



CITY OF LAS CRUCES

REALIZE LAS CRUCES AD HOC COMMITTEE COMMISSION

Following are the minutes from the City of Las Cruces Realize Las Cruces Ad Hoc Committee Meeting held Wednesday, September 6, 2023, at 3:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Christopher Brown
Paul Dulin
Arturo Duran
Scott Kaiser
John Moscato
George Pearson
Paul Pompeo
Sharon Thomas

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Daniel G. Buck
Dan Carter
Ken Odenheim
Luis Rios - EXCUSED
Dawn Sanchez

STAFF PRESENT:

Sara Gonzales, Senior Planner, Community Development
Tony Trevino, Deputy Directory Public Works
Larry Nichols, Director Community Development
Rocio Nasir, Senior Engineer, Utilities
Mark Miller, Planner
Srijana Basnyat, Performance Manager
Steven Bingham, Director Parks and Recreation
David Weir

OTHERS PRESENT:

Beth Bardwell

I. CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order.

II. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - 08/02/23: Page 4, line 24 it says, "commercial buildings need to be required to provide more bicycle parking" should be "existing buildings need to provide bicycle parking."

1 Motion was made to approve minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

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3 A Board Member mentioned he was present at last month's meeting. Attendance
4 list needs to be updated.

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6 Motion was made to approve minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

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8 **IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

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10 **1. Chapter 3. Zoning Regulations**

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12 Board started on page 104 where last meeting left off. Staff is sending out the
13 draft with comments and notes included. E-mails with comments and
14 corrections were requested so this can be updated and used at each meeting.
15 The Industrial Park on the West Mesa is an overlay and staff is having a
16 discussion with Freese and Nichols to designate it as a Planned Unit
17 Development and maintain those standards, and revisit as needed. This would
18 allow them to continue using their Master Plan and standards without
19 interruption. The airport also has their own Master Plan and there will be
20 changes to the boundaries between the two coming up to Council soon. It was
21 suggested to simply leave those two Master Plans alone. Elevate Las Cruces
22 calls out traditional commercial zones as a place type. This will fall into the
23 regional type use, where people do not go every day for convenience shopping.
24 The setbacks, lot placements, landscaping, façade treatments, etc. would be
25 required to match the surrounding character area. Clarification was requested,
26 as the draft does not explain well. Graphics were suggested. Secondary
27 commercial and retail are allowed in the Industrial Park and airport PUDs.
28 PUDs are the same as overlays, just smaller. The City does not own any
29 property past the City Limits on that side. There was discussion about airport
30 boundaries and the LCIIIP.

31
32 Page 104, 1.f. includes the term "visually appealing." It was asked if that is a
33 good term, as visual appeal is a very subjective thing. The replacement
34 wording suggested was "following the urban design standards for commercial
35 development" or "following the character area's standards." The historical
36 districts will be on an overlay and continue to follow the current standards. It
37 was requested to modify page 102 to include graphics that show mixed-use
38 neighborhoods with commercial on the first floor and residential above. This is
39 included on page 106 in the discussion of MXCO, Mixed Use Corridor Overlay.
40 It was requested to add this to page 102. Item c seems to be contradictory, as
41 it states, "mixed use" and then the last sentence is "Retail, commercial, and
42 office uses are appropriate when appropriately buffered from nearby residential
43 uses." This seems to defeat the purpose of "mixed use." Suggested wording
44 was "Within building blocks, mixed uses are encouraged" such that commercial
45 could occupy the first floor and residential above. The graphics could be
46 modified to put signs in the windows. Language was also suggested to indicate

1 "integrated with" instead of "buffered from" regarding commercial and
2 residential uses. There was discussion whether there should be language
3 indicating that ground floor commercial with residential above or whether it
4 should be left open for the opportunity to mix and match uses within a multi-
5 story building. The Mixed Use Zoning District relies on the character areas to
6 define form. The Town Centers and Mixed Use Overlays concentrate on the
7 form of the use. The Mixed Use Zoning District is designed to allow the
8 transition over time from the current form to the desired mixed-use form, which
9 will allow for slightly more commercial and service uses that may not be
10 completely appropriate for a residential area. The Neighborhood Zoning
11 District will allow for more residential use and slightly less commercial and
12 service. Current areas that resemble Mixed Use Corridors are University,
13 Mesilla Park, Alameda, and some parts of Amador/Lohman, and South Telshor
14 areas. Zone change issues, property taxes, and park impact fees were
15 discussed.

