CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS
AGENDA ITEM DEPARTMENT HEAD'S SUMMARY FORM

DEPARTMENT: **Planning and Economic Development**

AGENDA DATE: **November 16, 2010 – City Manager's Report**

CONTACT PERSON/PHONE: **Kathryn Dodson, PhD, Director 541-4670**

DISTRICT(S) AFFECTED: **ALL**

SUBJECT:
Presentation by Staff on implementing Sustainable Development in El Paso and the ETJ through Smart Growth principles, design standards, and Title 21 SmartCode zoning. There will be a subsequent discussion and action to direct the City Manager to initiate staff recommendation on and/or code changes to implement Sustainable Development through proposed measures.
[Economic Development, Kathryn Dodson (915)541-4670]

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:
As City Council has asked for safer, pedestrian friendly, transit ready, sustainable development and neighborhoods, Staff will be asking direction from Council for actions that can be taken to increase sustainable development, the use of Smart Growth principles and the usage of SmartCode in El Paso. These will include short, medium and long term plans and establishing staff taskforces and subcommittees to address specific code changes and recommended practices to bring forward to City Council in the future.

PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION:
N/A

AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:
N/A

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION:
N/A

**********REQUIRED AUTHORIZATION**********

DEPARTMENT HEAD: _____
Department Head

Implementing Smart, Sustainable Development

Although City Council has adopted an optional SmartCode zoning category, has committed to Bus Rapid Transit and taken other steps to promote smart, sustainable development in El Paso, the following recommendations are part of a comprehensive plan to implement smart, sustainable development in El Paso. Dozens of City employees across many departments have been involved in this effort.

There are a wide range of actions that can be taken to increase sustainable development, the use of Smart Growth principles and the usage of SmartCode in El Paso.

This presentation presents ways to more rapidly implement smart, sustainable development and provides an overview of the current status. It provides specific recommendations and action steps, should City Council concur with the proposals and direct the City Manager to proceed with implementation of suggested changes.

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

City Council uses a variety of language to describe the type of development they would like see in El Paso.

- Pedestrian Friendly
- Mixed Use
- Transit Corridors
- Transit Oriented Development
- Preservation
- Mix of Housing Types & Price Points
- Infill
- Neighborhoods
- Pocket Parks
- Context Sensitive Design
- Complete Streets

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

Reasons to implement smart, sustainable development in El Paso:

- Public Health
- Social Justice
- Municipal Cost / Municipal Revenue
- Environmental and Farmland Preservation
- Traffic Congestion and Traffic Safety

Public Health

"Recently, there has been a growing body of evidence linking aspects of the built environment to obesity (33–52). The 20 articles that met the eligibility criteria for this review have all been published within the past 5 years. Of these 20 studies, 17 found a statistically significant relation between some aspect of the built environment and risk of obesity."

Mia A. Papas, Anthony J. Alberg, Reid Ewing, Kathy J. Helzlsouer, Tiffany L. Gary, and Ann C. Klassen **The Built Environment and Obesity**
Epidemiol Rev (2007) 29(1): 129-143

Smart Growth communities can be places that improve public health by encouraging physical activity and social interaction, while reducing the negative impact of traffic. Since stores, schools, and offices are mixed in with each other and close together, people living in compact areas find it easier to walk rather than drive to eat, shop, get exercise, or even go to work.
www.smartgrowthamerica.org

Nearly 3 out of 10 El Paso children overweight (Center for Disease Control)

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

SERVICE SOLUTIONS SUCCESS

Driving Costs	Small Sedan †	Medium Sedan †	Large Sedan †	Average
Operating Costs	**per mile**	**per mile**	**per mile**	**per mile**
gas	9.24 cents	11.97 cents	12.88 cents	11.36 cents
maintenance	4.21 cents	4.42 cents	5.0 cents	4.54 cents
tires	0.65 cents	0.91 cents	0.94 cents	0.83 cents
cost per mile	**14.10 cents**	**17.30 cents**	**18.82 cents**	**16.74 cents**
Ownership Costs	**per year**	**per year**	**per year**	**per year**
full-coverage insurance	$1,005	$1,004	$1,084	$1,031
license, registration, taxes	$427	$583	$745	$585
depreciation (15,000 miles annually)	$2,384	$3,451	$4,828	$3,554
finance charge	$565	$803	$1,050	$806
cost per year	**$4,381**	**$5,841**	**$7,707**	**$5,976**
cost per day	**$12.00**	**$16.00**	**$21.12**	**$16.37**
Total Cost Per Mile				
10,000 total miles per year	**per year**	**per year**	**per year**	**per year**
cost per mile x 10,000 miles	$1,410	$1,730	$1,882	$1,674
cost per day x 365 days	$4,381	$5,841	$7,707	$5,976
decreased depreciation**	-$155	-$286	-$330	-$257
total cost per year	**$5,636**	**$7,285**	**$9,259**	**$7,393**
total cost per mile*	**56.4 cents**	**72.9 cents**	**92.6 cents**	**73.9 cents**
15,000 total miles per year	**per year**	**per year**	**per year**	**per year**
cost per mile x 15,000 miles	$2,115	$2,595	$2,823	$2,511
cost per day x 365 days	$4,381	$5,841	$7,707	$5,976
total cost per year	**$6,496**	**$8,436**	**$10,530**	**$8,487 total**
total cost per mile*	**43.3 cents**	**56.2 cents**	**70.2 cents**	**56.6 cents**
20,000 total miles per year	**per year**	**per year**	**per year**	**per year**
cost per mile x 20,000 miles	$2,820	$3,460	$3,764	$3,348
cost per day x 365 days	$4,381	$5,841	$7,707	$5,976
increased depreciation***	$120	$218	$250	$196
total cost per year	**$7,321**	**$9,519**	**$11,721**	**$9,520**
total cost per mile*	**36.6 cents**	**47.6 cents**	**58.6 cents**	**47.6 cents**

