the ICIP is somewhat informal. Grant County is pursuing an Asset Management Plan to guide the roadway maintenance process.

Airport

The airport area has land available for additional commercial activity, and stakeholders raised the idea of pursuing certified development site status for the airport and the surrounding area. Other desired infrastructure improvements include:

- Roadway infrastructure to support airport-based industries
- Improved broadband is important for attracting industries to the airport area
- Access to the airport could be improved by adding Corre Caminos shuttle services as a transportation option.

Transit

Grant County and the surrounding region have a remarkably well-developed transit system for the collection of relatively small towns and rural communities that comprise the Corre Caminos service area. One approach that Grant County and Corre Caminos may consider are shuttle services from populated areas to job sites in remote portions of the region. Such a service could provide a welcome benefit, considering that 34% of those employed inside of the County commute for the outside and 43% of employed residents in Grant County commute to places outside of the County. Depending on the demand over time and the sites being served, Grant County could develop a system of park-and-ride facilities to support both existing Corre Caminos routes and potential shuttle services.

Goals and Action Items

Goal: Maintain County-owned roads in good condition.

- Action Item: Develop an Asset Management Plan, including a maintenance schedule, to assist in decision-making related to improvements on County-owned roads.
- Action Item: Identify high priority roads for maintenance and improvements.

Goal: Provide increased transportation options for travel within the County.

- Action Item: Develop recreational bike facilities both on and off road.
- Action Item: Develop a network of pedestrian paths, including connections to commercial areas and walking paths for recreational uses.

Goal: Improve connections between Grant County and other areas of New Mexico and the southwest.

- Action Item: Promote air travel to Silver City/Grant County Airport.
- Action Item: Conduct corridor study along US 180 to determine potential improvements and to address safety concerns.

Goal: Support continued development and utilization of the Grant County Airport.

- Action Item: Improve roadways near the airport to support new industries.
- Action Item: Consider public transit shuttle service between the airport and populated areas of Grant County.

Maintain support for and enhance Corre Caminos public transit system.

- Action Item: Pursue additional funding to improve service hours and attract additional ridership.
- Action Item: Expand service hours and coverage areas as ridership grows.
- Action Item: Consider public transit shuttle service between the airport and populated areas of Grant County.

Capital Facilities and Community Services

This chapter documents the Grant County-owned and operated facilities and the public services available for Grant County residents. Some of the public services described below are provided by the other agencies and jurisdictions, though the services provided are available to Grant County residents.

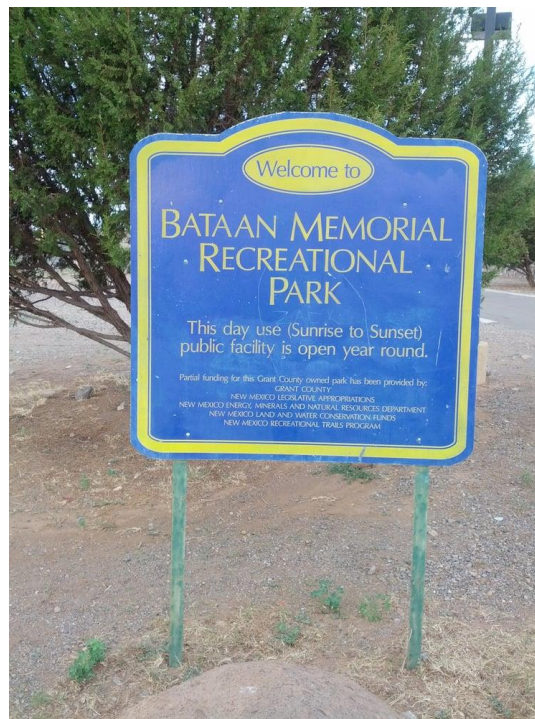
County Parks/Open Space

The County owns and operates various parks and open spaces. These amenities contribute to the high quality of life for Grant County residents and have important social and public health benefits. Recreational spaces provide opportunities for learning, relaxation, and contribute to mental well-being. They also provide opportunities for physical activity. All of these amenities build social capital and increase the desirability of the County as a place to live and spend time.

Bataan Memorial Park

Adjacent to the Fort Bayard Medical Center, this park contains a memorial to the Bataan Death March when the forced march by the Japanese Army during World War II resulted in the death of as many as 18,000 Filipino soldiers and 500-650 United States soldiers. In addition to the memorial site, the park contains playground equipment and three baseball fields.

Western New Mexico University is considering reviving its college baseball program, and the fields at Bataan Memorial Park have been discussed as a site for games.



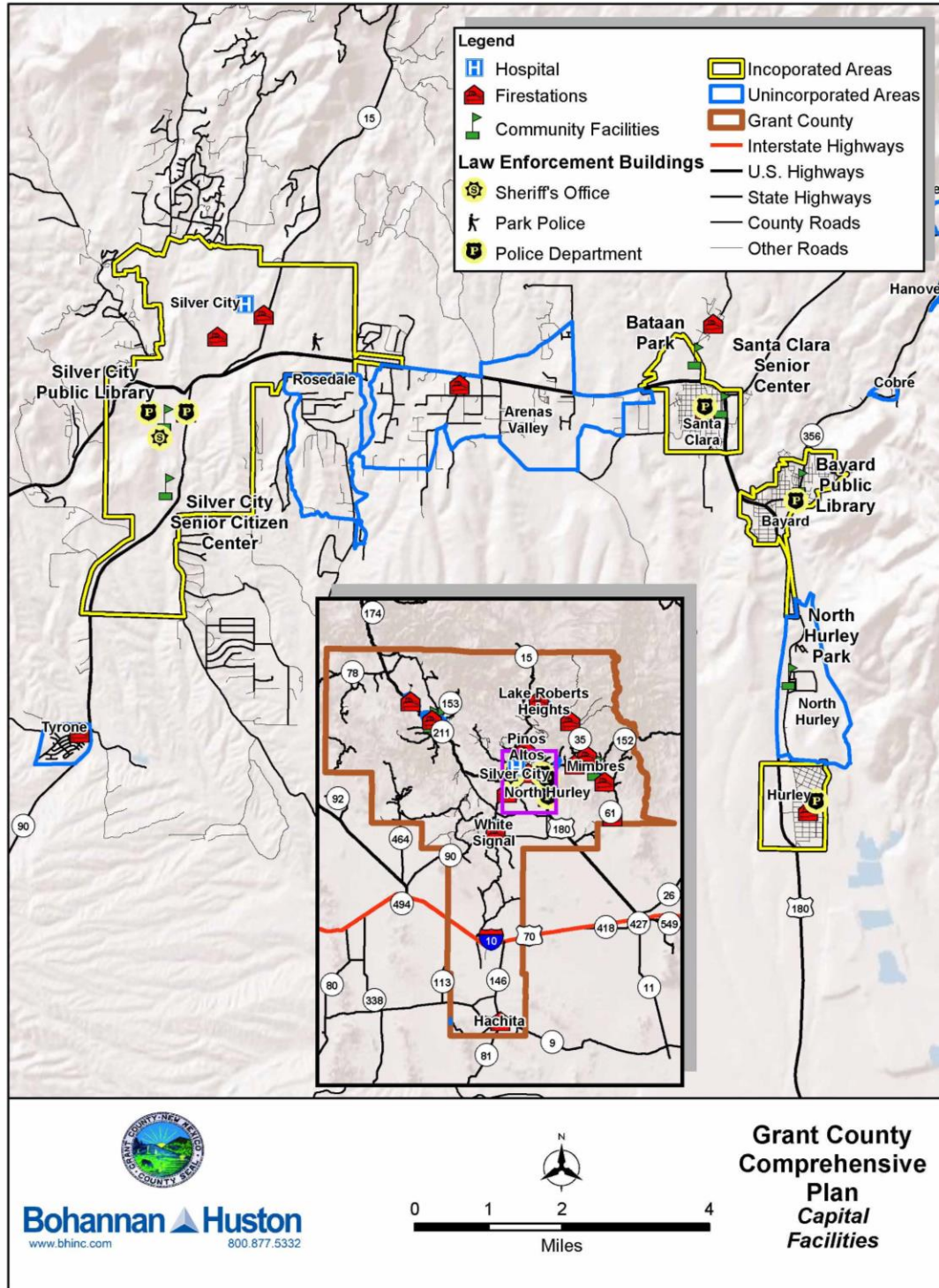


FIGURE 28 - CAPITAL FACILITIES

Cliff/Gila Grant County Fair Grounds
This facility hosts the annual Grant County Fair each September, which showcases local crafts and agriculture and serves an educational and tourism mission. It is run by the Cliff-Gila Fair Association, an all-volunteer organization without whom the fair would not exist. According to the website:



The Grant County 4-H organization is operated in conjunction with the Grant County Fairgrounds. 4-H is a community of more than 100 public universities across the nation that provides young people with opportunities to learn agricultural skills through practice by doing. Kids complete hands-on tasks in a positive environment where they receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles. This work is done through in-school and after-school programs, community clubs, and camps.

The first Cliff-Gila Fair was held on a Saturday in the fall of 1948. Shortly after, the Great Rock Wall at the Cliff School became the center piece for the first gathering of the fair. Here, temporary livestock pens were set up as well as 4-H exhibits. The women from the Farm Bureau and women in the valley provided lunch, which was served on the rock wall. In later years, fair-goers used the rock wall for seating after purchasing a barbeque lunch made by the Lions Club of Silver City.

Health Care/Medical Facilities

Grant County has excellent health services for a largely rural area. Most services are based in Silver City, but provide care for much of southwest New Mexico. In addition to the Gila Regional Medical Center, there are several health councils and public and private services for Grant County residents.

Gila Regional Medical Center

The largest hospital in a 100-mile radius, the Gila Regional Medical Center is a county-owned, not-for-profit, facility that serves Hidalgo, Luna, Catron and Grant Counties. The Gila Regional Medical Center contains 68 beds and provides care for about 63,000 people. It is also home to the Gila Regional Cancer Center and the Surgical Center of the Southwest.



This Medical Center was established in 1883 by the Ladies Sewing Circle. Since that time, it has changed ownership numerous times, and in 1969 was transferred to Grant County. The County Commissioners appoint a seven-member Board of Trustees who oversee the administration of the Center.