16
17 The new Parks & Rec Director, Steven Bingham, introduced himself. The point
18 of impact fees is to have new areas pay for their own infrastructure rather than
19 having established areas pay. Every five years, impact fees will be reevaluated
20 and studied. Parks & Rec and Public Works are in process. The Board
21 introduced themselves to Mr. Bingham. The table with the setbacks is needed
22 because the information is not provided in the old zoning district information.
23 The Board discussed reorganizing the information in the document and adding
24 more graphics for better readability. A concern was raised that if the standards
25 are not more specific, it is possible that someone will build a giant, ugly box
26 commercial building in the middle of a residential area. Staff has not received
27 clarification from the consultants regarding the percentage of landscaping
28 required per lot. The landscaping section of the document defines what
29 qualifies as "landscaping." An example of a commercial-only area would be
30 the area on Lohman where the Sprouts and Best Buy, etc. are. The Urban
31 Design Standards call out the requirements for the appearance of new
32 buildings so that there will not be big, ugly boxes. A suggestion was made to
33 clarify the requirements listed in the tables and maps. Once Realize is finished,
34 all properties City-wide will be rezoned accordingly. Table 3.1 shows the
35 variety of uses possible for properties. There is no statute requiring notification
36 to property owners when there are zoning changes. Once the draft of the Plan
37 is finished, the maps can be created to show how the zones will interact.

38
39 The Downtown, South Mesquite, and Alameda Depot Overlays will not be
40 changed until more public outreach can be done. The other overlays are under
41 discussion to see what needs to be done. Staff will request reorganization of
42 the pages so the overlays, district outlines, and land use tables are close
43 together in a logical order instead of the current layout. The cannabis uses
44 need to be added into the new Code. The Town Center Overlay requires 75%
45 residential uses. It does not allow 100% commercial or 100% residential.
46 There are currently four town centers planned. The base district will regulate

1 what is there already. After the Future Development Map is updated, other
2 areas may be earmarked for future town centers. A suggestion was made to
3 compare the requirements in Elevate with what is being discussed here. The
4 density requirements for the Town Center Overlay are not quite clear to Board
5 Members. The minimum number of stories is two for this overlay. There is no
6 maximum listed. The Board will ask the consultants to create a map of the
7 overlays and the town centers as a zoning district. This Code will hopefully
8 help intensify the use of certain areas such as Downtown. The tables seem a
9 bit ambiguous and clarification was requested. Depending on the zoning,
10 commercial use will be capped at either 80% or 70% to ensure diversity of use
11 in the mixed-use properties. The Board was reminded that some properties
12 are oddly shaped or have easements that cannot be used, so allowances have
13 to be made in Code for that.

14
15 Elevate describes town centers and has a development intensity but not a
16 gross density. The floor-to-area ratio is 1 to 2+. For a mixed-use corridor,
17 Elevate lists a gross density of single-family units 8-15 dwelling units per acre
18 and multifamily 15-30 dwelling units per acre. The question was asked as to
19 why Realize was using percentages rather than just solid numbers, the way
20 Elevate does. "Base district" refers to the new districts created by the Code
21 change and the percentages allow for even more dwelling units than Elevate
22 does; however, for the sake of clarity, Board Members suggest using hard
23 numbers and giving a wide range of flexibility by designating a minimum density
24 but no maximum. It was also suggested to simply create base districts which
25 regulate use and then create overlays to define form. It was also suggested to
26 get more variety and modernization in the architectural styles allowed. A
27 suggestion was made for staff to ask Freese and Nichols why they used the
28 percentages in the first place, to provide case studies of successful town
29 centers and mixed-use corridors, and even to attend the next meeting via
30 Zoom. The Board was reminded that having too much housing may crowd out
31 the commercial uses, similar to what happened in Rio Rancho. Comments
32 were made about having apartment buildings with proper parking, as many
33 families have more than one car, and also the Fire Code requiring sprinklers
34 and such for apartments with more than two stories. The developers will
35 generally choose not to do more than two stories, as the sprinkler systems are
36 expensive. The way to have a healthy, vibrant residential market is to have a
37 market that can react to a broad range of demands and needs. Again, a map
38 was requested so that Board Members can run practice exercises with it.

39
40 The Board is comfortable with going forward with these zoning districts. Staff
41 has been requested to create a Town Center Zoning District of its own, get a
42 preliminary zoning map, to tie the traditional categories into the place types
43 more strongly, and to ask Freese and Nichols where their numbers come from.

44 **2. Character Area Aerials**

1 **V. NEXT MEETING:**

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3 **VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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5 **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

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Chairperson