SECTION 2: ETZ PLANNING CHARACTERISTICS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The ETZ Planning characteristics section provides a comprehensive description of the existing physical, socioeconomic, environmental and land-use conditions. Additional maps and data are available at the City of Las Cruces Planning Department or at Doña Ana County's Community Development Department. Data is available on the County website: http://www.co.dona-ana.nm.us.

2.2 HISTORY AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN DOÑA ANA COUNTY

Early patterns of development in Doña Ana County were influenced by Spanish policy. When an area was settled by colonists, a church and the priest's house, public buildings (housing for soldiers, etc.), the village plaza and the construction of an "acequia" or irrigation ditch were required to be built first. Residential dwellings and farms were established outside the central area of the village.

In 1839, a tract of land containing more than 35,000 acres was certified by the Mexican government as being the Doña Ana Bend Colony Grant. Land-use patterns present in the ETZ today began with the Village of Doña Ana. The village was settled by Mexican colonists in 1843, while the area was still a part of the state of Chihuahua.

In comparison with early settlements in Mexico and northern New Mexico (circa 1500's and 1600's), the settlement of Doña Ana County was slow in developing. Severe physical and environmental limitations related to high water tables, swampy conditions and the high frequency of Apache Indian raids on frontier settlements, discouraged early settlers from locating in the potentially productive Mesilla Valley.

Following the Mexican-American War of 1846-48, portions of Doña Ana County were annexed by the United States in 1848, in accordance with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Dispute over the border between the United States and Mexico was an issue between the two countries until the Gadsden Purchase of 1853, which added 29,722 square-miles to the county. By the 1880's, with treaties signed and Indians confined to reservations, hostilities ended. Doña Ana County, as it is today, was established in 1852. It is one of the 33 counties now comprising the state of New Mexico.

2.3 LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT FACTORS

In arid regions of the West, development is typically driven by water and second by private land ownership. To be certain, water is the most essential of the two primary land use determinants in western environments.

2.3.1 Water

Water is the single most important element presenting both limitations and opportunities for the Doña Ana County-Las Cruces-El Paso metropolitan area and for Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. The constraint to the expected rapid development of the area is water. The El Paso-Juarez–Las Cruces urbanizing area is expected to exceed a population of six million people by 2025. This may be a reasonable estimate, given all demographic and economic variables remain constant; hydrologic estimates however, vary greatly on an annual basis.

Groundwater is not as plentiful as once thought. The recharge of the Mesilla Bolson, specifically the Rio Grande Alluvium (an overlying shallow water-bearing zone), is most likely dependent on percolation from agricultural irrigation as well as on flows of the river and canals (See Appendix D, Map 6: Surface Hydrologic Features). Although irrigation allocations are based on the expected precipitation in Colorado and Northern New Mexico, during dry periods irrigation is frequently dependent, on groundwater for adequate water supplies (See Appendix D, Map 7: Ground Hydrologic Features). In desert areas, wet and dry periods are expected, and may last for years. Dry cycles deplete water storage in large reservoirs such as Elephant Butte Lake. Weather phenomena, such as the recent El Niño and La Niña weather patterns, affect not only marginal desert areas, but have resulted in extensive drought-related agricultural losses throughout the world. If the existing irrigation allocations are transferred to urban uses, the Mesilla Bolson will slowly dry up.

Cities including Las Cruces, El Paso and Juarez are largely dependent on the groundwater aquifers. The City of El Paso has largely mined the groundwater in the Hueco Bolson, northeast of El Paso. Heavy pumping in Canutillo is straining the Mesilla Bolson's resources. Without the recharge from normal river flow and agricultural use, the Rio Grande basin could also face the same outcome. The Hueco and Jornada Bolsons were amply charged during the last glacial period, which ended approximately 15,000 years ago. Subsequent to the end of the ice age, the recharge of these aquifers has been either very slow or nonexistent, depending on the extent of precipitation falling in the surrounding mountains.

Approximately 730,000 acre feet of surface water are held in reserve in the Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID), a reservoir for irrigation and other potential uses. The annual allocation to New Mexico is 381,900 acre feet, 288,100 acre feet to Texas and 60,000 acre feet to Mexico. If all committed surface water were converted to urban use, the entire region outside urban development would become a marginal desert, with approximately 9" of precipitation annually. It is possible, given current consumption, that the Rio Grande could support a population of 7,750,000 if all surface water were converted to urban uses. However, the aquifers in the upper and lower Rio Grande would soon be depleted, leaving the area vulnerable to water shortages during an extended drought period. The water allocation through the New Mexico-Texas Compact and distributed by the Elephant Butte Irrigation District is as follows:

New Mexico Allocation	**57%**	**381,900 acre-ft**
Texas Allocation	**43%**	**288,100 acre-ft**
Mexico Allocation	**Constant**	**60,000 acre-ft**

Based on Annual Average Total Acre-ft of water available in the United States: 100% = 670,000 acre-ft. (Source: GeoStat, Inc. 2000)

TABLE 2-1: Allocation of Rio Grande River Water Resources

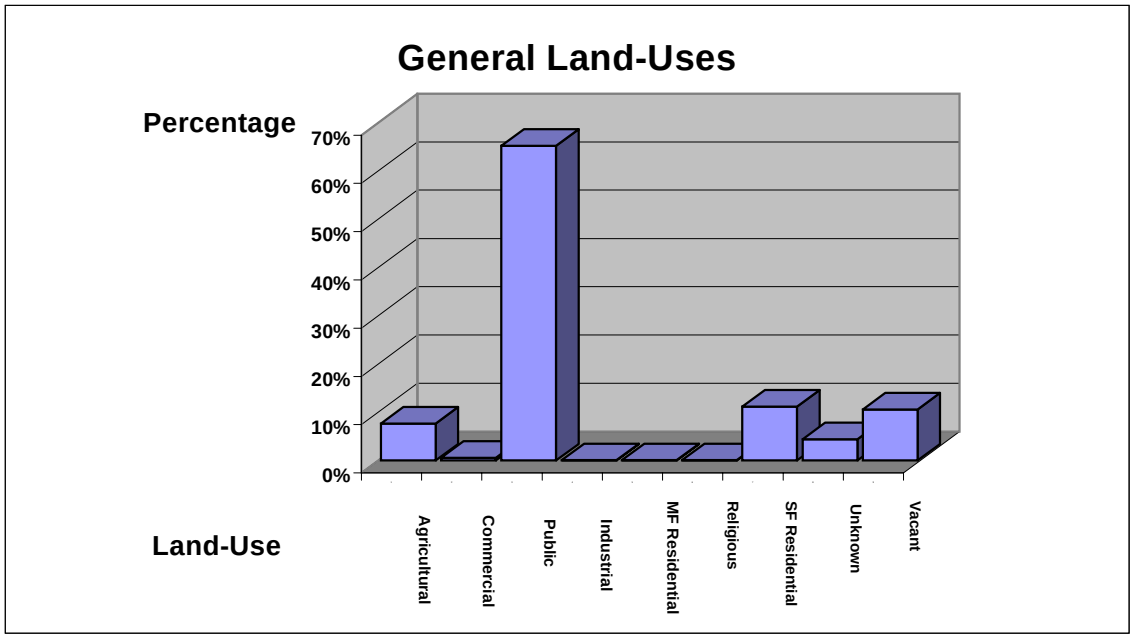
Based on geographical and environmental constraints (proximity to a water source and loss of water from evaporation) agricultural users in New Mexico have more water at this point in time. Therefore, the area's water has become a target for its more densely developed neighbor to the south. Land-use and water decisions made now can assure Doña Ana County of maintaining a quality way of life as opposed to losing its irreplaceable water supplies to neighboring communities along with housing, revenues, jobs and commerce.