The Center provides the following services:

- Family Medicine
- Emergency Care
- Infusion
- Rehabilitation
- Behavioral Health

- Maternal/Child Services
- Special Care Unit
- Cardiology
- Pain Management
- Diagnostics
- Radiology/Imaging

Hidalgo Medical Services

Based in Lordsburg in Hidalgo County and with offices and services located in Silver City, Cliff/Gila, Mimbres, and Bayard in Grant County, Hidalgo Medical Services is a non-profit healthcare organization that provides comprehensive medical, dental, mental health, and family support services.

Hidalgo Medical Services is the only Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in Grant County and serves over 16,000 patients per year. Hidalgo Medical Services HMS is also accredited by the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. To maintain its accreditation with the HRSA, Hidalgo Medical Services must do the following:

- Serve a medically underserved population,
- Provide appropriate and necessary services with fees adjusted on patients' ability to pay,
- Demonstrate sound clinical and financial management, and
- Be governed by a board, a majority of which includes health center patients

Originally founded in 1980, Hidalgo Medical Services has expanded over time and recently received funding through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to open the Silver City Community Health Center. ACA funding also allowed Hidalgo Medical Services to develop the Family Medicine Residency Program, which brings a rotation of additional physicians to the area, and to expand the number of patients served via Medicaid. The Family Medicine Residency Program trains family medicine physicians for practice in rural community settings, and is the first program of its kind in New Mexico.

Silver Health Care

Founded in 1975, Silver Health Care operates four clinics across Grant County, as well as an urgent care center in Silver City. The urgent care clinic is the only one of its kind in the region. Silver Health Care provides the following services:

- Primary care
- Behavioral health
- Pediatrics
- Podiatry
- Urgent care
- On-site diagnostics and related services

Silver City Care Center

Silver City Care Center is a nursing and respite care facility located in Silver City that offers a range of health services for senior citizens, including long-term care and rehabilitation.

Silver City Care Center serves individuals on both public (i.e. Medicare and Medicaid) and private healthcare plans, as well as private payments. Some of the services offered are the following:

- 24-hour nursing care
- Diabetes management
- Post-operative care
- Hospice care
- Respite care
- On-Site physician services
- Nutritional services

Grant County Community Health Council

The stated mission of the Grant County Community Health Council (GCCHC) is “to enhance the quality of life in Grant County, New Mexico, through assessment of needs, planning and prioritizing, and coordinating of efforts to meet those needs.”¹⁹ The GCCHC is a partnership of the Gila Regional Medical Center and Grant County, and is comprised of 30 members, including local health officials, policymakers, and representatives from educational institutions and other public agencies.

The stated objectives of the GCCHC include:

- Expand behavioral health programs and alcohol/substance abuse treatment options in the region
- Address community health and safety to lower the rate of unintentional injuries in the county
- Increase services and resources for survivors of interpersonal violence in the area
- Increase the number of resilient families in the community

New Mexico Department of Health

The New Mexico Department of Health operates a public health clinic in Silver City out of Grant County’s Silver Street Complex. The clinic offers the following services:

- Breast and cervical cancer screenings
- Children's medical services (children and youth with special health care needs)
- Family planning
- Harm reduction
- Health promotion
- Hepatitis counseling and testing
- Immunizations

¹⁹ <http://www.gcchc.org/>, accessed March 16, 2017

- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Tuberculosis treatment
- Women, Infants and Children (special supplemental nutrition program)

Fort Bayard Medical Center

Located on the grounds of historic site, the Fort Bayard Medical Center (FBMC) provides care for Alzheimer's patients and other individuals with behavioral and mental health challenges. FMBC is a licensed and certified hospital with 200 beds that serves as a long-term, intermediate, and skilled care facility. FMBC also provides nursing care, offers social services, therapeutic activity, laboratory services, and physical/occupational/speech language services.

The Fort Bayard State Veterans Home (FBSVH) is also located on campus. FBSVH is a 40-bed facility that specifically serves honorably discharged veterans and their families, as well as the families of veterans killed in serves. All facilities accept private and public (i.e. Medicare and Medicaid) health care.

Public Education

Described below are the public education services provided in Grant County. A small number of private schools also operate in the County but are not described here.

Silver Consolidated School District

Silver Consolidated School District is the largest public school district in Grant County, serving around 3,000 students in grades K-12 in Silver City and nearby communities. With around 500 teachers and support personnel employed by the district, Silver Consolidated Schools is one of the largest employers in the area.²⁰ The district manages the following schools:

TABLE 26 - SILVER CITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT²¹

Elementary School
G.W. Stout
Harrison Schmitt
Jose Barrios
Sixth Street
Cliff
Middle School
La Plata
High School
Silver High
Opportunity Vocational
Cliff High

²⁰ http://www.silverschools.org/about_us, accessed March 17, 2017

²¹ As of fall 2017, Sixth Street School will serve strictly as a Kindergarten facility.

Charter / Vocational Schools

There are two charter high schools that provide targeted curricula and are noteworthy for their attempts to address workforce needs in Grant County and southwest New Mexico.

Opportunity High School

Part of the Silver Consolidated School District, Opportunity High School is designed to allow students to learn a trade or vocational skills, or pursue college credit through Western New Mexico University while enrolled in high school. Skills training includes fields such as nursing, construction, early childhood development, electrical, finance, and welding. This approach is significant given the needs related to workforce training that were identified in the Comprehensive Plan development process. There were 79 students in the 2016-2017 school year.

Aldo Leopold Charter School

Aldo Leopold is a free tuition, independent charter school located in Silver City that focuses on outdoor experiential learning and emphasizes environment stewardship. The school's focus areas are a natural fit for the region, given the role that tourism and forestry play in the local economy. There were 162 students in the 2016-2017 school year.

Cobre Consolidated Schools

The Cobre Consolidated School District serves the towns of Bayard, Hurley, and Santa Clara, and communities in the Mimbres Valley. There were 1,297 students enrolled across six schools in the 2016-2017 school year. The district manages the following schools in this district are the following:

TABLE 27 - COBRE CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Elementary School
Bayard
Hurley
Central
San Lorenzo
Middle School
Snell
High School
Cobre

Western New Mexico University

Founded in 1893, Western New Mexico University is an accredited four-year public institution located in Silver City. WNMU has an enrollment of around 3,500 students and is known for its biology department and its School of Education and teacher training programs. In addition to more than 40 undergraduate degree programs, the school offers 12 Master's programs.

WNMU also provides a range of important services in Grant County, including vocational training, jobs skills instruction, and continuing education classes. The amenities associated

with WNMU contribute to the high quality of life in Grant County and are considered an amenity by many retirees. WNMU and the Silver City and Cobre School Systems increasingly provide opportunities for dual enrollment in which students receive credit for both high school and college. These programs can improve college graduation rates and allow for expedited career development.

Community Facilities

Libraries

Public libraries are operated by the Town of Silver City and the City of Bayard, though they are open to all Grant County residents. Grant County contributed annual funding to the operations of the Bayard Public Library. There are various services available at the local libraries, including literacy training and online access. Locations include:

Senior Centers

Grant County manages five senior centers that are for intended specifically for residents that are 60 years or older. The County senior centers offer a number of services, including employment opportunities, prepared meals, activities, transportation to and from appointments, and meals delivery.

Senior center locations include:

- Silver City Senior Center
- Santa Clara Senior Center
- Mimbres Senior Center
- Gila Senior Center
- Hurley Community Center

Community Centers

There are six community centers across Grant County that are open to residents of both incorporated and unincorporated areas, including Bataan Park and the Cliff/Gila Grant County Fairgrounds which are maintained by Grant County. These facilities serve as important gathering spaces and can be used for community meetings, senior programming and services events, and as emergency shelters. The community centers in the County are listed below:

- Bataan Park
- City of Bayard
- Cliff/Gila Grant County Fairgrounds
- Town of Hurley
- Santa Clara Armory
- Tyrone HOA

Convention Center

The Grant County Business and Conference Center (GCBCC) is owned by the County with management and operations conducted by a private firm working on contract with the Silver City Grant County Chamber of Commerce. The GCBCC became fully operational in

2017 and is utilized for conferences, conventions, and public and private event rentals. Improvements to the GCBCC were recently completed utilizing GO bond money. Stakeholders in Grant County believe the facility could be an attractive host for conferences serving New Mexico and Arizona markets and industry groups.

The Corre Caminos Terminal is also located next to the Conference Center. The site includes administrative services and provides a major pick-up and drop-off location for transit users.

Grant County Offices

The County manages three office buildings in Silver City that are used for official County business. The Silver Street Complex houses extension offices, the Department of Health services, and provides space for community events. The Grant County administrative offices, located



along US 180 on the eastern edge of Silver City, houses various departments as well as the Commission meeting chamber. The Grant County Court House, which has jurisdiction over civil and most criminal cases, is located in downtown Silver City.

Grant County is also utilizing these facilities to follow through on the pursuit of renewable energy, as discussed in several planning documents and studies, through the installation of solar panels on five Grant County-owned and operated buildings. Given the high costs of electricity for these facilities, the installation of solar panels is likely to provide meaningful long-term savings.

Emergency Services

Fire Protection

All fire services in unincorporated areas of Grant County are offered by volunteer fire departments. Grant County provides the capital facilities and resources necessary for the fire departments, and is regularly upgrading facilities through GO bond money. In 2017, the County completed the installation of a 40,000-gallon storage tank for the Faywood substation in Lower Mimbres Volunteer Fire Department and is building a new station on L S Mesa.

The Town of Silver City provides fire services for areas inside city limits and the ETJ boundary. Coverage is divided into two districts, each served by its own fire station. Figure 29 shows the coverage area for the Silver City Fire Department.

Volunteer Fire Departments in Grant County

- Cliff-Gila
- Fort Bayard
- Lower Mimbres
- Pinos Altos
- Sapillo Creek
- Tyrone
- Upper Mimbres
- Whiskey Creek

Public Safety

During the Plan development and outreach process, stakeholders identified safety and crime as areas of concern. An increase in crime in last few years, including drug-related crime, is a perceived *and* real problem that affects local quality of life. Grant County has the highest violent crime rate per capita in New Mexico. The community is also affected by the presence of methamphetamines and black tar heroin, while the high numbers of unregistered vehicles presents other economic and public safety issues.

