


V. Appendix

Appendix A. Mesquite Street-original Townsite Historic District Reconnaissance Survey Final Report

Introduction

During the summer of 2004, Weisiger and Associates conducted a reconnaissance-level architectural survey of 700 buildings in a portion of the Mesquite Neighborhood. The boundaries of the survey area coincided with those of the Mesquite Street-Original Township Historic District, as listed in the national and state registers of historic places (refer to maps). Our survey, based on a visual examination from the public right-of-way, focused on judging whether each building contributed or not to the significance of the historic district and on assessing the condition of each building.

In conducting that survey, we expanded the parameters of the period of significance for the district. The National Register of Historic Places, which sets the national standards for determining whether or not buildings contribute to historic districts, holds that in general a building, structure, or object must be at least 50 years old before it can be considered “historic.” The 1980 survey thus used a 1930 threshold date, and the 1994-95 and 1998 (?) surveys employed a 1940 threshold. These were artificial dates, since the neighborhood remained a significant and cohesive residential area for Hispanics, African-Americans, and working-class whites in Las Cruces until the beginning of the urban renewal program in the early 1960s. A number of buildings constructed after 1940 would now potentially be eligible for inclusion in the National Register as contributing buildings within the district, if the nomination were amended to expand the period of significance. Thus, after consulting with Sylvia Camunez of Las Esperanzas, we expanded the period of significance for the purposes of this survey up to 1955.


Survey Methodology

Preparation prior to field work

To conduct the Reconnaissance Survey of the Mesquite Street-Original Township Historic District, Weisiger and Associates engaged the services of five architectural surveyors, all of whom had experience with similar surveys or had excelled in Professor Marsha Weisiger’s historic preservation course at New Mexico State University. Some also had specialized experience with assessing the condition of adobe buildings or had construction experience. Prior to the survey, each of the surveyors participated in a training workshop to familiarize themselves with the Mesquite Neighborhood, the goals of the survey, survey procedures, the criteria for determining the historic status and condition of the buildings, the format of the maps and forms, and the operation of electronic equipment. After the first day, we made adjustments to the procedures based on practical issues that arose in the field.

We took several measures to inform the neighborhood about the survey and eliminate any qualms they might have about the purpose of our work. Prior to the field work, we alerted neighborhood residents about the purposes of the survey by hand-distributing a letter, written in Spanish and English, to every occupied building accessible from a public right-of-way. Each team of surveyors also carried with them copies of this letter, along with an information sheet about the national and state registers of historic places, to distribute to residents who inquired about their work. As an additional identifying measure, each surveyor wore a “Mesquite Street-Original Township Historic District Survey” T-shirt.

Prior to the field work, we developed a master map, based on a City of Las Cruces map that had been created from aerial photographs.



Each building on the map was numbered and color-coded to reflect the historic status of the buildings as determined in the surveys of 1980, 1994-95, and 1998 (?). We then divided the master map into eleven survey maps, which guided the field work.

Field work

The survey crews completed their work between July 20 and August 25, 2004. Each crew took a map, a handheld computer, and a digital camera into the field. On the maps, they recorded any changes to a given building's footprint, deleted buildings that had been demolished, sketched in buildings that did not appear on the map (most were newly constructed, but some were old), labeled buildings that proved to be outbuildings, and labeled parking lots and vacant lots.

A total of 700 buildings were surveyed, including secondary buildings in backyards used as residences or offices. This was 97 more buildings than anticipated from the earlier survey maps. Ancillary buildings used as garages or sheds were not surveyed; if they appeared on the survey map, they were coded as such. All buildings were surveyed from public rights-of-way. For each surveyed building, we recorded the following information: street address, historic significance ("contributing," "worthy of further study," or "non-contributing"), and condition (good, fair, or poor). In addition, at the suggestion of members of Las Esperanzas who participated in a portion of the training workshop, we filled out a check list of specific defects beginning the second day of the survey. (We did not record this information on the first day, because the suggestion came only the night before field work began, precluding timely revisions to the data base.) We also recorded the map reference number, the photographic number, and the survey date. Later, we added the name of the owner and the owner's address for each property, drawn from a data base provided by the City of Las Cruces. Ownership information was not available from the data base for all properties, however; these are marked as "N/A."


The project director, Marsha Weisiger verified the accuracy of the survey crew's data throughout the course of the study. During the first few days, she spent time with each crew in the field, discussing their assessments of the historical integrity and the condition of several blocks of buildings. Crew members were encouraged to report any uncertainties about integrity or condition, and once the survey was complete, Dr. Weisiger compared the photographic data to the forms and the maps. In each case where uncertainties arose, Dr. Weisiger verified or, when appropriate, corrected the data in the field. Moreover, she verified every change in historical status between the 1998 (?) survey and the present survey through reviews of the photographs or, when appropriate, field visits.

Definition of terms

To determine whether a building contributed or did not contribute to the significance of the district, we used the National Register criteria for eligibility. A contributing element must meet three criteria:

- It must be at least 50 years of age;
- It must possess architectural integrity of location, design, materials, craftsmanship, association, and feeling; and
- It must contribute to the overall significance of the Mesquite Street-Original Township Historic District.

We found it difficult to determine with certainty whether buildings were 50 years of age or not, because the standard historical source for approximating the age of buildings, the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, did not cover most of the Mesquite Neighborhood. Only five blocks fronting Campo Street – Blocks 51, 52, 53, 54, 55 – were ever mapped by the fire-insurance company, at least as of 1962. Consequently, for the purposes of this reconnaissance-level survey, we assumed that buildings were at least 50 years old if they had been marked as contributing or significant in earlier surveys or if they were built of adobe, unless obviously of newer construction. We also assumed that those buildings with steel casement windows, which went out of fashion by the 1960s, were probably 50 years old



and at least worthy of further study. For most of these, it would require intensive research through tax-assessor records, building-permit records (if available), oral histories, and photographs to determine the age of most of the buildings in the district with any degree of accuracy. In a few instances, however, where we could be reasonably certain that they were at least 50 years old or altered at least 50 years ago, we counted them as contributing buildings.

Most of the historic buildings in the Mesquite Neighborhood possess integrity of location and association, and several areas of the district continue to possess the highly-subjective integrity of “feeling” much as the neighborhood did in the mid-1950s. Integrity of design, materials, and craftsmanship generally requires that the building possess its original walls, roofline, window sashes, and door openings: Alterations made prior to 1955, or those that essentially replicate the appearance in 1955, are considered part of a given building’s historical evolution and, thus, do not cause a loss of integrity. Alterations to some windows but not others may result in only a partial loss of integrity that does not negate the ability of a building to contribute to a district. Small additions, particularly to the rear, also do not necessarily affect the overall historical integrity. One rule of thumb is to consider whether a building looks today largely as it did in 1955.

Non-contributing buildings include those that were constructed after 1955 and those that have suffered a significant loss of integrity due to alterations made after that year. In the Mesquite Neighborhood, many buildings have lost integrity as a result of some combination of the replacement of original window sashes and changes in the roofline. New exterior-wall fabric (such as brick veneer), large additions that overwhelm the original structure, reconfigured window-openings (for example, new arched openings), new ornamentation, or new porches can also cause a loss of integrity. Because the loss of integrity is cumulative, this is often a subjective assessment.

In many instances, we could not determine through visual examination when a building was built or what the probable window configuration was in 1955. We thus took a conservative position that those buildings that were not clearly contributing or non-contributing elements in the district were **worthy of further study**. A good number of these buildings, particularly those with steel casement windows, were likely built or altered by 1955, and subsequent research may determine that they indeed contribute to the district. On the other hand, we expect photographic research to reveal that many of the buildings with other types of windows were altered after 1955 and no longer contribute to the historic feel of a ca. 1955 neighborhood. More intensive research is necessary to make those determinations with certainty.

In addition to determining the historical significance for each building, the surveyors assessed the condition of each structure, using a three-point scale provided by Bob McCabe, a member of the architectural design team. The surveyors considered the condition of the roof, foundation, exterior surfaces, windows, chimney, porches, and stairs. Each building was then rated according to the following criteria:

- **Good** - No more than two minor defects (such as peeling paint, exposed wood, minor stucco cracks); something the homeowner could fix him- or herself.
- **Fair** - No more than four minor defects OR one major defect (such as spalling, missing, or bulging stucco; large structural cracks; stucco cracks above window or door openings indicating differential settlement; or a bad roof); something the homeowner would probably need to hire a contractor to repair.
- **Poor** - Five or more minor defects OR two or more major defects OR one major defect and four minor defects OR one critical defect (that is, one may make the building too dilapidated to repair).



The vast majority of the buildings have flat roofs, characteristic of adobe architecture. Because our survey was conducted from the public right-of-way, it was impossible for us to judge the condition of the roof in many instances. We looked for evidence such as stains along the eaves and other signs of poor drainage to assess roof condition. But we are certain that some buildings have roof problems that we failed to identify. In an adobe building, more so than in other types of construction, the roof must seal out water and channel the water away from the walls to protect the adobes from moisture. Many homeowners have repeatedly re-roofed their buildings as part of normal maintenance, creating coved areas that crack over time and allow water to pool, creating leaks. Moreover, their canales no longer function properly. Even historically, canales often deposited water too close to the building; now covered up by re-roofing, they fail to move water away from the building at all. In general, however, these types of problems could not be gauged without climbing up on the roofs.

Survey Results

- **Historical Significance:** Of the 700 buildings surveyed, 225 (32 percent) contributed to the national or state historic districts (or both), 197 (28 percent) were worthy of further study, and 276 (39 percent) do not contribute to the district, either because they are less than 50 years old or have experienced a loss of integrity. Another two buildings were not sufficiently accessible to determine their historical significance.

Historic districts are defined by concentrations of contributing buildings along streetscapes. Within the Mesquite Neighborhood, contributing buildings are scattered throughout, but tend to be concentrated in four general areas: (1) the National Register Historic District (see map for boundaries of this irregularly-shaped district); (2) three small areas adjacent to the National Register district: one along East Organ Street, between Mesquite

and Manzanita streets; one along East Griggs Street between Tornillo and Manzanita streets; and one along East Kansas Street, taking in an area one lot west of the current boundary and extending east to Tornillo Street; (3) an area bounded by Campo, Picacho, Mesquite, and Hadley streets; and (4) an area along East Hadley Street near Espina.

Large clusters of non-contributing buildings appear (1) in the area north of Picacho Street (but excluding the north side of Picacho itself, where a number of contributing buildings remain), (2) along Campo Street between Lohman and Kansas streets; (3) along Hadley Street, between Tornillo and Almendra streets; (5) along Las Cruces Street east of Tornillo Street; (6) on the north side of Griggs Street east of Manzanita Street; (7) along Bowman Street east of Manzanita Street; (8) and along the south side of Texas Street. Most of these clusters of non-contributing buildings are concentrated along the edges of the State Register district.

Scattered throughout the study area are buildings that require more study to determine whether or not they actually contribute to the national and state register districts; the outcome of an intensive-level survey may reveal that some portions of these districts are stronger and other portions weaker than we can determine at this time,

- **Building Condition:** Of the 700 buildings, 343 (49 percent) were in good condition, 212 (30 percent) were in fair condition, and 139 (20 percent) were in poor condition.

Buildings in poor condition are scattered throughout the study area. Many of the buildings in poor condition cluster within the boundaries of the National Register district; an especially large concentration exists in an area bounded roughly by Campo, Griggs, Mesquite, and Bowman streets. Other clusters





exist along San Pedro Street between Augustine and Mountain streets; along Hadley Street between San Pedro and Manzanita streets; and in an area bounded roughly by Tornillo, Griggs, Alamendra, and Bowman.

- **Special Issues Concerning Adobe Buildings** - Many of the buildings may be in worse or better condition than we could determine from the public right-of-way. It is especially important to note that the presence of cement stucco on most of the adobe buildings and the addition of concrete collars around their foundations create two problems in accurately determining a given building's condition. The stucco may mask underlying conditions in the adobe walls; indeed, the stucco and the concrete collars may actually contribute to the deterioration of the adobe. Thus many of the buildings that we judged to be in good or fair condition may actually be in fair or poor condition due to underlying problems with the adobe walls, masked by cement stucco. Conversely, a number of the buildings that appear to be in poor condition may actually have sound walls behind deteriorating stucco and, thus, may be fruitful rehabilitation projects.¹

The presence of cement stucco and concrete collars constitutes an ongoing defect in all the adobe buildings. However, in assessing building condition, we did not count the presence of these materials as a critical defect, since we could not assess whether in fact the adobe walls were deteriorating behind the stucco without a more detailed examination than possible in a reconnaissance-level survey. Had we counted these elements as critical defects, nearly all of the buildings in the district would be ranked as "poor," which we believe would seriously overstate the case.

Portland cement stucco accelerates the deterioration of adobe buildings. Historically, adobe buildings constructed before the 1930s employed a lime plaster wash to protect the adobe from the elements. Lime stucco has a similar thermal coefficient as the adobe and, thus, tends to move with the adobe as it expands and contracts; it also "breathes" and allows moisture to transpire. Portland cement stucco was widely adopted in the 1930s and 1940s to replace the historic lime stucco, in part because people mistakenly thought it would help keep moisture out of the walls and in part because it appeared to require less maintenance. However, unlike lime plaster, cement stucco, a dense, rigid material, expands and contracts at a much greater rate than do adobe or lime plaster, leading to far more cracking and allowing penetration of moisture. In fact, cement stucco is less permeable than lime plaster and traps moisture from poorly drained roofs, capillary movement of water from the ground, and capillary condensation into the gap between the stucco and the adobe. This promotes deterioration of the wall, as the adobe literally melts. Additionally, cement stucco is heavier than the adobe, which is a very soft material, and tends to spall away from the wall as a result of gravity. When it does so, it often takes with it the rusted nails that anchor the chicken-wire to which the stucco adheres, causing further damage to the walls.

Concrete collars, which were added along with the cement stucco to the base of most of the buildings in the Mesquite Neighborhood, also present a serious problem. In the past, people thought the collars would help prevent moisture from rising from the ground into the walls through capillary action (a condition called "rising damp"). As it turns out, concrete actually encourages moisture to rise, accelerating deterioration. Moreover, like cement stucco, these collars have thermal coef-

¹Excellent guidelines on preserving adobe buildings are available in James W. Garrison and Elizabeth F. Ruffner, eds., *Adobe: Practical and Technical Aspects of Adobe Conservation* (Prescott: Heritage Foundation of Arizona, 1983). See especially the following chapters: James W. Garrison, "How to Inspect Adobe Buildings," and David G. Battle, "Interaction of Adobe with Other Materials." That book and conversations with Martin Davenport and Pat Taylor have informed the following discussion.





ficients that cause them to expand and contract at different rates than the adobes. To make matters worse, the bond between the hard collar and the soft wall is weak, encouraging cracks, and the lip of the collar encourages rain water to pool exactly where cracks are likely. Consequently, the collars encourage water to become trapped between the stucco and the wall, and as a result the foundation of many adobe buildings can literally melt in a process called basal erosion, contributing to structural weakening.

A final problem endemic to the Mesquite Neighborhood is poor drainage around building foundations, which helps trap water against the wall and encourages deterioration of adobe. Repeated repaving of the streets has in many cases elevated the streets and sidewalks above the grade of the building lots, exacerbating the problem. It is crucial that the earth be graded around adobe buildings so that excess water moves away from the walls, to discourage puddles from around the foundation, which can contribute to rising damp.

We would like to emphasize that many of the buildings we have designated as being in “poor” condition merit rehabilitation, not demolition. In at least some instances, sound adobe walls stand behind deteriorating stucco. A specialist in historic adobe should make a detailed examination of any “poor” adobe building before it is slated for demolition. We especially encourage the rehabilitation of all buildings in the National Register district, since these are generally the oldest and most historic in the neighborhood. Indeed all buildings designated as “contributing” to the national or state districts should be rehabilitated, and all those designated as “worthy of further study” should at least be considered candidates for rehabilitation if, after further research, they prove to contribute to the historical significance of the national or state districts. Additionally, we urge Las Esperanzas and the City of Las Cruces consider the rehabilitation of one or more of a collection of buildings in poor or fair condition, scattered throughout the study area, as listed in our recommendations below.

Recommendations

- 1. Utilize the recently adopted zoning overlay to protect the current low-scale, residential character of the current Mesquite Street-Original Townsite Historic District, while providing for existing commercial use and mixed use along the edges.*
- 2. Revise historic district documentation.*
 - Conduct an intensive-level survey of those buildings designated as “worthy of further study,” employing neighborhood volunteers to conduct oral history, photographic research, and documentary research. Prioritize those areas that are listed below as worthy of amendments to the national and state registers.
 - Amend the boundaries of the National Register Historic District to encompass the area along East Organ Street between Mesquite and Manzanita streets; East Griggs Street between Tornillo and Manzanita streets; and one East Kansas Street from one lot west of the current boundary, east to Tornillo Street. Additionally, amend the nomination to include a new area bounded by Campo, Picacho, Mesquite, and Hadley streets; this may be accomplished as part of a Multiple Resources nomination.
 - Amend the boundaries of the State Register Historic District to exclude areas on the fringes with large numbers of non-contributing buildings. This will help to eliminate unnecessary conflicts over historic-preservation issues with property owners in areas with few contributing buildings.’





3. Pursue a historic preservation ordinance with design review to preserve the historic character of the Mesquite Street-Original Townsite Historic District.

4. Encourage neighborhood awareness of and pride in the historic character of the district with public events.

- Develop an annual fiesta celebrating the history of the neighborhood, with a walking tour of historic buildings designated by signage; an outdoor museum-exhibit with panels of photographs telling the neighborhood's history; and with traditional music, dancing, and food.
- Conduct an oral history program to elicit the history of the neighborhood from elderly, long-time residents. Encourage young people to participate in recording these histories.
- Collect photographs of the neighborhood from long-time residents.
- Prepare a booklet and slide program on the history of the neighborhood, utilizing historical information gained from oral history, photographic, and documentary research.

5. Encourage property owners to preserve the historic character of their buildings.

- Apply to the State Department of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division, for a grant to write a homeowners guide for monitoring, repairing, and rehabilitating adobe buildings.
- Sponsor a workshop to educate and create a pool of masonry and plaster contractors and general contractors trained to properly repair adobe buildings with lime plaster. Invite building inspectors and city officials.

- Sponsor a workshop to educate homeowners regarding the monitoring, proper repair, and rehabilitation of adobe buildings. Focus on the replacement of cement stucco with lime plaster, the proper repair of roofs, and the regrading around the foundation for proper drainage. Encourage a member of the neighborhood to volunteer the appropriate rehabilitation of his or her home as a demonstration project.
- Encourage use of state and federal tax credits for the rehabilitation of residential and commercial properties. Establish a neighborhood resource-person to help building owners plan projects and complete paperwork.
- Create a materials stockpile (screens, screened aggregate, adobe bricks, adobe mud, sand for mortar, lime), to keep needed materials available to homeowners at low cost.
- Create a tool lending library and reference library to promote appropriate rehabilitation.
- Encourage the removal of Portland cement stucco and concrete collars and replacement with lime plaster.
- Create a team of neighborhood resource-people, trained in the appropriate treatment of historic adobe buildings, to inspect and monitor adobe buildings and make recommendations for rehabilitation.
- Encourage building owners to provide better drainage around their foundations, to shed water away from adobe walls.
- Encourage the repair, rather than the replacement, of historic windows. The replacement of windows – a key design characteristic – is the chief reason for loss of historical integrity in the Mesquite Neighborhood.