* total cost per year ÷ total miles per year

** decreased depreciation for mileage under 15,000 miles annually

*** increased depreciation for mileage over 15,000 miles annually

† see page 2 for a listing of vehicle makes and models used for driving cost calculations

Social Justice

Low cost housing on the outskirts of town is usually touted as reason to continue to allow communities to sprawl. Living in this "low cost" housing adds the cost of commuting to a family's budget.

The average cost of owning and maintaining a car is $9,520 per year, and this cost increases as a person's commute increases. This amount is equivalent to $793.33 per month. If this payment were used on housing it would provide for $132,000 of additional mortgage capacity.

Using the 2010 IRS mileage reimbursement rate alone, a person with a 20 miles commute has an equivalent expense of $2,000.

Municipal Cost

Dense, smart growth communities often require less public investment per acre than sprawl communities. In addition, if this growth is infill development, the majority of municipal expenses, including libraries, parks, police and fire stations, roads, transit services and utilities are already in place and require little or no additional investment. The city is obligated to provide citizens with these services and in new sprawling communities these services require new investment from the municipality.

Municipal Revenue

Investment per acre rises as buildings become multistory to support denser, often mixed-use development. This results in an increase per acre in tax revenue to a municipality.

Environmental & Farmland Preservation

Smart, sustainable growth can preserve farmland by concentrating density in appropriate areas and allowing for increased preservation.

SmartCode development

710 housing units
40 acres of protected arroyo
4 acres neighborhood green
1 acre civic space
10 acres commercial space

Asarco East

Existing development regulations

665 housing units
11 acres of protected arroyo
0 acres neighborhood green
0 acres civic space
0 acres commercial space

Asarco East

Environmental & Farmland Preservation

A UNC study noted New Urbanism's superior protection of hydrologically sensitive areas, forested lands, steep slopes, and terrain with porous soils

Smart growth can also reduce per capita water imperviousness, which cuts storm water volumes

- EPA study in Atlanta .28 acres imperviousness per DU, .03 acres per new urban design DU

Energy savings come from travel mode shifting, shorter travel distances

The steepest energy savings increases come in 3 to 18 DU per acre range

Going from 3 to 6 units per acre is more efficient than complying with the Federal Energy Star Requirements

Environmental & Farmland Preservation

Land-Use and CO_2

Suburban
8 DU/acre
0.25 FAR

Urban
40 DU/acre
2.5 FAR

CO_2 Lbs/Yr/Household		
Buildings	24,000	11,000
Transportation	26,000	9,000
Total	50,000	20,000

Traffic Congestion & Traffic Safety

Traffic congestion is one of the biggest complaints that citizens are voicing in the charrettes for the comprehensive plan update. In addition, El Paso has had 59 vehicle related fatalities this year and 18 of them were pedestrians.

People living in sprawling areas are more likely to die either as motorists or as pedestrians. Sprawling developments typically include high-speed roads that are more hazardous for people on foot and bicycle. In the nation's most sprawling region, Riverside CA, 18 of every 100,000 residents die each year in traffic crashes. The eight least sprawling metro areas all have traffic fatality rates of fewer than 8 deaths per 100,000.

www.smartgrowthamerica.org and *Measuring Sprawl and Its Impact*

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

City Council's "Community Development Policy Statement," part of the Strategic Plan memorializes this type of development:

To become the most livable city in the United States and be recognized as an international city.

- Identify the top ten livability factors/criteria most relevant to El Paso and establish benchmarks and comparisons in order to develop target opportunities for improvement
- Promote Sustainable Quality Development
- Identify core principles of smart growth and new urbanism to be incorporated into the comprehensive plan for El Paso.
- Update local regulations to reflect local definition of smart growth and new urbanism principles.
- Identify sites for infill and redevelopment opportunities.

Pedestrian Areas in El Paso

Mesa & Remcon (West)

Montwood & Zaragosa (East)

Incomplete Streets

Country Club Road (Upper Valley)

Existing Roadways

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

Existing Roadways

Transit Corridor

Oregon near Robinson (UTEP area)

Multifamily

Colina Alta Drive (West)

