

VALENCIA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Community Meetings

December 7, 2021

AGENDA

- Introductions
- Scope/Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan
- Summary of Public Input
- Key Issues and Priorities
- Recommendations
- Discussion

INTRO QUESTIONS

Tell us (actually, type to us!) about yourself:

- Which community do you live in?
- How long have you lived in Valencia County?
- What is your favorite restaurant in Valencia County?

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

- Vision document for the future of Valencia County; established through a community-driven process
- Policy guide that informs decisions about capital investments and land use (in contrast to a regulatory document such as the Zoning Code)
- Outlines existing conditions, challenges, and opportunities
- Considers needs 20+ years into the future
- Strategies to achieve County goals and policy priorities

WHY IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPORTANT?

- Understand and anticipate changing demographics and economic conditions
- Reference document for staff, residents, and policy-makers when developing infrastructure projects and making land use decisions
- Qualify for grant funding; state recommends that a Comp Plan be updated every 5 years

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Focus is on **unincorporated areas**
- Incorporated communities (e.g. Belen and Los Lunas) have Comprehensive Plans that identify their own priorities
- Valencia County Comprehensive Plan documents services in incorporated areas that are available for all residents
- Many issues transcend boundaries – housing needs, economic development, recreational opportunities, transportation needs

CHAPTERS / COMPONENTS

- Community Profile / Demographics
- Community Engagement
- Land Use
- Housing
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Community Services & Utilities
- Natural Resources / Environment

Structure of Individual Chapters

- Existing Conditions
- Community Priorities
- Goals and Action Items

HOW IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UTILIZED?

- How will staff reference the Comprehensive Plan?
- What were the challenges with using the existing Comp Plan (approved in 2005)?
- Allows Valencia County to qualify for a range of grant funding

COMMUNITY SURVEY

- 449 respondents
- Residents believe quality of life is generally high, but only a quarter say conditions are improving
- Top reasons respondents choose to live in Valencia County:
 - Rural character/small town feel
 - Sense of community

How would you rate the quality of life in Valencia County?

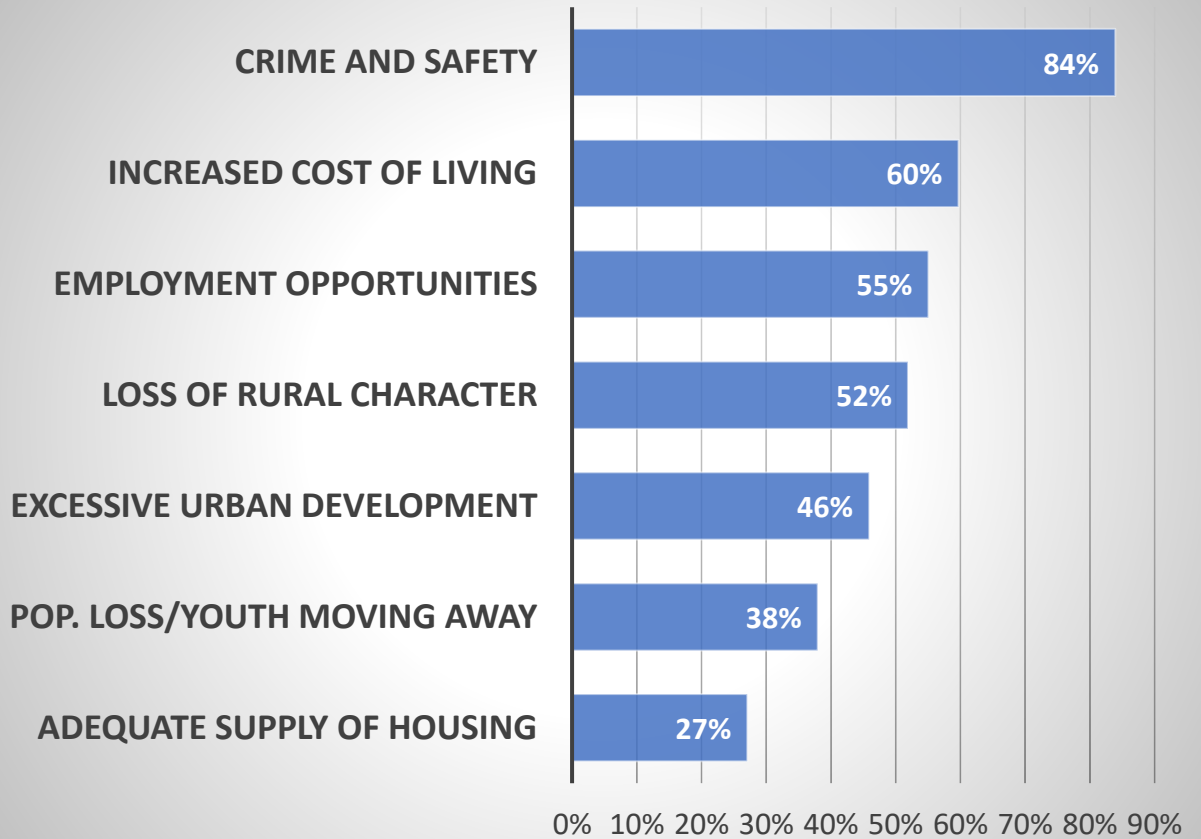
Answer Choices	Percent
Excellent	10.4%
Good	54.7%
Fair	29.1%
Poor	5.8%
Total	100%