Sheriff's Department

The Sheriff responds to emergency and non-emergency situations across unincorporated portions of Grant County. Operations are managed out of the central station in Silver City.

Police Departments

In addition to the County Sheriff, there are local Police Departments in Silver City, Bayard, Santa Clara, and Hurley that provide services within municipal limits. The New Mexico State Police also has jurisdiction in Grant County. Western New Mexico University operates a police department that provides safety services on campus only.

Detention Center

Grant County Detention Center is a county jail used to confine inmates for short periods awhile awaiting trial or processing. As inmates are staying for usually less than one year, the Detention Center has fewer amenities than a jail or prison. The Grant County Detention Center is located south of Silver City.

Additional Facilities and Services

DWI Program

In cooperation with NMDOT, Grant County operates a prevention program that is aimed at reducing incidences of driving while intoxicated (DWI). The program coordinates prevention and educational programs at elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels, as well as alcohol awareness classes. The program also provides support to the courts and law enforcement for arrest and sentence compliance for DWI offenders. The

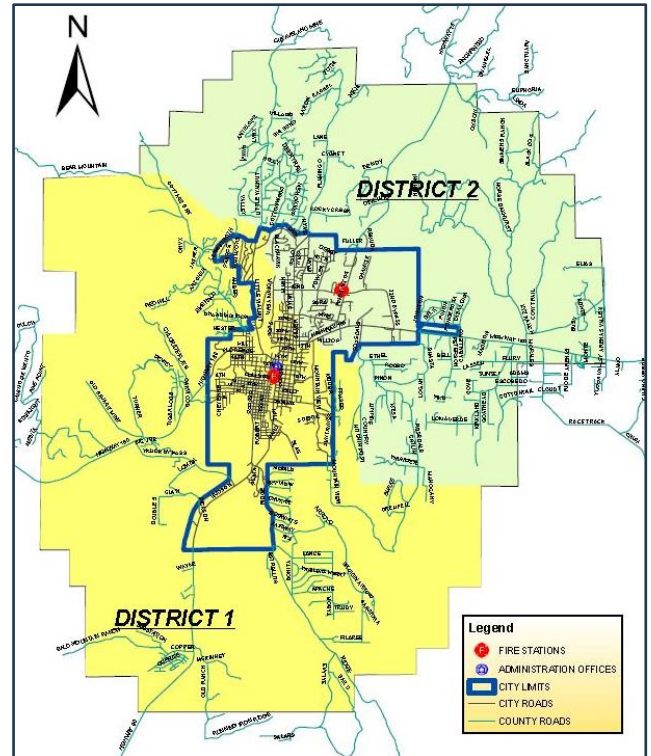


FIGURE 29 - SILVER CITY AREA FIRE DEPARTMENT COVERAGE

DWI program is noteworthy for utilizing SCRAMx Alcohol and Electronic Monitors and ignition interlock systems as alternatives to incarceration.²² The Corre Caminos public transit system also operates the Corre Cantinas program, which provides subsidized rides to and from bars and restaurants as a means of addressing the rate of DWIs.

Shooting Range

The County owns and operates a shooting range located outside of the Village of Santa Clara. The range is open Friday through Sunday.

Solid Waste and Recycling

The Southwest Solid Waste Authority (SWSWA) provides solid waste and recycling services across the four counties in southwest New Mexico. SWSWA maintains four waste transfer stations – located in Cliff/Gila, Hachita, Hurley, and Mimbres – and a regional landfill that serves much of the southwest part of New Mexico. Grant County contracts with SWSWA for services and sits on the SWSWA governing board.

Tu Casa

Set to open in 2018, Tu Casa is a substance abuse center that responds to an increase in drug abuse and suicides in the area. Hidalgo Medical Services is operating the center under contract with Grant County. Capital funding for Tu Casa comes from a combination of local resources (including revenue bond money), state capital outlay, and Economic Development Set-aside funds through the Community Development Block Grant program.

Other Grant County Facilities

- Old County Jail
- Ace Hardware Building
- Daycare facility
- Grant County Roads Department (see Transportation chapter)

²² SCRAMx is a method of testing blood alcohol content through the skin. The test is administered through the technology involuntarily every thirty minutes.

Discussion

Grant County provides an array of medical, social, and community services that appear to be heavily utilized and well-regarded by the general public. These services are critical for the long-term resilience of the community. Changing population dynamics, including an increasing share of senior citizens and a shrinking number of individuals in the workforce mean that the mission of community services may need to evolve over time. Services for senior citizens will be especially important, as will continued efforts to recruit medical professionals to the area.

Grant County must pursue creative funding strategies and maintain long-term commitments to regional needs. Tu Casa is an important example of the multiple streams of funding that are necessary to make services become a reality in Grant County. Partnerships in the provision of public services will also become increasingly important as funding becomes increasingly limited from the state and federal levels. See the Regional Coordination chapter for additional discussion.

Opportunities

Making the most of County resources includes the pursuit of targeted investments and the use of shared resources to meet evolving County needs. Opportunities include the co-location of facilities needed by Grant County and other public agencies. The increased use of revenue and general obligation bonds also presents an opportunity to improve public facilities, such parks and public spaces. The willingness of Grant County to utilize **creative funding strategies** will be critical as state and federal funding becomes increasingly constrained.

Grant County can continue to pursue the installation of solar panels and other **energy efficiency projects** as a means of demonstrating Grant County's commitment to policies that are financially and environmentally sustainable.

To complement the Comprehensive Plan and support sound investment of public dollars, Grant County is pursuing an **Asset Management Plan**. This effort can also connect decisions about public service provision to the transect approach described in the Land Use chapter of this document.

Goals and Action Items

Goal: Maintain and improve current County services.

- Action Item: Ensure all Grant County residents have access to educational, medical, and social services.
- Action Item: Seek opportunities for energy efficiency improvements.
- Action Item: Provide additional community facilities and social services for senior citizens through public and/or private investments.

Goal: Ensure safety and security for all Grant County residents.

- Action Item: Explore community policing opportunities.
- Action Item: Continue to invest in substance abuse and drug prevention programs, including DWI prevention and Tu Casa substance abuse center.
- Action Item: Work with private sector to expand telecommunications infrastructure to ensure residents can contact emergency responders and sheriff's officers via cell phone.

Goal: Utilize County-owned and operated resources to support economic development activities.

- Action Item: Engage in marketing efforts related to the Convention Center to attract trade groups and conferences to support local business and inject tourism revenues into the local economy.

Economic Development

This chapter evaluates existing economic and employment statistics, considers current revenue generators, and identifies potential industries or businesses that may be viable in Grant County. This effort summarizes and updates conclusions from recent economic development initiatives, and connects those opportunities to issues and challenges identified throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

Employment Totals

The economy of Grant County is dependent on a few major industries, primarily mining, healthcare, government, education, and retail. Despite high levels of volatility over time, mining continues to be the largest employer in Grant County, with about 1,450 combined jobs at the Freeport-McMoRan operated Chino and Tyrone Mines. Education is also a major employer with Western New Mexico University, Silver Consolidated Schools, Aldo Leopold Charter School and Cobre Consolidated Schools collectively employing over 1,300 individuals. Government and healthcare are major employment sectors as well, with the Gila National Forest and Gila Regional Medical Center the largest employers in those respective industries. Retail and accommodation and food services, which both support tourism in the area, are among the other industries with a major presence in Grant County.

Table 28 provides employment totals by industry. It is important to note that employment numbers are highly prone to variation among data sources. The numerical values provided here are taken from 2015 annual average data from the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, unless otherwise noted. Some industries have been adjusted based on local data and to correct for industry-level data that is suppressed by DWS.

An analysis of the workforce in Grant County indicates roughly 9,500 jobs located within the County, though there are about 11,500 employed residents.

TABLE 28 - EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY IN GRANT COUNTY

NAICS	Industry	Employees	Share
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting	250 ²³	3%
21	Mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction	1,700 ²⁴	18%
22	Utilities	58	1%
23	Construction	326	3%
31-33	Manufacturing	98	1%
42	Wholesale trade	69	1%
44-45	Retail trade	1,113	12%
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	59	1%
51	Information	76	1%
52	Finance and insurance	174	2%
53	Real Estate and rental and leasing	100	1%
54	Professional and technical services	128	1%
55	Management of companies and enterprises	N/A	
56	Administrative and waste services	144	2%
61	Educational services	1,400 ²⁵	15%
62	Health care and social assistance	940	10%
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	49	1%
72	Accommodation and food services	888	9%
81	Other services, except public admin	193	2%
92	Public Administration	1,689	18%
	Total	9,454	100%

Major Industries

Mining

Mining is at the historical roots of Grant County and continues to play an important role in the economy of Grant County today. Beginning in the 1860s, miners began extracting copper, silver, gold, and other minerals for commercial sale. The Chino Mine (also known as Santa Rita) began production in 1910 and is now one of the largest open pit mines in the world at 1,500 feet deep and 1.5 miles across. Copper extraction continues under the ownership of Freeport-McMoRan, a major mining operator and largest employer in Grant

²³ Estimate based on combined value of direct employment from most recent Census of Agriculture and DWS data.

²⁴ Estimate based on industry-level data from QCEW from 2014 (DWS data for 2015 is suppressed). Freeport-McMoRan identifies 1,450 jobs between the Chino and Tyrone Mines in its 2015 company impact report.

²⁵ 1350 education jobs are reallocated from "Government" estimate in DWS data to reflect most recent available staff levels from WNMU, Silver Consolidated School District, and Cobre Consolidated School District. DWS indicates 56 jobs in the Education sector for 2015. That total is added to the estimates for the three public institutions.

County. The other major mine in operation is in the community of Tyrone, where Freeport-McMoRan extracts low-grade copper ore from an open pit mine.

Employment at the mines fluctuates depending on commodities prices, with slightly over 1,450 employed at the Chino and Tyrone mines in 2015. In response to low commodity prices, production at the Tyrone Mine fell by 50% in 2015 from the previous year. The Chino Mine was out of operation altogether between 2009 and 2011. Various other mines across Grant County that operated throughout the 20th century closed in the 1990s. Copper ore processing, also conducted by Freeport-McMoRan, takes place in the City of Bayard.