2.3.2 Land Ownership

The ETZ Planning Area has a total land area of almost 219,455 acres, or nearly 342.88 square miles. Ownership within the planning area is divided among many interests, which include local, state and federal governments, New Mexico State University (NMSU) and private owners. Public ownership by far accounts for the majority of land ownership, with public or government entities overseeing 143,077 acres of land, or 223.56 square miles, or 65% of the land located in the ETZ planning area. Less than 132.68 sections, or approximately 84,915 acres (35 percent of the land in the ETZ) is under private ownership. This includes remote ranch land that lack water or infrastructure.

The New Mexico State Land Office ownership accounts for approximately 55 sections, or more than 35,000 acres, or 16 percent of the area as shown in Graph 3. The State land parcels most likely to be released for development are east of the city limits and lying mostly north of the proposed Lohman extension and south of US 70 east of the Las Cruces City limits.

The most desirable properties for development are those adjacent to the City of Las Cruces and for which the city could make utilities and transportation available. The properties that fit this category include less than two sections of private land and more than 15 sections of State Trust Lands. Of the 15+ sections (9,700 acres), approximately four sections (2,506 acres) in the northwest corner of the site have been master-planned for development by the state. This property is in an area that has been identified for arterial and street development in the Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization's MPO Transportation Plan.



Legend: **MF = Manufactured Home** **SF = Single Family**
Source: GeoStat, Inc. 1999

Graph 2-1: General Land-Uses

The US Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) hold properties to the east of the State Trust Lands as the Organ Mountain Wilderness and Recreation Area.

Due to the large amount of cultivated agricultural land present in the North and South Valley Areas, private interests hold the majority of remaining land. Private ownership can be further divided into land use categories of urban/developed land, agricultural land and some vacant land. The majority of urban/developed land is located close to the City of Las Cruces, Town of Mesilla and the Village of Doña Ana.

2.4 ETZ SUB-AREAS

The ETZ Commission divided the Extra-territorial Zone into "Sub-Areas" to identify the land-use, housing and socioeconomic characteristics that may be exclusive or unique to one area of the ETZ versus another. Brief descriptions of the sub-areas are provided next.

2.4.1 North Valley Area

The North Valley area is bounded on the west by the Rio Grande, on the north by the ETZ five-mile limit, on the east by Interstate Highway 25 (I-25) and on the south by the Las Cruces City limits. (See Appendix D: Map 5, ETZ Sub-Areas).

The North Valley Area includes the historic village of Doña Ana, which was the first settlement in Doña Ana County, in the early 1840's. The village was designated on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. Land use is comprised mainly of agriculture, primarily vegetable crops, pecan orchards and associated housing, ranging from small acreages and sub-acre lots to large-lot site-built housing, or mobile homes on rural lot splits. Commercial and agribusiness related activities are limited and primarily located to take advantage of the area's arterial network. The floodplain of the Rio Grande and the irrigation systems, canals and drains provide for crops and pecan orchards.

2.4.2 East Mesa Area

The East Mesa boundaries are: I-25 on the West, the ETZ five-mile boundary on the north, military boundaries on the east and Dripping Springs on the south.

The East Mesa area includes the community of Organ, originally surveyed in 1882 and established as a townsite in 1885 under a grant signed by President Chester Allan Arthur. By 1883, two hundred people inhabited the townsite. Many worked in the 43 mines that were in operation in the area between 1882 and 1929.

It was not until the 1950's that the East Mesa was to experience growth. The need for nearby housing for workers employed at White Sands Proving Grounds (now the White Sands Missile Range), located east of the Organ Mountains, triggered new growth and development in the East Mesa.

The area has been dominated by haphazard development north of US 70. In 1987, the City of Las Cruces, in an effort to upgrade development requirements, annexed a portion of the East Mesa. Therefore, commercial sites in the East Mesa area, adjacent to and near the City of Las Cruces, are subject to more stringent standards of development but are provided with amenities that outlying areas do not have (e.g. water, sewer, etc.).

To the east of the city limits, a large tract of New Mexico Trust land is contiguous to the developing areas of the City of Las Cruces. The New Mexico State Land Office owns approximately 18 sections (11,520 acres) of vacant land, which is bounded on the east by the Organ Mountain Recreation and Wilderness Area. A total of 2,506 acres has been planned for urban development. The New Mexico State Land Office has expressed an interest in completing a Master Plan for the remainder of the 9,014 acres to be made available for development. Although the Master Plan does not address specific housing densities, it is assumed that an average density of approximately four dwelling units per acre, with complete infrastructure, would be necessary for the development of middle range housing. The area would easily support at least 25,000 single-family housing units, with condominium and patio homes. This area, with private lands adjacent or near to the State Lands site, would meet much of the housing demand for the foreseeable future. These State lands present a tremendous opportunity for the City, County, ETZ and citizens to impact development in an orderly manner. The New Mexico State Land Office is required by law to obtain the best possible return on State Trust lands. The New

Mexico State Land Office maintains control over master planning and recommended zoning, in advance of annexation of such master-planned lands by a municipality. The soils of the area date back to glacial time periods. Unique opportunities exist that could be useful in preserving natural arroyos that have alluvial cuts that would be unsuitable for urban use that could benefit natural open space and park settings. The land to the east of the State Trust Lands are in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Organ Mountain Recreation and Wilderness Area, which prevents the development of the mountains and higher mesa areas, thereby protecting the fragile environment and the aesthetic mountain views.

Local governments can acquire federal land for parks, roads and public facilities. Additional sections of BLM land are designated for disposal to the private sector or for trade with the New Mexico State Land Office. The East Mesa soils, for the most part, have several moderate building limitations and, in some cases, severe building limitations, including high shrink and swell, cementing and flooding, which require special building precautions. The septic suitability ranges from slight to severe depending on percolation, cementing and other characteristics. The average soil suitability limitations for septic tank usage is moderate.

2.4.3 Tortugas Mountain - East Mesa Area

The boundaries for this area are: the junction of I-25 and I-10 to the west, Dripping Springs Road to the north, military reservation boundaries to the east and the ETZ's five mile boundary to the south.

The Talavera Foothills, Las Alturas Estates and other southeast mesa areas have been included as the Tortugas Mountain East Mesa, with approximately 1,500 residents. The Tortugas Mountain acts as a barrier separating the residential foothills from the city. The mountain also supports an observatory maintained by New Mexico State University. The Las Alturas Estates area began development in the 1960's and has focused on large lot development. New Mexico State University and the NMSU Golf Course bound the Las Alturas Subdivision on the north and west. On the east, there is NMSU property, an Elephant Butte Land and Trust subdivision and federal (military) property.

The adjacent Elephant Butte Land and Trust Subdivision, although platted in the early part of the twentieth century has few homes. The residents have a common link with the other residents in the area of desiring lots to be as large as or larger than the current zoning with the minimum lot size being restricted to two acres. A road assessment district has been approved to provide paving on the primary roads serving the Elephant Butte Land and Trust subdivision.

The Talavera Foothills area is a more recent development with lots of at least one acre. Unlike much of the City, County and ETZ, these lots are outside the water and sewer service area of the city. Recently, a 12" water line owned by the Moongate Water Company has been extended into the area. This water line extension will speed up the

rate of housing construction. Wastewater is disposed of with private septic tanks, which are approved by the New Mexico State Environment Department.

The Tortugas Mountain-East Mesa soils, for the most part, have several moderate building limitations and, in some cases, severe building limitations including high shrink and swell, cementing and flooding, which require special building precautions. The septic suitability ranges from poor to severe, depending on percolation, cementing and other characteristics. The average soil suitability limitations for septic tank usage is moderate.

2.4.4 South Valley Area

Boundaries of the South Valley are I-10 on the east, the ETZ's five mile boundary on the south, the Rio Grande on the west and the Las Cruces city limits on the north.

The area is predominantly agricultural, producing chiles, other vegetables, pecans and cotton, with numerous homes and mobile homes on lot splits, which extend from the municipal limits of Las Cruces and Mesilla south to the ETZ five-mile boundary. Limited mixed agribusiness and commercial activities also characterize this area located south of Mesilla and Mesilla Park. Much of the development is along New Mexico Highways 28 and 478 and the adjacent Burlington Northern & Santa Fe (BN&SF) Railroad, which support light industrial and agribusiness enterprises. The old townsite of Brazito, dating back to 1819, is located along New Mexico Highway 478. Large pecan orchards cover many acres along Highway 28, providing economic health as well as cool, beautiful surroundings.