Preservation of Farmland

Artcraft & Upper Valley

Artcraft & Westside

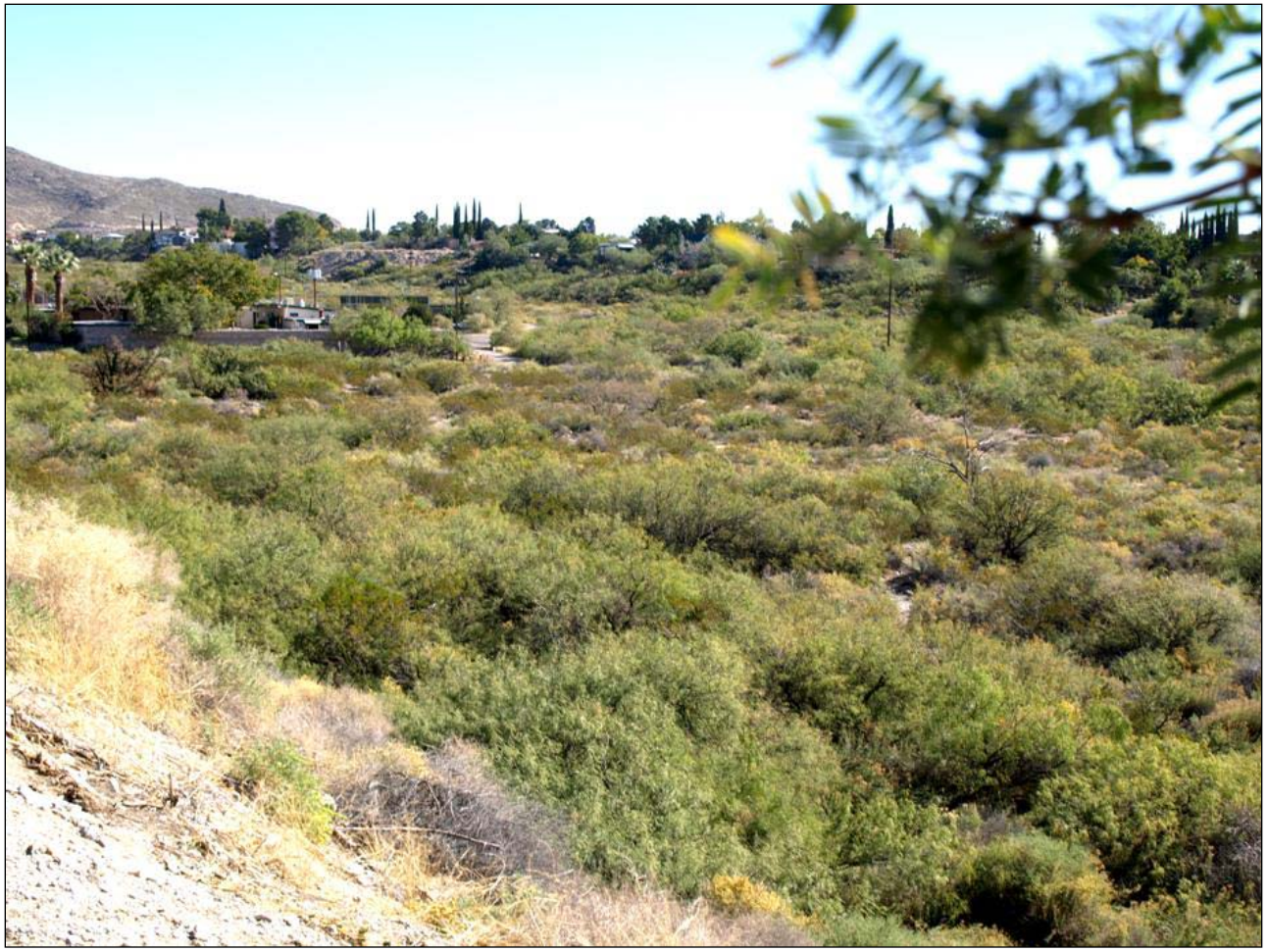
Infill Opportunities

Downtown Area

Pocket Park

Caruso Park (Sunset Heights)