Do you believe the quality of life in Valencia County is improving, declining, or remaining the same?

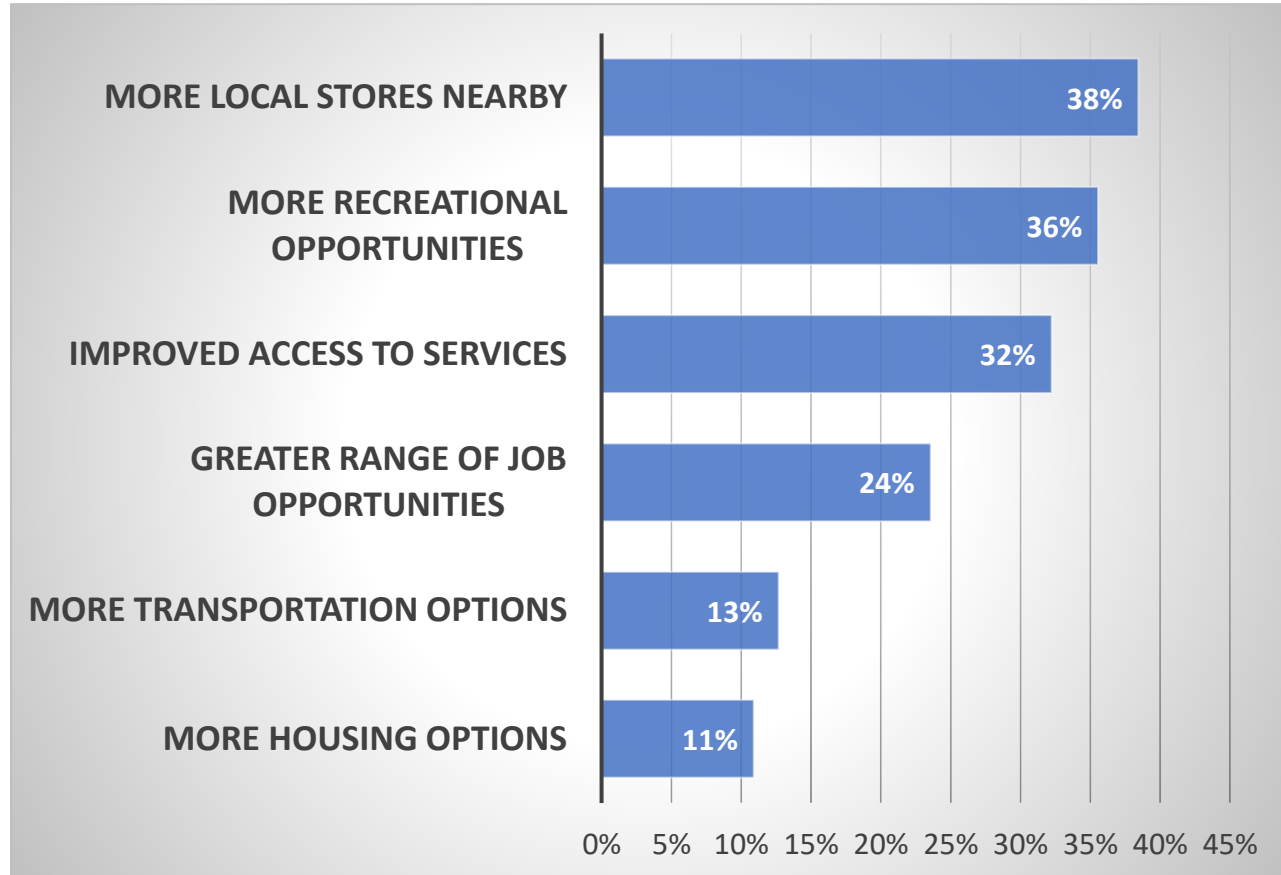
Answer Choices	Percent
Improving	26.2%
Declining	37.6%
Remaining the same	36.2%
Total	100%