The area soils are dominantly sandy- clay- loam mixtures with good drainage. These soils have moderate to severe limitations for septic tank percolation and severe for lagoon treatment acreage. Building construction in the valley is limited. Much of the soil in the area exhibit high shrink and swell characteristics and have a low (weight) bearing capacity.

2.4.5 West Mesa Area

The West Mesa is comprised of areas west of the Rio Grande including historic Shalem Colony, Picacho Hills, Fairacres, the village of Picacho, Rassaf Hills and the mesa area east of the Las Cruces Airport and Industrial Park. Farms characterize the area, with urban enclaves and mobile homes on individual lots.

Old Picacho village is part of the ETZ's West Mesa. The village is an unincorporated community, comprised of a mix of agricultural and residential uses. Shalem Colony, the most unique of early area developments, began in 1884 when Dr. John Newbrough acquired 1,200 acres and founded the colony. There are no longer any buildings remaining to indicate that the colony ever existed.

Recent developments in the West Mesa area include Picacho Hills, a golf community, and Rasaaf Hills, located west of Mesilla. Fairacres was established in 1926 and grew with Las Cruces following World War II and the buildup of White Sands Proving Grounds now called White Sands Missile Range (WSMR), east of the Organ Mountains.

The West Mesa area soil, along the river valley are predominantly sandy-clay-loam mixtures with good drainage. These soils have moderate to severe limitations for septic tank percolation and severe limitations for lagoon treatment. There are moderate to severe limitations for building due to high shrink and swell characteristics and low bearing capacity. The mesa soils have several moderate building limitations, and in some cases, severe building limitations including high shrink and swell, cementing and flooding, which require special building precautions. The septic suitability ranges from slight to severe depending on percolation, cementing and other characteristics. The average soil suitability limitations for septic tank usage is moderate.

2.5 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

2.5.1 ETZ Sub-Areas: Current Land-Use Patterns and Projected Growth

Table 2-2 presents the population and housing data for each sub-area. The demographic and economic section covers these data in more detail. Land-use patterns reflect historic population growth and housing development. Information about the county and city

SUB – AREAS:	YEAR:	1990	1998	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
North Valley	Population	14,558	18,50	19,451	20,216	21,043	21,845	22,602	23,413
	Housing		7,308	7,780	8,090	8,420	8,740	9,040	9,370
South Valley	Population	10,839	13,812	14,481	15,501	16,604	17,673	18,683	19,764
	Housing		4,863	5,170	5,540	5,930	6,310	6,670	7,060
East Mesa	Population	11,154	14,214	14,902	17,281	19,874	22,385	24,758	27,298
	Housing		5,633	5,960	6,910	7,950	8,950	9,900	10,920
Tortugas Mountain	Population	1,614	2,057	2,156	2,325	2,490	2,650	2,801	2,963
	Housing		774	800	860	920	980	1,040	1,100
West Mesa	Population	3,888	4,954	5,194	5,959	6,786	7,588	8,345	9,156
	Housing		1,765	1,860	2,130	2,420	2,710	2,980	3,270
ETZ Total	Population	42,053	53,587	56,184	61,282	66,797	72,141	77,189	82,594
	Housing		20,343	21,570	23,530	25,640	27,690	29,630	31,720

Source: 1999 Information Pathways, Inc.; 1998 Bureau of US Census; and 1999 GeoStat Land-Use Projections with Population Adjustment

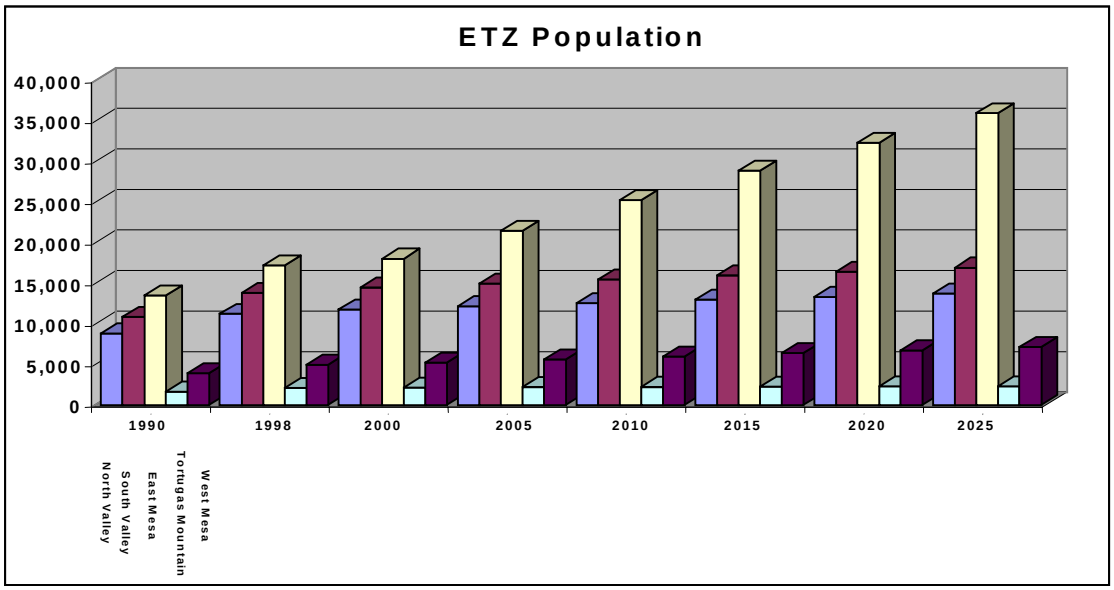
TABLE 2-2: Current ETZ Population and Housing Unit Estimates and Projection by Sub-Areas

building permit data was reviewed to determine the rates of growth and the absorption rates. With these essential data in hand, population data have been adjusted to estimate future land-use using a simple mathematical land use and population model. The results are depicted in Table 2-2 and Graph 2-2.

To increase the level of accuracy for these sub-area projections, county level projections were prepared. Then, utilizing Census Block Groups and Tracts, the model placed the growth in logical Census boundaries. As shown in the population table and graph, the East Mesa is projected to be the fastest growing area in the ETZ, followed by the South Valley, North Valley, and West Mesa, in that order. The Tortugas Mountain Area is the slowest growing area in the ETZ.

The Sub-Area's populations, as well as the ETZ total population, are depicted in Table 2-2. In preparing demographic projections, national and state projections are very accurate. The county level projections are fairly accurate. The most difficult projections are for cities and small areas.

The Future Land Use Concept Map (Map 1) also illustrates that residential site-built homes, as well as manufactured and mobile homes, have utilized a great deal of land for development. The continued development of large lots (one or more acre in size), will soon place pressures on available private land. An increase in density for site built and manufactured homes to four or more units per acre, and an increased density for mobile homes placed in planned developments of six to 10 units per acre, would have a positive impact on reducing sprawl. The impact would be on both the affordability of home sites and homes, as well as the affordability of environmentally compatible infrastructure.



Source: GeoStat, Inc. 1999

Graph 2-2: Population Growth by ETZ Area

An increase in residential density would also preserve much of the land currently being taken out of open space and agriculture.

The purpose of the Land Use and Zoning section is to identify the historic patterns of development, the existing land use and zoning for the Doña Ana County-Las Cruces ETZ and to project future development. The ETZ Commission does not have the capital planning and budgeting authority often considered necessary for sound planning practices. The ETZ Commission and the ETZ Authority do have jurisdiction on zoning and subdivisions. These regulations can have a major impact on development patterns and standards.