6. *Develop programs through the City of Las Cruces to promote the preservation of historic adobe buildings.*

- Encourage the rehabilitation, rather than demolition, of all adobe buildings designated as “contributing” or “worthy of further study” within the National Register Historic District, as amended according to Recommendation 2, above.
- Promote the appropriate rehabilitation of adobe buildings through the HOME program and the Community Development Block Grant program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, following the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings.
- Educate building inspectors regarding the appropriate rehabilitation of historic adobe buildings, as articulated in the New Mexico Historic Preservation Alliance’s model code for historic adobe buildings. This proposed amendment to New Mexico’s State Building Code is currently under consideration. Historic adobe buildings require different treatments to maintain their structural integrity. For example, adobe walls can be destroyed by modern reinforcement requirements and by the additional loads of modern tie-beams.
- Devise and provide infrastructure repairs to address the drainage problems cause by streets and sidewalks that are elevated above the grade of building lots.
- Discourage the replacement of historic windows with historically inappropriate windows in. City-administered rehabilitation projects.

- Provide financial support for replacement windows that replicate the historic windows in design and materials, in those instances where repair is not feasible.
- Develop a jobs program for neighborhood youth to learn lime-plastering and adobe brick-making techniques and work on rehabilitation projects. Such a program could not only provide jobs for young people but would also promote neighborhood pride and discourage vandalism.
- Create a revolving loan fund with Community Development Block Grant funds for appropriate rehabilitation of adobe buildings, following the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.
- When demolition is necessary and in redevelopment of vacant lots, encourage infill that respects the historic character of the neighborhood, while remaining distinctive from the historic fabric.

7. *Acquire funding to purchase one or more buildings in “poor condition” and rehabilitate them for resale as a demonstration project, outdoor laboratory, and fund-raising project.*

Rehabilitation of these buildings would enhance the historic district and help revitalize the neighborhood. In a few instances, appropriate rehabilitation could make these buildings contribute to the district once more, because their dilapidated condition resulted in such a loss of integrity that it earned a “non-contributing” assessment. The reconnaissance survey identified 17 buildings that might be considered for such a program. The addresses are available in the full report.

Appendix B. South Mesquite Neighborhood Overlay Zone District

The following is an excerpt from the overlay zone regulations for the South Mesquite Neighborhood adopted by the Las Cruces City Council on May 24, 2005 (Ordinance 2200). These regulations will be an important policy framework to support the implementation of the Mesquite Historic District Neighborhood Design Plan.

Sec. 38-49.2 South Mesquite Neighborhood Overlay Zone District

- A. **PURPOSE.** The South Mesquite Neighborhood District is designed to deal with issues unique to Las Cruces' Original Townsite and surrounding area. Specific provisions in this Ordinance deal with issues such as setbacks and zoning designations that are better suited to this older part of the City. Via neighborhood participation, it was decided to closely follow the zoning designations and permitted land uses of the City's former 1981 Zoning Code, as amended, with some modifications. Additionally, neighborhood design standards have been added to the general area of the Original Townsite to enhance and preserve the unique character of Las Cruces' first neighborhood.
- B. **DELINEATION OF OVERLAY DISTRICT BOUNDARIES.** The South Mesquite Overlay District shall include all properties noted on the associated map. (See Figure 1.)
- C. **DEFINITIONS.** Definitions shall rely on those noted in Chapter 38, Section 38-20 of the Las Cruces Municipal Code unless otherwise noted here:

Compatible: Capable of existing together in harmony. Parts of a whole that work well together when pieced together.

Consistent: That which is similar to, or nearly the same.

Demolition: An act that destroys or removes in whole or in part of the exterior of a building or structure of a historic property.

Design and Architectural Guidelines: Regulations intended to preserve the historic and architectural character within the South Mesquite Overlay Zone District (noted within this document as "Area 2").

Exterior Appearance: The visual character of all outside surfaces of a structure, including the kind and texture of the signs, light fixtures, steps, or appurtenant elements.

Exterior remodeling, exterior renovation, and exterior alteration: Any change or rearrangement in the supporting members of an existing building, such as exterior bearing walls, columns, beams, girders, as well as any substantial change in rooflines, number of doors and/or windows added, removed, or resized, or any enlargement to or diminution of a building or structure, whether horizontally or vertically. Maintenance or repair shall not be construed as exterior remodeling, renovation, and/or alteration.

Facade: Any exterior wall of a structure.

(A complete version of the South Mesquite Neighborhood Overlay (Section 38-49.2 of the 2001 Zoning Code as amended), is available from the City of Las Cruces, Community Development Department.)



I. Existing Conditions



Introduction and History

The Mesquite Street Neighborhood is the oldest district in the City of Las Cruces. It is part of the original townsite which was laid out in 1848. For purposes of the design plan, its boundaries have been expanded beyond that to comprise nearly 349 acres, bounded by Madrid Avenue on the north, Colorado Avenue on the south, Campo Street on the west and Virginia Avenue and several other streets on the east.

A decision was reached during the planning process by representatives of the Las Esperanzas group, the Residents and Business Owners of the North Mesquite District, and City staff that all implementation plans and expenditure of Legislative funds would concentrate on the Mesquite Neighborhood South of Spruce Avenue. The Residents and Business Owners of the North Mesquite District would pursue their own funding and determine their priorities.

The Las Esperanzas Neighborhood organization has been committed for many years to the improvement of the Mesquite Historic District. However, they have lacked the necessary data, analysis and strategic directions to accomplish this task. The City of Las Cruces requested that Las Esperanzas develop and come forward with a plan and vision for the future of their community. The Neighborhood Design Plan is a response to that request. This document includes data on both the north and southern portions of the Mesquite Neighborhood. The analysis, recommendations and implementation priorities focus on the South Mesquite District. This focus is consistent with the area covered by the new overlay zone district adopted by the City of Las Cruces. Funding received to date and future funding for improvement projects will focus on this area.

Planning Context and Purpose

A. Land Use

A majority of the land uses within the Mesquite Neighborhood boundary are single family detached homes, regardless of zoning that allows higher density dwelling units. Most of these homes are built of adobe in many shades of brown with a few facades in pastel pink, yellow, green and blue reminiscent of old Mexico. Often they are set flush against the narrow streets, arranged in the grid pattern of the original town site. In the words of John T. Cabral, a student of the area, "It is a neighborhood where children play out in the open, people sit outside their homes on the sidewalk, and large family gatherings with uncles and grandparents and cousins from all over town are held in lit-up back yards to the sound of live Mexican music." (Cabral, 1990).

A substantial number of parcels are also used for apartments of eight or more units and a lesser number for multi-family dwellings with from two to six units. These are concentrated around the heart of the neighborhood area between Spruce and Bowman.

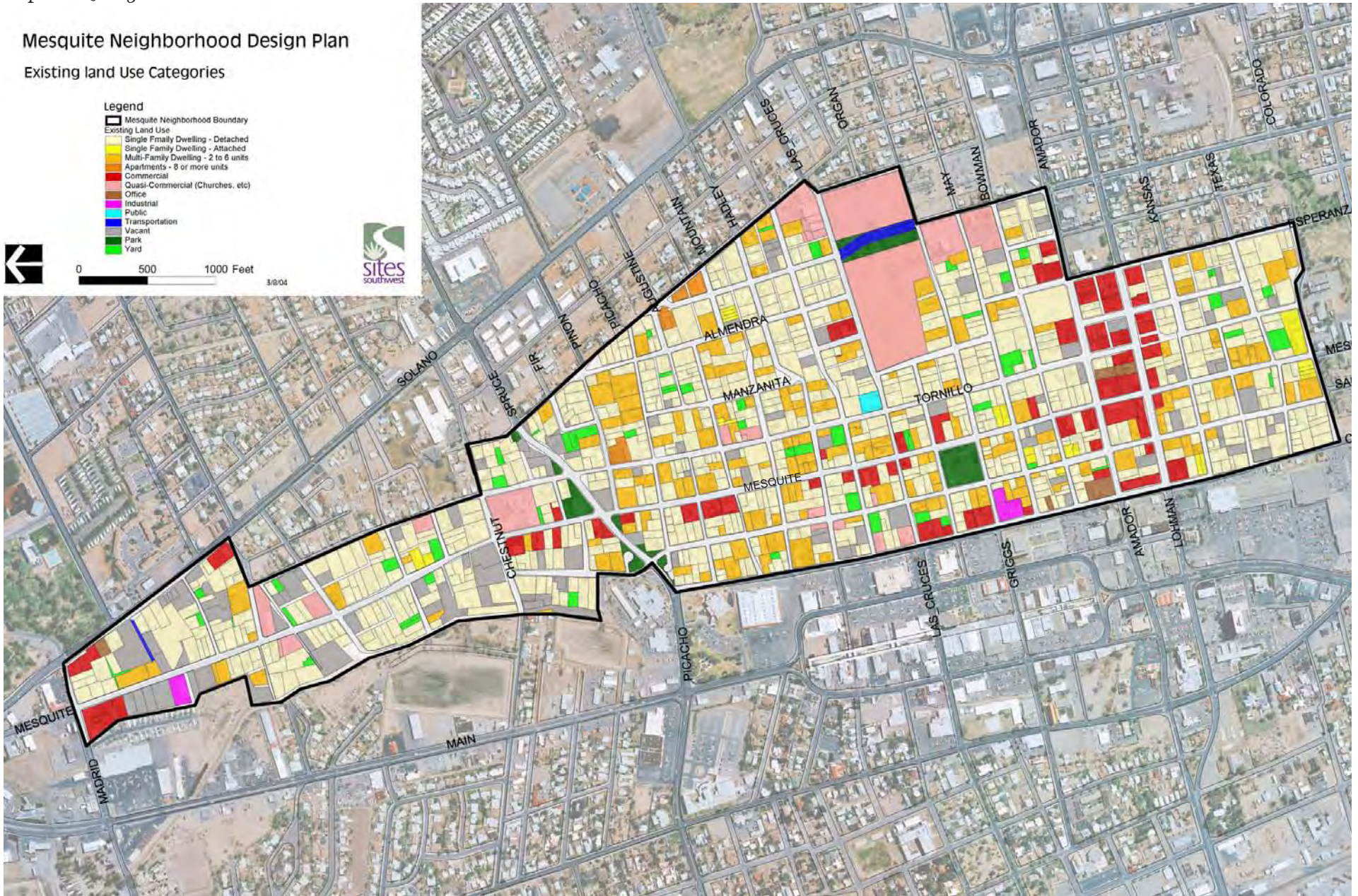
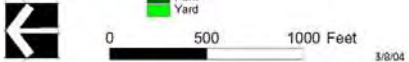
Neighborhood commercial uses predominate along Lohman and Amador, following the zoning and the faster pace of automobile traffic on those one-way streets. Low intensity commercial uses also dot portions of Mesquite Street, occupy a few frontages on Campo Street, and form a few clusters at the northern end of the plan boundary.

Dominating the eastern edge along Esperanza near Griggs stands St. Genevieve Church and cemetery. Several other quasi-commercial uses are sprinkled throughout the neighborhood. The area also contains a number of churches and several parks and yards – most notably Klein Park at the central location of Griggs and Mesquite. The remainder of the acreage, more than ten percent, is vacant.

Mesquite Neighborhood Design Plan

Existing land Use Categories

- Legend**
- Mesquite Neighborhood Boundary
 - Existing Land Use
 - Single Family Dwelling - Detached
 - Single Family Dwelling - Attached
 - Multi-Family Dwelling - 2 to 6 units
 - Apartments - 8 or more units
 - Commercial
 - Quasi-Commercial (Churches, etc)
 - Office
 - Industrial
 - Public
 - Transportation
 - Vacant
 - Park
 - Yard



B. Zoning

A major portion of land within the boundaries of the Mesquite Neighborhood boundary is zoned for residential, particularly low density, multi-dwelling units (R-2). Based on the 2001 Zoning Code, as amended, this zoning category allows only duplexes and triplexes for a total of 12 dwelling units per acre, but permits home occupations. Even higher densities are allowed along Campo Street, through R-3 and R-4, which forms the neighborhood's western border with the Las Cruces Downtown Area. The R-3 district allows triplexes, quadplexes, and mobile home parks for up to 15 dwelling units per acre and is typically used along major local roadways to avoid traffic congestion in lower density areas. R-4 is a high density, multi-dwelling unit district allowing the above building types as well as apartments with five or more units per building. It also permits limited retail, institutional and service-oriented uses. It is designed to be used along collector roadways where public transportation is available and commercial and employment opportunities are nearby.

A swath of commercial C-2 zoning runs nearly the length of the Mesquite Neighborhood, from the northern boundary at Madrid to the south side of Lohman, on both sides of Mesquite Street. C-2 zoning encourages development of uses that provide retail and service activities as a convenience to adjacent neighborhoods and usually serve from 5,000 to 30,000 people. Land uses in that area show scattered clusters of commercial along the Mesquite Street, except along the one-way streets of Amador and Lohman where commercial uses dominate. In addition, there are a few small patches of O-1 (Office, Neighborhood – Limited Retail Services), C-1 (Low Intensity Commercial), C-2C (C-2 Conditional) and 01_C-2C (C-2 Conditional under 2001 code) and 01_C-3C (C-3 Conditional under 2001 code).

Over the past few years, neighborhood residents have called for more neighborhood-oriented commercial uses in the area. In response, the City of Las Cruces Community Development Department developed the South Mesquite Neighborhood Overlay Zone District (SMO) for the area. It authorizes use of the 1991 Zoning Code with slight use variations and, in some cases, acceptance of 2001 Zoning Code nomenclature.

In addition, the overlay zone would allow businesses greater flexibility for on-street parking. Neighbors would also like to limit permitted uses, size, and height of buildings across the street from the new Federal Courthouse on Campo between Oregon and Griggs to maintain the residential, small business character of the Mesquite Historic District.

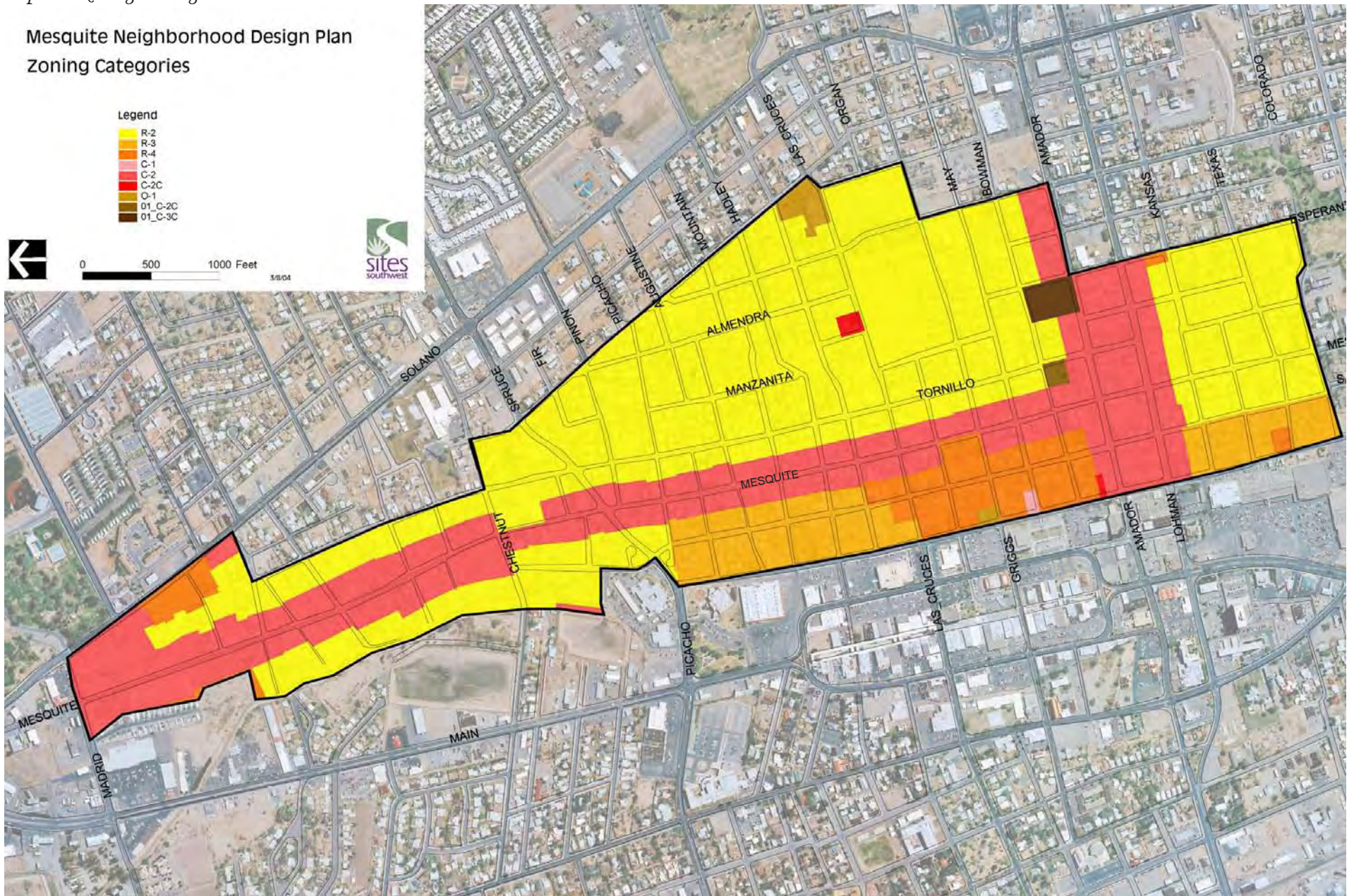
C. Housing

As noted above, the most predominant land use in Mesquite is single-family, one story detached houses mostly built of adobe. Many are built close to the narrow, grid-patterned streets which don't allow a large volume of vehicle traffic, but create a tightly-knit network of walkable streets. Many are bordered by small fences of chain link, adobe, or wrought iron. Of 1,400 units encompassed by a study area with slightly different boundaries than this plan, a third were built before 1939, compared with seven percent in the rest of the city. Only 24 percent of the dwellings were single-family attached, duplexes, multi-family units, or mobile homes. The single family homes also tend to be small: only 24 percent had three or more rooms and none had five or more (Cabral 1990).