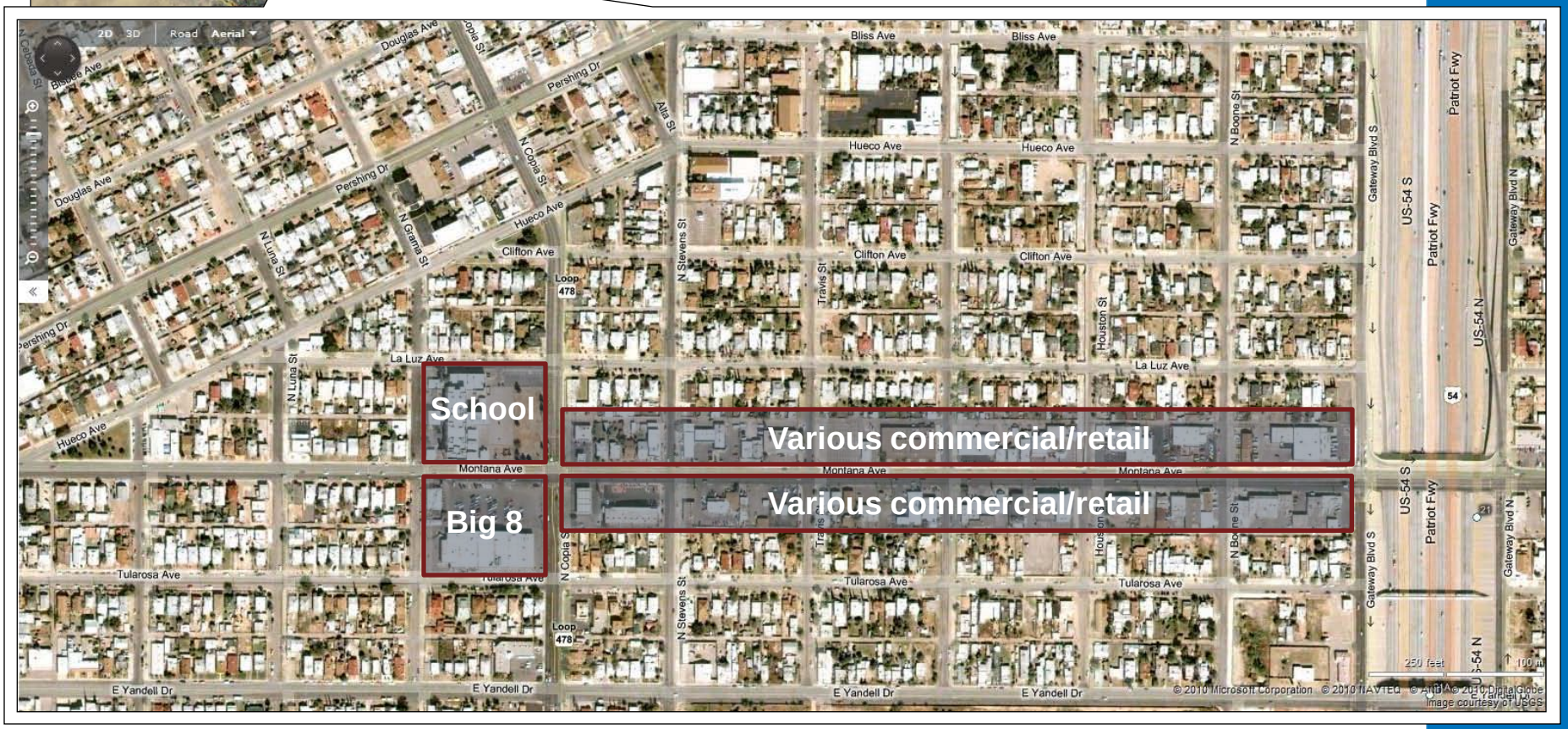
Natural Open Spaces



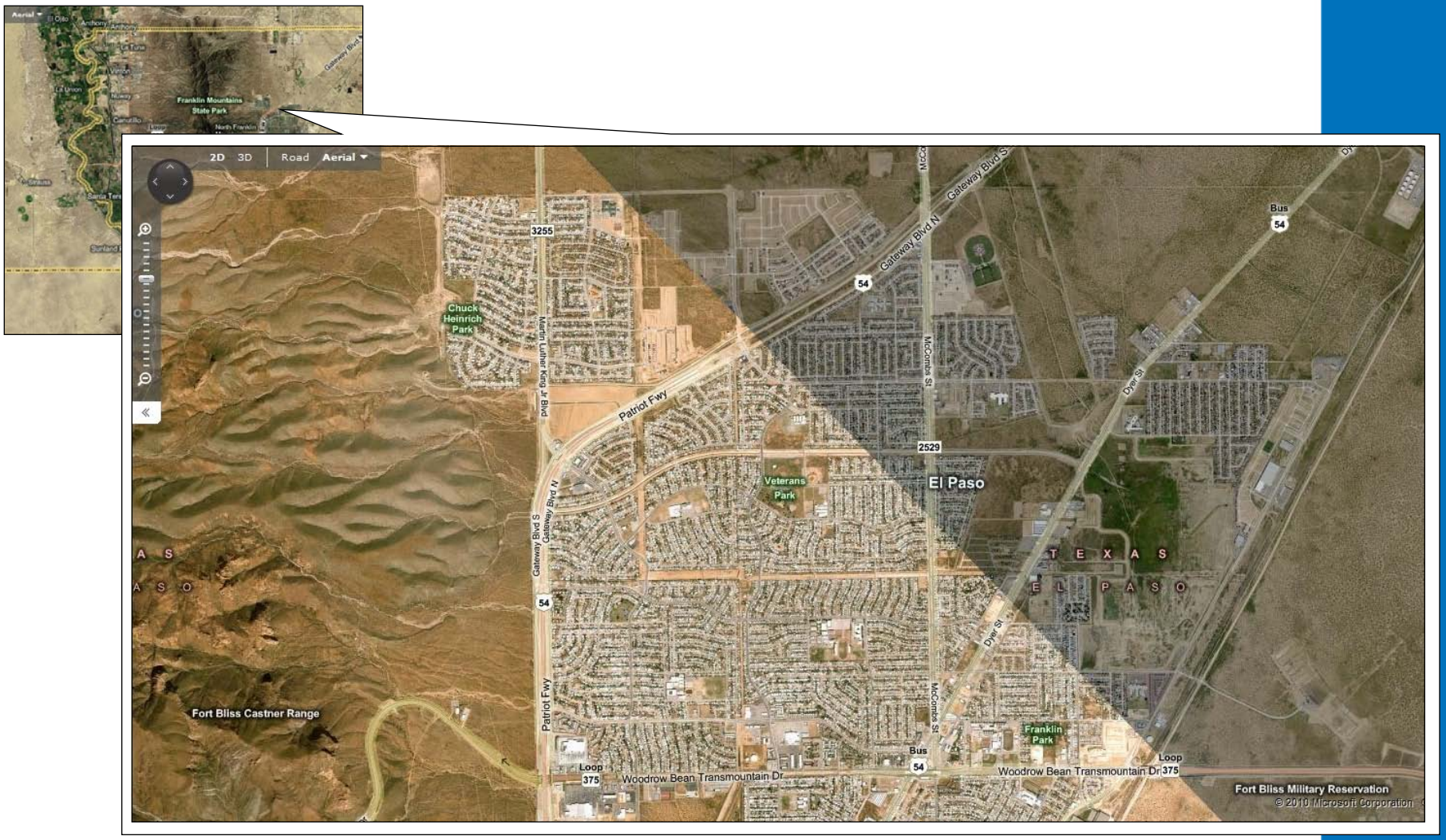
Arroyo Park (Kern)