2.5.2 Population Estimates and Projections

Population projections are prepared at regular intervals by the US Bureau of the Census at the national, state and county levels. Figures cover large geographic area coverages and are very accurate, due in part to the size and relative stability of large areas. As projections are made for cities and smaller areas, the accuracy declines. In order to improve the accuracy of projection, the county projections were made in phases. During the first phase, a traditional population projection was developed by Information Pathways (a national geo-demographic and economic analysis firm). Second, an examination of building permits, subdivision permits and absorption rates provided basic information on the location of the available private and public land for new development and the rate of development. These data were used to determine the share and location of county population in relation to the demand for a type and location of landuse. The land-use model uses these data and physical limitation data with public input and policy statements to develop the land use projections.

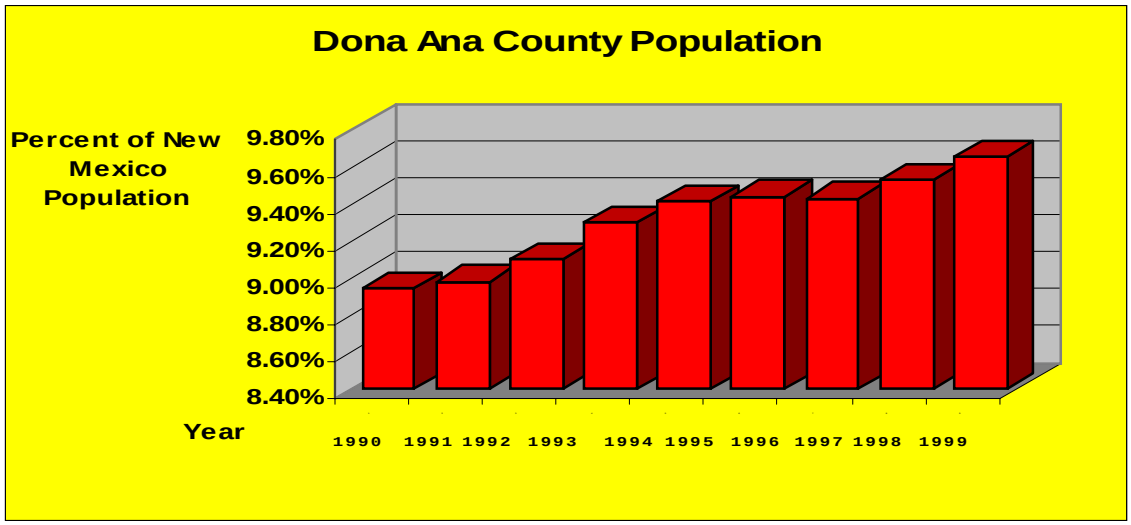
Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
New Mexcio	1,515,069	1,519,940	1,547,141	1,580,841	1,615,385	1,653,777	1,683,773	1,707,902	1,723,965	1,736,931
Doña Ana County	135,510	136,523	140,830	146,275	151,965	156,083	158,802	162,713	166,301	169,165
Percent of State Population	8.94%	8.98%	9.10%	9.30%	9.41%	9.44%	9.43%	9.53%	9.65%	9.74%

Source: US Census 1999: GeoStat 2000

TABLE 2-3: Doña Ana County as a Percentage of the State of New Mexico

As shown in Table 2-3, Doña Ana County is gaining in population not only at a rapid rate, but also as a percentage of the total New Mexico Population. Doña Ana is not only one of the few New Mexico counties to be gaining in population, but the only county to exhibit growth throughout the last decade. The county has increased by 33,655 persons and the state by 221,862 so far this decade. Doña Ana County's numeric representation

is increasing overall in relation to the State. This increase is expected to continue as Doña Ana County benefits from the Greater El Paso area's sphere of influence.



Source: GeoStat 1999

Graph 2-3: Percentage of Doña Ana County Population to the State of New Mexico Population

2.5.3 Population Growth and Landuse by ETZ Sub-Area

The county's population is projected to increase by 21,000 people between the year 2000 and the year 2020. Housing units are projected to increase by 10,150 in the same period. Due to the lack of sewer systems in the ETZ, the added housing demand could absorb up to 10,000 additional acres of land in the ETZ.

The use of cluster development, as an intensity of land-use alternative on a moderately large lot development, would benefit residents, developers, builders and governments alike (See Map 1, Future Land Use 2020). First, the placement of clusters of homes with adjacent open spaces for joint use would increase the aesthetic value to not only the residents thereof, but to the entire community, as well. Cluster developments would save 25% to 50% in on-site infrastructure development costs, as well as provide local government savings for off-site development costs by concentrating the development. From a facilities and operations point of view, cluster communities assist in keeping the costs low for the delivery of all vital services including waste management, police, fire, and emergency services.

The increased demand for land will push new development onto poor soils with septic tank and building construction-related problems. As the land absorption continues, land values will likely increase as the result of diminishing land supplies. A reduction in the land-to-building ratio from one house per acre to four or more houses per acre would

greatly reduce the infrastructure cost for each property owner, for local governments and for utility services.

Small lots would also provide an economic pattern sufficient to provide sewage facilities at roughly the same cost as currently allocated for septic tanks. The soils in the ETZ are predominantly sandy-clay-loam mixtures with relatively good drainage. (See Map 2: Generalized Soil Map). These soils have moderate to severe limitations for septic tank percolation and severe limitations for lagoon treatment. The soils also have moderate to severe limitations for building due to high shrink-swell characteristics, with low bearing capacity. A more detailed analysis is contained in the technical report and in complete analyze by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS). (See Appendix D: Map 3 Generalized Structural Building Limitations).

Soil Maps 1, 2 and 3, in Appendix D, clearly delineate the generalized soils by type, geographic area and the recommended limitations for agricultural and urban uses for each soil type. Urban soil limitations are based on scientific analyses of each soil type. These limitations include poor percolation of wastewater in septic tank fields. Other limitations are: the bearing capacity of soils, corrosive and caustic characteristics requiring different types of pipe and other building materials, shrink and swell caused by clays that require stronger foundations, and other measures that will provide safer and healthier homes (See Appendix D: Map 4 Generalized Septic Sensitivity).

2.5.4 Existing Landuse Patterns in the ETZ

The ETZ is divided into land-uses, which include residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial, institutional, public infrastructure, public and educational facilities and vacant land. Each of the land-use categories have subcategories that define a parcel's specific land-use.

Land-use patterns in Doña Ana County, as well as in the ETZ, began in the 1840's. They reflect a north-northwest and south-southeast pattern of development that follows the Rio Grande's watercourse in association with the valley's farm and ranch activities. (See Appendix D: Map 8: 2000; Map 9: 2005; Map 10: 2010; Map 11: 2015; Map 12: 2020; and, Map 13: 2020 the Future Land Use Series Maps).

Availability of private land has been the prime determinant for much of the growth experienced in the area since 1950. Limited availability of private land, and the presence of water appear to be the strongest influences in guiding location decisions. The next major determinates are the availability of arterials and highways for traffic. Much of the development in the ETZ has occurred along US 70, which connects Las Cruces with White Sands Missile Range, a major area employer, and Alamogordo to the east. The US 70, Interstate 10 (I-10) and Interstate 25 (I-25) corridors lack much of the infrastructure usually considered necessary for sound development, because much of the land is used for grazing cattle on Bureau of Land Management land. However, private land was sold and developed rapidly in the western part of the ETZ (West Mesa area), along the

westbound Deming-to-Los Angeles section of US 70/I-10 (west of Las Cruces). The I-10 route to El Paso, and the I-25 route to Albuquerque are mostly undeveloped, except for one major interchange at Doña Ana within the ETZ boundary. Other routes to El Paso, such as New Mexico Highway 478 and Highway 28, have land use patterns more commonly associated with agricultural development.