Map 2. Existing Zoning

Mesquite Neighborhood Design Plan
Zoning Categories

- Legend
- R-2
 - R-3
 - R-4
 - C-1
 - C-2
 - C-2C
 - C-1
 - 01_C-2C
 - 01_C-3C



Map 3. Building Condition

Mesquite Neighborhood Design Plan

Building Condition - August 2004





Housing - Building Conditions

In 2004 Weisiger and Associates* conducted a reconnaissance-level architectural survey of 700 buildings in a portion of the Mesquite Neighborhood (see Appendix A). The boundaries of the survey area coincided with those of the Mesquite Street-Original Township Historic District, as listed in the national and state registers of historic places (see maps 3, 6 and 7). Their survey, based on a visual examination from the public right-of-way, focused on judging whether each building contributed or not to the significance of the historic district and on assessing the condition of each building. In determining the condition of each structure the surveyors considered the condition of the roof, foundation, exterior surfaces, windows, chimney, porches, and stairs. Each building was rated according to the following criteria:

Good - No more than two minor defects (such as peeling paint, exposed wood, minor stucco cracks); something the homeowners could fix themselves.

Fair - No more than four minor defects OR one major defect (such as spalling, missing, or bulging stucco; large structural cracks; stucco cracks above window or door openings indicating differential settlement; or a bad roof); something the homeowner would probably need to hire a contractor to repair.

Poor - Five or more minor defects OR two or more major defects OR one major defect and four minor defects OR one critical defect (that is, one that may make the building too dilapidated to repair).

Of the 700 buildings surveyed, 343 (49 percent) were in good condition, 212 (30 percent) were in fair condition, and 139 (20 percent) were in poor condition. Buildings in poor condition are scattered throughout the Mesquite Neighborhood. Many of the buildings in poor condition cluster within the boundaries of the National Register district; an especially large concentration exists in an area bounded roughly by Campo, Griggs, Mesquite, and Bowman streets. Other

clusters exist along San Pedro Street between Augustine and Mountain Streets; along Hadley Street between San Pedro and Manzanita streets; and in an area bounded roughly by Tornillo, Griggs, Alameda, and Bowman (see map 3).

Many of the buildings that have been designated as being in “poor” condition merit rehabilitation, not demolition. In at least some instances, sound adobe walls stand behind deteriorating stucco. A specialist in historic adobe should make a detailed examination of any “poor” adobe building before it is slated for demolition. The rehabilitation of all buildings in the national Register district, generally the oldest and most historic in the neighborhood, is especially encouraged. Indeed, all buildings designated as “contributing” to the national or state districts should be rehabilitated, and all those designated as “worthy of further study” should at least be considered candidates for rehabilitation if, after further research, they prove to contribute to the historical significance of the national or state districts. Additionally, Las Esperanzas and the City of Las Cruces are urged to consider the rehabilitation of one or more of a collection of buildings in poor or fair condition, scattered throughout the Mesquite Neighborhood, as listed in our recommendations below.

One of the neighborhood’s biggest challenges was recovering from the loss of homes during the urban renewal between 1968 and 1970 and the realignment of Spruce-Picacho in the late 80s that bisected the neighborhood. Long-time residents who achieve higher education and better incomes have tended to sell their homes and move. They, in turn, are followed by new, poorer residents. The area is also a possible target for gentrification (Cabral 1990). Given the need for affordable housing in Las Cruces, however, the area presents a prime opportunity to infill vacant land with homes for those with low to moderate incomes.

* [The Mesquite Street - Original Townsite Historic District Reconnaissance Survey Final Report](#) is found in Section V, Appendix A of this report.

D. Vacant Land

Within the plan boundary, 190 lots are vacant, indicating an erosion of the existing built environment. This number represents approximately 10 percent of the total 349 gross acres of land within the neighborhood. While vacant parcels are distributed throughout the neighborhood, a larger portion is found in the area north of Spruce.

E. Land Ownership

Data from the Dona Ana County Assessor (2002) on the 1,212 parcels within the neighborhood plan boundaries indicated that 512 occupants (42 percent) owned their homes and 421 occupants (35 percent) rented their homes. This determination could not be made for an additional 23 percent of parcels due to gaps in the data. In comparison, 67.5 percent of homes in the Las Cruces metropolitan area were owner-occupied while 32.5 percent were renter-occupied.

F. Historic Buildings, Streets and Places

The Mesquite St.-Original Townsite was plotted out in 1848 by U.S. Army Lt. Delos Bennett Sackett with a rawhide rope and stakes. Sackett chose a site along the acequia madre and designated a block of land for the plaza and church. Eight-four city blocks were then laid out, each with four lots of land. Its rough boundaries were E. Texas, Campo, Tornillo and E. Court Street. Buildings in the area were constructed primarily in Mexican/Spanish traditional style with one-story, flat-roofed adobe construction close to the front property line. Although much of the area retains this unique character, other parts have fallen into disrepair and encroachment by the Downtown.

The boundaries of the Mesquite Neighborhood Plan developed by the City of Las Cruces Community Development Department encompasses about half of the original townsite, beginning at Campo Street on the west and expanding north to Madrid Avenue, south to Colorado Avenue and east as far as Virginia Avenue. This area includes a small Federal Historic District (see Map 9) and a larger State Historic District (see Historic District Map).

A National Register Historic District is an area or neighborhood that has a concentration of buildings, sites, and objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development that are considered worthy of preservation by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Buildings are classified as *significant, contributing, supporting, neutral and noncontributing*. Being listed makes property owners eligible for such benefits, such as Federal tax credits and Federal assistance for historic preservation when restoring these properties. They also receive special consideration when Federal or Federally-funded projects are planned. Listing on the State Register in New Mexico qualifies rehabilitation projects for state tax credits. When claiming tax credits or using public funds, the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division must approve restoration activities to ensure the structure's historic designation will be maintained.

Housing - Historical Significance

For the purposes of the 2004 Weisiger and Associates* architectural survey of 700 buildings in a portion of the Mesquite Neighborhood, the National Register criteria for eligibility was utilized to determine whether individual buildings either contributed or did not contribute to the historical significance of the district. For a building to be considered **contributing** it must meet three criteria:

- It must be at least 50 years of age;
- It must possess architectural integrity of location, design, materials, craftsmanship, association, and feeling; and
- It must contribute to the overall significance of the Mesquite Street-Original Township Historic District.

However, in the Weisiger and Associates survey, parameters of the period of significance for the district were expanded. As mentioned above, the National Register of Historic Places, which sets the national standards for determining whether or not buildings contribute to historic districts, holds that in general a building,

* [The Mesquite Street - Original Townsite Historic District Reconnaissance Survey Final Report](#) is found in Section V, Appendix A of this report.

Map 4. Vacant Land Map

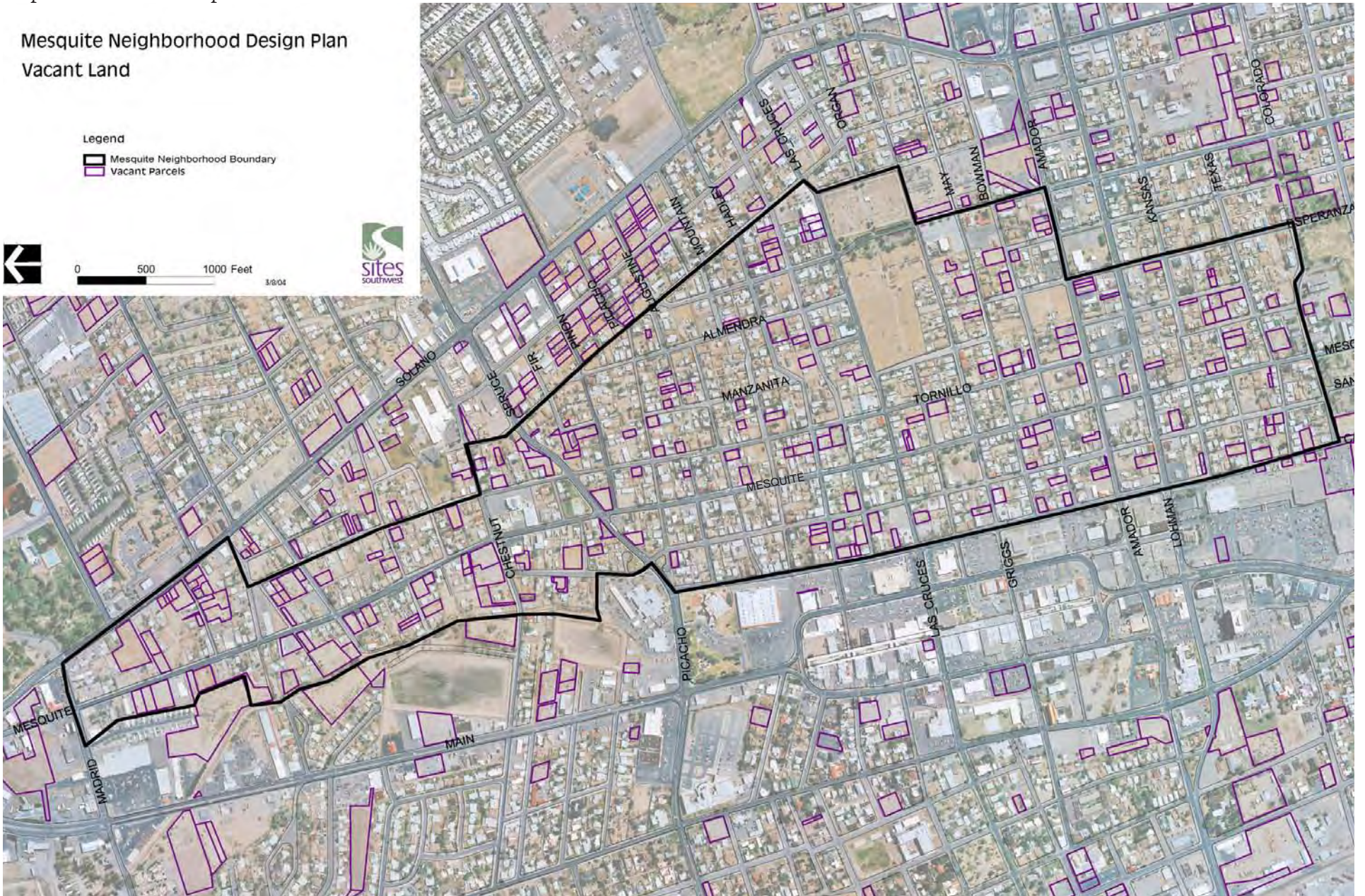
Mesquite Neighborhood Design Plan
Vacant Land

Legend

- Mesquite Neighborhood Boundary
- Vacant Parcels



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1/8/04



Map 5. Owner and Renter Occupied Properties Map

Mesquite Neighborhood Design Plan

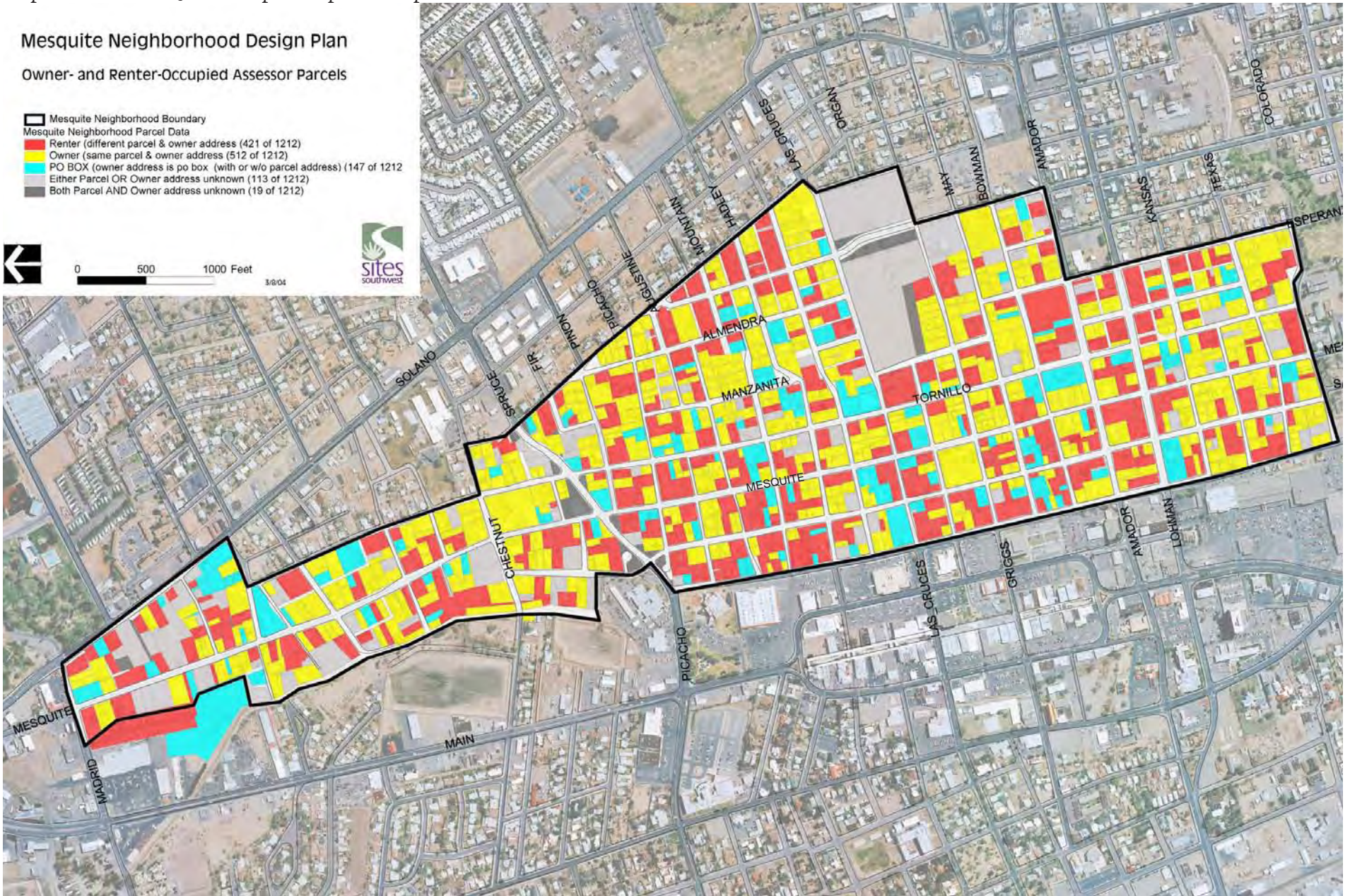
Owner- and Renter-Occupied Assessor Parcels

- ▭ Mesquite Neighborhood Boundary
- ▭ Mesquite Neighborhood Parcel Data
- Renter (different parcel & owner address) (421 of 1212)
- Owner (same parcel & owner address) (512 of 1212)
- PO BOX (owner address is po box (with or w/o parcel address)) (147 of 1212)
- Either Parcel OR Owner address unknown (113 of 1212)
- Both Parcel AND Owner address unknown (19 of 1212)



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Mesquite Neighborhood Design Plan

Mesquite Historic District

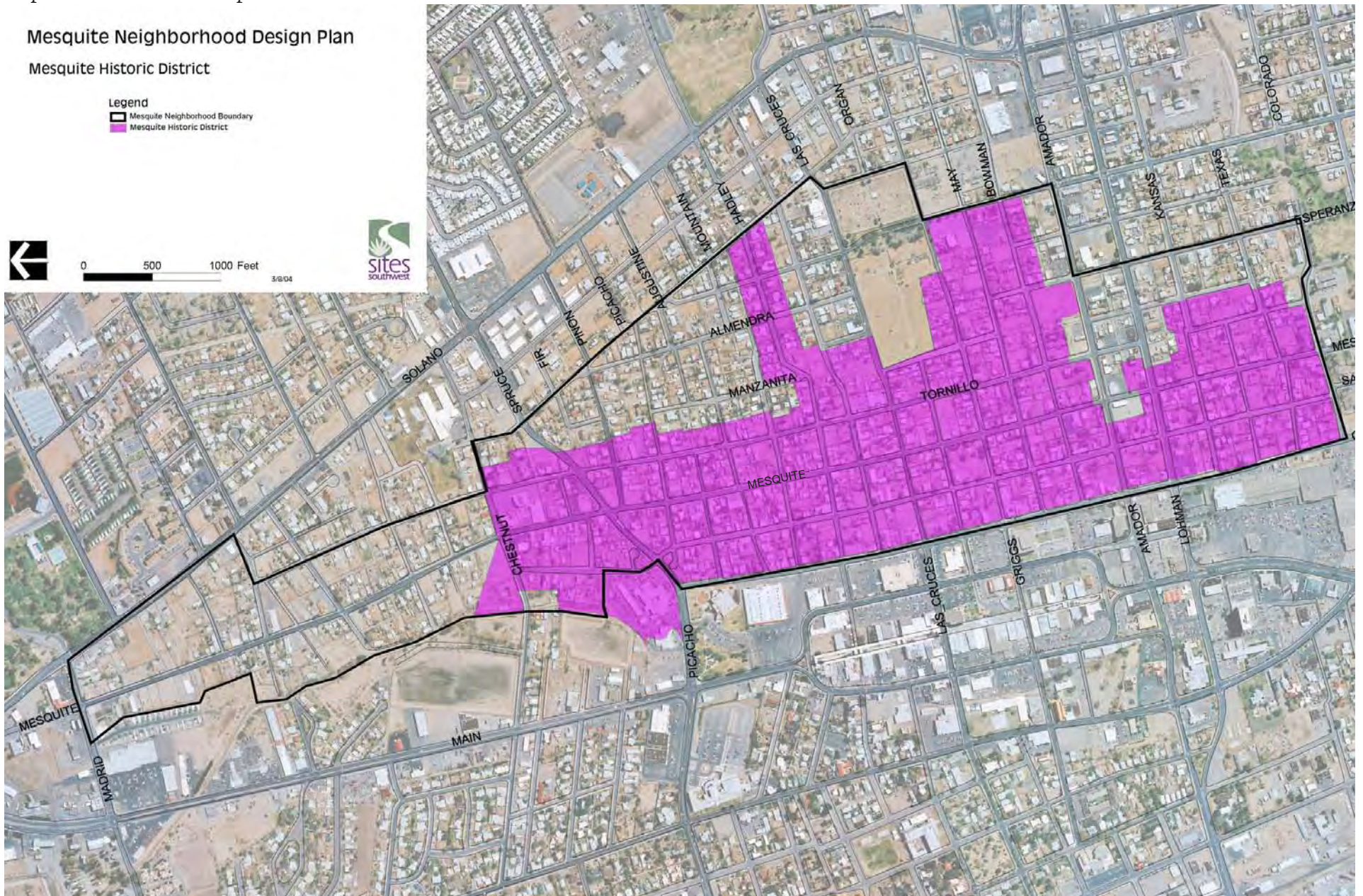
Legend


- Mesquite Neighborhood Boundary
- Mesquite Historic District



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3/8/04





structure, or object must be at least 50 years old before it can be considered “historic”. The 1980 survey thus used a 1930 threshold date, and the 1994-95 and 1998 surveys employed a 1940 threshold. These surveys were informational and apparently were not formally adopted by the City of Las Cruces. A number of the buildings constructed after 1940 would now potentially be eligible for inclusion in the National Register as contributing buildings within the district, if the nomination were amended to expand the period of significance. Thus, after consulting with Las Esperanzas Neighborhood Group, the period of significance for the purposes of this survey was expanded up to 1955.