Impact of Mining on the Grant County Economy

Mining plays an outsized role in the Grant County economy. The Economic Base Study prepared by the NMSU Arrowhead Center in 2015 examines the location quotient for mining in Grant County, which contrasts the share of employment in a particular industry in the local economy to the share of employment in that industry at a national level. According to the NMSU report, mining in Grant County had an LQ of 14.37 in 2013,

Per a Freeport-McMoRan company report performed by researchers at Arizona State University, the Tyrone and Chino mines “generated an estimated \$176.1 million in economic benefits for Grant County and approximately \$422.4 million for New Mexico in 2015.”²⁶ Direct impact stems from \$125.6 million in employee salaries and benefits, \$4.4 million in business taxes, and \$4.7 million in vendor purchases.

Agriculture

Farming and ranching represent a valuable component in the image and cultural identity of Grant County. Based on data from the most recent US Census of Agriculture, conducted in 2012, it is clear that agriculture continues to play a vital role in the economy, though there are indications that the nature of farming and ranching is evolving. From 2007 to 2012, the number of farms increased, though the average size of farms fell, along with the total acreage of farms in Grant County. Yet the smaller farms are also more productive, as the average income per farm increased by about 50% from 2007 to 2012.

Impact of Agriculture on the Grant County Economy

According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, almost half of the farms in Grant County produce sales of less than \$2,500 per year, and another 20% produce sales of \$2,500-\$10,000, indicating that most farms in Grant County are small-scale and are not the primary source of income for the owners. About 30% of the farms in Grant County are larger than 1,000 acres, and about 40% had hired labor, creating 218 direct jobs (not including farm owners).

²⁶ “Impact of Freeport-McMoRan on the Economy of Grant County and New Mexico - 2015,” http://www.fcx.com/operations/USA_NewMexico_Chino.htm

TABLE 29 - AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN GRANT COUNTY, 2007 AND 2012²⁷

	2007	2012	% Change
Number of Farms	327	407	24.5%
Total Land in Farms (acres)	1,213,349	1,064,487	-12.3%
Average Size of Farm (acres)	3,711	2,615	-29.5%
Market Value of Products Sold	\$7,818,000	\$14,543,000	86.0%
Average Sales Per Farm	\$23,908	\$35,732	49.5%

Tourism

Tourism supports a range of industries and provides important supplemental revenue to local businesses and restaurants. Among the attractions are the charm of downtown district of Silver City, nearby mining history, hiking and outdoor recreation, and historical sites, including the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument and Fort Bayard. Grant County is also taking advantage of the appeal of Silver City and the surrounding landscape to attract conferences and events to the new Grant County Convention Center.

Impact of Tourism on the Grant County Economy

Tourism contributes tens of millions of dollars each year to the economy. Table 2 contains annual visitor spending in Grant County by sector, and demonstrates a significant increase in overall visitor spending from 2014 to 2015.

TABLE 30 - VISITOR SPENDING²⁸

Visitor Spending (Millions)								
Year	Lodging	Food & Beverage	Retail	Recreation	Transport	Second Homes	Total	Growth Rate
2015	\$10.9	\$11.5	\$10.6	\$4.6	\$7.6	\$8.9	\$54.1	13.3%
2014	\$9.7	\$10.4	\$8.7	\$4.0	\$6.4	\$8.6	\$47.8	0.7%
2013	\$9.6	\$10.8	\$8.4	\$4.5	\$6.4	\$7.7	\$47.5	-1.1%
2012	\$9.9	\$11.2	\$8.6	\$4.5	\$6.8	\$6.9	\$48.0	2.6%
2011	\$10.1	\$11.5	\$8.3	\$4.2	\$6.5	\$6.2	\$46.8	

Tourism

Outdoor Recreation

The Gila National Forest and the surrounding area are frequently visited by hikers, campers, hunters, and other outdoor enthusiasts. There are hundreds of miles of hiking trails in the Gila National Forest, including the Continental Divide trail, which passes

Tourism Marketing

The tourism industry is supported by efforts to market the area and attract visitors. The Silver City marketing page (www.visitsilvercity.org) contains many attractions and services that are located in rural parts of Grant County. The webpage for the Silver City Grant County Chamber of Commerce (www.silvercity.org) stresses the businesses, events, and opportunities across both the Town and the County.

²⁷ Source: US Census of Agriculture, 2007 and 2012

²⁸ "The Economic Impact of Tourism in New Mexico, 2015 Analysis," Tourism Economics, An Oxford Economics Company. July 2016

through Silver City. Backcountry hiking in the Gila Wilderness Area is considered among the best in the country and attracts visitors from across the country.²⁹ A number of hot springs are also located throughout the Wilderness Areas and across Grant County. Within the Gila National Forest lie three National Wilderness Areas – Gila, Aldo Leopold, and Blue Range – which are preserved in their natural condition to the greatest extent possible. The Silver City area serves as a base for much of the activity in the region.

Birding

The Gila National Forest is recognized as an attractive place for birders. The USFS maintains a birding checklist for the Gila National Forest that contains 166 species known to breed in the area, 114 other species that frequent the area, and 57 species considered to be “casual” visitors. Stakeholders identified the marketing of birding opportunities in the area as a tourism niche that could be expanded upon. The best birding in the area can be found in the Pinos Altos Mountain region, as well as the Gila Cliff Dwelling National Monument area, Lake Roberts, Little Walnut Picnic Area, and Bear Mountain.

Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument

The Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument preserves alcove homes occupied in the 13th and 14th centuries by the Mimbres people of the Mogollon culture. Though technically located outside of Grant County, one of only two access routes to the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument is via NM 15 through Pinos Altos, and many visitors stay in the Silver City area prior to visiting the site. The site is located 44 miles north of Silver City.

Trail of the Mountain Spirits National Scenic Byway

Covering 95 miles of mountain state roads through the Gila National Forest, the Trail of the Mountain Spirits National Scenic Byway crosses the Continental Divide and links Gila Cliff Dwellings, hot springs, mining sites, Fort Bayard, and other attractions. The byway is a popular route among cycling enthusiasts and is utilized during the annual Tour of the Gila.

Tour of the Gila

The Tour of the Gila draws competitive cyclists from around the world for a five-stage race that advertises itself as destination race with “highly technical descents, an out-and-back time trial that is often held in gusty winds, 9,000 feet of climbing, beautiful mountain scenery, and a high-speed criterium in downtown Silver City.”³⁰ The Tour began in 1987 and takes place each April.

Economic Development Plans and Studies

Grant County Economic Development Master Plan

The Grant County Economic Development Master Plan is a “critical analysis of assets and challenges in Grant County to pinpoint its competitive strengths, recognize and correct

²⁹ <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/12/travel/escapes/12american.html>

³⁰ <http://tourofthegila.com/>. Accessed April 8, 2017.

weaknesses, and more narrowly define its target audiences for marketing.”³¹ The Plan was completed in three phases that build upon one another: Market Assessment, Target Industry Analysis, and Strategic Plan.

The **Market Assessment** investigates existing economic conditions in Grant County to inform the Target Industry Analysis and Strategic Plan. The Market Analysis is comprised of demographic, economic, and geographic research, and identifies strengths and weaknesses in the county regarding population trends, the drivers of economic growth, and future needs to help support the local economy, among other topics. Among the findings is that Grant County is unusual in the high concentration of jobs in the natural resource and mining industries. However, the assessment notes that these are industries are shrinking in jobs nationally over time. Among its strongest assets, Grant County offer opportunities for renewable energy production including geothermal and wind, with solar power the most promising due to the high levels of concentrating solar activity. The analysis notes that “Grant County is in need of a significant and effective workforce-development resource,” and that the local workforce often cannot meet the needs demanded by local industries.³²

The **Target Industry Analysis** examines key industries and economic development opportunities that could be pursued in the future in Grant County. The analysis includes site selection requirements associated with five key industries: Natural Resources & Mining, Renewable Energy, Regional Goods & Services, Tourism & Recreation, and Small Business/ Entrepreneurship. Each of these industries currently exist to at least some degree in Grant County. The Target Industry Analysis suggests that there are opportunities to nurture supporting industries or to build off existing infrastructure and expand the role these industries play in the local economy.

The **Strategic Plan** offers recommendations to help support and improve economic opportunities across Grant County, particularly related to the five target industries identified. In effect, the Plan discusses where the County’s economy can go in the future. The Plan identifies eight goals that are each supported by a series of recommendations. The Plan goals are as follows:

- a. Clarify and formalize the roles and responsibilities of Economic Development partners in Grant County.
- b. Prepare real estate options and infrastructure to support economic development goals and Target Industries.
- c. Ensure that Grant County’s existing workforce meets the needs of the employers and supports Target Industries as well as the broader Economic Development goals.

³¹ Grant County Economic Development Master Plan, Angelou Economics, 2012, pg. 2

³² Grant County Economic Development Master Plan: Market Assessment, Angelou Economics, 2012, p. 7

- d. Leverage small business resources and assets to support entrepreneurship, retention, and expansion of existing businesses, and the attraction of new businesses.
- e. Strengthen Target Industry support by pursuing sector-specific strategies.
- f. Fully capitalize on the unique opportunities provided by Western New Mexico University.
- g. Position Grant County to develop stronger international ties and increase focus on preparedness for international business opportunities.
- h. Develop a clearly identifiable, marketable, and easily communicated brand for Grant County.

Major recommendations build upon the assets that already exist. For example, there are several workforce training opportunities in place, but the Strategic Plan suggests they should be targeted to achieve the maximum benefit. Priority strategies include workforce development and partnerships with WNMU, encouraging support services and industries that complement key industries, small business development support, cohesive branding and marketing efforts for Silver City and Grant County that build a strong sense of what the region has to offer, and targeted infrastructure investments.

2015-2020 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

As the designated Economic Development District for the region, the Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments must produce a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) every five years that considers strategies for regional economic development across the counties of Catron, Grant, Hidalgo, and Luna. In so doing, the CEDS provides on-going planning-level analysis to bring stakeholders together around economic development issues and ensure that local efforts are well-integrated and consistent with regional objectives.