ETZ SUB-AREAS	North Valley			East Mesa			Tortugas Mountain			South Valley			West Valley		
	Parcel Count	Square Miles	Acres	Parcel Count	Square Miles	Acres	Parcel Count	Square Miles	Acres	Parcel Count	Square Miles	Acres	Parcel Count	Square Miles	Acres
Agriculture	342	5.2	3,297.5	32	4	2,557.2	8	0.7	423.7	463	9.3	5,963.4	119	7.4	4,707.1
Commercial	46	0.1	63.4	43	1.4	867.6	3	0.0	13.0	97	0.3	180.1	30	0.4	266.0
Govt / Quasi Govt	30	0.1	30.5	207	84.1	53,829.3	66	26.0	16,622.9	36	0.1	40.8	206	113.4	72,553.7
Industrial	16	0	9.5	17	0.1	33.9	1	0.1	64.6	33	0.1	87.4	14	0.1	67.4
Multi-Family Res	40	0.2	95.7	28	0	26.5	13	0.0	11.6	69	0.2	123.5	35	0.1	71.0
Religious	4	0	8.3	3	0	18.0	0	0.0	0.0	9	0.0	21.7	1	0.0	14.6
Single-Family Res	2,906	8.2	5,246.4	2,745	7.2	4,624.1	739	2.1	1,311.1	2,367	12.8	8,213.9	1,241	8.1	5,151.6
Unknown	360	2.5	1,604.2	234	3.4	2,191.8	40	1.1	681.7	362	3.6	2,277.8	216	4.5	2,882.0
Vacant	532	2.2	1,398.2	2,019	18.1	11,555.2	620	5.7	3,631.6	437	2.5	1,569.7	630	7.9	5,036.1
Sub Area Total:	**4,276**	**18.4**	**11,753.7**	**5,328**	**118.3**	**75,703.6**	**1,490**	**35.6**	**22,760.2**	**3,873**	**28.9**	**18,478.3**	**2,492**	**141.8**	**90,749.5**

TOTAL ETZ AREA

	Parcel Count	Square Miles	Acres	Percentage Parcel Count	Percentage Square Miles	Percentage Acres
Agriculture	964	26.48	16,948.90	5.5%	7.72%	7.72%
Commercial	219	2.18	1,390.10	1.3%	0.64%	0.63%
Govt / Quasi Govt	545	223.56	143,077.20	3.1%	65.20%	65.20%
Industrial	81	0.41	262.8	0.5%	0.12%	0.12%
Multi-Family Res	185	0.51	328.3	1.1%	0.15%	0.15%
Religious	17	0.09	62.6	0.1%	0.03%	0.03%
Single-Family Res	9,998	38.36	24,547.10	57.3%	11.19%	11.19%
Unknown	1,212	15.06	9,637.50	6.9%	4.39%	4.39%
Vacant	4,238	36.23	23,190.80	24.3%	10.57%	10.57%
	Total # of Parcels	Total # Square Miles	Total # of Acres			
TOTAL:	**17,459**	**342.88**	**219,445.30**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: GeoStat Inc 1999 (See an enlarged copy of Table 2-4 in Appendix C: Supplemental Data)

Table 2-4: Landuse by ETZ Areas and the Total ETZ Landuse

Interstate 10 is the Mesilla Valley's major east-west highway. The east-bound route of I-10 connects the Mesilla Valley with El Paso, Houston and eventually the southeast Atlantic coast. The west-bound route of I-10 links the Mesilla Valley with Deming, Lordsburg, Tucson, Phoenix, Los Angeles, and San Diego. Interstate 25, which originates in Las Cruces, provides a route north to Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Colorado Springs, Denver and Billings, Montana. From I-25, US 70 serves as the area's eastern link to Alamogordo, Roswell, Portales, Clovis and Amarillo, Texas. The Las Cruces International Airport provides passenger, freight and charter air service. Regularly scheduled airline service is also available through El Paso International Airport approximately 47 miles to the southeast.

These routes are contiguous to private land, while the **i**nterstate highways (I-10 and I-25), for the most part, are located adjacent to federal and state lands. Located parallel to New Mexico State Route (NMSR) 478, is the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) right-of-way, which is another major freight transportation route with associated commercial and industrial development.

Land and infrastructure availability, governmental policies and regulations, as well as the more difficult to quantify "favorable development climate" determine the type and amount of development that takes place. The total ETZ comprises an area 342.88 square miles or 219,496.5 acres of which 47.6 square miles or 30,471.4 acres are within municipal corporate limits or is under New Mexico State University ownership. More than two thirds of the land in the ETZ is owned by federal, state and other public agencies. The remaining land that is vacant is the land with development potential.

2.5.4.1 Residential Use

Although the ETZ has various residential zones, it is comprised primarily of lots that are one acre in size or greater. Such acreages consist of the following housing related subcategories: single-family, rural detached site-built, manufactured housing, single and double-wide mobile homes and recreational vehicles in parks. There are a few patio homes and duplexes in the Extra-Territorial Zone. Due in part to the economy of the area, residential housing within the ETZ consists of predominantly mobile home units on single lots, lot splits and mobile home parks, interspersed with manufactured housing and separate single-family site-built units. (See Appendix D: Existing Land Use Map 13.) There is a lack of sewer systems in the ETZ. The requirements for septic tanks under State regulation is a minimum of 3/4 acre. This regulation determines the minimum marketable lot size in much of the ETZ. There are numerous private and cooperative water systems with the capacity of serving such lots.

2.5.4.2 Commercial Use

Commercial use zones allow such uses as neighborhood shopping centers, community retail trade, professional office space, recreational, manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, and services. The majority of commercial uses are small businesses and can be categorized to be in structurally good to poor conditions, mostly as strip commercial development along the major arterials. One of the largest areas of concentrated commercial development is along US 70 east of the City of Las Cruces, comprised of a wide variety of small commercial enterprises. There are also commercial developments along Highway 478, US 70 West and Picacho Avenue.

2.5.4.3 Industrial Use

Industrial uses include light industry, agribusiness, construction, manufacturing, and warehousing. The Las Cruces Industrial Park, adjacent to the Las Cruces International Airport on the south of the Airport and I-10, provides space for considerable development. The area needs additional infrastructure and specialized wastewater treatment or sewer systems, to meet the requirements of many industries. The Santa Teresa International Border Port of Entry, outside the ETZ in the southern part of the County, provides access to Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, as well as to the rest of Mexico. The area also has excellent transportation infrastructure with a nearby highway and the interstate highway, rail and airport facilities. This new Port of Entry area is expected to become a major commercial, industrial and employment generator. Several new facilities have already been developed. There are major industrial plants and agriculture packing facilities along the BNSF Railroad and Highway 478 inside and outside the ETZ boundaries.

2.5.4.4 Institutional Use

Institutional uses include police, fire protection, transportation, government, schools and churches. All of the ETZ's permitting services are located at the County Complex in Las Cruces. The Las Cruces School District has a total of twenty-nine (29) public schools and an enrollment of 20,771 students in the system. Of the 29 schools, 19 are elementary schools, with 10,253 students. Nine of the district's 19 elementary schools are located in the ETZ. There are six middle schools, with 4,335 students, two of which are located within the ETZ. Many of the students are bussed to various schools within the Las Cruces School District, as school district boundaries do not coincide with municipal boundaries. A large number of churches and a few synagogues, mosques and temples are scattered throughout the ETZ and represent several religions.

2.5.4.5 Public Facilities

Public Facilities are divided into the following subcategories: health care, recreation, libraries, utilities, telecommunication, and open space. (See Appendix D: Map 19 - Public Schools and University). Currently, few facilities are available in the ETZ itself, but are available in the municipalities, primarily the City of Las Cruces. Complete health care services, including basic trauma services, satellite health clinics, dental facilities, behavioral health, and ancillary facilities are located in Las Cruces at Memorial Medical Center, Mesilla Valley Hospital, various clinics and doctors' offices. Primary health services are available to the ETZ at the Ben Archer Clinic, near the village of Doña Ana and the East Mesa Health Clinic.

2.5.4.6 Water Service

The City of Las Cruces provides water service to its residents and has extended limited water service to areas outside its city limits, where the extension of the system was feasible (See Appendix D: Map 17, ETZ Water Systems). Private water providers and

water utility companies provide water service to numerous areas in the Extraterritorial Zone.