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Primary Concerns



Means of Improving Quality of Life



WHAT ELSE DID WE HEAR?

- High value placed on the combination of rural lifestyle and proximity to urban amenities
- Tension: urban growth versus rural identity
- Concerns over long-term water resource availability
- Declining viability of agriculture; younger generations are less interested in farming
- Previous Comp Plan (2005) does not provide sufficient guidance on land use decisions

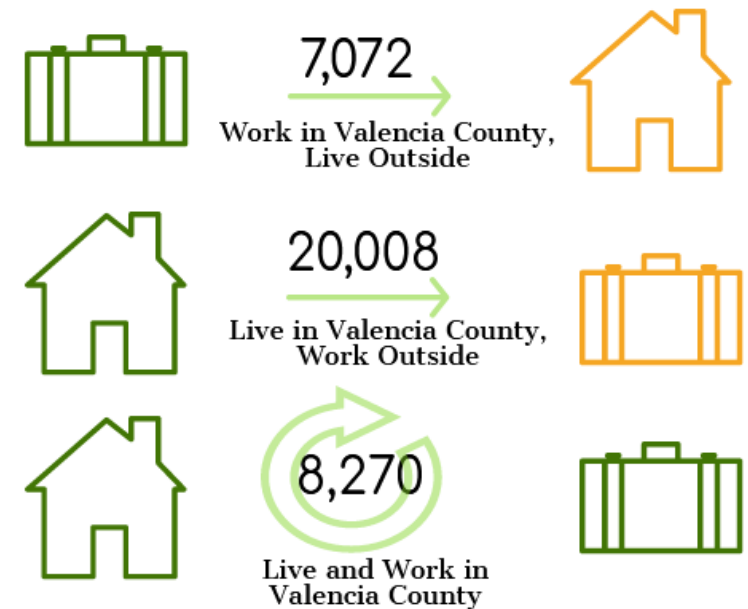
COMMUNITY ASSETS

- Cultural/historical landmarks
- Rural heritage/atmosphere
- Farming greenbelt along the Rio Grande
- Railroad – BNSF and Rail Runner
- UNM Valencia



GENERAL COMMUNITY NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

- Greater range of job opportunities (3/4 of employed residents commute outside the County for work)
- Access to medical services
- Community programs and recreational opportunities
- Roadway improvements
- Improved broadband/internet access