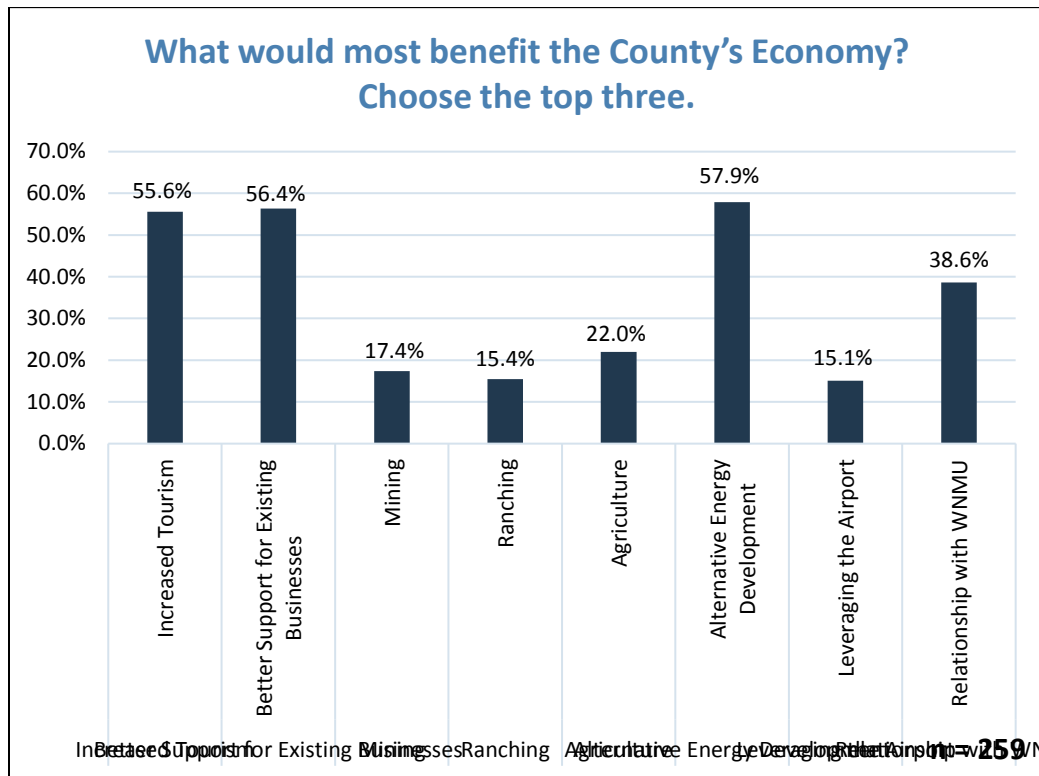
Since it is regional in nature, the CEDS provides less detail than the Grant County Economic Development Master Plan. However, the document is updated regularly and provides an opportunity to ensure that specific strategies are still relevant. The CEDS contains a series of regional strategies related to agriculture and local foods; arts, film, and entertainment; energy; health and social services; hospitality, tourism, and recreation; manufacturing and logistics; natural resources and mining; and small business and entrepreneurship. Themes include support for local businesses and industries and quality of life improvements that make southwest New Mexico a desirable place to live.

Public Feedback

The questionnaire revealed a consistent desire among Grant County residents to support small business and continue to diversify the economy. Residents view alternative energy development as the greatest priority, followed by support for local businesses and increased tourism. Residents also view the relationship with Western New Mexico University as a crucial opportunity for economic sustainability in the County.

Q1: "What would most benefit the County's economy? Choose the top three."

FIGURE 30 - QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Noteworthy responses

- “Alt energy is marketable to businesses who...have an interest in caring for the environment. That attitude/growth could then be marketed to tourists who care and bring in businesses with that attitude.”
- “Silver could be a mecca for recreational tourism if we'd get serious about it and look forward.”

Main Street Initiatives

Silver City MainStreet

The Silver City MainStreet Project is a state and nationally-certified program that supports local businesses in the Downtown area. The program was established in 1985 and is funded jointly by the Town of Silver City and Grant County. Main Street projects demonstrate that a vibrant downtown district can not only bring outside visitors to the area, but provide a quality of life amenity that benefits residents across Grant County. Silver City Main Street Project sponsors and organizes events to attract visitors and area residents to the Downtown area and conducts collective marketing efforts.

Recent capital projects include façade improvements, improvements to the Silver City Visitor's Center, and development of a Master plan for Main Street Plaza. Downtown Silver City is also a designated Metropolitan Redevelopment Area, which enable public private partnerships. Downtown Silver City is zoned for mixed-use activities that encourage live/work space.

Frontier Communities

The New Mexico State Legislature created the Frontier Communities Initiative in 2013 as an initial step toward full recognition as a Main Street Community. The Frontier Communities Initiative is coordinated through New Mexico MainStreet Community Program, and is intended to provide rural economic development assistance to communities under 7,500 in population.

The Village of Santa Clara and the Town of Hurley are both designated as Frontier Communities. Through the Frontier Communities Program, the Village of Santa Clara has considered or pursued a number of capital projects, including improvements to the cemetery and a Downtown Splash Park. There have also been proposals in the state legislature to incorporate the Ft Bayard area into Village limits. Grant County can continue to support the Village of Santa Clara as it develops and pursues support from the New Mexico Main Street Community Program.

The Town of Hurley leveraged its status to obtain Colonias funding to undertake streetscape improvements along Cortez Ave. The Town has also pursued façade restoration and downtown revitalization programs.

Fort Bayard Historic Site

Although the Fort Bayard Historic Site is open to visitors and has touristic appeal, the campus is under-utilized and expensive to maintain. Various efforts have been made to sell the site to private developers or for local jurisdictions to assume ownership. The Village of Santa Clara is seeking legislative action for the transfer of the Fort Bayard site, which is currently owned by the New Mexico General Services Department (the National Cemetery is owned by the Veterans Administration).

Private funding recently enabled the completion of a Fort Bayard Business Plan that identifies desired uses of the site and considers the cost of infrastructure improvements. Local governments and agencies across Grant County are in the process of signing a memorandum of understanding in support of the Village of Santa Clara's efforts to preserve and enhance the site, as well as the strategies and recommendations contained in the Business Plan.

Among the proposals for the site include hosting cultural events, a museum dedicated to the Buffalo Soldiers, and improved ballfields for use by WNMU. Rehabilitated buildings could be rented out to local businesses and government agencies. The State of New Mexico in partnership with the Village of Santa Clara recently welcomed a group of AmeriCorps volunteers to participate in clean-up and restoration efforts on site.

Silver City Main Street engages in a four-step process to support the Downtown district:

- 1) Organization, including internal capacity building and community involvement;**
- 2) Design, through rehabilitation of historic buildings and general urban design improvements;**
- 3) Promotion, including events and marketing;**
- 4) Economic positioning, through business development and recruiting efforts.**

Given the uncertainty over the site, Grant County should consider, though not limit itself, to the recommendations of the Business Plan. Whatever final arrangement is pursued, it will be important for Grant County to play a long-term supporting role on the rehabilitation of Fort Bayard. The campus presents a unique opportunity to transform a historic site into a vibrant public space that adds to the menu of touristic opportunities in the area and provides valuable space and amenities for local residents.

Opportunities

Grant County faces challenges related to the overall economic climate in the state of New Mexico, long-term demographic shifts that are likely to affect the local workforce, and volatility (and long-term uncertainty) related to traditional industries. Fortunately, policymakers and stakeholders can look to build upon recent economic development initiatives and studies.

Grant County has built-in opportunities not shared by many communities across the state. Among Grant County's assets are a desirable climate, high quality of life, renewable energy potential, and natural and cultural attractions that drive tourism and visitor spending. Local actions can be taken to leverage these and other assets, and help diversify the local economy, and successful programs already in place, such as the Silver City MainStreet Project should continue to be supported.

Stakeholders and previous studies identified the need to increase **local business support services**. According to the Grant County Economic Development Master Plan:

“(the) entrepreneurial support system ranked among the lowest of 19 business location factors rated by respondents of a business survey conducted... Additionally, focus group participants noted multiple times the lack of an entrepreneurial support system locally as well as the lack of awareness by residents of the entrepreneurial opportunities that exist.”

WNMU operates a small business support center that provides business training and marketing services, though the center itself could benefit from additional funding and support from Grant County.

Support for local businesses and industries can also be provided through **workforce training programs**. WNMU houses a Small Business Development Center that provides business management and marketing training courses, and a small number of programs and partnerships exist with WNMU and local schools that allow for students to receive college credit and trade-specific skills. A soft skills committee has also been formed to promote professionalism among young adults and ensure local residents are ready to enter the job market. These programs can be expanded and customized to support growing industries.

Analysis shows that southwest New Mexico is among the locations with the greatest **renewable energy** generation potential in the United States. According to the Market Study completed as part of the Grant County Economic Development Master Plan, “Solar farms and solar-panel manufacturing offer tremendous potential to the Grant County area

given the proximity to large areas of undeveloped land with some of the highest solar photovoltaic energy potential in the U.S.” (65).³³

To take advantage of this opportunity, Grant County can seek to implement the recommendations that emerged from the Southwest New Mexico Energy & Grant Jobs Task Force’s *Regional Strategic Plan for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy* (EERE). The EERE, produced in 2013, contains a series of recommendations and action items that would both improve efficiency to reduce demand and spur development of renewable energy projects. Recommendations include a regional office on clean energy development and sustainability, supporting installation of renewable energy projects by identifying required infrastructure and potential sites, and provide workforce training opportunities to align the skills of local workers with the needs of the renewable energy industry. A potential opportunity also lies in the SunZia Transmission Line, which will connect central New Mexico with markets in Arizona and California and will pass through southern Grant County. Construction is expected to begin in 2018, with energy production beginning in 2020.

Recent energy projects in Luna County are instructive in the types of private sector activity that could take place in Grant County.

- Macho Springs Wind Farm was completed in 2011 and is managed by Capital Power. The wind farm contains 28 turbines across 1,800 acres, and provides enough energy to power 14,000 households.
- Macho Springs Solar Farm is managed by El Paso Electric and powers 19,500 homes on average annually. The solar farm is located on about 600 acres of land and contains 704,160 modules.