It was often difficult for the surveyors to determine with certainty whether buildings were 50 years of age or not. Buildings were assumed to be at least 50 years old if they had been marked as contributing or significant in earlier surveys, if they were built out of adobe (unless of obviously newer construction), and if they had steel casement windows, which were out of fashion by the 1960s.

Most of the buildings in the Mesquite Neighborhood possess integrity of location and association, and several areas of the district continue to possess the highly-subjective integrity of “feeling” much as the neighborhood did in the mid-1950s. Integrity of design, materials, and craftsmanship generally requires that the building possess its original walls, roofline, window sashes, and door openings. Alterations made prior to 1955, or those that essentially replicate the appearance in 1955, are considered part of a given building’s historical evolution and, thus, do not cause a loss of integrity. Alterations to some windows but not to others may result in only a partial loss of integrity that does not negate the ability of the building to contribute to a district. Small additions, particularly to the rear, also do not necessarily affect the overall historical integrity. One rule of thumb to consider is whether a building looks today largely as it did in 1955.

Non-contributing buildings include those that were constructed after 1955 and those that have suffered a significant loss of integrity due to alterations made after that year. In the Mesquite Neighborhood, many buildings have lost integrity as a result of some combination of the replacement of original window sashes and changes in the roofline. New exterior-wall fabric (such as brick veneer), large additions that overwhelm the original structure, reconfigured window-openings (for example, new arched openings), new ornamentation, or new porches can also cause a loss of integrity. Because the loss of integrity is cumulative, this is often a subjective assessment.

Buildings whose age could not be clearly determined through visual examination or determination of the probable window configuration in 1955 were considered by the architectural surveyors to be **worthy of further study** as it cannot be clearly determined whether or not they can be considered historically contributing elements within the district.

Of the 700 buildings surveyed, 225 (32 percent) contributed to the national or state historic districts (or both), 197 (28 percent) were worthy of further study, and 276 (39 percent) do not contribute to the district, either because they are less than 50 years old or have experienced a loss of integrity. Another two buildings were not sufficiently accessible to determine their historical significance.

Historic districts are defined by concentrations of contributing buildings along streetscapes. Within the Mesquite Neighborhood, contributing buildings are scattered throughout, but tend to be concentrated in four general areas:



1. the National Register Historic District (see Map 9) for boundaries of this irregularly-shaped district;
2. three small areas adjacent to the National Register district: one along East Organ Street, between Mesquite and Manzanita streets; one along East Griggs Street between Tornillo and Manzanita streets; and one along East Kansas Street, taking in an area one lot west of the current boundary and extending east to Tornillo Street;
3. an area bounded by Campo, Picacho, Mesquite, and Hadley streets; and
4. an area along East Hadley Street near Espina.

Most of these clusters of non-contributing buildings are concentrated along the edges of the State Register district.

Scattered throughout the surveyed area are buildings that require more study to determine whether or not they actually contribute to the national and state register districts; the outcome of an intensive-level survey may reveal that some portions of these districts are stronger and other portions are weaker than could be determined by the 2004 Weisiger and Associates reconnaissance level survey.

Large clusters of non-contributing buildings appear:

1. in the area north of Picacho Street (but excluding the north side of Picacho itself, where a number of contributing buildings remain);
2. along Campo Street between Lohman and Kansas streets;
3. along Hadley Street, between Tornillo and Almendra streets;
4. along Las Cruces Street east of Tornillo Street;
5. on the north side of Griggs Street east of Manzanita Street;
6. along Bowman Street east of Manzanita Street;
7. and along the south side of Texas Street.



Map 7. Historical Significance
Mesquite Neighborhood Design Plan
 Historical Significance - August 2004





II. Neighborhood Design Goals

The Goals, Objectives and Strategies presented here are the result of an extensive public input process by the City of Las Cruces staff with Residents, the Las Esperanzas neighborhood group and Business Owners in both the North and South Mesquite districts.

A decision was reached by these groups during the planning process that all implementation plans and expenditures of Legislative funds would concentrate on the Mesquite neighborhood south of Spruce Avenue. The Residents and Business Owners of the North Mesquite District would pursue their own funding and determine their priorities. The resulting Zoning Code ordinances were also divided into the North Mesquite Overlay (Section 38-49.1) and the South Mesquite Overlay (Section 38-49.2).

A. Land Use

In compliance with the South Mesquite Neighborhood Overlay Zone District, adopted May 24, 2005:

Objective 1: Encourage more small-scale commercial businesses to locate within walking distance of Mesquite residents.

Strategies

- 1) Allow businesses greater flexibility for on-street parking.

Objective 2: Facilitate development of more businesses that cater to other segments of the City of Las Cruces. (SFI)

Strategies

- 1) Allow businesses greater flexibility for on-street parking.

Objective 3: Prevent Las Cruces Downtown development and traffic flow imperatives from encroaching on or destroying the Mesquite Neighborhood.

Strategies:

- 1) Limit permitted uses, size and height of buildings across the street from the new Federal Courthouse.

B. Historic District

Objective 1: Preserve and enhance the unique historic character of the Mesquite St.-Original Townsite Historic District and Neighborhood Plan boundaries.

Strategies:

- 1) Provide architectural continuity and compatibility throughout the plan's boundaries.
 - Use 2001 Zoning Code's Flex-Standard provisions
- 2) Maintain a visual balance and rhythm between walls, doors, and windows along a given street segment.
- 3) New development should use the front and side yard setbacks found along the subject property's street segment.
- 4) Remodeling projects should maintain the existing structure's front and side yard setbacks.



- Locate doors/entryways on the streetside façade.
 - Windows should be compatible with neighboring buildings in terms of placement, size, and shape.
 - Roof materials and styles generally found on neighboring buildings should be used on new development and remodeling projects.
 - Set attached or detached garages back from the primary structure so that the primary structure is the main focus along the street front.
- 5) New development and remodeling projects should use construction materials on all exterior facades that are compatible with those found in the surrounding area. Examples of common materials found in this area include adobe, brick, stone, limeplaster, and stucco.
- 6) New development locating within the boundaries of the Mesquite Neighborhood Plan and especially the Mesquite St. - Original Townsite Historic District should be constructed at a human scale.
- 7) New development and remodeling projects should create a landscape design, whether for a commercial or residential project, that is compatible with the subject property's street segment.
- 8) Integrate urban design standards into all properties that contain office, commercial, and residential uses.
- 9) Establish an Urban Design Review Board to review new projects and exterior alterations to ensure the policies listed in this objective are carried out.
- 10) Implement an historic overlay zoning district.
- 11) Encourage Las Esperanzas to assist area residents with questions regarding the preservation of historic structures, local preservation guidelines, low interest loans, etc. to preserve the historical integrity and residential character.
- 12) Ensure that local historic designations follow the National Register and New Mexico State historical designation categories.
- 13) Investigate the possibility of taking part in the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office's Certified Local Government (CLG) Program to receive supplementary technical assistance and the ability to apply for historical grant funding by creating a board, such as the UDRB mentioned earlier, to review and provide comments on construction plans for historic structures.
- 14) Seek funding to update the Mesquite St.- Original Townsite Historic District's historic designations with the State and National



Registers and continue to do so in a timely manner.

- 15) Establish guidelines to preserve the historic quality and character of both the historic district and historic structures located in the Mesquite St.-Original Townsite Historic District. Guidelines should apply to all additions, accessory structures, new construction, and any exterior remodeling projects taking place within the boundaries of the historic district regardless of historical designation as those described in the Urban Design Section of this document.
- 16) Discourage the demolition of historic structures.

Objective 2: Improve the overall look and feel of the area

Strategies:

- 1) Control visual blight, such as unscreened storage areas and refuse containers.
- 2) Investigate programs for façade and site improvements.
- 3) Work with the City's Codes and Enforcement officers to further minimize issues dealing with municipal code violations in the area.
- 4) Create a beautification plan that will provide an aesthetic component throughout the Neighborhood Plan's boundaries.

C. Housing

Objective 1: Create, restore, and rehabilitate and maintain affordable housing in the Mesquite neighborhood without pricing current residents out of the market (ie, gentrification).

Strategies:

- 1) Continues and expand the City of Las Cruces' efforts with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and HOME Program funds.
- 2) Investigate program that allow in-kind labor partnerships for the purpose of creating affordable housing and rehabilitating existing residences.
- 3) Explore the possibilities of combining City, state and federal resources/monies to assist with affordable housing and rehabilitation.
- 4) Seek assistance from those with experience in structural rehabilitation to conduct workshops for area residents/property owners. Investigate creating partnerships with New Mexico State University, Dona Ana Branch Community College, non-profit and community groups.

Objective 2: Increase home ownership



D. Streetscape

Objective 1: Create an attractive streetscape that enhances the unique character of the Mesquite Neighborhood Plan boundaries and provides a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Strategies



- 1) Encourage the use of well-designed, visually attractive bus stops, shelters, and benches within the neighborhood.
 - Investigate the use of Federal Transit Authority monies to improve transit stops.
 - Investigate the use of CDBG and other types of grant funding for bus stop improvements.
- 2) Encourage the use of appealing, yet functional street lights in the Mesquite Neighborhood Plan Boundaries.
- 3) Use special street signs to help convey the historic character of the Mesquite Neighborhood Plan Boundaries.
- 4) Develop a maintenance schedule for area sidewalks to ensure that the existing sidewalks are properly maintained and to avoid higher replacement costs in the future.
- 5) Identify those areas that lack sidewalks and develop a construction schedule for those areas that focuses on connectivity.

- 6) Encourage property owners to acquire historic plaques and/or markers for their historic properties.
- 7) Investigate additional traffic calming measures in the area, such as curb cuts, to provide a more pedestrian-friendly environment.
- 8) Examine the possibility of bus service that links this general area to New Mexico State University.
- 9) Support the Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization's bicycle planning activities.

Objective 2: Use urban design concepts to help make the Mesquite St.-Original Townsite Historic District a physically safer environment.

Strategies:

- 1) Create and improve safe pedestrian crossings from the Mesquite Neighborhood to Downtown Las Cruces, particularly across Campo Street.
- 2) Maintain existing sidewalks and construct new ones.
- 3) Encourage the use of both appealing and functional street lights to provide light as a means of warding-off criminal activity.

-
- 
- 
- 4) Encourage the vacation of alleys, where possible, to limit areas where criminal activity may occur.
 - 5) Investigate areas where traffic calming should occur and what types of methods should be used in order to restrict traffic to permitted speeds.

Objective 2: Create additional green space in the neighborhood.

Strategies:

- 1) Convert vacant lots into parks and community open space.
- 2) Support the efforts of neighborhood groups, such as Las Esperanzas to acquire vacant parcels and convert them into community green space.
- 3) Where feasible, donate City services and property that would enhance the efforts of neighborhood groups to increase green space within the boundaries of the Mesquite Neighborhood Plan and the Historic District.
- 4) Advocate the placement of parks, green space, and/or community gardens to provide green or garden boundary markers for the Mesquite St.-Original Townsite Historic District.
- 5) Investigate the possibility of converting city-owned vacant parcels into usable green space or parks for residents and visitors.
- 6) Encourage coordination with neighborhood groups to provide opportunities for synergistic benefits, such as city owned-parks located adjacent to community green spaces.

E. Signage and Wayfinding

Objective 1: Signage for businesses located in the neighborhood plan boundaries should blend with the architectural character of the property to which they pertain.

Strategies:

- 1) Establish signage standards for businesses within neighborhood boundaries.
- 2) Recognize Las Cruces' original Townsite by erecting historic markers delineating its boundaries.
- 3) Distinguish the Mesquite St.-Original Townsite Historic District with street signage that conveys the district's official boundaries.

F. Parks and Gardens

Objective 1: Design and create a community garden.



G. Funding and Implementation

Objective 1: Implement the strategies in this document.

Strategies:

- 1) Utilize the adopted overlay zoning district ordinance to improve the neighborhood.
- 2) Promote the use of this document as a policy guide when decisions are being made.

Objective 2: Identify funding sources and alternatives to provide the desired amenities and improvements.

Strategies:

- 1) Encourage neighborhood groups, such as Las Esperanzas, to apply for state and federal grants for neighborhood improvements.
- 2) Work with City departments to investigate the feasibility of making those improvements that are possible without excessive/additional cost to the City and taxpayers.

III. Neighborhood Plan Elements

A decision was reached during the planning process by representatives of the Las Esperanzas group, the Residents and Business Owners of the North Mesquite District, and City staff that all implementation plans and expenditure of Legislative funds would concentrate on the Mesquite Neighborhood South of Spruce Avenue. The Residents and Business Owners of the North Mesquite District would pursue their own funding and determine their priorities.

A. Land Use

1. Proposed Land Use Concept

A. Residential

The majority of land uses within the Mesquite Neighborhood boundary are single family detached homes. There are also a substantial number of parcels used for apartments of eight or more units and a lesser number for multi-family dwellings with from two to six units. Most of these higher density units are concentrated around the heart of the neighborhood area between Spruce and Bowman. While new single family residential infill is encouraged for areas throughout the Historic District, development of moderate density residential is encouraged in the area along San Pedro between Picacho and Court streets (see map 8). This area is currently zoned for office use. Bringing in moderate density patio or townhomes provides the opportunity to create a more urban housing choice in an area that is close to existing office and retail areas as well as within walking distance to the “revitalizing” Downtown area. This should be able to be accomplished without disrupting the historic fabric of the neighborhood.



B. Commercial

Community serving commercial uses predominate along Lohman and Amador, following the zoning and enhanced automobile access provided by the one-way streets. Low intensity neighborhood serving commercial uses dot portions of Mesquite Street and occupy a few locations on Campo Street and at the northern end of the plan boundary.

An objective of this Plan is to encourage neighborhood serving commercial businesses to be located within walking distance of Mesquite residents. At the same time the area surrounding Klein Park offers a unique opportunity to create a special mixed use commercial area that could provide specialty shops, restaurants and housing that could serve the neighborhood and at the same time capitalize on the re-emergence of an active downtown workforce and growing residential population. The special historic character of the Klein Park area and its “walkability” from Downtown could make it a much desired destination as a special place to eat, shop or live. The pedestrian focus of new commercial development is critical to minimize the encroachment of the automobile into the neighborhood.

The Plan recommends a possible strategy that proposes that the area along Mesquite Street north of Villa Mora Avenue could become a primarily commercial and “live work” location to respond to the preponderance of commercial establishments and vacant land. The current zoning in the area with a little revision would support that strategy. The area south of Villa Mora Avenue should remain primarily residential. This concept is depicted on Map 8.

C. Office

Office development that is designed with sensitivity to the historic traditions of the Mesquite Neighborhood is encouraged for the area along Campo Street between Picacho and Hadley streets. This area is zoned for these uses and has been overlaid with design requirements (SMO, May 24, 2005) to insure its compatibility with the

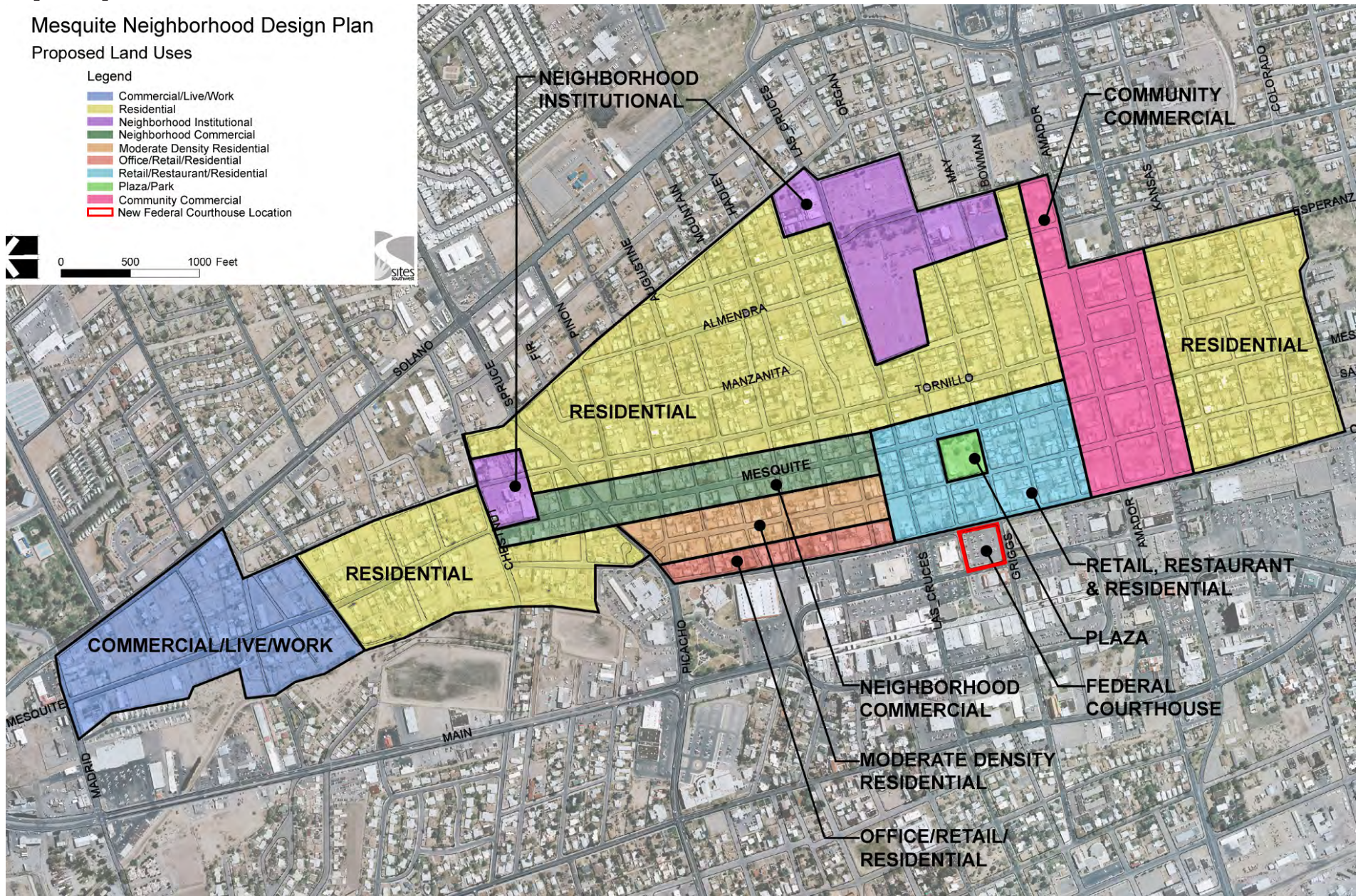
Map 8. Proposed Land Uses

Mesquite Neighborhood Design Plan

Proposed Land Uses

Legend

- Commercial/Live/Work
- Residential
- Neighborhood Institutional
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Moderate Density Residential
- Office/Retail/Residential
- Retail/Restaurant/Residential
- Plaza/Park
- Community Commercial
- New Federal Courthouse Location





Neighborhood. If done properly this area could create a transitional buffer to the Neighborhood and present a “face” to the Downtown that reinforces the history of the area.