2.5.4.7 Wastewater Service

The City of Las Cruces provides wastewater service to the residents of the City and has extended limited service to outlying areas that are adjacent to existing systems. The City of Las Cruces' approved wastewater system improvements do not include plans to serve the greater portion of the ETZ.

The village of Doña Ana has the potential for 500 connections via a force main sewer to the City of Las Cruces wastewater treatment plant. The Doña Ana Mutual Domestic Water Consumer Association (MDWCA) provides billing service for customers who are connected to the Las Cruces sewer system and who are residents of the village of Doña Ana.

The Public Facilities and Services section of Doña Ana County's *"Final Regional Wastewater Facilities Master Plan – 1998,"* has an inventory of the present condition, capacity and use of the above facilities and services. The assessment of the identified sections of the document is not intended to be an in-depth evaluation of the area's operations or programs, but identifies their capacity and limitations with respect to future ETZ planning and development. (See Appendix D: Map 18, Wastewater Service area).

2.5.4.8 Vacant Land

Vacant land is prevalent throughout the ETZ, with most concentrated development occurring within one mile of the Las Cruces City limits. (See Appendix D: Map 15 Vacant Lands). Within the planning area, much of the land expected to be annexed by Las Cruces has vacant status at the present time. This is due in large part to the lack of roads and utilities on state and federal lands.

2.5.5 Existing Zoning Patterns in the ETZ

The existing zoning patterns for the ETZ were adopted in 1989, as shown on the Large ETZ Zoning Map on file in the County Planning Office. (See Appendix D: Map 14 - Generalized ETZ Land Use Map). These districts show that the trend was to zone most land for residential districts of varying density requirements. A few isolated pockets of commercial zones currently exist in the ETZ. The commercial activities along US 70, east and west, have generated a degree of visual pollution to the entry to the City of Las Cruces.

The existing industrial zones have been located along the rail line and tend to buffer the residential and agricultural areas from rail traffic. There is little or no vacant land zoned for apartments or mobile home parks or recreational vehicle (RV) parks in the ETZ.

At this writing, all private land in the ETZ has been zoned. The state reserves the right to determine the applicable uses of its lands. Commercial zoning has generally followed the railroad, state highways such as South Main Street (NMSR 478), State Highway 28 in the South Valley, Picacho Avenue (US 70) into the West Mesa, and North Main Street (US 70) into the East Mesa Area, and Valley Drive into the North Valley area. Only the Talavera area is without a major arterial/highway and accompanying strip commercial activity.

2.5.6 Locations of Special Concern

The evolution of land use within the ETZ has produced a number of conflicts whereby abutting land uses are incompatible. Doña Ana County has 25% of the mobile homes in New Mexico and less than 10% of the State's population. The mobile home housing units are scattered on acre and sub-acre parcels throughout the ETZ, in contrast to Las Cruces, where mobile homes are concentrated in mobile home parks or subdivisions. Pockets of mobile home sites located adjacent to single-family site-built residences tend to create incompatible land use unless the mobile homes or manufactured homes have exterior siding and roof materials similar to site-built homes. Public comments received through meetings and surveys indicate that the problems associated with mobile home locations adjacent to site-built homes are serious, and that a special zoning district be created exclusively for mobile home parks to ameliorate the problem.

The location of mobile homes in parks with community water and sewage treatment, would reduce potential health problems, especially considering the septic tanks in the valley areas. (See Appendix D: Map 12, Mobile Home Parcels). Public health, water and hydrology professionals, as well as the general public, during the meetings that were held as a part of the planning process in 1999, identified septic tank seepage as a major problem. Unplanned, unimproved large and small clusters of homes on single parcels without adequate sewer facilities exacerbate these problems.

The most compatible use of land fronting a major highway or railroad is open space, commercial or industrial land use. They also provide barriers to the sound pollution associated with heavy commercial traffic. Some single-family residential uses facing major highways are exposed to the noise and high traffic volumes without noise fence barriers.

Commercial activity along highways and major arterials is for the most part compatible with adjacent residential, industrial and agricultural uses. The "islands" of industrial uses are compatible with adjacent uses when there is sufficient building setback and buffering.

The lack of open space and parks in the ETZ creates a handicap for residents wanting recreational facilities. This is especially noticeable in the Northeast Mesa, area where there are few parks and recreation areas other than the mountains.

2.5.7 Housing

An analysis of existing housing is presented in the following subsections:

- Housing Characteristics
- Housing Conditions

2.5.7.1 Housing Characteristics

The 2000 estimate of population and housing for the ETZ shows approximately that 56,200 residents live in the ETZ. In 2000, there are approximately 20,343 housing units in the ETZ; however, 9% are estimated to be vacant. Subtracting the vacant units from the total units, then dividing the answer into the total population results in an average household size within the ETZ of 2.8 persons. This figure contrasts slightly with the national average of the 1998 US Census figure of 2.7 persons per household, but well within expected levels. The national average has been attributed to the decline of the baby boom and the increase of divorce.

Census Tract	Block Group	1998 Population	2003 Population	1990 -1998 Population Growth	1998-2003 Population Growth	1998 Households	2003 Households	1990 -1998 Household Growth	1998-2003 Household Growth	Average Household Size
North Valley Subtotal		18,552	20,798	274	121	6,799	7,792	307	146	2.7
East Mesa Subtotal		14,212	15,935	137	61	4,896	5,610	153	73	2.9
Tortugas East Mesa Subtotal		2,057	2,306	55	24	724	830	61	29	2.8
South Valley Subtotal		13,812	15,486	165	73	4,471	5,123	184	87	3.02
West Mesa Subtotal		4,954	5,555	82	36	1,580	1,811	92	44	3.4
ETZ Total		53,587	60,080	713	315	18,470	21,166	797	379	2.9

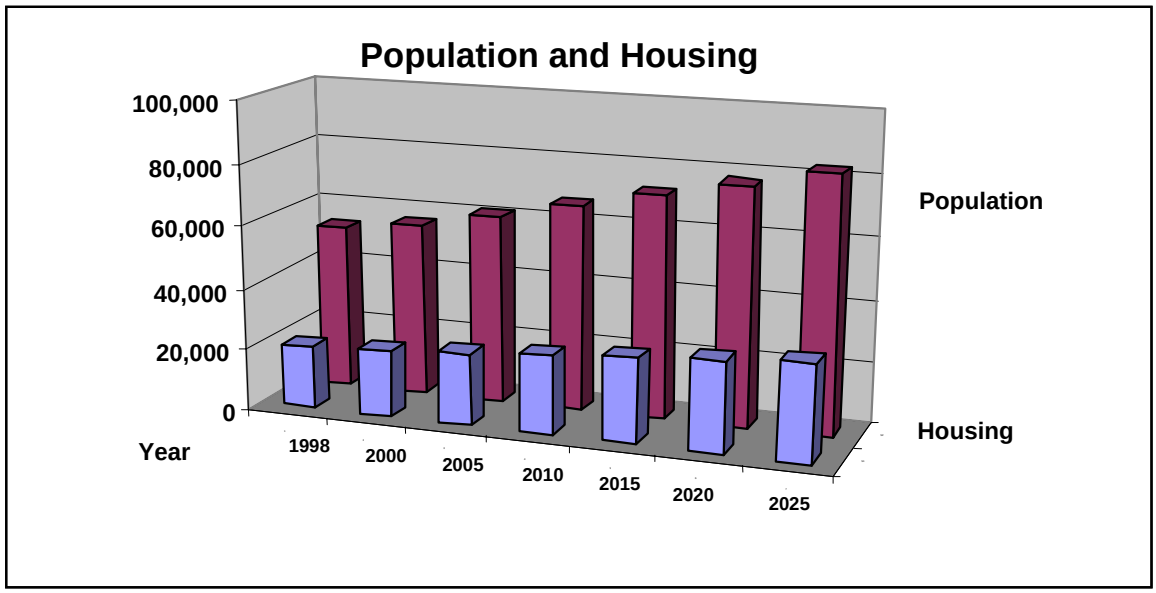
Source: GeoStat, Inc. 1999 (See enlarged version of Table 2-5 in Appendix C)

Table 2-5: Las Cruces-Dona Aña County ETZ Planning Areas

The Summary Population Estimates and Projections in Table 5, by each Sub-Area and the total ETZ provide a snapshot of growth at the Census Block Group levels. All data have been included in the land use projections and are reflected in the GIS data and maps. (See Table 2-2: Population and Housing Estimates and Projections.