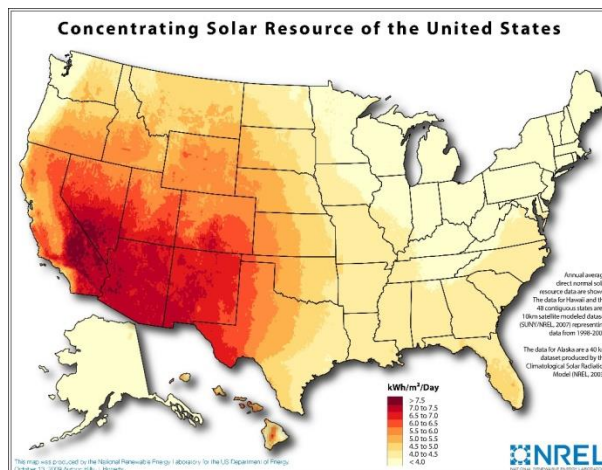


FIGURE 31 - SOLAR RESOURCE GENERATION POTENTIAL³⁴

This concept is supported by Grant County, as demonstrated by the potential installation of solar panels on four Grant County-owned and operated buildings. Grant County can take an active role by working with the private sector on the installation of transmission lines to make these projects feasible.

Access to broadband internet connections and skills in digital media are important elements of economic development in rural areas. There is currently INET **broadband infrastructure** across much of Grant County, but it is mostly available for institutions (local government, public schools, WNMU). A larger effort could be undertaken to

³³ Grant County Economic Development Master Plan: Market Assessment, Angelou Economics, 2012, p. 65

³⁴ Image source: National Renewable Energy Lab, <http://www.nrel.gov/gis/solar.html>

review the condition of the fiber and determine if the system could be expanded for residential and commercial purposes across the County. To support skills development, the SWNMCOG commissioned a Digital Literacy Study in 2014 as part of the New Mexico Broadband Program. The study identifies a range of opportunities and recommendations to improve the skills required for competing in the 21st century economy. Suggestions generally focus around online skills training and connecting training programs to local industries and employment opportunities.

Grant County is in a fortuitous situation as a rural county with a relatively well-utilized airport with commercial passenger service. Grant County can continue to encourage aviation-related businesses and incentivize new development at the **Grant County Airport** through improved infrastructure around the airport and transportation investments to make the facility easier to access.

As traditional industries at the heart of community identity, Grant County can continue to support **agriculture and ranching** activities. Particular roles the County can play include facilitating communication among federal and state land management agencies and the Grant County ranching community. Grant County can also work with local jurisdictions, business associations, and restaurants to promote the use of local ingredients and produce.

There are opportunities to build on the recent growth in tourism and continue to attract visitors and outside dollars to the region. Economic development studies across southwest New Mexico regularly cite the benefits of a **regional marketing campaign**, and the value in promoting new and niche forms of tourism, such as birding, in addition to the more conventional outdoor recreational activities for which the area is known. It is important for stakeholders and policymakers to recognize that economic development initiatives are often regional in nature and that new projects and employment opportunities benefit the region as a whole, regardless of their location.

Stakeholders contend that marketing and recruitment efforts are most likely to be successful if they target **small to medium-scale manufacturing**, rather than industrial park-style development. This approach is partly due to limited transportation access and workforce challenges, which make attracting large-scale employers and investments unlikely. It is reasonable and more realistic to attract small-scale and boutique manufacturers (e.g. 5-10 employees). The St. Claire's candy company, which is relocating its operations from Colorado to Santa Clara, aided by a LEDA grant, is an important example of economic development at this scale. There is also potential to attract manufacturers of outdoor recreational equipment as many small companies seek environments that are consistent with their product and image. The Gila Wilderness and National Forest are logical testing grounds for such products.

Grant County may also consider **financial incentives** for new business creation or for adding employment. Options include short-term incentives, such as freezing taxes at current rates, or other tax credits or bonuses. If tax incentives are to be pursued, strong language regarding clawbacks should be provided.

Goals and Action Items

Goal: Pursue economic development activities at the regional level.

- Action Item: Participate in economic development forums and initiatives through the SWNMCOG and other organizations.
- Action Item: Engage in shared tourism and marketing efforts for southwest New Mexico.
- Action Item: Engage in collective business recruitment activities to encourage new firms and industries to locate to Grant County, including the incorporated areas.

Goal: Leverage the presence of the Grant County Airport to attract additional businesses and visitors to the region.

- Action Item: Encourage aviation-related businesses to locate to the Grant County Airport.
- Action Item: Consider shuttle services or other transportation investments to make the airport easier to access.

Goal: Encourage growth in the renewable energy industry.

- Action Item: Promote Grant County as a suitable site for solar and wind farms.
- Action Item: Work with the State of New Mexico and energy producers on the identification of potential transmission lines and suitable locations for wind and solar energy generation.
- Action Item: Implement strategies and recommendations contained in the Regional Strategic Plan for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.
- Action Item: Promote the New Mexico Energy Smart weatherization program that finances household energy efficiency upgrades.

Goal: Support and enhance workforce training opportunities in the region.

- Action Item: Conduct outreach to local agencies, businesses, and potential growth industries to determine workforce training needs.
- Action Item: Coordinate with WNMU and local schools to develop programs that ensure residents can meet the needs of local employers.
- Action Item: Pursue recommendations in the Digital Literacy Study regarding online skills training.

Goal: Promote the agriculture and ranching industries.

- Action Item: Promote local food at area restaurants and grocery stores to help producers find additional markets.
- Action Item: Facilitate communication between USFS and ranchers on grazing allotments and resource management planning.

Goal: Develop the Fort Bayard Historic Site into a community gathering space, tourist destination, and viable commercial space.

- Action Item: Coordinate with the Village of Santa Clara, other local governments, and the State of New Mexico on site development and transfer of ownership options.
- Action Item: Work with SWNMCOG and the Silver City-Grant County Chamber of Commerce to promote the site to potential tenants.
- Action Item: Implement the Fort Bayard Business Plan.
- Action Item: Support community events and festivals at the site.

Goal: Support local businesses across Grant County.

- Action Item: Work with WNMU and the Small Business Resource Center to promote training programs and ensure businesses are aware of available services.
- Action Item: Promote tourism opportunities and encourage visitor spending at Grant County businesses.

Funding

Competition for funding at the state and federal level is increasingly challenging. It is therefore critical for Grant County to leverage its existing assets and to fund creative ways to finance local investments, including exploring both public and private financing options. The ability to utilize revenue and general obligation (GO) bonds to finance improvements gives Grant County increased flexibility in project selection, and greater capacity to finance capital-intensive projects. This chapter describes the traditional funding sources employed by the County, as well as potential funding opportunities and resources that could be utilized to support Grant County initiatives.

Local Funding Sources

The Grant County general fund, which covers a range of services and infrastructure improvements, is primarily supported by a combination of property tax and gross receipts tax revenue. Additional sources of revenue include apportionments from the State of New Mexico. Capital outlays from the state legislature also fund programs and infrastructure projects, though the amount of funding and the projects those funds support vary from year to year.

Infrastructure Capital Improvement Program

Grant County maintains an Infrastructure Capital Improvement Program (ICIP) to help the county prioritize their needs and to assist in securing funding for County-owned buildings and infrastructure. The ICIP is intended to be a planning rather than a funding tool; the top priorities are prioritized for local funding, submitted for state capital outlay funding, and other state and federal funding opportunities. The ICIP development process is driven by Grant County staff and is open to public feedback, though historically there has been limited public engagement in the project decision-making process.

State Grant Funding Sources

Grant County funds projects via state grant funding. Common sources include Community Development Block Grants, The New Mexico Department of Transportation local government road funds, New Mexico Finance Authority funds, capital outlay, and Colonias Infrastructure Funding.

Community Development Block Grant

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) are administered at the state-level by the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration Local Government Division with funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. CDBG may be utilized for a range of projects that include infrastructure, public facilities, housing, planning, emergency, Colonias, and economic development. CDBG projects must meet one of three national objectives:

1. Benefit low and moderate income persons
2. Elimination of slum and blight,
3. Meet an urgent need.

Eligible projects include community infrastructure such as water and wastewater systems, roads, and other municipal utilities and infrastructure; housing development; preservation of historic buildings and housing rehabilitation; acquisition of public facilities; economic development initiatives; and the development of planning documents.

Grant County recently obtained funding through a CDBG grant under the Economic Development set-aside to support the completion of the Tu Casa substance abuse center. See the Capital Facilities and Community Services chapter for more information.

Colonias Infrastructure Fund

The Colonias Infrastructure Act, administered by the NMFA, was created to ensure adequate infrastructure in Colonias communities, including water and wastewater facilities, flood and drainage control, street projects, solid waste, and housing. Grant County has utilized Colonias funding recently for road construction, drainage improvements, and installing ADA-compliant sidewalks. Almost \$13 million in funds were distributed across New Mexico in 2016, including projects in the Town of Silver City and the Town of Hurley. Since 2012, 28 projects worth more than \$13 million have been awarded to communities across Grant County.

Colonias Infrastructure Fund awards are determined by the Colonias Infrastructure Board, which evaluates proposals based on need, community impact, urgent need and project readiness. Successful applications demonstrate how a project will provide concrete public health, safety, and economic welfare benefits to Colonias residents. Important to note is that Grant County can complement housing-related awards as Colonias funds can be used to install utilities and road connections to affordable housing projects.

The Colonias Infrastructure Board also encourages regional collaboration on projects, particularly for water and wastewater systems-related initiatives. See the Community Background chapter for more information of Colonias communities in Grant County.

Funding Opportunities

The funding ideas below are presented by initiative category, though some funding sources could be targeted for multiple programs. The information is provided in alphabetical order by initiative and does not necessarily reflect importance, dollar value, or the likelihood of being awarded funding.

Capital Facilities

Water and Wastewater System improvements

Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) – New Mexico Environment Department

The CWSRF program was established in 1986 under the Wastewater Facility Construction Loan Act and the Federal Clean Water Act. The program provides low-interest loans to local communities for infrastructure improvement projects, including a wide range of wastewater or storm water drainage projects that protect surface and ground water. Funds may also be used for solid waste and septic tank installations.