D. Mixed Use

Mixed use development, such as retail/residential and/or retail/restaurant is especially encouraged around Klein Park which could come to serve as a plaza and focal point for neighborhood activity and business. One concept for properties on the north side of Campo is to introduce a 2-story mixed use type of development comprised of retail shops, offices, or restaurants on the ground level with residential units on the second floor. This concept could create both a vibrant center for neighborhood business and an important link to and attraction for the nearby area of Downtown Las Cruces. This concept will need to be carefully studied to insure that “contributing” buildings are not compromised and that the historic integrity of the area is not compromised.

E. Neighborhood Institutional Areas

There are two areas in the neighborhood that are significant activity centers for those living in Mesquite. They both are energized by the existence of neighborhood churches. These areas include a section south of Chestnut Avenue between Mesquite and Tornillo streets and the area roughly bounded by Court Avenue, Martinez Street, Bowman Street, and Manzanita Street.

B. Historic District

1. Recommendations for the Future

The following represents a summary of recommendations made in the 2004 Weisiger and Associates’ *Mesquite Street- Original Townsite Historic District Reconnaissance Survey*. (See Appendix A for more detailed recommendations in the final report for the survey.)

- A. An Overlay Zone has been adopted to protect the current low-scale, residential character of the Mesquite Street-Original Townsite Historic District, while providing funding for existing commercial use and mixed use along the edges.
- B. Revise historic district documentation and amend the boundaries of the National Register Historic District to include areas with a large number of historically “contributing” buildings and the boundaries of the State Register Historic District to exclude areas on the fringe with a high number of “non-contributing” buildings (see map 7).
- C. An Overlay Zone ordinance has been adopted with design review to preserve the historic character of the Mesquite Street-Original Townsite Historic District.
- D. Encourage neighborhood awareness of and pride in the historic character of the district with public events.
- E. Encourage property owners to preserve the historic character of the buildings (see Pages 30-32 for examples).
- F. Develop programs through the City of Las Cruces to promote the preservation of historic adobe buildings.
- G. Acquire funding to purchase one or more buildings in “poor condition” and rehabilitate them for resale as a demonstration project, outdoor laboratory, and fund-raising project.

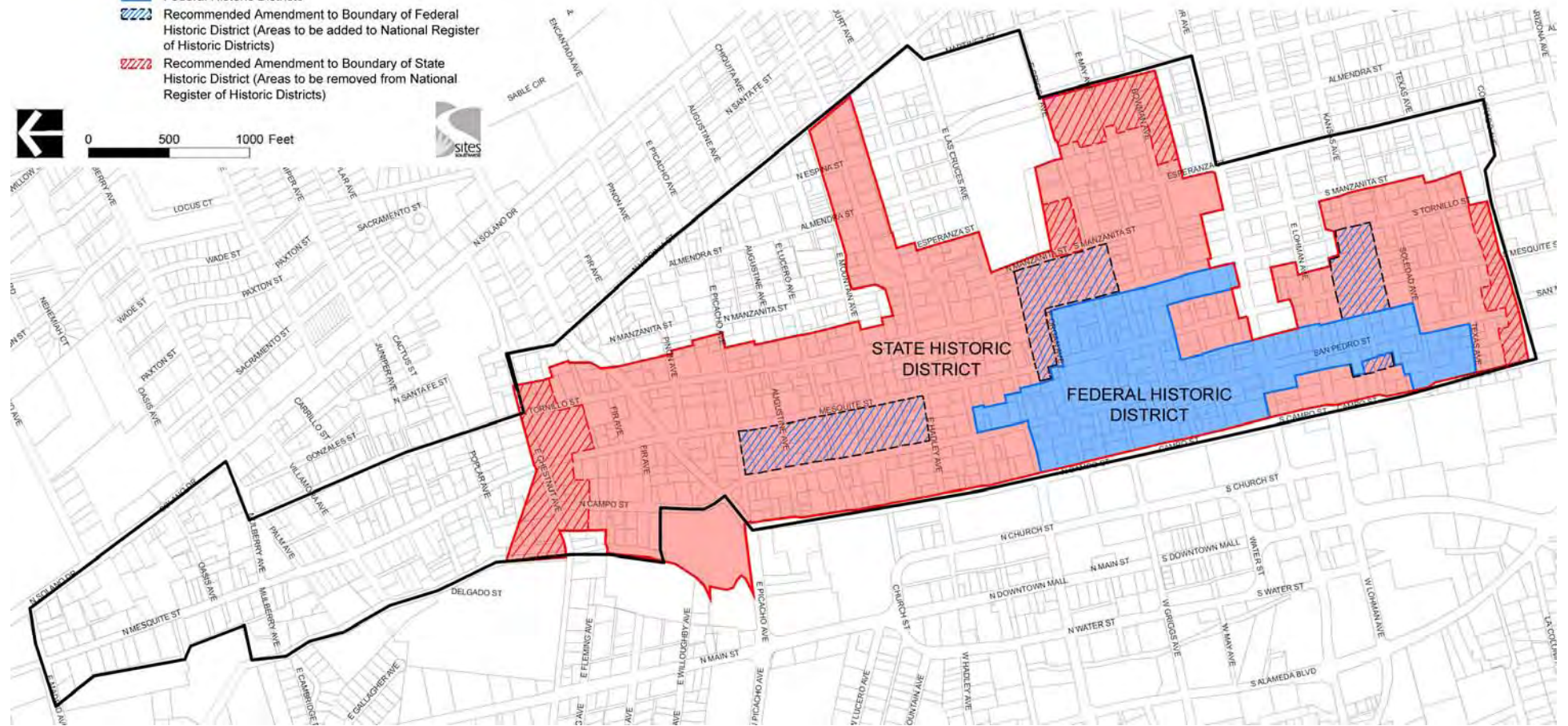
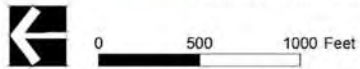


Mesquite Neighborhood Design Plan

Historic District Boundaries

Legend

- State Historic Districts
- Federal Historic Districts
- Recommended Amendment to Boundary of Federal Historic District (Areas to be added to National Register of Historic Districts)
- Recommended Amendment to Boundary of State Historic District (Areas to be removed from National Register of Historic Districts)



C. Housing

1. Infill Sites






There are a number of vacant lots in residential areas located within both the National and State Register historic districts. These lots are the ideal starting point for the development of residential infill projects to create, restore, rehabilitate, and maintain affordable housing in the Mesquite Neighborhood that also further enhances the character of the existing neighborhood. A Design Overlay Zone has recently been adopted that regulates setbacks and presents design guidelines for new construction. A secondary intent of infill development is to increase home ownership and owner occupied housing within the neighborhood. Any new residential development should be built in a style that reflects the existing historically “contributing” buildings. New homes should be designed and constructed with architectural details and materials that “fit in” with the existing historic homes and capture the spirit of the neighborhood while remaining distinctive from the historic fabric. Ideally any new construction should not be an exact replica of any existing building within the district, but simply be made to blend in seamless with the surrounding neighborhood and look as if it had been constructed in or before 1955 by utilizing design, craftsmanship, materials, and colors that would have been in use during that time. Therefore, the use of materials such as adobe and lime stucco and the replication of historic rooflines and window and door placement styles are recommended. Core areas that could be developed with infill sites are illustrated in the Priority Infill Sites Map on the following page (see Map 10).



Mesquite Neighborhood Design Plan

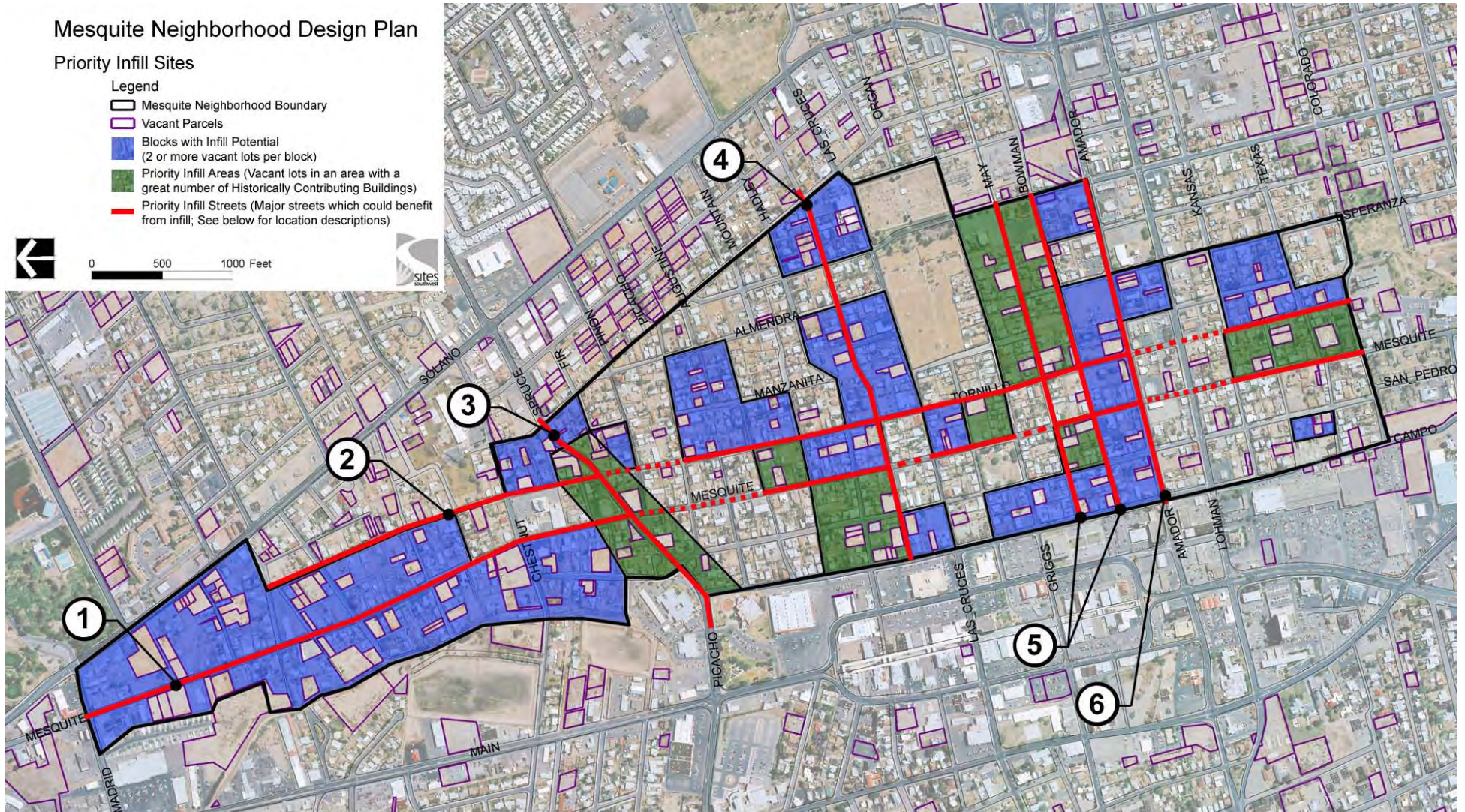
Priority Infill Sites

Legend

-  Mesquite Neighborhood Boundary
-  Vacant Parcels
-  Blocks with Infill Potential (2 or more vacant lots per block)
-  Priority Infill Areas (Vacant lots in an area with a great number of Historically Contributing Buildings)
-  Priority Infill Streets (Major streets which could benefit from infill; See below for location descriptions)



0 500 1000 Feet



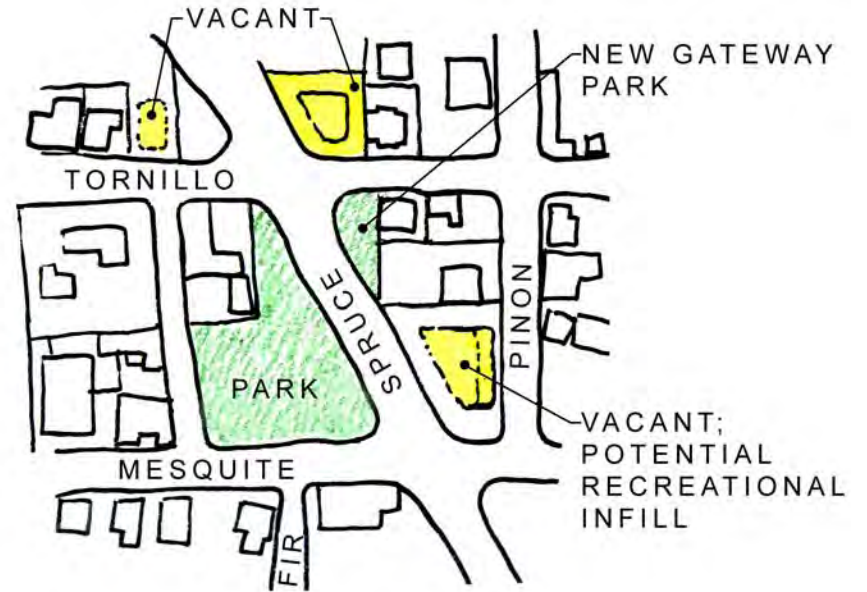
- 1) Mesquite Street (Especially between Madrid & Picacho)
- 2) Tornillo (Especially between Picacho/Spruce & Colorado)
- 3) Picacho/Spruce between San Pedro & Virginia
- 4) Court Avenue between Campo & Virginia
- 5) May and Bowman between Campo & Espina
- 6) North Side of Amador between Campo & Espina



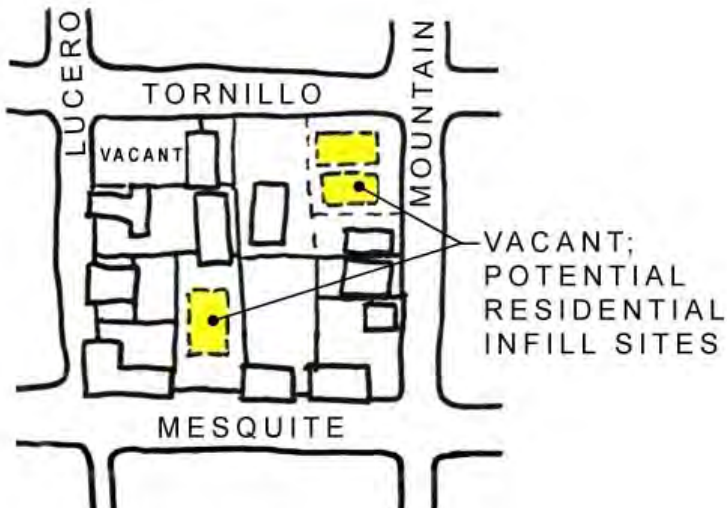
Potential Infill Sites

As described previously, there are a number of vacant lots scattered throughout the historic district that could be used for infill development. Generally speaking, any lots big enough to support residential development should be utilized for new homes. However, in the right circumstances, smaller sites could be developed as pocket parks or small community plazas to provide more public recreation and gathering spaces for the neighborhood. General examples of how such infill development might look are illustrated below. Specific locations would be determined by targeting blocks or areas within the district where infill, either residential or recreational, could have a maximum positive impact on the neighborhood.

In some cases there are multiple vacant lots near or adjacent to buildings that are designated as contributing to the historic character of the neighborhood, but are “brought down” by nearby unkempt lots. As shown in the example below, these areas, particularly those that lie within the neighborhood commercial areas, could be infilled with either housing or community oriented retail sites constructed in a style to further enhance the historic character of the neighborhood.



In other areas, there are vacant lots near or adjacent to existing park land. In addition to refurbishing the existing parks, these vacant areas could be developed as additional park land or as recreation or activity related community center type buildings or small plazas. In the example above, a series of small park and plaza areas could be developed to create a gateway area.



2. *Rehabilitation Sites*

Based on the reconnaissance survey, there are a number of houses within the historic district that are contributing to the historic character of the neighborhood, but which are currently in poor condition. These houses could be targeted as a first priority for overall rehabilitation within the historic district. As described above, the goal of rehabilitation is to preserve, and enhance and recreate the historical integrity of original buildings through the use of a historically appropriate palette of design styles, details, materials, and colors. The key to this type of rehabilitation will be neighborhood involvement. As Weisiger and Associates suggest in their 2004 Mesquite Street Original Townsite Historic District Reconnaissance Survey (see Appendix A), property owners must be encouraged to preserve the historic character of their buildings. Suggestions for providing such encouragement include:

- Developing a homeowners guide for monitoring, repairing, and rehabilitating adobe buildings.
- Sponsoring a workshop to educate and create a pool of masonry and plaster contractors and general contractors trained to properly repair adobe buildings with lime plaster.
- Sponsoring a workshop to educate homeowners regarding the monitoring, proper repair, and rehabilitation of adobe buildings. This workshop should focus on the replacement of cement stucco with lime plaster, the proper repair of roofs, and regarding around the foundation for proper drainage. Ideally a member of the neighborhood could be encouraged to volunteer the appropriate rehabilitation of his or her home as a demonstration project.

- Encouraging the use of state and federal tax credits for the rehabilitation of residential and commercial properties and establishing a neighborhood resource-person to help building owners plan projects and complete paperwork.
- Creating a materials stockpile (screens, screened aggregate, adobe bricks, adobe mud, sand for mortar, lime) to keep needed materials available to homeowners at low cost.
- Creating a tool lending library and reference library to promote appropriate rehabilitation.
- Encouraging the removal of Portland cement stucco and concrete collars and replacement with lime plaster.
- Creating a team of neighborhood resource-people, trained in the appropriate treatment of historic adobe buildings, to inspect and monitor adobe buildings and make recommendations for rehabilitation.
- Encouraging building owners to provide better drainage around their foundations to shed water away from adobe walls.
- Encourage the repair, rather than the replacement of historic windows. The replacement of windows – a key design characteristic – is the chief reason for loss of historical integrity in the Mesquite Neighborhood.



Specific areas within the historic district that could become core areas for rehabilitation are illustrated in the Priority Rehabilitation Sites Map (see Map 11).