West El Paso (near Escondido & Resler)

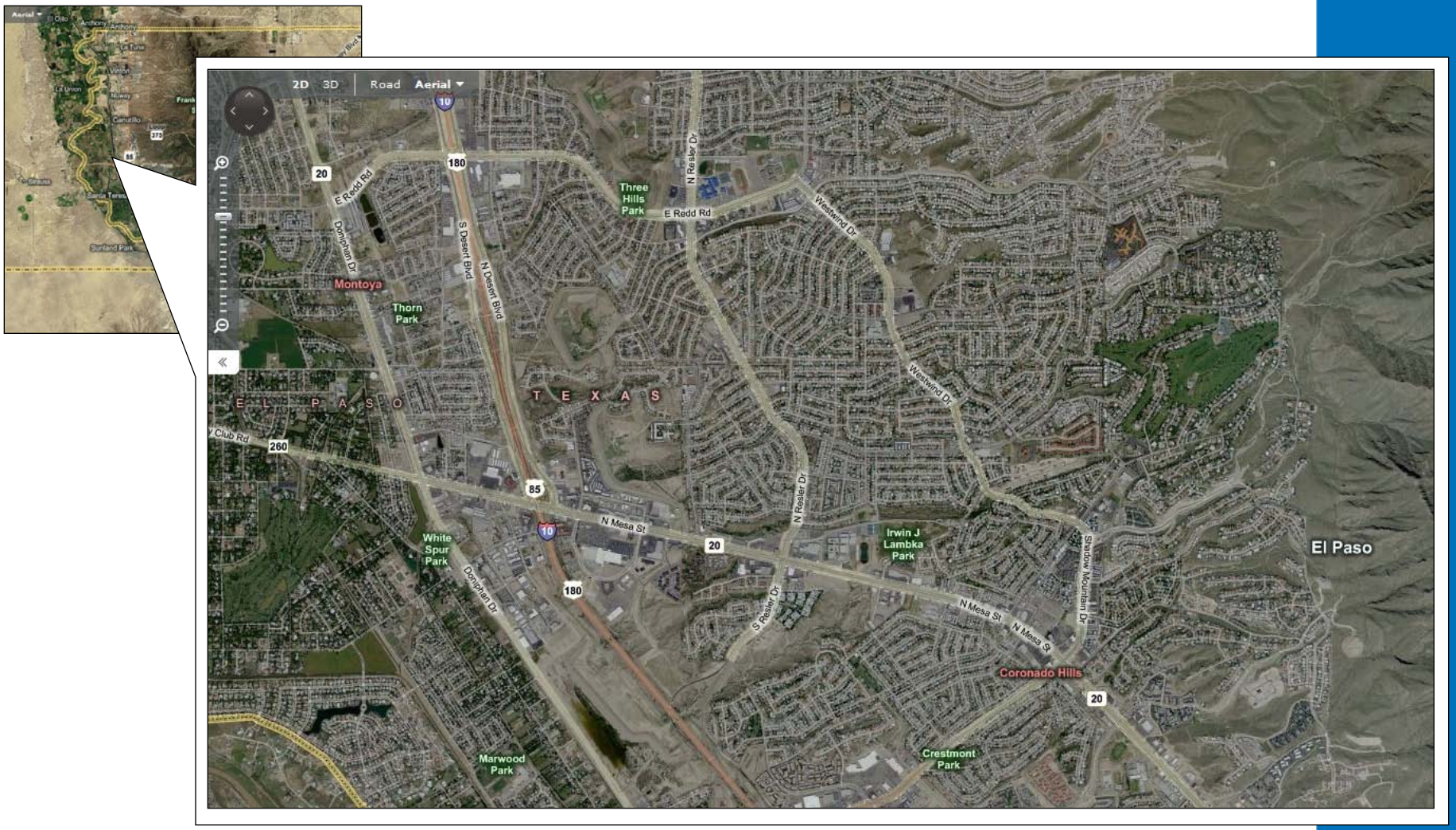
Central El Paso



Sprawl – Northeast El Paso



Sprawl – West El Paso



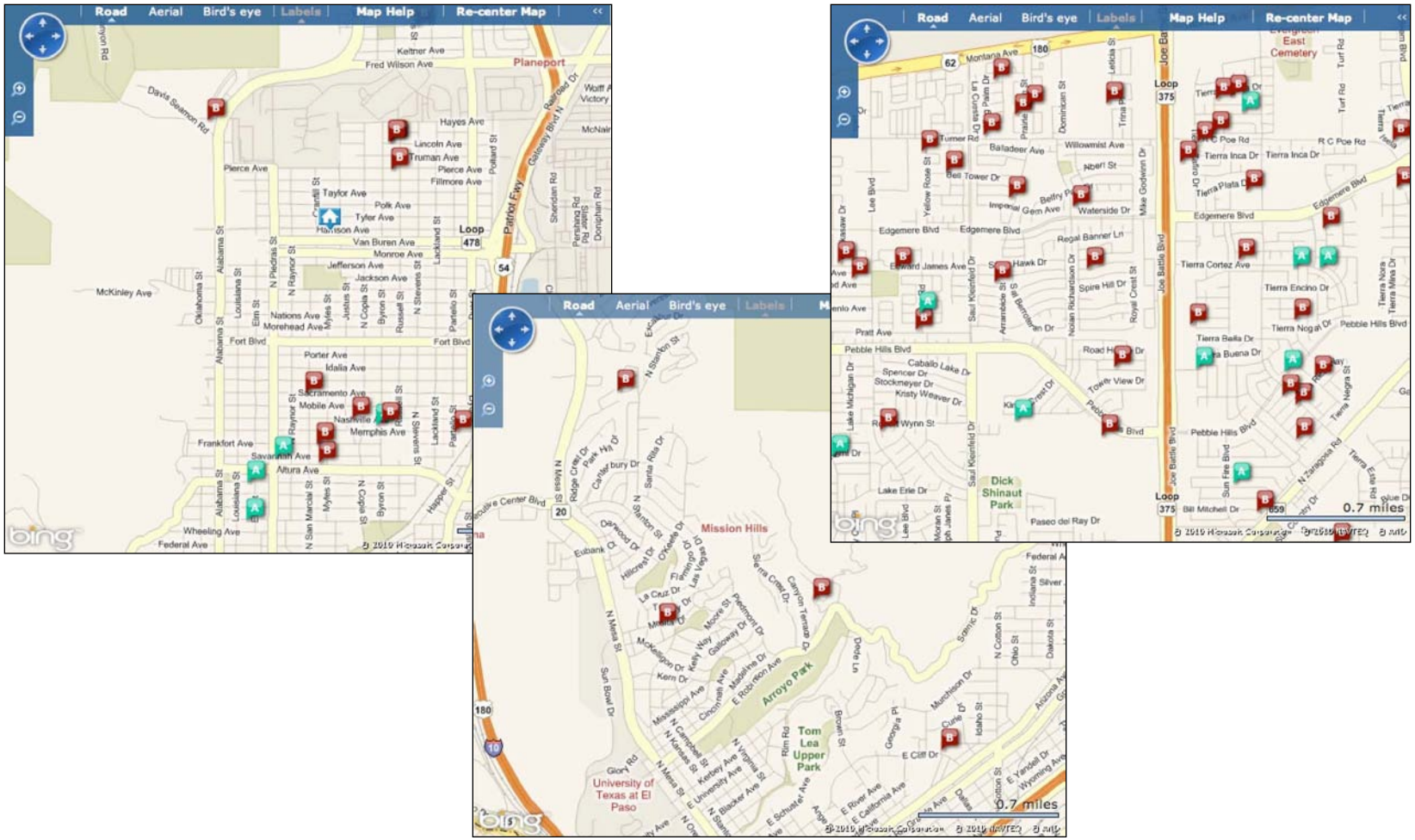
Sprawl – East El Paso

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

SERVICE SOLUTIONS SUCCESS

You can't sprawl your way into prosperity.

Foreclosures in central, Kern and the far eastside.



Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

SERVICE SOLUTIONS SUCCESS

We have the ability to change our existing development into smart, sustainable communities

Current

Oregon Street

Vision: Complete Streets, Pedestrian Friendly, Multimodal Transportation Options

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

SERVICE SOLUTIONS SUCCESS

We can bring life, and revenue, back to downtown.

Current

Downtown

Revitalized Downtown Economy, Pedestrian Friendly, Mixed Use

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

SERVICE SOLUTIONS SUCCESS

We can take unproductive infill sites and have them contribute to our community.