<https://www.env.nm.gov/cpb/CWSRFPages.htm>

US Department of Agriculture Water and Wastewater Programs

US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Rural Development provides funding and technical assistance programs to help rural communities with less than 10,000 residents develop safe and affordable water and wastewater systems. The program provides loans, guaranteed loans, and grants for water, sewer, storm water, and solid waste disposal facilities. The US Department of Agriculture also provides funding for Colonias, which in this case are defined as economically-distressed neighborhoods or communities located within 150 miles of the USA-Mexico border. Potential funding opportunities include water, wastewater, planning, renewable energy, and social services.

http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/wastewater/septic/usda_index.cfm

USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) Program

Under the REDLG program, the USDA provides grant funds to local utility organizations to establish revolving loan funds. Since Grant County is not a utility provider, some work would be necessary to discover if there is an eligible (and willing) local non-profit utility to serve as a conduit for this type of funding. These loans and grants are coordinated through state offices of the USDA Rural Development Division.

http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_redlg.html

USDA Community Facilities Program

Essential community facilities, including fire and police stations, may be developed in rural areas through the USDA Community Facilities Program. Funding options include low-interest loans, grants, or a combination thereof. Eligible communities include incorporated and unincorporated communities with populations under 20,000, with priority given to communities with median household incomes below 80% of the state non-metropolitan household income level.

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>

WaterTrust Board Fund – New Mexico Finance Authority (NMFA)

The Water Trust Board Fund is administered by the NMFA and the Water Trust Board, a diverse 16-member Board that recommends projects for funding to the Legislature. There are five approved project categories: (1) water conservation or reuse, (2) flood prevention, (3) endangered species act (ESA) collaborative efforts, (4) water storage, conveyance and delivery infrastructure improvements, and (5) watershed restoration and management initiatives. There is an annual submittal process for project evaluation. Inclusion of particular needs or projects in a Comprehensive Plan is an important evaluation criterion.

<http://www.nmfa.net/governance/water-trust-board/>

Local Government Planning Fund - New Mexico Finance Administration (NMFA)

New Mexico Finance Authority (NMFA) provides support to local communities for planning efforts, including Comprehensive Plans, infrastructure plans, and energy

efficiency audits, as well as water and wastewater planning efforts. Grant County may pursue planning funds to complement this Comprehensive Plan, or could support applications by small incorporated communities across the County. Awards are made on a rolling basis, and allocations are based on existing financial conditions within each community. Communities can receive up to \$100,000 a year but can only apply for projects in \$50,000 increments.

<http://www.nmfa.net/financing/planning-grants/about-planning-grants/>

Community Development

US Department of Agriculture: At-Risk Youth

The US Department of Agriculture's Children, Youth and Families At-Risk program (CYFR) funds community-based programs through a Cooperative Extension Service (CES). CES in New Mexico offers resources for communities for youth development initiatives related to energy and water, farming and ranching, and health and family well-being. CYFR awards funding up to \$175,000 and annually reaches approximately 30,000 individuals in high-risk environments. The grant is especially important for rural communities due to the program's emphasis on youth development and agriculture.

<http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/rural-after-school-programs-for-at-risk-youth-and-their-families>

<http://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/children-youth-and-families-risk-cyfar-sustainable-community-projects>

Economic Development

Tourism: Cooperative Marketing Grant Program

The Cooperative Marketing Grant Program, sponsored by the NM Tourism Department, is available for non-profit, tourism-related organizations and local and tribal governments, such as Grant County. The funds can assist with marketing costs associated with tourism-related initiatives, and are specifically aimed at making New Mexico the primary destination for adventure travelers. Grants are reimbursement-based, and allocated in amounts of \$3,000, \$10,000, and \$40,000. Cooperative Marketing Grants are awarded through an annual application process.

<http://nmtourism.org/coop-marketing/>

Tourism: Event Sponsorship Grants

The NM Tourism Department offers Event Sponsorship Grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$40,000 depending on the size of the event and the needs of the local community.

<http://nmtourism.org/partnership-opportunities/event-sponsorship/event-sponsorship-online-grant-application-tips-faq/>

Tourism: New Mexico Clean and Beautiful

Through its New Mexico Clean and Beautiful initiative, the New Mexico Tourism Department partners with national non-profit Keep America Beautiful to offer grants to

support beautification, litter reduction, recycling initiatives, and education programs. The program granted \$700,000 in FY 2016; all grants must be met by private and/or public entities with a 25% local match.

<http://nmtourism.org/partnership-opportunities/clean-and-beautiful/>

Economic Development Administration (EDA)

The EDA provides a range of funding on an annual basis for rural areas for technical assistance and to support construction and economic development initiatives. The funds are designed to leverage existing local/regional money and to advance economic prosperity in distressed communities. The strongest applications and programs may come from cooperative initiatives among multiple agencies and facilitated through SWNMCOG.

<http://www.eda.gov/funding-opportunities/>

Local Economic Development Act (LEDA)

The LEDA program is the capital outlay-supported “closing fund” for the state of New Mexico. Communities that have passed a local LEDA Act, including Grant County, can apply for state funding to support infrastructure projects, economic development efforts (i.e. job creation), and retail opportunities. Passing a local LEDA Act and becoming eligible for state funding requires a local economic development ordinance and a strategic economic development plan. See the Economic Development chapter for more information on related planning efforts.

In particular, the LEDA program gives local jurisdictions the ability to participate in economic development process and support applications to the State of New Mexico for assistance, including the sales of bonds to finance development efforts that support businesses. In addition to supporting job creation opportunities, LEDA funds can be used to support capital purchases and infrastructure improvement projects. Specifically, this means municipalities can purchase, lease, grant, construct or reconstruct buildings or infrastructure; acquire or convey land; provide direct loans or loan guarantees for land, buildings or infrastructure; and provide public works essential to location and expansion of businesses. The following are among the criteria that must be addressed for a proposal to receive LEDA funding:

- Attract high quality, sustainable jobs
- Address the need of small businesses and agricultural activity
- Strengthen small business activity
- Assure cultural preservation of historic areas
- Provide jobs, livable wages and employment opportunities

Grant County can give priority to qualifying projects that encourage the expansion or relocation of existing businesses, assist business start-ups, create new jobs, assist economic clusters, and/or add value to the knowledge of the local labor force.

Recent developments projects in Grant County have received funding through LEDA, including the expansion of the Little Toad Creek Brewery and Distillery and the St. Clair’s

Chocolate Factory. Grant County staff provided support for these businesses in the application process. See the Economic Development chapter for more information.

<http://gonm.biz/community-development/local-economic-development-act/>

Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG) Program – US Department of Agriculture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides grants typically ranging from \$10,000 to \$500,000 – with an emphasis on smaller projects – to public entities and private non-profit organizations for rural projects that finance and facilitate development of small and emerging rural businesses. While grants are often applied to physical assets, such as land acquisition, building construction, and equipment, other possibilities include establishing revolving loan funds for startups and working capital, rural transportation improvement, and project planning. Small and emerging businesses that are eligible for RBEG funds employ 50 or fewer employees and have less than \$1 million annual revenue.

http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/bcp_rbeg.html

Historic Preservation

Grant County can act in a supporting capacity for historic preservation efforts by working with private and non-profit groups to document and historic properties.

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program

The National Park Service administers a 20% tax credit in partnership with the Internal Revenue Service and with State Historic Preservation Offices for the rehabilitation of privately-owned historic properties such as offices, rental housing, and retail stores. Abandoned or under-used schools, warehouses, factories, churches, retail stores, apartments, hotels, houses, and offices in many cities have been restored to life in a manner that retains their historic character. The Preservation Tax Incentives can help to create moderate and low-income housing in historic buildings.

National Trust for Historic Preservation Programs

Grants from National Trust for Historic Preservation help stimulate public discussion on priorities related to local preservation efforts. These programs enable local groups to introduce the public to preservation concepts and techniques, gain the technical expertise needed for individual projects, and encourage financial participation by the private sector. Grants generally start at \$2,500 and range up to \$5,000.

<http://www.preservationnation.org/resources/find-funding/preservation-funds-guidelines-eligibility.html>

Housing

New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority Housing Programs

The New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) offers a variety of assistance programs for specialized housing needs, including emergency housing and assistance for homeless populations, housing rehabilitation for low-income households, weatherization

and energy efficiency improvements, and housing for individuals with AIDS, physical disabilities, or mental health issues.

MFA also offers tax credit programs for private developments that offer affordable housing opportunities. While these programs are meant to encourage private sector-driven housing initiatives, Grant County can offer letters of support coordinate on appropriate locations for affordable housing developments. Jurisdictions with an Affordable Housing Plan, such as Silver City, can further support these efforts by donating land to private developers for affordable housing purposes.

Homeless Housing Programs

Utilizing HUD funding, the MFA offers multiple programs targeted at serving homeless populations. The Emergency Homeless Assistance Program provides funding to non-profits and local jurisdictions for the provision of homeless shelters. The Continuum of Care Performance program also utilizes HUD funding for homelessness prevention and assistance programs across the state of New Mexico.

http://www.housingnm.org/community_development/emergency-homeless-assistance-program-ehap

HOME Investment Partnership Programs

The HOME Investment Partnership Programs (HOME) are funded by HUD and administered in New Mexico by the Mortgage Finance Authority. In New Mexico, this takes the form of the House by House Reservation Rehabilitation Program, which provides assistance to low-income homeowners who are unable to fund home repairs or renovations needed to bring the home up to code. The Southwestern Regional Housing and Community Development Corporation, which serves Grant County and other jurisdictions in southwest New Mexico, is an eligible partner that can work with local homeowners to secure assistance

http://www.housingnm.org/community_development/community-development-block-grant

Rental Assistance Programs

MFA partners with local housing providers to offer “rapid re-housing” assistance to families and individuals experiencing homelessness or who are risk of becoming homeless. Rather than providing the funding directly, MFA partners with local providers. For Grant County, the eligible partner is the Western Regional Housing Authority, which has an office in Silver City.

http://www.housingnm.org/community_development/rental-assistance-programs-rap

Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS

HOPWA provides rental assistance and emergency housing payments for individuals with HIV/AIDS to ensure they do not become homeless. Other services funded through HOPWA include healthcare costs, mental health services, drug and alcohol counseling. Southwest Care Center, based in Santa Fe, provides HOPWA rental assistance in Grant County.

http://www.housingnm.org/community_development/housing-opportunities-for-persons-with-aids

Weatherization and Energy Efficiency Program

Through the NM EnergySmart Program, MFA finances weatherization and energy efficiency improvements for homeowners and renters. Individual households receive an average of \$5,500 in upgrades at no cost to residents, and generally save \$350-500 on annual utilities costs. Services include insulation, caulking, new windows and/or new heating systems.

http://www.housingnm.org/community_development/nm-energymart-program

USDA Housing Programs

The USDA provides a range of housing programs in rural areas, including direct home loans and guaranteed loan for single-family households to encourage home ownership, and rental assistance for multi-family housing, particularly among low-income, elderly, and disabled residents of rural areas. Other programs support home repairs and rehabilitations.