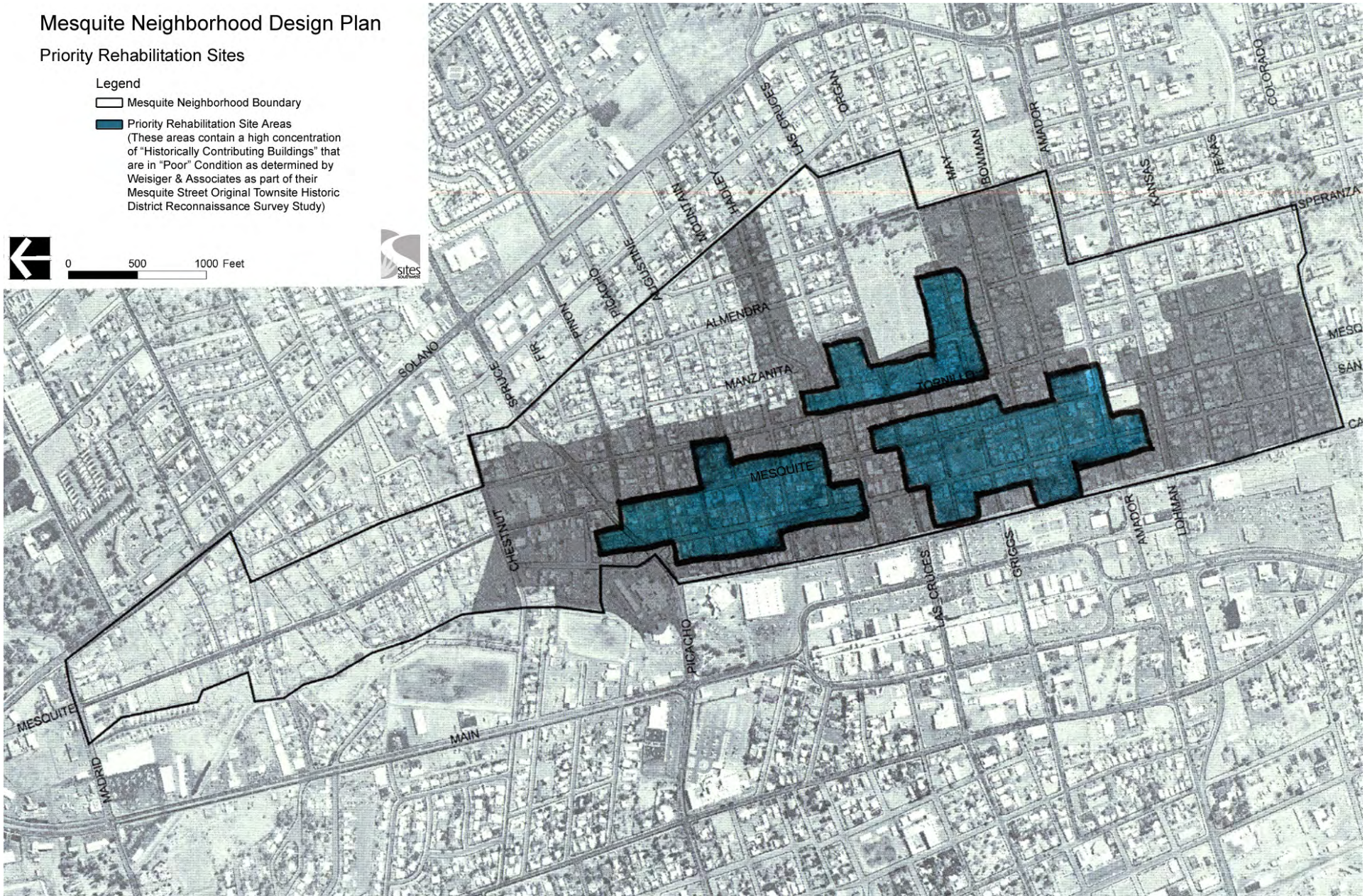
Map 11. Priority Rehabilitation Sites

Mesquite Neighborhood Design Plan

Priority Rehabilitation Sites

Legend

-  Mesquite Neighborhood Boundary
-  Priority Rehabilitation Site Areas
(These areas contain a high concentration of "Historically Contributing Buildings" that are in "Poor" Condition as determined by Weisiger & Associates as part of their Mesquite Street Original Townsite Historic District Reconnaissance Survey Study)





Potential Rehabilitation Sites

Recommendations:

Rehabilitation is recommended for all buildings which are considered to be “contributing” to the historic character of the neighborhood. However, perhaps a first priority would be buildings which are considered to be in “poor” condition. As described above, the determination of building as being in “poor”, “fair”, or “good” condition was made by Weisiger and Associates in the 2004 Mesquite Street-Original Townsite Historic District Reconnaissance Survey (See Appendix A). “Poor” condition is defined in the survey as: “Five or more minor defects OR two or more major defects OR one major defect and four minor defect OR one critical defect (that is, one that may make the building too dilapidated to repair.” Examples of defects include problems with stucco, concrete collars, roof, foundation, drainage, structural cracks, or other major structural problems. A list of such “poor” condition, but historically significant buildings can be found in the full report developed by Weisiger and Associates.

Additionally, it may also be beneficial to rehabilitate even some of the “non-contributing” buildings. In a few instances, appropriate rehabilitation could make these non-contributing buildings contribute to the district once more, because their dilapidated condition resulted in such a loss of integrity that they earned a “non-contributing” assessment. Rehabilitation of such sites (identified in the reconnaissance survey) would enhance the historic district and help revitalize the neighborhood (see Map 7 and Appendix A).



3. Façade Enhancement

There are a number of historically “contributing” homes within the historic district which are in fair enough condition that they only need a bit of a face-lift rather than a complete rehabilitation. These homes could benefit from façade enhancement involving the application of new paint or stucco, window or doorway repair, new fence or wall treatment, or the removal or addition of trees or other plantings, and so on. As with infill and rehabilitation, the goal of façade enhancement is to maintain and enhance the historic character of homes within the district. Therefore, any improvements made to historic structure should reflect the period in which it was constructed. Only colors, materials, and design details and styles which reflect an appearance of how the structure looked in 1955 or earlier should be utilized. Particular attention should be paid to maintaining traditional rooflines and historic window and door placement.

Many of the suggestions mentioned above for encouraging residents to become actively involved in rehabilitation of buildings in poor condition could also equally benefit homeowners who are trying to maintain and improve buildings that are in good or fair condition. In particular, homeowners updating and improving their buildings through the City’s weatherization program should be careful to coordinate changes to ensure that they support criteria for historically contributing buildings.

Although buildings throughout the historic district could always benefit from some level of façade enhancement, areas within the historic district that could become core areas of enhancement are illustrated in the Priority Façade Enhancement Sites Map on the following page (see Map 12).



The enhancements shown below include a new, more traditional roofline as well as a new door and windows, new stucco, a new porch, wall, gate, and plantings





Map 12. Priority Facade Enhancement Sites

Mesquite Neighborhood Design Plan

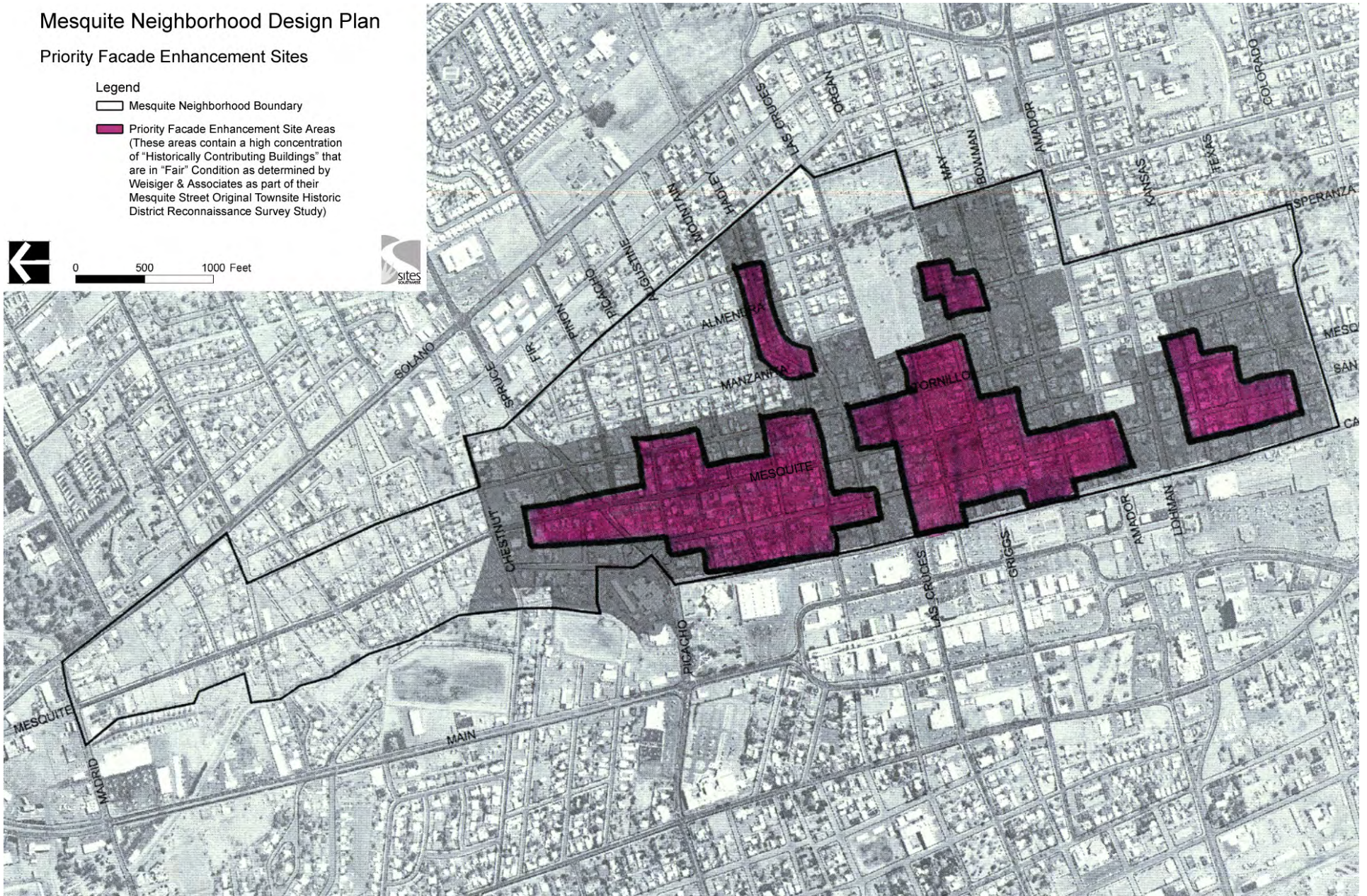
Priority Facade Enhancement Sites

Legend

-  Mesquite Neighborhood Boundary
-  Priority Facade Enhancement Site Areas
(These areas contain a high concentration of "Historically Contributing Buildings" that are in "Fair" Condition as determined by Weisiger & Associates as part of their Mesquite Street Original Townsite Historic District Reconnaissance Survey Study)



0 500 1000 Feet



Potential Façade Enhancements

Throughout the Mesquite neighborhood there are many buildings, homes and businesses alike, which could be revived through facade enhancement. These buildings, while in fair enough condition that they do not need to be completely rehabilitated, still may not be contributing to the historic character of the neighborhood as much as they could. These homes and businesses may benefit from non-structural enhancement which could involve new paint or stucco, new fencing or wall treatments, the removal or addition of trees or other plantings, and so on. Although the goal of facade enhancement is to “spruce up” the exterior of buildings with minor

non-structural defects, in the Mesquite historic neighborhood it is essential that any improvements to a structure reflect the period in which it was constructed. Therefore, all paint colors, building materials, and design details and styles should emulate those used in the historic district prior to 1955. In many cases simple changes to recently completed, more modern updates should allow the original character of historic homes to shine though once again. In particular, traditional rooflines and window placement should be maintained or restored and new materials, such as Portland cement, should be replaced with traditional materials such as lime plaster.



Facade enhancements shown above include new paint on the house & wall, a new gate, and new trees & shrubs



Facade enhancements shown above include new paint, tile accents, and an archway for the wall and new plantings



Facade enhancements shown above include new tile accents on the roof, a new wall, archway, gate, and plants




D. Streetscape

A key design objective of the neighborhood plan is to develop attractive streetscapes that will enhance and further define the unique character of the Mesquite neighborhood and provide a pedestrian-friendly environment (see examples on Pages 34-37). The use of streetscape amenities such as well-designed, visually attractive bus stops, shelters, and benches, appealing, yet functional street lights, street trees and other plantings, more unified wall and fencing treatments, updated or specialty paving, special street signs, and historic plaques could create a more attractive, pedestrian-oriented, and physically safer environment for the Mesquite Historic Neighborhood. The streets that should receive special attention include Mesquite Street, Picacho & Spruce avenues, Hadley Avenue, Las Cruces Avenue, and Amador & Lohman avenues.

1. Major Streetscapes

Mesquite Street - Mesquite Street should be a key focus area for streetscape improvement. Although it is a minor arterial, Mesquite Street is *the* major North-South street running through the heart of the historic district. Defining and enhancing the character of this neighborhood “main street” will impact the visual quality, pedestrian-friendliness, and commercial character of the entire historic district. Suggested improvements include: widening the sidewalk (if right-of-way allows) to include a planting strip with periodic bulb-outs for street trees, lighting, bus stops, shelters, street furnishings, and signage; specialty paving along sidewalks and at major intersections to reflect and enhance the historic character of the neighborhood; and a focus on rehabilitation and façade improvement for any historically “contributing” buildings along Mesquite Street.

Las Cruces Avenue - As both an East-West street that runs right through the heart of the historic district and an important link to nearby Downtown Las Cruces, Las Cruces Avenue should also be a focus area for streetscape enhancement. The streetscape design for Las Cruces Street should include elements of both the Mesquite neighborhood’s historic character and the newer feel of nearby Downtown Las Cruces. Perhaps the type of street lighting and street tree scheme could match or emulate, on a more neighborhood scale, the style of the downtown area, while the paving, street furnishings and signage could be a unique reflection of Mesquite’s historic character.



Picacho / Spruce Avenue - Picacho / Spruce Avenue is a major East-West arterial located several blocks north of the Mesquite Historic Neighborhood’s central core. It links the neighborhood to the northern end of Downtown and provides an opportunity for a gateway area at its Mesquite Street intersection. As with Las Cruces Avenue, the streetscape scheme for Picacho could emulate some of the newer style of the downtown area while maintaining the flavor and human scale of the Mesquite’s historic neighborhood. As a major arterial through the neighborhood, this street feels more car-oriented than pedestrian-friendly. To make it safer and more desirable for pedestrian traffic certain traffic calming measures such as clearly defined pedestrian crossings at intersections, wide comfortable sidewalks with a planting buffer, street trees, lighting, street furnishings and human-scale signage could be incorporated into the streetscape scheme.

Hadley Avenue - Hadley is an East-West collector two blocks north of Las Cruces Avenue. As with Las Cruces and Picacho / Spruce Avenues, Hadley Avenue does provide a connection between the historic Mesquite Neighborhood and Downtown Las Cruces and, therefore, may also benefit from a somewhat blended style streetscape scheme. Because it is only two blocks away from Las Cruces, a key East-West linking streetscape, perhaps Hadley’s streetscape could share some of the same elements as Las Cruces Avenue albeit on a slightly smaller scale (i.e. fewer streetlights and furnishings, etc. than Las Cruces Avenue except at the intersection of Hadley Avenue & Mesquite Street where a full-blown streetscape scheme seems appropriate).

Amador Avenue & Lohman Avenue - Although Amador and Lohman are both major community-serving streets, streetscape improvements could allow these busy, one-way, downtown-oriented streets to tie in more with the Historic Mesquite Neighborhood. Specialty paving at major intersections could create more visible and safer pedestrian zones. Beyond special paving, the creation of a street tree scheme, a lighting scheme, and the addition of pedestrian amenities, such as bus stops, shelters, and benches, would provide a more human-scale environment along these busy arterials. Such streetscape enhancement would help define the character of these streets, allowing them to better relate to and reflect the historic, residential character of the surrounding neighborhood.

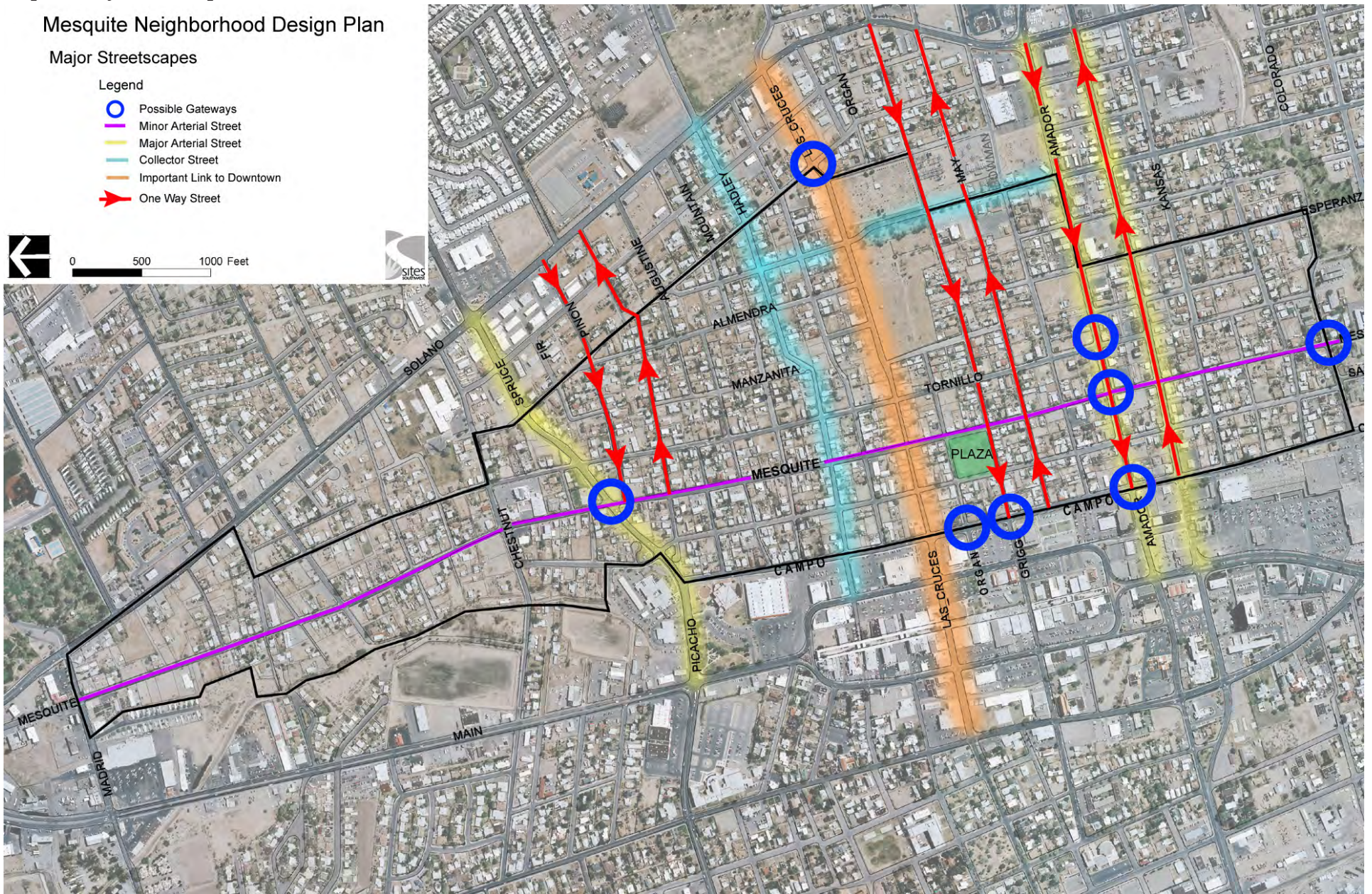
Map 13. Major Streetscapes

Mesquite Neighborhood Design Plan

Major Streetscapes

Legend

-  Possible Gateways
-  Minor Arterial Street
-  Major Arterial Street
-  Collector Street
-  Important Link to Downtown
-  One Way Street