OnTheMap, 2018

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

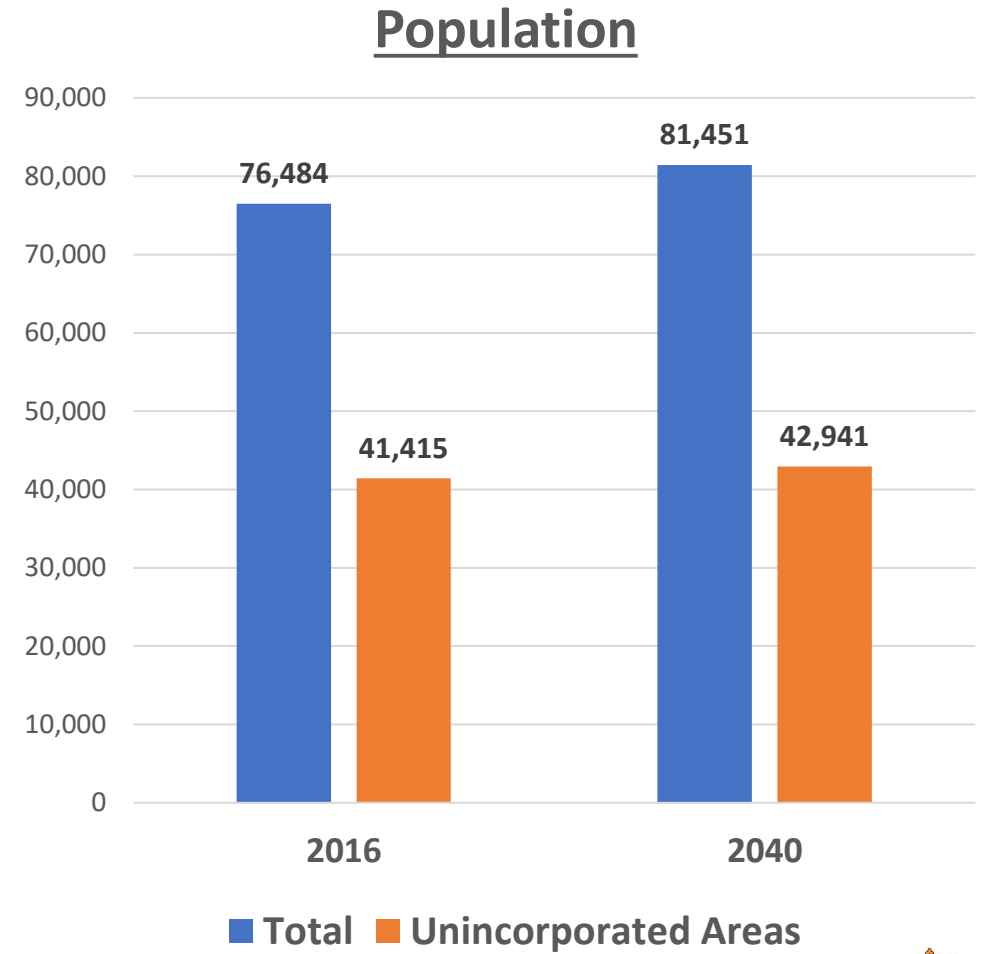
GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- Spillover effects from activity in Albuquerque and Los Lunas
- Potential drivers of economic activity in unincorporated areas
 - I-25 interchange and river crossing
 - Future regional medical center
 - Land development proposals west of I-25, along Meadowlake Rd