ASARCO Site

Infill Development

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

Examples of smart, sustainable development from other Cities

Port Royal, SC

I'On – Mt Pleasant, SC

Davidson, NC

Glenwood Park – Atlanta, GA

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

SERVICE SOLUTIONS SUCCESS

Examples of smart, sustainable development from other Cities

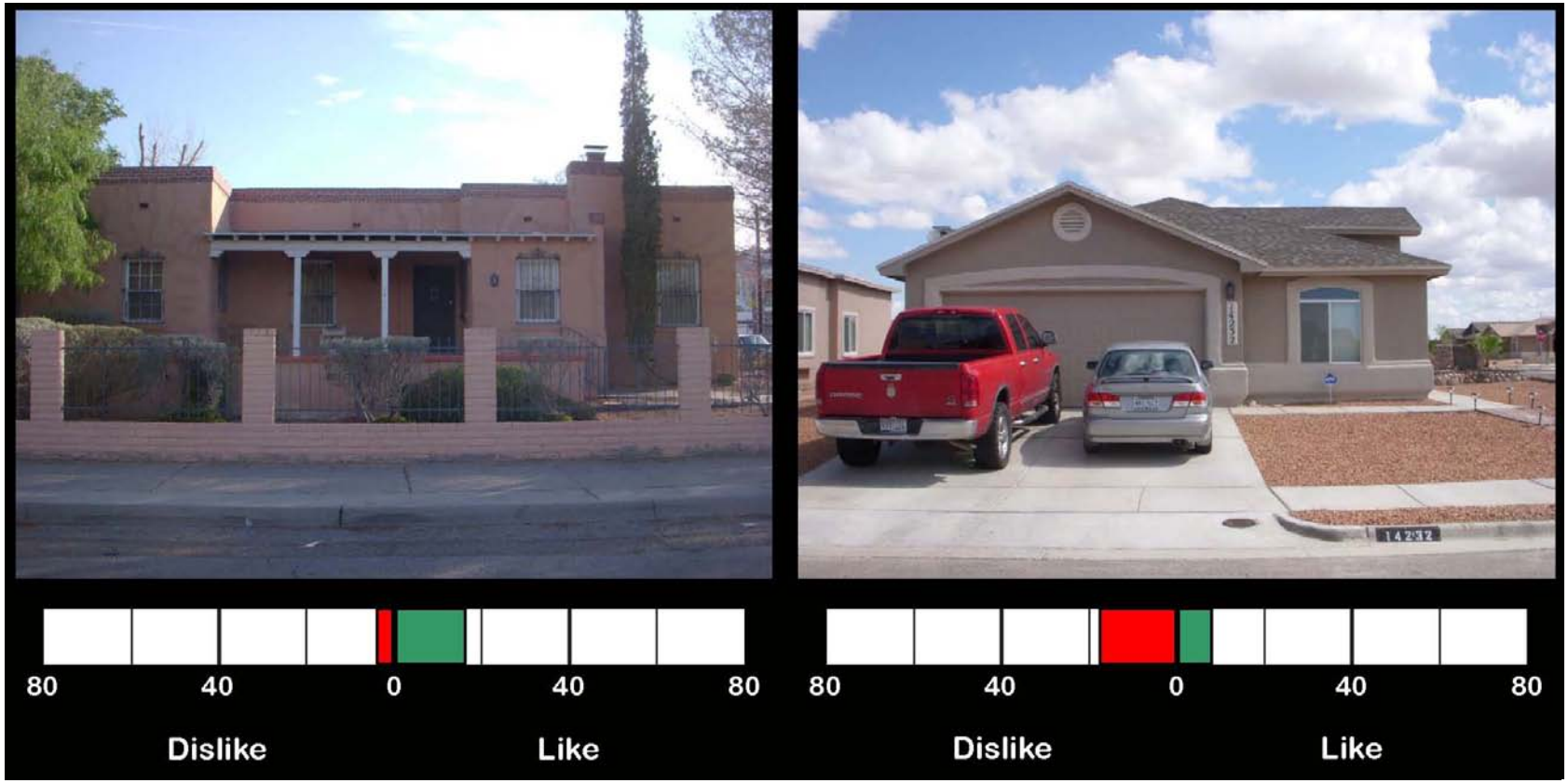
Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

SERVICE SOLUTIONS SUCCESS

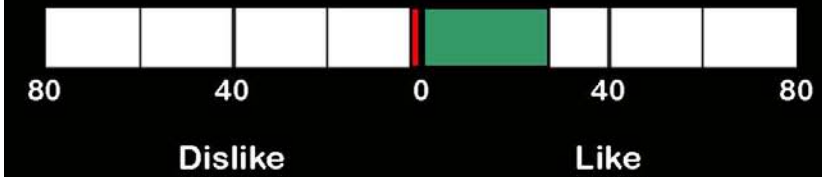
Examples of smart, sustainable development from other cities