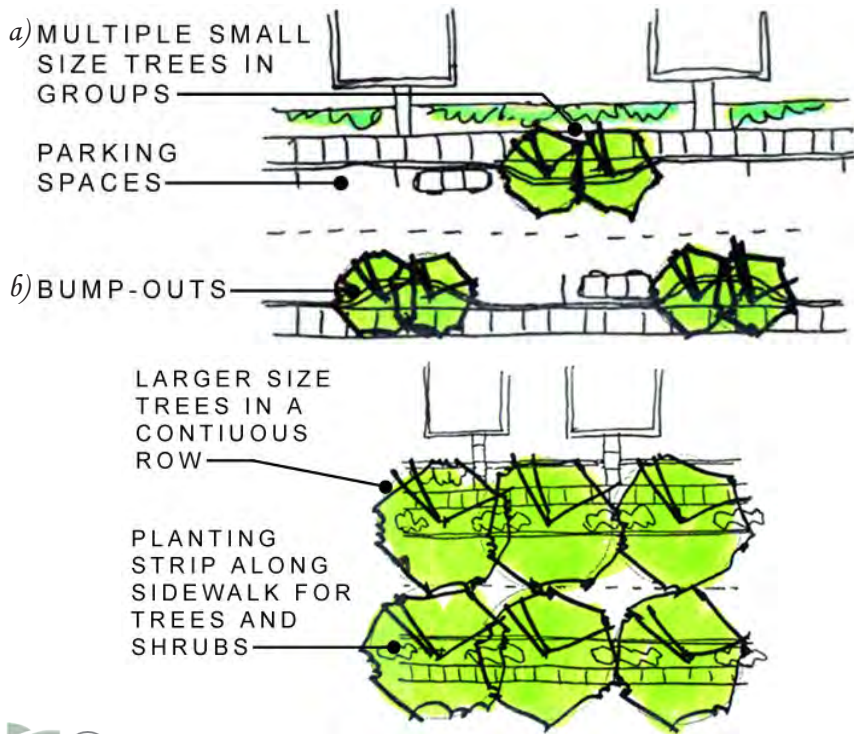


2. Landscape/Hardscape

Improvements to landscape and hardscape elements along major streetscapes through the neighborhood and at key intersections would provide an immediate, attractive, and unifying look for the district. Street trees and other plantings along major streetscapes and specialty paving at central intersections, in small parks and plaza areas, and at gateway locations will help enhance and define the historic character of the neighborhood and encourage pedestrian traffic within the district.

a. Street Tree Placement

The diagrams below illustrate two possible street tree placement schemes for planting along major streetscapes in the Mesquite Historic Neighborhood. The first scheme (a) depicts new trees planted within regularly spaced “bump-outs” added along existing sidewalks. Such placement could provide shade for pedestrians and parked cars and provide some distance between the sidewalk and



roadway to create a safer, more pedestrian-friendly streetscape. The second scheme (b) depicts street trees planted in a continuous planting strip along the outer edge of the sidewalk.

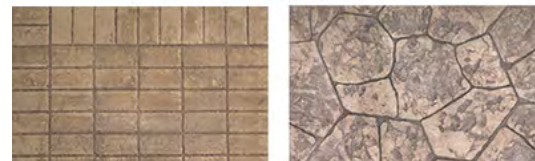
b. Street Tree Types

Suggested types of street trees include:

- Arizona Ash
- Modesto Ash
- Chinese Pistache
- Palo Verde 'Desert Museum

c. Hardscape: Materials & Details

Suggested options for hardscape enhancement include pigmented or color washed/stained concrete paving in traditional colors, possibly with brick, stone, or tile inset detailing, at prominent streetscape locations (i.e. gateway areas, major intersections, in park or plaza areas, and along the edges of sidewalks and/or planting strips on major pedestrian routes). Additionally, low adobe & stucco walls, possibly with seating bays and brick, stone, or tile inset detailing could be placed in similar locations.



Adobe Walls with Decorative Accents



d. Klein Park

The location of Klein Park makes it ideally suited to become a focal point, a town square, for the Mesquite Historic Neighborhood. Close to Downtown Las Cruces, yet centrally located along Mesquite Street, the Klein Park area could become a vibrant hub of mixed use activity with shops, restaurants, and homes encircling a central plaza. (See example plazas below.)



1. Suggested Plant Materials

- | | | | |
|---------------------|---|--------------------|-------------------|
| Trees: | Shrubs: | Perennials: | |
| - Mexican Hat | - Yuccas, Bear Grass, Parry’s Agave | - Yarrow | - Mexican Hat |
| - Mexican Poppy | - Sages (Sand Sage, Big Sage, Mexican Blue Sage, Cherry Sage, Chihuahuan Sage, Grayball Sage) | - Penstemons | - Mexican Poppy |
| - Globe Mallow | - Fourwing Saltbush | - Catmint | - Globe Mallow |
| - Desert Marigold | - Chamisa, Apache Plume, Winterfat | - Aster | - Desert Marigold |
| - Gaura | - Arizona Rosewood, Bird of Paradise | - Chocolate Flower | - Gaura |
| - Powis Castle Sage | - Spreading Candelilla | - Paper Flower | - Powis Castle |
| - Plume Tiquilia | - Trailing Rosemary | - Trailing Indigo | - Sage |
| | | | - Plume Tiquilia |

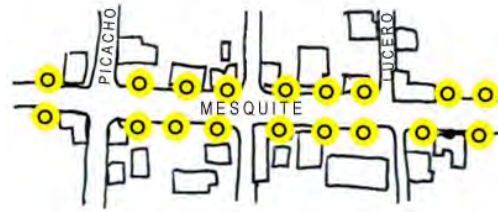
2. Suggested equipment for Klein Park includes multiple park benches (some in well-shaded areas) and/or low seatwalls, ample lighting, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, a small shelter or stage area for neighborhood events and celebrations, and perhaps some sort of central feature such as artwork or a fountain

3. Lighting

Historically appropriate style street lights can also add tremendous character and visual unity to the neighborhood while increasing pedestrian safety. The systematic replacement of the current “cobrahead” fixtures with historically sensitive street lights would make a major positive improvement to the traditional character of the area.



Intersections & Gateways



Major Streetscapes
& Pedestrian Routes



Parks or Plazas

Specialty Lighting

There are several locations within the district where it may be appropriate to introduce specialty lighting fixtures. For example, specialty lighting could be introduced at key intersections and gateway areas, along major streetscapes and pedestrian routes, or at feature locations such as parks or community plaza areas. As illustrated in the Existing Lighting Map (see Map 14), there is an existing infrastructure of lighting in the Mesquite Neighborhood that could be utilized for the development of a more extensive lighting system.

Possible Lighting Types & Details

A number of different lighting styles, such as those illustrated below, could be utilized to reflect and enhance the historic character of the Mesquite Neighborhood. Further research is recommended to determine the best suited, most historically accurate style of light fixture.



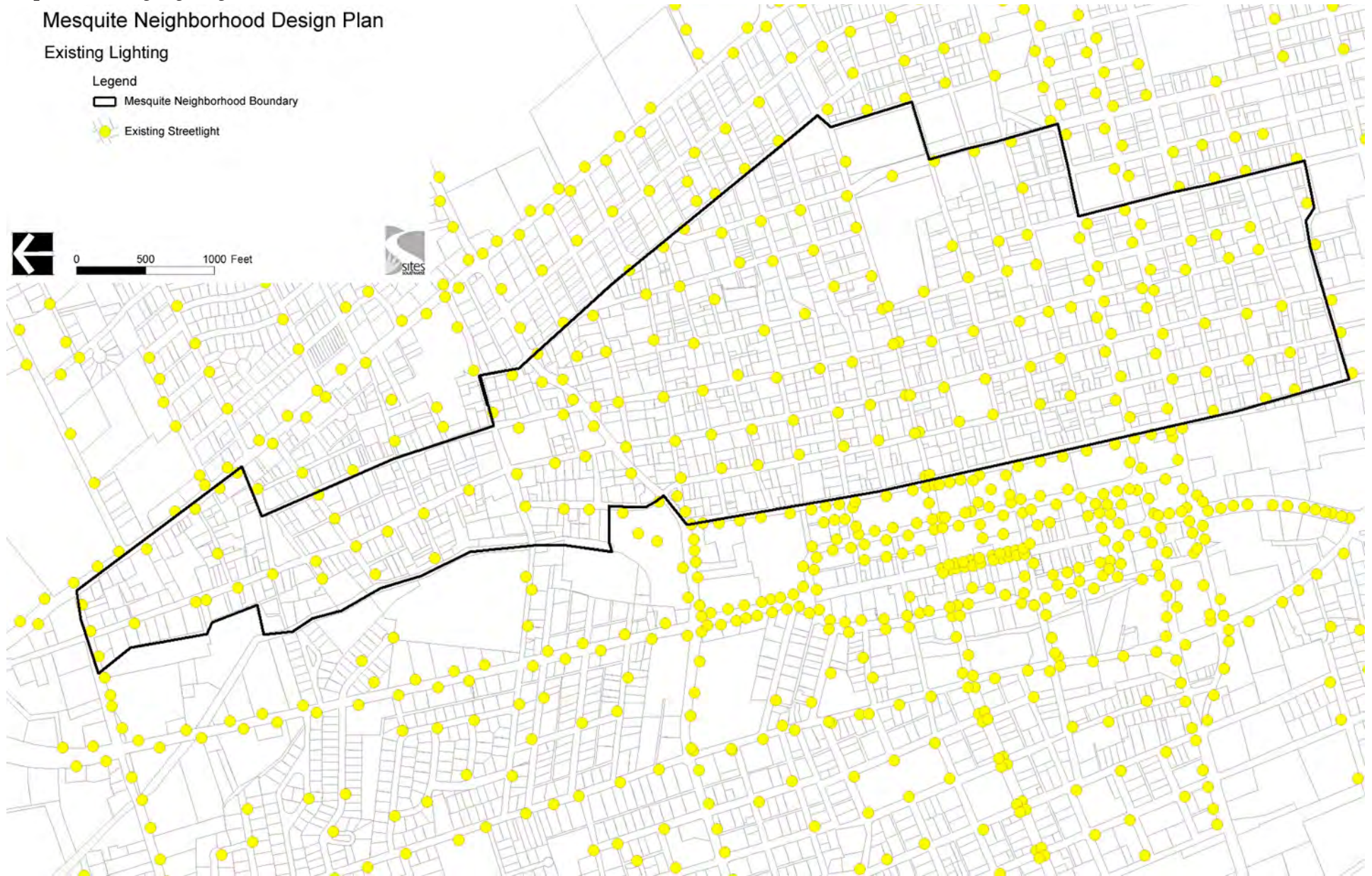
Mesquite Neighborhood Design Plan

Existing Lighting

Legend

▭ Mesquite Neighborhood Boundary

● Existing Streetlight



4. Pedestrian System

The pedestrian system in the historic district could be enhanced through the improvement of existing sidewalks as well as the addition of directional signage, traffic calming measures, and bus service links to the neighborhood. Safety improvements for pedestrian crossings at key intersections, particularly those that link the Mesquite Neighborhood to Downtown Las Cruces across Campo Street, would encourage pedestrian traffic into and throughout the district.

Major Pedestrian Streets

As illustrated in Map 15, there are several streets within the district that could be identified and enhanced as major pedestrian routes including:

- Mesquite Street
- Las Cruces
- Hadley (Between Downtown & Mesquite Street)
- San Pedro (Between Hadley & Griggs)
- Griggs (Between San Pedro & Mesquite)

Amenities & Improvements

A number of different amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, bollards, pedestrian-scale street lighting as well as shade trees and colorful plantings, could all be incorporated in a new streetscape design to enhance the pedestrian experience in the Mesquite Historic District. The style of these amenities should reflect the historic character of the neighborhood.

Improvements to existing sidewalks, the creation of new sidewalks where necessary, and the enhancement of pedestrian crossings with visible, specialty paving would all help to make the Mesquite Historic Neighborhood a safer, more welcoming pedestrian environment.



As illustrated below, the introduction of periodic bump-outs planted with shade trees and flowering plants, visible specialty paving at crosswalks, and additional streetlamps and furnishings all combine to create a pleasant, welcoming, and pedestrian-friendly streetscape.

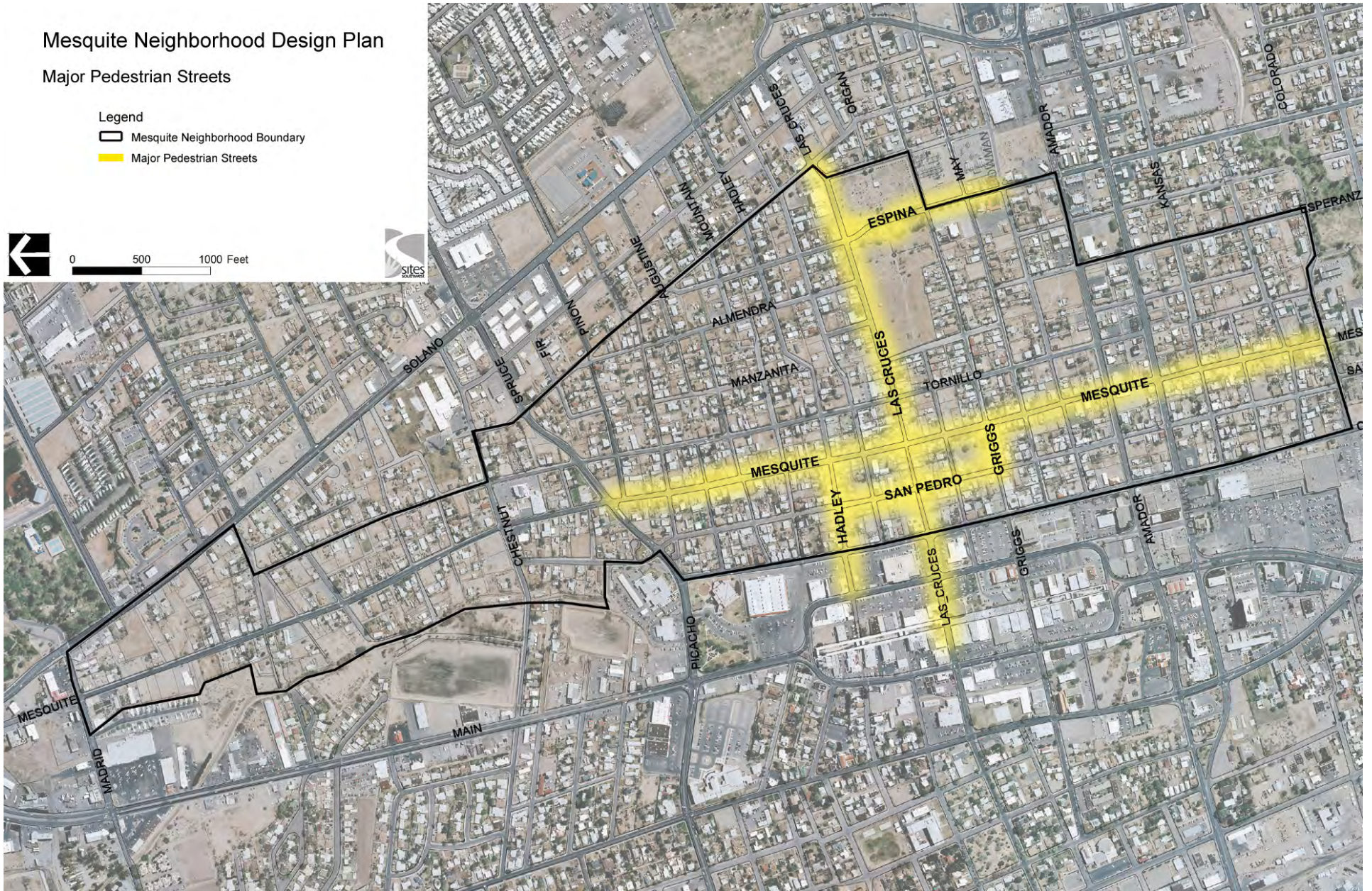


Mesquite Neighborhood Design Plan

Major Pedestrian Streets

Legend

- Mesquite Neighborhood Boundary
- Major Pedestrian Streets



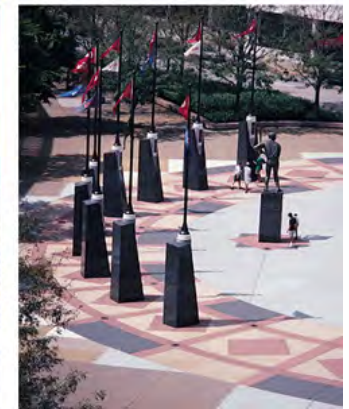
5. Gateways

There are several key intersections within the historic district that could be developed as gateways to and within the historic district. For example, Organ/Campo and Griggs/Campo could become the gateways between the Mesquite Historic Neighborhood and Downtown Las Cruces. Specialty paving, street lights and trees, and signage could all be incorporated to create a defining entry point into the historic district. Creating welcoming and appealing gateways will increase awareness of and interest in the historic district and can create a renewed sense of pride for residents of Mesquite.

Located at key intersections and framed by welcoming archways or signage, “gateway” areas could both define the boundaries and enhance the overall character of the Mesquite Historic Neighborhood. The addition of gateway elements such as decorative planting, lighting, street furnishings, specialty paving, and directional signage at key entry points into the district would draw attention, guide and welcome visitors to the historic district.

Potential locations for gateway areas are illustrated in the Major Streetscapes Map (see Map 13) and include:

- Las Cruces Avenue at Virginia Street
- Las Cruces Avenue at Campo Street
- Griggs Avenue at Campo Street
- Mesquite Street at Picacho/Spruce Avenue
- Mesquite Street at Amador Avenue
- Mesquite Street at Colorado Avenue



E. Signage & Wayfinding

The *Las Cruces Downtown Revitalization Comprehensive Planning and Design Services Draft Concept Report* proposes ideas for a signage and wayfinding system for Downtown Las Cruces. Ideally, a signage & wayfinding system for the Mesquite Historic District would utilize and refine these concepts to create a compatible, but distinct signage system that reflects the unique, historic character of the neighborhood. Several different levels of signage are recommended for the Mesquite Historic Neighborhood. Such signs will not only provide information and assist in direction, but will also enhance awareness of the historic district and elevate the residents' sense of pride in their unique local community.