2.5.7.2 Housing Conditions

Housing is rated as "good," "fair," or "poor." By comparing the condition of all residential structures (site-built homes, mobile homes and manufactured homes) in the ETZ, over 80% can be considered in good or fair condition. The largest portion of poor housing consists of older, used mobile homes.



Source: GeoStat, Inc. 1999

Graph 2-4: Population and Housing Estimates and Projections 1990 to 2025

The residential structures in poor to fair condition are not grouped in one area of the ETZ, but are interspersed throughout the ETZ; they generally constitute visual blight and pose health and safety hazards. The largest groupings of poor housing are northeast of Las Cruces and adjacent to or north of US 70. Used mobile homes in poor repair are found in four of the five Sub-Areas.

There is a substantial need for affordable housing and alternative affordable housing programs to provide acceptable housing for the entire community.

2.5.8 Income

2.5.8.1 Household Income

Doña Ana County has a very large number of poor households, of which 32% of those households earn less than $15,000 annually, which falls short of the Housing and Urban Development 's (HUD) "Very Low Income" limit of $16,250 (for a family of four). It is

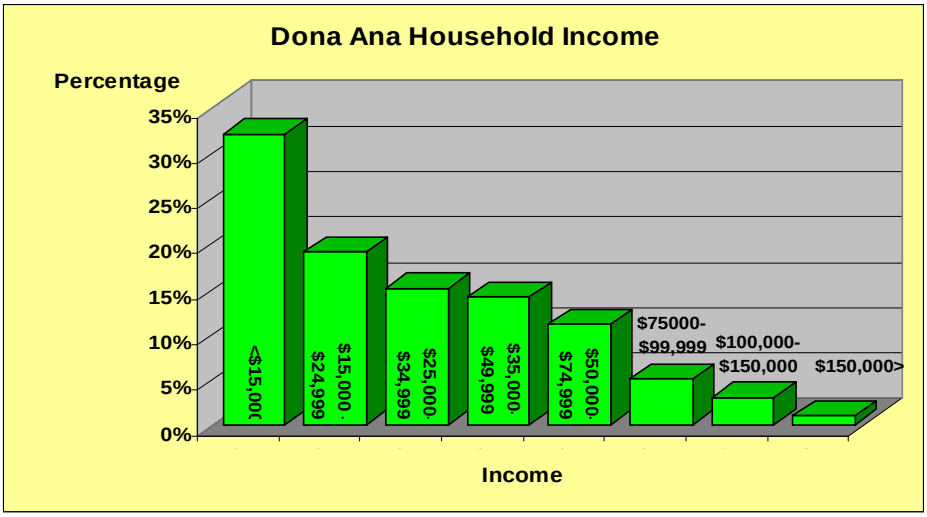
also below HUD's "Low Income" limit, which is established at 50% of the HUD-adjusted Median Family Income, and below HUD's "Low Median Family Income"

Less than $15,000	$15,000 $24,999	$25,000 $34,999	$35,000 $49,999	$50,000 $74,999	$75,000 $99,999	$100,000 $150,000	Over $150,000
18,614	11,184	8,547	8,195	6,738	2,755	1,880	858
32%	19%	15%	14%	11%	5%	3%	1%

Source: US Census 1998 / IPI, Inc 1999 / GeoStat, Inc 2000

Table 2-6: Doña Ana County Household Income

limit of $18,200. Over 51% of the income of households in the ETZ, are below $25,000. Forty percent of the households have incomes ranging from $25,000 to $74,999 annually. Such figures indicate the need for a variety of housing types in various price ranges.



Source: GeoStat, Inc. 1999

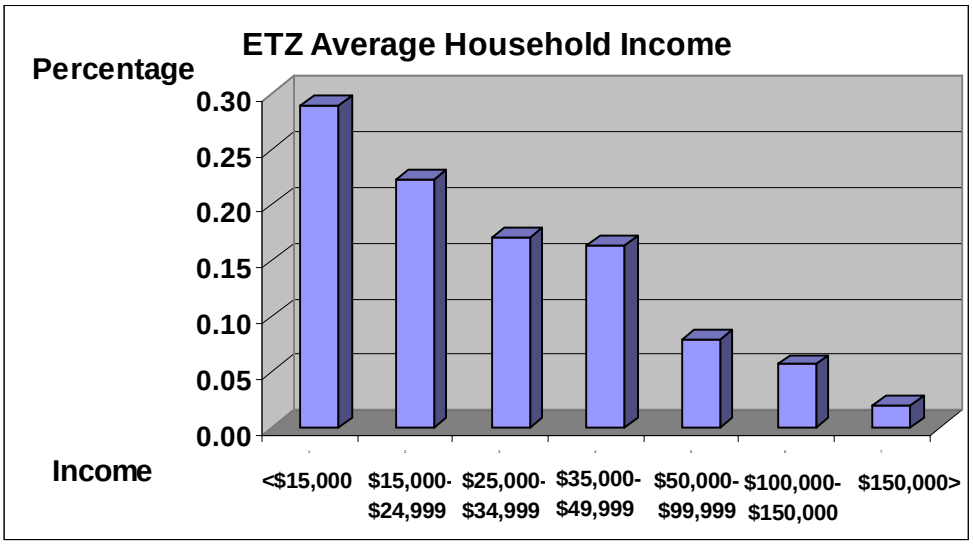
Graph 2-5: Doña Ana County Average Household Income

The ETZ pattern is somewhat different form that of the County as a whole. This is evident in Table 2-7, as well as in Graph 2-5. While 32% of the County households are in the under $15,000 range, the figure for the ETZ is only 25%. There are slightly higher numbers of households as a percentage of all households in the income ranges over $50,000 per year.

	1998 HOUSEHOLD INCOME										
	Less tha $15,000	$15,000 $24,999	$25,000 $34,999	$35,000 $49,999	$50,000 $74,999	$75,000 $99,999	$100,000 $150,000	Over $100,000	Median Income	Average Income	Per Capita Income
North Valley Subtotal	1,492	1,192	887	1,097	1,245	435	296	62	$41,135	$35,958	$13,122
East Mesa Subtotal	1,343	961	816	688	481	288	213	105	$29,534	$31,454	$11,623
Tortugas-East Mesa Subtotal	66	47	38	66	160	183	117	48	$75,190	$64,563	$23,138
South Valley Subtotal	1,343	1,054	654	512	533	236	122	18	$33,107	$30,327	$10,362
West Mesa Subtotal	290	245	273	196	263	105	140	70	$46,161	$39,305	$12,755
ETZ Total:	4,534	3,499	2,668	2,559	2,682	1,247	888	303	$45,025	$40,321	$14,200
Percent	25%	19%	15%	14%	15%	7%	5%	2%			

Source: US Census 1998 / IPI, Inc. 1999 / GeoStat, Inc. 2000

Table 2-7: ETZ Household Income **(See enlarged version of Table 2-5 in Appendix C)**