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

POPULATION DYNAMICS

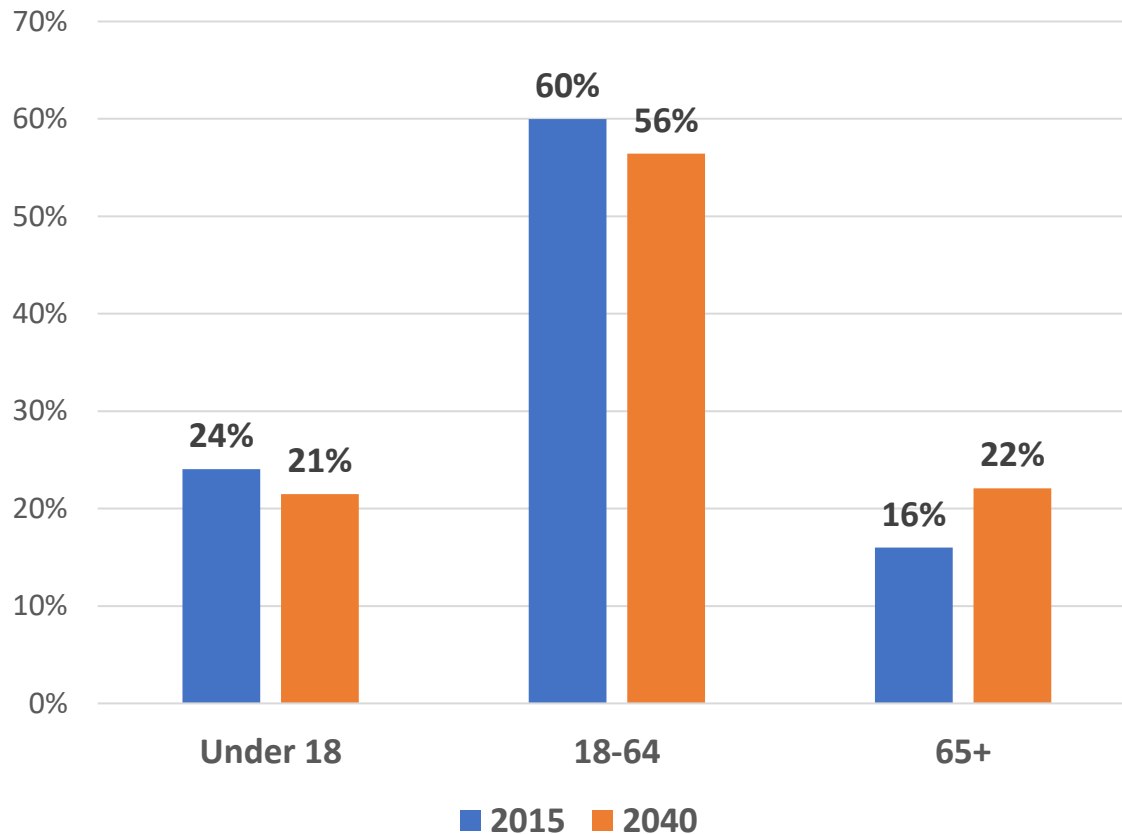
- Modest growth at County level in last 5-10 years
- Recent increase in housing demand, especially in Los Lunas
- County forecast (MRCOG): 2016-2040
 - 4% total population growth
 - 5% total employment growth
 - Majority of growth is likely to occur in incorporated areas
 - Effects of pandemic still being determined