The USDA also works with housing developers to incentivize new housing and housing rehabilitation in rural areas. These programs are generally facilitated through local governments, such as Grant County, or housing providers, such as the Southwest Regional Housing Community Development Corporation.

<https://www.usda.gov/topics/rural/housing-assistance>

Through the *Multi-Family Housing Rental Assistance*, the USDA provides rental assistance payments on behalf of low-income tenants for occupants of USDA-financed Rural Rental Housing or Farm Labor Housing projects.

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/multi-family-housing-rental-assistance>

Transportation

In addition to the funding generated through general obligation bonds, property taxes, and gross receipts taxes to support transportation infrastructure improvements, there are a range of transportation funding options available from the state and federal governments.

NMDOT Local Government Road Fund

The NMDOT Local Government Road Fund provides transportation funding for counties and municipalities across New Mexico through four separate programs: the County Arterial Program, the Cooperative Agreement Program, the Municipal Arterials Program, and the School Bus Routes Program. Funds are generated through the State Highway Trust Fund.

County Arterial Program

The County Arterial Program (CAP) distributes money to each county based on a formula using lane miles of roads. Each county decides how to utilize its share of funds, and CAP is

an important source of funds for the Grant County ICIP. The formula is based on total lane miles rather than miles by functional class. Funds may be utilized for project development, construction, reconstruction, improvement, maintenance, repair, and right of way and material acquisition. Grant County is able to prioritize which facilities to address using CAP funding.

Cooperative Agreement Program

The Cooperative Agreement Program allocates money to fund various district-prioritized projects for counties, municipalities, school districts, and other entities. As of 2017, 42% of the Local Government Road Fund is allocated to the Cooperative Agreement Program, with:

- 33% for agreements with counties
- 49% for agreements with municipalities
- 14% for agreements with school districts
- 4% for agreements with other entities

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

The State Transportation Improvement Program is the short-range implementation plan for projects that are programmed utilizing the allocation of federal funds to the New Mexico Department of Transportation. Many of the funding sources programmed in the STIP are dedicated for NMDOT-owned and maintained facilities. While funding that is specifically for regional and state-wide roads do not directly impact county-owned roads, these investments benefit the County as a whole. Grant County should look to coordinate with NMDOT on projects that have regional impacts and provide benefits to Grant County residents through improved mobility and access to sites in unincorporated areas. A second set of funds are programmed by NMDOT but may be utilized for roads maintained by local jurisdictions. A final set of funds, including the Transportation Alternatives Program and Recreational Trails Program, are distributed through competitive statewide selection processes.

To qualify to be part of the STIP roads must be classified as a major collector or an arterial. They must also be of regional significance and serve the overall transportation and network needs of the region.

Regional Transportation Improvement Program Recommendations (RTIPR)

The Southwest Rural Transportation Planning Organization, housed within the Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments, provides a forum where agencies across the region, including Grant County, can submit their priority projects for federal funding. Agencies can also advocate for the improvements along NMDOT-owned and maintained facilities that would be of benefit to Grant County residents. Projects of high regional priority are included in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program Recommendations (RTIPR) and submitted to the NMDOT for possible inclusion in the STIP.³⁵ Ultimate decision-making rests with the NMDOT, though inclusion in the RTIPR is a critical step in pursuing federal funding.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a federal reimbursement program that provides funding for non-motorized transportation-related programs and projects. Relevant projects include pedestrian and bicycle facilities, safe routes to school – related infrastructure improvements, and programs that support the use of alternative modes of travel. Projects that are consistent with goals or objectives of a local Comprehensive Plan weighted more heavily in the NMDOT evaluation process.

Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a federal reimbursement program that provides funding to develop and maintain trail-related facilities. Relevant trail uses that can be awarded funds include hiking, bicycling, equestrian use, and motorized driving.

TAP and RTP Funding Considerations

TAP and RTP funds are allocated through a statewide competitive process every two years. Project selection is based on benefits related to seven scoring factors. Eligible entities must demonstrate how the project or program improve economic development efforts and safety issues, promote accessibility and mobility, environmental conservation, and efficient system management and preservation, and present supporting planning documentation. The sponsoring entities must also match 14.56% of the total project cost.

³⁵ Eligible funding categories include Surface Transportation Program (STP), Highway Safety Improvement program (HSIP), and Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) funding.

The program funded an estimated \$1,356,910 for FY 2018 and FY 2019 each year for recreational trails across the state. The RTP divides funding opportunities into three categories: 30% for non-motorized trail-related projects, 30% for motorized trail-related projects, and 40% for diverse trail-related projects.

Other Funding Sources and Considerations

Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant Program

TIGER Discretionary Grants are a competitive grant program administered by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT). According to the USDOT, “Successful TIGER projects leverage resources, encourage partnership, catalyze investment and growth, fill a critical void in the transportation system or provide a substantial benefit to the nation, region or metropolitan area in which the project is located.” TIGER grants can be used for highway or bridge projects, major public transportation investments, passenger and freight rail, port infrastructure investments (including inland port infrastructure, and intermodal projects.

TIGER Grants can be used for up to 100% of the costs of a project in rural areas, with a \$1 million minimum grant. There was a total appropriation of \$500 million for rural and urban areas in FY 2016, though amounts were slightly higher in previous years. There is no designated pool of funds specifically for rural areas; applying as a rural rather than an urban area reduces the local match that is required for the project.

Public Transit

FTA/NMDOT Rural Transit Funding Programs

A series of programs from the Federal Transit Administration support public transit services in rural areas, including the Corre Caminos public transit system. The Corre Caminos public transit system had an operating budget of \$965,550 in FY 2017, of which almost 60% came from federal funding sources with the remainder provided by Grant County, Silver City, Deming, and Luna County.

FTA Section 5311 Program – Formula Grants for Rural Areas

Corre Caminos is a regularly recipient of FTA 5311 funds, which support capital and operations expenditures for public transit systems in rural and small urban areas with fewer than 50,000 residents. The program specifically aims to provide access to healthcare, shopping, education, employment, public services, and recreation. Inter-city bus travel is another service supported by 5311 funds. FTA 5311 funds require a minimum 20% local match for administrative, capital, and planning expenses, and a 50% local match for operating expenses.





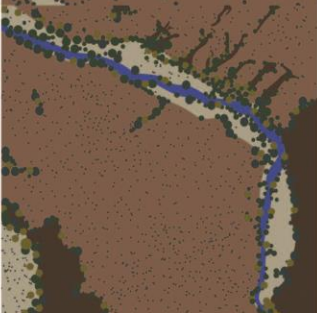
FTA Sections 5303 and 5304 Programs – Metropolitan and Statewide Planning

These funds support multi-modal and transit planning efforts, and would be a logical source of funding if Corre Caminos were to pursue enhancements to the existing system or to develop a transit service plan. Local jurisdictions must provide a 20% funding match.

FTA Section 5310 Program – Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities

Through FTA 5310 funds, local agencies and non-profits can make capital investments such as vehicle purchases to improve services for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Projects must be included in a locally-developed coordinated human service transportation plan, such as the plan developed by the SWRTPO. A 20% local match is required for FTA 5310 funds.

Transects

	Description	Example Community	Land Use	Adjacent Uses	Lot Size	Roadway Layout	Block Size	Public Spaces	Public Infrastructure	Public Services
Urban/Incorporated	 <p>This style includes the types found in Silver City and similar communities. It has small block sizes, small lots, mixed uses and sometimes taller buildings.</p>	Silver City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium to high density housing • Mix of residential and commercial • Commercial facilities and public institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitional with buffer required for high intensity industrial or mining activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small to medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grid system, high density of roads • Network of arterials and collectors • Pedestrian facilities; some bicycle facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short to medium block lengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails, parks, amenities, public art, ballfields. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water and sewer, garbage, broadband 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical centers • Schools, community/senior services • Police and fire department • Administrative buildings and services • Fixed route public transit
Village / CDP	 <p>Smaller communities outside of Bayard, Hurley and Silver City, usually around 2,00 people. These are mixed block size- areas, but tend to be residential and small, locally owned.</p>	Santa Clara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small and Medium density housing • Some retail/commercial • Community facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitional with buffer required for high intensity industrial or mining activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small to medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grid system with low-to-medium density of roads • Limited set of arterials and/or collectors • Dedicated pedestrian facilities on major streets; wide shoulders for bicyclists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium block length 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks with limited amenities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water, garbage, broadband • Generally septic or private sewer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare clinic • Elementary schools • Community/senior center • Emergency response • Volunteer fire department • Inter-city commuter transit service
Transitional	 <p>Small communities usually developed as small housing clusters, this is usually developed with a relationship to major industrial areas.</p>	N Hurley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-density housing • Industries include mining, renewable energy production, light manufacturing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban • Village • Natural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium lots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited grid; one or two major roads • On-street pedestrian and bicycle facilities not required; wide shoulders desirable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium-large irregular blocks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited water/sewer utilities • Broadband 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency response (sheriff's department, medical)
Rural	 <p>Isolated housing with large natural areas separating locations.</p>	Redrock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-density housing • Industries ranching, renewable energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural • Transitional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large lot sizes • Farms and ranches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major roads with local connections only • Wide shoulders for bicyclists and pedestrians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal public spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited utilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency response (sheriff's department, medical) • Recreational services
Natural	 <p>Open Space or undeveloped areas that have been unaltered by humans in a major way.</p>	Wilderness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest land • Conservation areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural • Transitional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited roadway network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational trails and facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational services only • Forest management, wildfire suppression