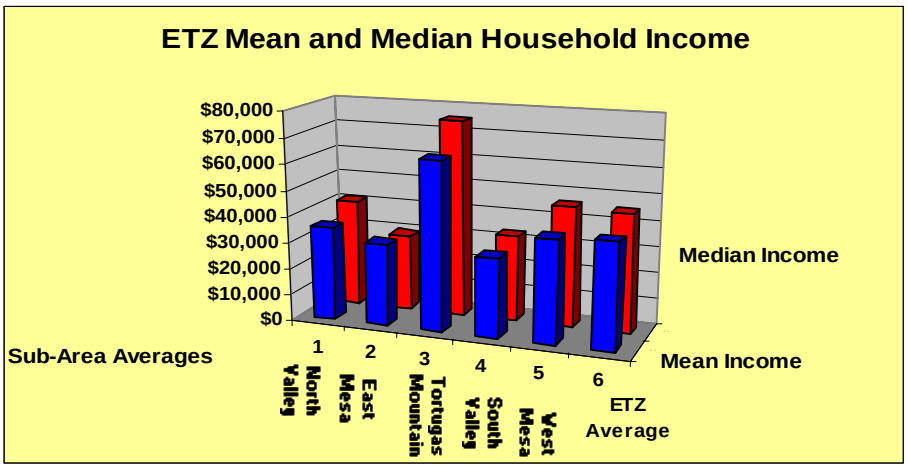
Source: GeoStat, Inc. 1999

Graph 2-6: ETZ Average Household Income

2.5.8.2 Average Income

The average incomes in the ETZ are displayed in Graph 2-6. The "Median Income", the numeric middle count of all incomes, has an equal number of household-incomes above and below this count. The Mean is the arithmetic average, or mean, the total of all

household incomes divided by the number of households. The "Median" is frequently favored in economic reports because it is generally higher than the mean, but less accurate in describing household income. Both methods of obtaining averages are shown in Graph 2-7. The obvious data show the differences in each of the Sub-Areas. The North Valley has a mean household income of $35,958, dollars while the median household income is $41,135. Either measure places the North Valley incomes substantially above the County averages of $33,690 Median or the $30,778 Mean household income.



Source: GeoStat, Inc. 1999

Graph 2-7: Average Household Income

The East Mesa contains some of the most significant pockets of poverty in the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). It is the only area within the ETZ below the County average, with a median of $29,534 and a mean household income of $31,454. The highest income in the ETZ, as well as in most of the County, is found in the Tortugas Mountain East Mesa Sub-Area. This is an area of large homes on large one-acre plus lots. The large square footage homes and high values are uncommon in the County, but may be found interspersed in developments throughout the ETZ. The median household income is $75,190, and the mean household income of $64,563 is well above ETZ and County averages.

Median Income	Mean Income	Per Capita Income
$33,690	$30,778	$11,106

Source: US Census 1998 / IPI, Inc 1999 / GeoStat, Inc. 2000

Table 2-8: Doña Ana Average Incomes

The ETZ is the largest area in terms of population in New Mexico not incorporated. The ETZ currently has sufficient population to be a Census Metropolitan Area if it were an incorporated municipality. The ETZ would also be the fourth largest city in New Mexico and contain some of the wealthiest areas in the state.

	Median Income	Mean Income	Per Capita Income
North Valley	**$ 41,135**	**$ 35,958**	**$ 13,122**
East Mesa	**$ 29,534**	**$ 31,454**	**$ 11,623**
Tortugas/East Mesa	**$ 75,190**	**$ 64,563**	**$ 23,138**
South Valley	**$ 33,107**	**$ 30,327**	**$ 10,362**
West Mesa	**$ 46,161**	**$ 39,305**	**$ 12,755**
ETZ Area	**$ 45,025**	**$ 40,321**	**$ 14,200**

Source: US Census 1998 / IPI, Inc 1999 / GeoStat, Inc. 2000

Table 2-9: ETZ Average Incomes

2.6 TRANSPORTATION / CIRCULATION

2.6.1 Existing Conditions of Transportaion Systems

Improvement to the existing Las Cruces and Doña Ana County transportation network area, inclusive of the ETZ, is an issue that warrants attention. Input received from Doña Ana County, the Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the New Mexico State Highway Department, from citizens who reside in the ETZ, as well as from elected and appointed public officials. By and large, the citizens felt that there is room for much improvement in the transportation network and the modes of transportation available. (See Appendix D: Map 20, Las Cruces and ETZ MPO Transportation Plan).

There is concern over the need for uniform street and highway standards and requirements for the development of infrastructure by which all developments share the cost of improvements. These requirements should be applied across the board to ensure fair and equitable transportation facilities and cost sharing, both in and out of incorporated areas. Traffic speed and volumes on neighborhood streets were another widely expressed concern, and suggestions included narrowing neighborhood streets and

implementing more speed enforcement to reduce speeds. The narrowing of streets is a standards action, which could be addressed under local government police powers in street design standards.

Other concerns were voiced concerning the volume of traffic and the need for improvements on US 70 east to White Sands and Alamogordo (See Appendix D: Map 21, US 70 Improvements). This has been addressed by the New Mexico State Highway Department, which has already begun a two-year program to upgrade US 70 to interstate standards. The first phase of improvements began on November 16, 1999 from and including the intersection and interchange of US 70 and I-25, and including the Del Ray, Road Runner, Rinconda and Sonoma Ranch intersections. The second phase is scheduled for the Spring of 2000 and includes the intersections with Mesa Grande Drive and Porter Drive. The third phase is scheduled for late summer of 2000 and includes Holman Road. The fourth phase is scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2001 and completes the improvements to the intersections with Weisner Road, Brahman Road and NASA Road. Schedules are subject to change based on the availability of funds.

The aforementioned improvements meet many of the identified needs. With anticipated future improvements onto the East Mesa, including the loop arterial proposed between US 70 and I-25, many of the identified roadway capacity needs for the future will be met. There are other arterial plans that are somewhat controversial. Some of these are the extension of Weisner Road, south of US 70 to I-10 near the Mesquite interchange (the "East Loop"). Also under consideration is the westerly extension of Peachtree Hills Road. Several West Mesa citizens expressed opposition to the widening of Shalem Colony Trail to meet arterial design standards. The alternative would be to construct an arterial (new roadway) along the edge of the west escarpment. This proposal has been identified for study.

2.6.2 Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization

The MPO adopted a Transportation Plan on August 10, 1994. An updated plan was adopted on June 14, 2000. The City of Las Cruces, the Town of Mesilla and Doña Ana County jointly form the MPO. The MPO planning area includes the ETZ lands.

2.6.3 US Highway 70 East (East Mesa Area)

Once the improvements to US 70 East are in place, the upgrades will resolve long standing traffic and safety problems are inherent to the area. The project is scheduled to be completed in four phases, including construction of frontage roads and interchanges that will provide limited access to US 70.

2.6.4 The MPO Bicycle Element of the Transportation Plan

Pedestrian and bicycle systems are evolving in the City of Las Cruces. New Mexico State University is "bicycle friendly" and improving its facilities. No plans are in place for bike lanes in unincorporated areas. The banks of the Rio Grande, however offer excellent recreational bicycle and pedestrian development potential, as does the Organ Mountain Wilderness and Recreation Area, which would require coordination with the US Bureau of Land Management, the Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) and other federal and local agencies.

The following are the key elements presented in the Bicycle Plan 2000 Updates to this point in the ETZ Comprehensive Plan Development:

1. The Bicycle Plan will benefit students in the NMSU area.
2. The Bicycle Plan will benefit the entire City and its residents.
3. Roadway reconstruction project plans are in the Bicycle Plan, utilizing existing roadways and drainage ways. Both existing roadways and drainage ways have existing rights-of-way for the construction of bikeways.

2.6.5 US Highway 70 Reliever Route Study

The study identified the need for an Engler Road Extension to relieve local arterials, which were experiencing a poor "level of service", by providing an east-west access in the North Valley and East Mesa areas.

Resolutions concerning the adoption of major arterial routes were added to the MPO Transportation Plan and are identified in Appendix D.

2.6.6 Public Transit

Public Transit is limited to the City of Las Cruces Roadrunner Bus System. The system provides routes that are similar to those of other western communities. It serves major arterials and New Mexico State University. There are route extensions into the ETZ to serve the Tortugas area on Highway 478. Further extension to Dona Ana and to the South Valley are being studied. Doña Ana County subsidizes an Indigent Health Care program, which includes "Saferide" service that provides transportation for non-emergency medical trips.