1. Neighborhood

General directional and informational signs would be located throughout the neighborhood to provide wayfinding assistance for locals and visitors alike. These signs should be in scale with the surrounding buildings and reflect the historic style of the neighborhood.

2. Historic District & Buildings

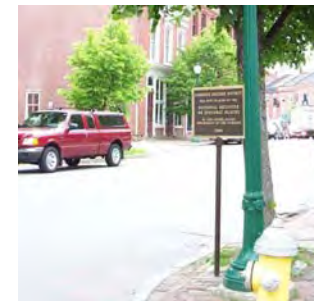
At main gateway locations into the Mesquite Neighborhood would be welcome/educational signage that explains the history of the neighborhood as a whole. On historic buildings there should be individual plaques or markers that give specific information regarding the history of particular buildings.

3. Landmarks

Similarly, at any landmarks within the neighborhood there should be plaque type informational signs describing the significance and history of that landmark site as it relates to the Mesquite Neighborhood.

4. Pedestrian System

Directional pedestrian signs would provide both safety and wayfinding information on signs that are visible, but which blend in gracefully with the historic character of the neighborhood.



F. Parks & Gardens

1. Proposed Parks & Community Gardens

New park development is recommended for some of the larger vacant lots located throughout the Mesquite Historic District. Large central plaza type parks, such as Klein Park, as well as small pocket type parks suitable for simple tot lots, and smaller community-gathering type parks designed in a style that reflects the character of the surrounding district, could all provide the community with places to come together, to relax, to play, and to take pride in the neighborhood. Existing and Potential Park locations are shown on Map 16.

2. Landscape/Hardscape/Equipment Palette

Recommended materials include both large and small shade trees and other plantings, furnishings such as benches or seat-walls, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, shelters, gated entry elements, play equipment (for the tot lots), artwork (either free-standing or murals, etc.), and decorative water features, fountains or other focal point type elements. Paving could consist of a combination of brick or brick pavers or concrete pigmented in historic colors with tile, stone, or brick insets/details. Low adobe and stucco or stone walls could add a finishing touch.





IV. Funding and Implementation



A decision was reached during the planning process by representatives of the Las Esperanzas group, the Residents and Business Owners of the North Mesquite District, and City staff that all implementation plans and expenditure of Legislative funds would concentrate on the Mesquite Neighborhood South of Spruce Avenue. The Residents and Business Owners of the North Mesquite District would pursue their own funding and determine their priorities.

A. Rationale for Project Prioritization

Several factors were taken into account in establishing development priorities for the Mesquite Historic District Neighborhood Plan. These factors include:

a) Availability of Funding

- Typically public grant funding can only be used on public facilities

b) Community Needs

- Evaluating the entire neighborhood to identify potential projects that have maximum benefit to a broad cross section of the neighborhood such as:
 - Establish educational programs
 - Assisting home owners in accomplishing self-help home rehabilitation
 - Making home owners aware of purchase or home rehabilitation loans, winterization programs and low cost landscaping techniques.

B. Proposed Prioritization of Projects

Klein Park and the Rehabilitation Project were originally considered top priority projects for the Mesquite Historic Neighborhood. However, City Council now recommends directing currently available funding toward smaller projects spread throughout the entire neighborhood. Therefore, each of the recommendations in the Mesquite Historic District Neighborhood Design Plan is categorized below as either an immediate or secondary priority project. In general, immediate priority projects

represent those design plan goals to be completed (or at least initiated) within the next five years. The initiation of secondary priority projects may take longer. As projects are evaluated findings may show that some projects are not as funding or labor intensive as envisioned. In these cases, priorities may be shuffled to reflect a high probability of accomplishment.

1. Immediate Priority

a) Identifying Signage & Wayfinding Needs

- Historic Building Markers (Similar to the Court Youth Center ceramic tile and mosaic pot projects.)
- Landmarks (To be located at the corners of the original Townsite and at the retaining wall at the corner of Campo and Soledad.)

b) Gateway Design & Installation

- To be located at the intersection of Griggs and Campo

c) Klein Park Re-purpose

- Implement additional programming (i.e. Movies in the park, concerts in the park, and entertainment and games associated with the summertime lunch program.)
- Klein Park: Landscape/Hardscape Improvements

d) Rehabilitation Workshops

- Partner with Dona Ana Branch Community College to offer workshops on home rehabilitation, adobe renovation, lime-plastering, etc.

2. Secondary Priority

a) Wayfinding/Directional Street Signage

b) Signage Standards

c) Installation of Additional Gateways

d) Building Rehabilitation Projects

e) Home Ownership Assistance

f) Development of New Parks & Gardens/Greenspace

g) Streetscape Improvements:

- Street Trees & Plantings
- Improved Pedestrian System
- Improved Street Lighting
- Improved Transit Stops

C. Implementation Schedule & Funding Sources for Design Plan Goals

A variety of potential funding sources, from local, state, and federal agencies to private, for-profit, and non-profit organizations are available for projects within the Mesquite Historic Neighborhood. Table 1 lists implementation categories, actions, and tasks, project priority and timing, as well as potential partnerships and funding sources. These priorities are tentative and are bound to change as community aspirations and the availability of funding change over time. Descriptions of these funding sources are included at the end of Table 1.

Table 1. Implementation of Mesquite Historic District Neighborhood Design Plan Goals

Implementation Action	Priority	Potential Partnerships	Tasks	Potential Funding Sources
Signage & Wayfinding:				
Historic Building Markers	Immediate	Doña Ana County Historical Society; City of Las Cruces Department of Community Development & Keep Las Cruces Beautiful	Develop & install historic building markers similar to the Court Youth Center ceramic tile and mosaic pot project. Encourage property owners to acquire plaques/markers for their historic properties.	Doña Ana County Historical Society; Volunteer Sponsors / Private Funding located via Keep Las Cruces Beautiful and/or Dona Ana County Historical Society
Landmarks/Historic Markers	Immediate	Doña Ana County Historical Society; City of Las Cruces Department of Community Development & Keep Las Cruces Beautiful	Design & install historic markers to delineate the boundaries of the original townsite and at the retaining wall at the corner of Campo & Soledad.	Doña Ana County Historical Society; City of Las Cruces Capital Project Funds; Special Legislative Appropriation; Transportation and Equity Act for the 21st Century (Federal TEA-21 Enhancement Funds); EDA Title 1 and Title IX Grant; Volunteer Sponsors / Private Funding located via Keep Las Cruces Beautiful and/or Dona Ana County Historical Society
Wayfinding/Directional Street Signage	Secondary	City of Las Cruces Department of Community Development & Keep Las Cruces Beautiful	Design & install system of wayfinding and directional street signage which conveys the district's official boundaries and the historic character of the Mesquite Neighborhood and enhances pedestrians' experience and safety.	CDBG Grant; City of Las Cruces Capital Project Funds; Special Legislative Appropriation; Transportation and Equity Act for the 21st Century (Federal TEA-21 Enhancement Funds); EDA Title 1 and Title IX Grant; Volunteer Sponsors / Private Funding located via Keep Las Cruces Beautiful
Signage Standards	Secondary	City of Las Cruces Community Development Department	Establish signage standards for businesses within neighborhood boundaries.	City of Las Cruces General Fund
Gateways:				
Gateway at Griggs & Campo	Immediate	City of Las Cruces Department of Community Development & Keep Las Cruces Beautiful	Design and install gateway area at Griggs and Campo as a junction between Downtown Las Cruces and the Mesquite Neighborhood Historic District.	CDBG Grant; City of Las Cruces Capital Project Funds; Special Legislative Appropriation; Transportation and Equity Act for the 21st Century (Federal TEA-21 Enhancement Funds); EDA Title 1 and Title IX Grant; Private Funding
Additional Gateways	Secondary	City of Las Cruces Department of Community Development & Keep Las Cruces Beautiful	Design and install additional gateway areas at locations recommended in plan.	CDBG Grant; City of Las Cruces Capital Project Funds; Special Legislative Appropriation; Transportation and Equity Act for the 21st Century (Federal TEA-21 Enhancement Funds); EDA Title 1 and Title IX Grant; Private Funding

<i>Implementation Action</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Potential Partnerships</i>	<i>Tasks</i>	<i>Potential Funding Sources</i>
Events Programming:				
Klein Park Re-Purpose	Immediate	City of Las Cruces' Department of Public Services: Recreation	Implement additional programming (i.e.. Movies in the park, concerts in the park, entertainment and games associated with the summertime lunch program.	Mesquite Street Weed and Seed Project
Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings/Homes:	Immediate & Ongoing			
Educational Workshops	Immediate	Las Esperanzas; Dona Ana Branch Community College Learning Center; Mesilla Valley Habitat for Humanity; City of Las Cruces Community Development Department	Partner with DABCC Learning Center to offer workshops on home rehabilitation, adobe renovation, lime-plastering to: 1) Create a pool of masonry & plaster contractors and general contractors trained to properly repair adobe buildings with lime plaster 2) Educate property owners on the monitoring, repairing, and rehabilitation, of adobe buildings.	CDBG Grant; DABCC Learning Center HUD Grant; Mesilla Valley Habitat for Humanity; Doña Ana County Historical Society; Mesquite Street Weed and Seed Project; Private Funding
Create, restore, and rehabilitate affordable housing by supporting infill, façade enhancement, and rehabilitation projects	Secondary	City of Las Cruces Community Development Department; Dona Ana Branch Community College Learning Center; Las Esperanzas; Mesilla Valley Habitat for Humanity	a) Purchase one or more buildings in "poor" condition and rehabilitate them for resale as a demonstration project. b) Develop a homeowners' guide for monitoring, repairing and rehabilitating adobe buildings. c) Establish a neighborhood resource-person to help building owners plan rehabilitation projects and complete paperwork d) Create a materials stockpile to make needed materials available to homeowners/property owners at low cost. e) Create a tool lending library and reference library to promote appropriate rehabilitation. f) Create a team of neighborhood resource-people to inspect and monitor adobe buildings and make recommendations for rehabilitation.	HUD Grants (CDBG Loans/Grants & HOME Grants) New Mexico Community Development Loan Fund; State and Federal Tax Credits such as: - New Market Tax Credits (Federal) - Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits - New Mexico's Low-income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC); Mesilla Valley Habitat for Humanity; Doña Ana County Historical Society; Mesquite Street Weed and Seed Project; Private Funding
Home Ownership	Immediate & Ongoing			
Increase Home Ownership	Secondary (Ongoing)	Mesilla Valley Habitat for Humanity; Housing Authority of the City of Las Cruces and Dona Ana County	a) Educate Mesquite Neighborhood residents about availability of home ownership programs to encourage home ownership in the Historic District. b) Direct qualified families to existing housing agencies for information on home ownership programs.	HUD Grants (CDBG and HOME) Mesilla Valley Habitat for Humanity; The Housing Authority of the City of Las Cruces and Dona Ana County's HOME Choice II Program; New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority

<i>Implementation Action</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Potential Partnerships</i>	<i>Tasks</i>	<i>Potential Funding Sources</i>
Greenspace/Parks Improvements:				
Klein Park Landscape/Hardscape Improvements	Secondary	City of Las Cruces' Department of Public Services: Recreation; City of Las Cruces Department of Community Development & Keep Las Cruces Beautiful;	Design & install landscape and hardscape improvements to better serve the neighborhood and meet new programming requirements as recommended in plan.	CDBG Grant; HOME Grant; Mesquite Street Weed and Seed Project; City of Las Cruces Capital Project Funds; Special Legislative Appropriation; EDA Title 1 and Title IX Grant; Private Funding
Increase Parks/Green Space	Secondary (Ongoing)	City of Las Cruces' Department of Public Services: Recreation; City of Las Cruces Department of Community Development & Keep Las Cruces Beautiful; Las Esperanzas	a) Convert appropriate City owned vacant parcels into usable green space or parks b) Acquisition of vacant parcels by neighborhood groups, such as Las Esperanzas, to convert them into community gardens.	CDBG Grant; HOME Grant; Mesquite Street Weed and Seed Project; City of Las Cruces Capital Project Funds; Special Legislative Appropriation; EDA Title 1 and Title IX Grant; Private Funding
Streetscape Improvements:				
Street Trees & Plantings	Secondary	City of Las Cruces Department of Community Development: Keep Las Cruces Beautiful	Design & install a street tree and planting plan (as recommended in plan) to enhance the neighborhood character and pedestrian experience.	CDBG Grant; Mesquite Street Weed and Seed Project; City of Las Cruces Capital Project Funds; Special Legislative Appropriation; EDA Title 1 and Title IX Grant; Transportation and Equity Act for the 21st Century (Federal TEA-21 Enhancement Funds); Volunteer Sponsors / Private Funding located via Keep Las Cruces Beautiful
Update/Improve Pedestrian System	Secondary	City of Las Cruces; The Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)	a) Improve existing sidewalks and crossings. b) Create new sidewalks and crossings where necessary. c) Add traffic calming measures such as curb bump-outs, specialty paving at crossings, etc. d) Install street furnishings such as benches, trash receptacles, and so on to create a more welcoming pedestrian environment.	CDBG Grant; Mesquite Street Weed and Seed Project; City of Las Cruces Capital Project Funds; Special Legislative Appropriation; Transportation and Equity Act for the 21st Century (Federal TEA-21 Enhancement Funds); EDA Title 1 and Title IX Grant; Private Funding
Update/Improve Street Lighting	Secondary	City of Las Cruces	Select and install new pedestrian-scale streetlights to enhance and highlight historic streetscape character and increase public safety.	CDBG Grant; Mesquite Street Weed and Seed Project; City of Las Cruces Capital Project Funds; Special Legislative Appropriation; Transportation and Equity Act for the 21st Century (Federal TEA-21 Enhancement Funds); EDA Title 1 and Title IX Grant
Improve Transit Stops	Secondary	City of Las Cruces' Department of Public Services: Transit System; The Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) State Transportation Authority; Federal Transit Authority	a) Improve existing bus stops by adding new shelters, benches, signage, etc. b) Create new bus stops with shelters, etc. where necessary.	Federal Transit Authority; CDBG Grant; City of Las Cruces Capital Project Funds; Special Legislative Appropriation; Transportation and Equity Act for the 21st Century (Federal TEA-21 Enhancement Funds); EDA Title 1 and Title IX Grant



Funding Source Descriptions:

Transportation and Equity Act for the 21st Century (Federal TEA-21 Enhancement Funds) - Federal TEA-21 Enhancement funds, in excess of \$200 billion, are allocated to integrate transportation projects with environmental and community revitalization goals over a period of six years. TEA-21 funds are applicable beyond highways, road and transit maintenance -- funds may also be used for relevant environmental restoration, pollution abatement, historic preservation, trails, bike paths and pedestrian infrastructure including aesthetic enhancements.

CDBG Grant - The CDBG Program, one of the nation's largest Federal grant programs, is administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to promote the revitalization of neighborhoods and the expansion of affordable housing and economic opportunities. This includes activities that support the redevelopment of properties in distressed areas if such activity supports the mission of the program. CDBG is a "bricks and mortar" program, with the rehabilitation of affordable housing traditionally being the largest single use of CDBG funds.

EDA Title 1 and Title IX Grant - Grants are available to governments and nonprofit organizations in distressed areas to fund improvements in infrastructure and public facilities, including industrial parks.

Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits - Investors can receive a credit against their total income taken for the year in which a rehabilitated building is put into service. Rehabilitation of certified historic structures qualifies for a credit equal to 20 percent of the cost of the work; rehabilitation work on non-historic structures built before 1936 qualifies for ten percent.

HOME Grant - The HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program is a federal entitlement grant program authorized by Title II of the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990, as amended. The program provides annual grants on a formula basis to entitled cities, counties, approved consortia, and states. Local governments receiving HOME funds are called "participating jurisdictions." The amount of the HOME funds annually available to participating jurisdictions is determined by Congress through passage of the annual federal budget. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is also responsible for management and oversight of the HOME Program. Each participating jurisdiction is responsible for deciding how HOME funds will be used in its jurisdiction and for daily administration of HOME funds. The HOME Program is intended to increase affordable housing opportunities, particularly low-income persons. Specific purposes of the program are:

- a) To expand the supply of decent and affordable housing, particularly rental housing, for low and very low-income persons;
- b) To strengthen the abilities of state and local governments to design and implement strategies for achieving adequate supplies of decent, affordable housing;
- c) To provide both financial and technical assistance to HOME recipients, including the development of model programs for affordable low-income housing, and
- d) To expand and strengthen partnerships among all levels of government and the private sector, including for-profit and non-profit organizations, in the production and operation of affordable housing.

Housing Authority of the City of Las Cruces and Dona Ana County's HOME Choice II Program - Offers families an opportunity to purchase their own homes. The estimated sales price for these homes range from \$49,500 to \$82,000. The HOME Choice II Program offers two types of home ownership assistance plans. Program eligibility requirements: At least one member of the family must have been employed for two years, and the family must have a minimum gross annual income of at least \$13,150. Income must be no more than 80% of the median income for Dona Ana County (adjusted for family size). Letters of reference and a credit check are required.

HUD funds for local CDBG loans and "floats" - Community Development Block Grants are used to finance locally determined activities and can include coping with contamination and financing site preparation or infrastructure development. Eligible activities include planning for redevelopment, site acquisition, environmental site assessment, site clearance, demolition, rehabilitation, contamination removal and construction. Also, when a grant recipient can show that previously awarded CDBG funds will not be needed in the near term, it may tap its block grant account on an interim basis, using a "float" to obtain short-term, low interest financing for projects that create jobs. Money borrowed from grants in this way may pay for the purchase of land, buildings and equipment, site and structural rehabilitation (including environmental remediation) or new construction.

New Market Tax Credits (Federal) - The New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC) Program permits taxpayers to receive a credit against Federal income taxes for making qualified equity investments in designated Community Development Entities (CDEs). Substantially all of the qualified equity investment must in turn be used by the CDE to provide investments in low-income communities. The credit provided to the investor totals 39% of the cost of the investment and is claimed over a seven-year credit allowance period. In each of the first three years, the investor receives a credit equal to five percent of the total amount paid for the stock or capital interest at the time of purchase. For the final four years, the value of the credit is six percent annually. Investors may not redeem their investments in CDEs prior to the conclusion of the seven-year period.



Funding Source Descriptions:

New Mexico Community Development Loan Fund - The New Mexico Community Development Loan Fund is a private, non-profit organization that provides loans, training and technical assistance to business owners and non-profit organizations. Their services support the efforts of low-income individuals and communities to achieve self-reliance and control over their economic destinies. Loans to new and existing small businesses for such needs as equipment, inventory, building renovations, and operating capital. They provide loans to non-profits for such needs as bridge financing against awarded private and public contracts, capital improvements and equipment, and loans to non-profits that develop affordable housing.

New Mexico's Low-income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) - Ten year credit for owners of newly constructed or renovated rental housing who set aside a percentage for low-income individuals for a minimum of 15 years. The amount of the credit varies for new construction and renovation. The project must receive allocation of New Mexico State's bond volume cap. Allocations are made on the basis of the New Mexico State Qualified Allocation Plan.



Mesquite Historic District Neighborhood Design Plan

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