WHAT DO WE KNOW?

POPULATION DYNAMICS

Population by Age



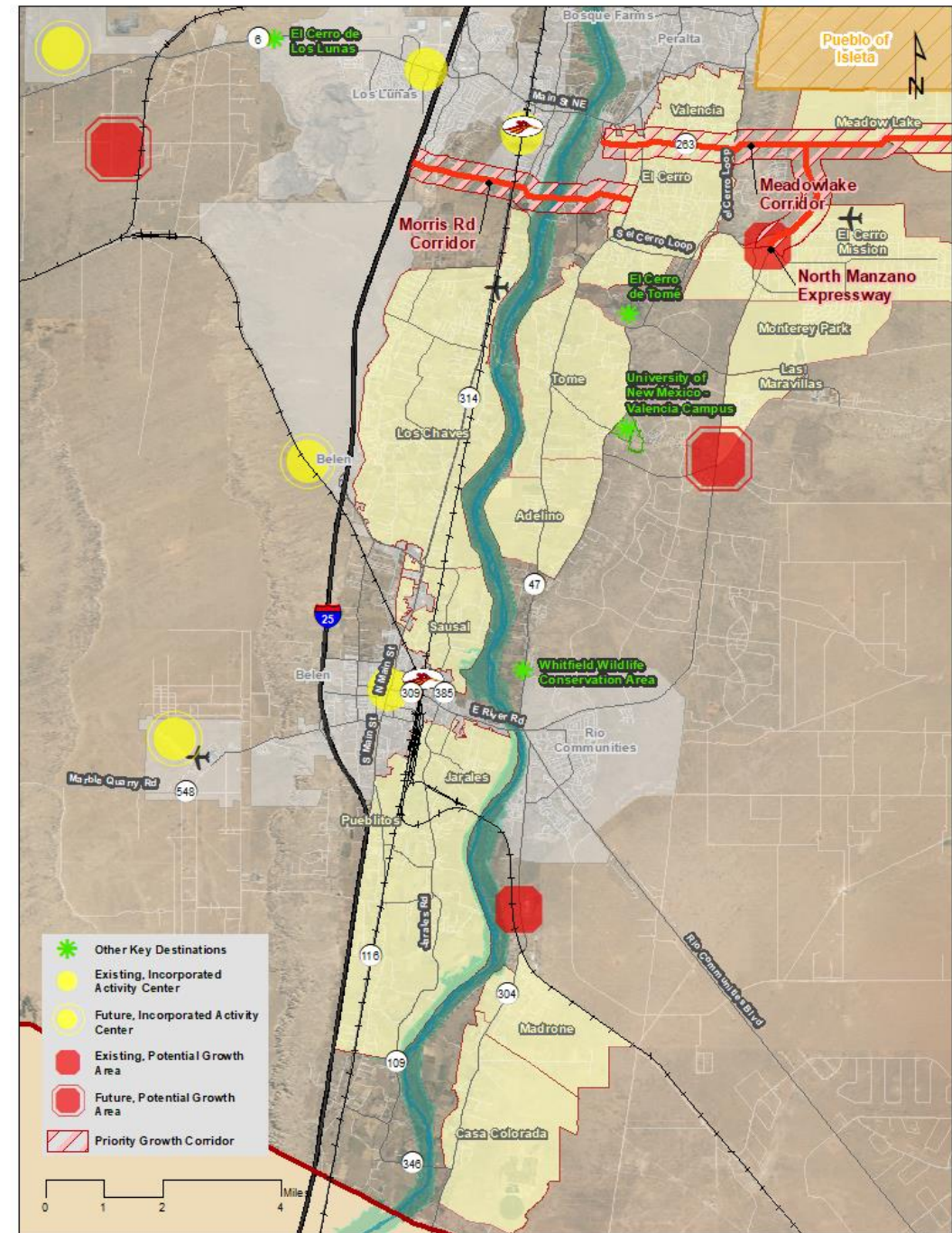
- Increasing share of the population will be over age 65
- Decreasing share of population will be under 18
- Fewer individuals to participate in the workforce (i.e. ages 18-64)
- Implications for housing needs, senior services, school enrollment, travel patterns, etc.

KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Tension between urban/economic development and historical land use patterns
- How do we manage growth while preserving community character?
- Address service and housing needs associated with changing demographics

PRIORITY GROWTH AREAS

- Activity centers and corridors where future growth can be concentrated
- Alleviate pressure for new development in rural and agricultural areas
- Encourage additional retail and services in these areas
- Update Zoning Code to allow for more flexibility and (somewhat) higher density



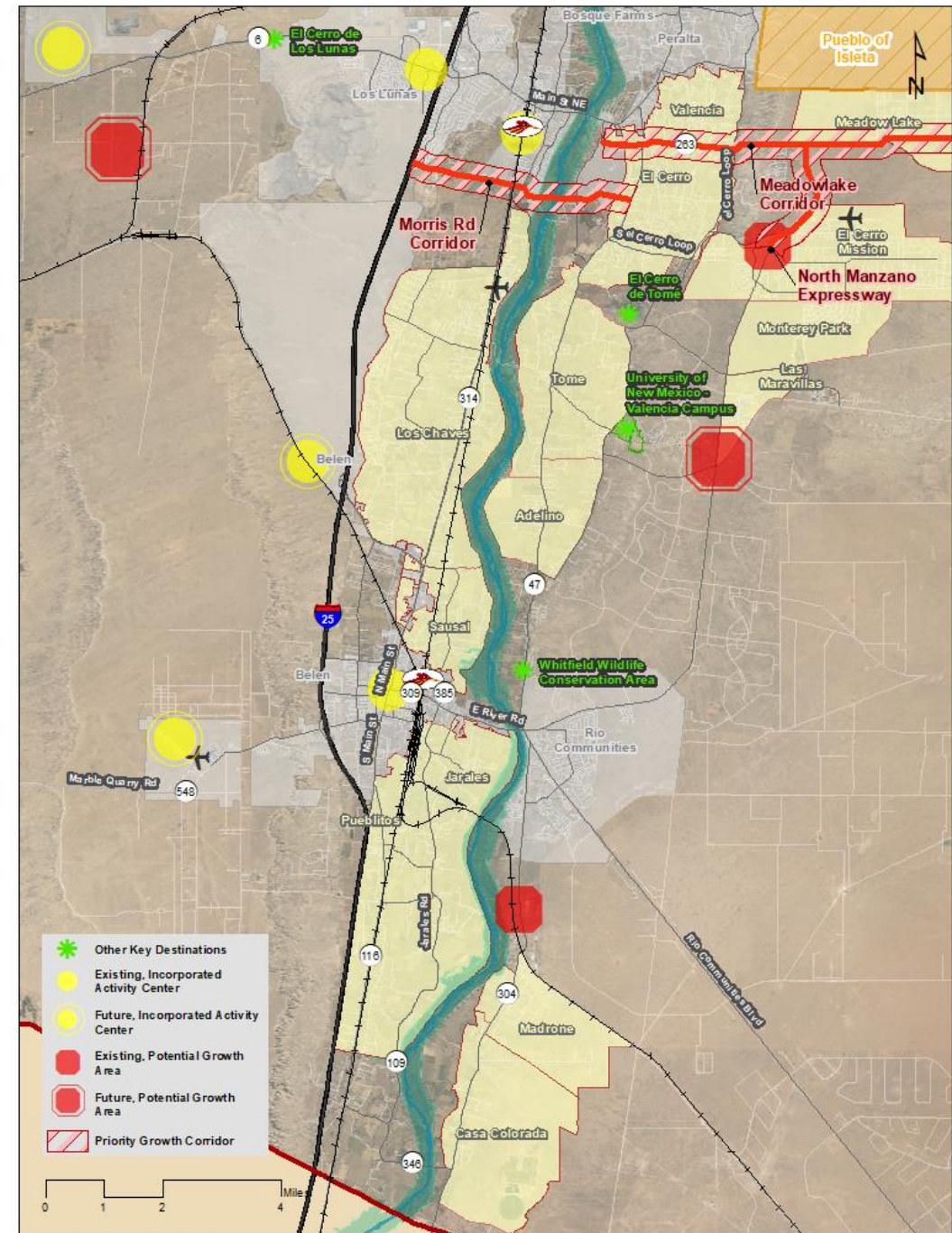
PRIORITY GROWTH AREAS

- **Corridors**

- Meadowlake Rd
- Morris Rd
- North Manzano Expressway

- **Centers**

- West Mesa
- Belen Railway/Industrial Area
- Las Maravillas (south)
- Manzano Center (El Cerro Mission Rd)



RECOMMENDATIONS: LAND USE & HOUSING

- Capture **regional growth in Priority Growth Areas** to preserve the rural character of the County.
- Coordinate **land use and infrastructure decisions** and ensure that Valencia County residents have convenient **access to goods and services**.
- **Update the Zoning Code** to allow more flexibility in land use, particularly in Priority Growth Areas.
- Promote a **variety of housing** types within the County, including accessory dwelling units.
- Allow for **higher density housing**, including mixed-use development, **within Priority Growth Areas** to increase housing availability and affordability.

RECOMMENDATIONS: TRANSPORTATION

- Prioritize **maintenance** of the Valencia County transportation system.
- Pursue **targeted roadway improvements** to improve regional connections and support economic development initiatives, including the **I-25 interchange** and **Morris Rd river crossing**.
- Invest in **recreational facilities** and **multi-modal transportation** infrastructure that expand opportunities for Valencia County residents and visitors to travel without a vehicle.

RECOMMENDATIONS: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Coordinate with Los Lunas and Belen on business recruitment efforts and participate in **regional economic development** initiatives.
- Continue to partner with UNM Valencia and the Small Business Development Center on **workforce training initiatives**.
- Expand access to high-speed internet and support investments in **broadband infrastructure**.
- Support the expansion of **healthcare services** in Valencia County, including the development of a Valencia County Regional Medical Facility.
- Encourage **new business development in Priority Growth Areas** by updating the Zoning Code to create greater flexibility and proactively investing in transportation and utilities infrastructure.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Natural Resources

- **Conserve the open space** and natural habitats of Valencia County.
- Promote **water conservation** through programs for County residents and regional surface water supply management.

Community Services

- Create a formal **Parks and Recreation Department** that administers facilities and programs; pursue a Parks, Open Space, & Trails Plan.
- Invest in **community facilities** such as senior centers, community centers, waste pick-up sites, etc.).
- Expand **broadband infrastructure** and improve access to high-speed internet.

NEXT STEPS

- Presentation to County Commission – December 15
- Facebook Live Events
 - Thursday, December 16 – 12-1 PM
 - Thursday, December 16 – 6-7 PM
- Comments can be made by email or via project website through January 15, 2022: <https://bhinc.com/valencia-county-comp-plan/>

QUESTIONS

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