Visual Preference Survey

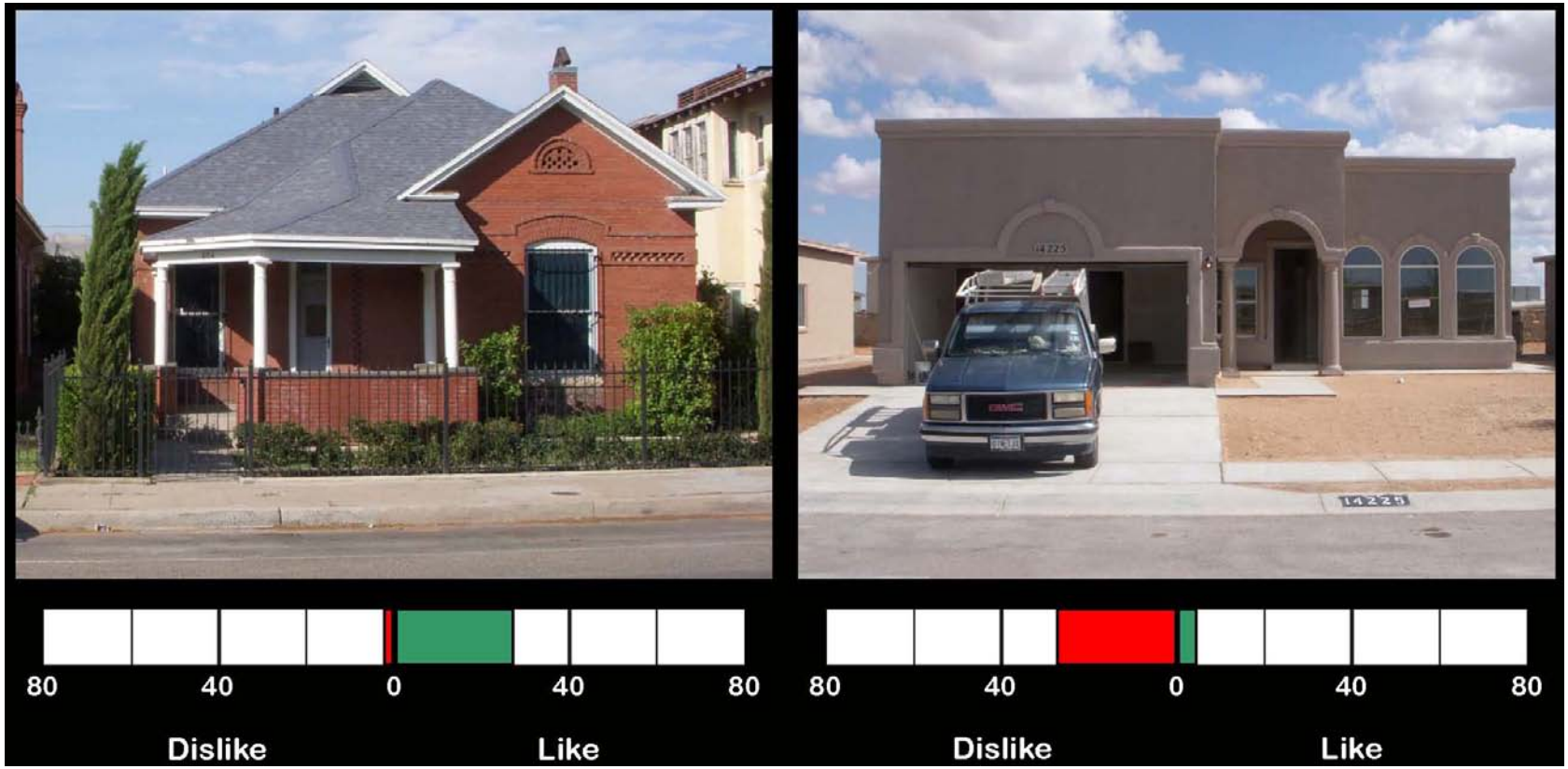
Visual Preference Survey



Visual Preference Survey



Visual Preference Survey

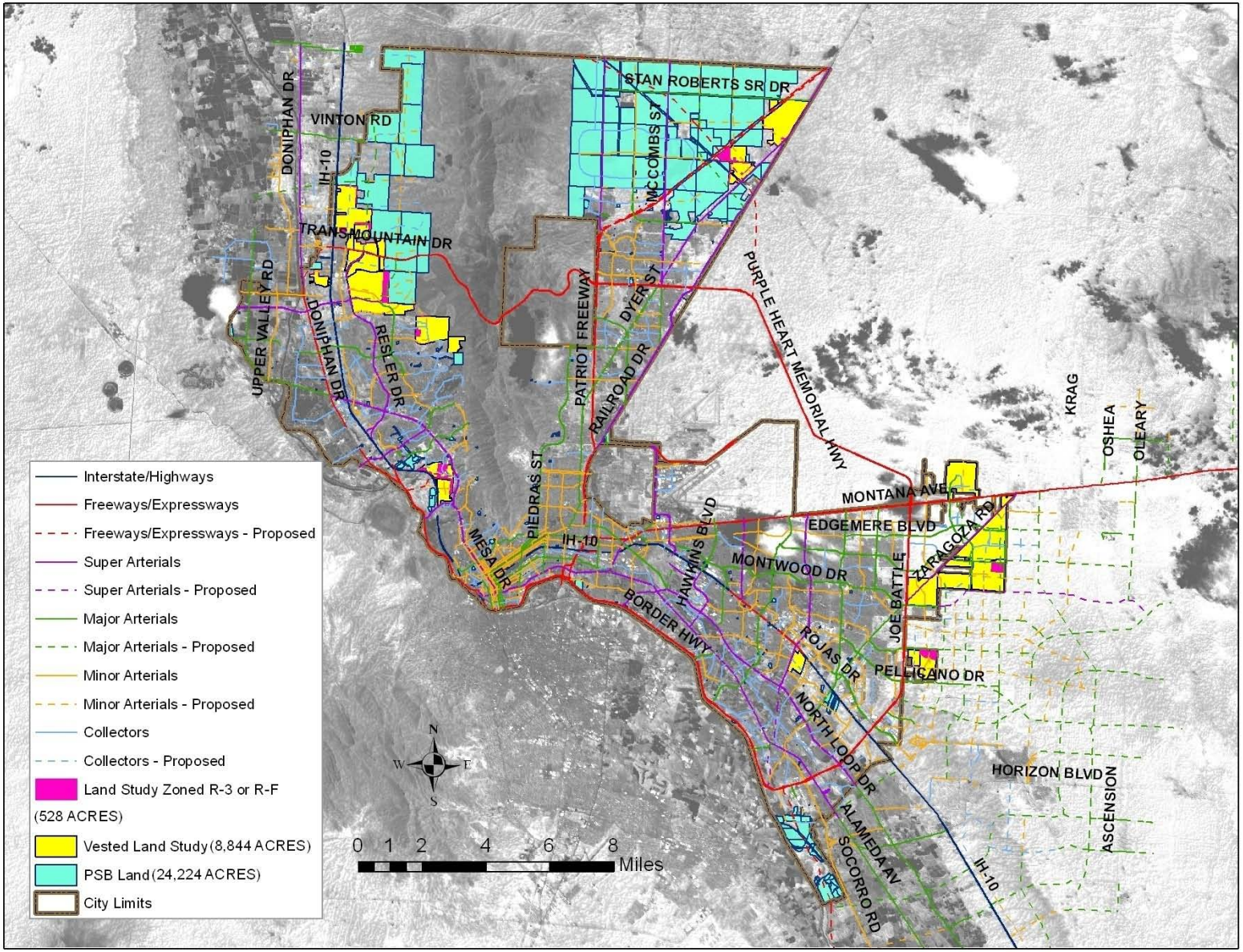


Visual Preference Survey

Even if we implement all of the recommended changes today, it will take time to see a difference in the community. Much of El Paso that is not built out is vested under existing development plans.

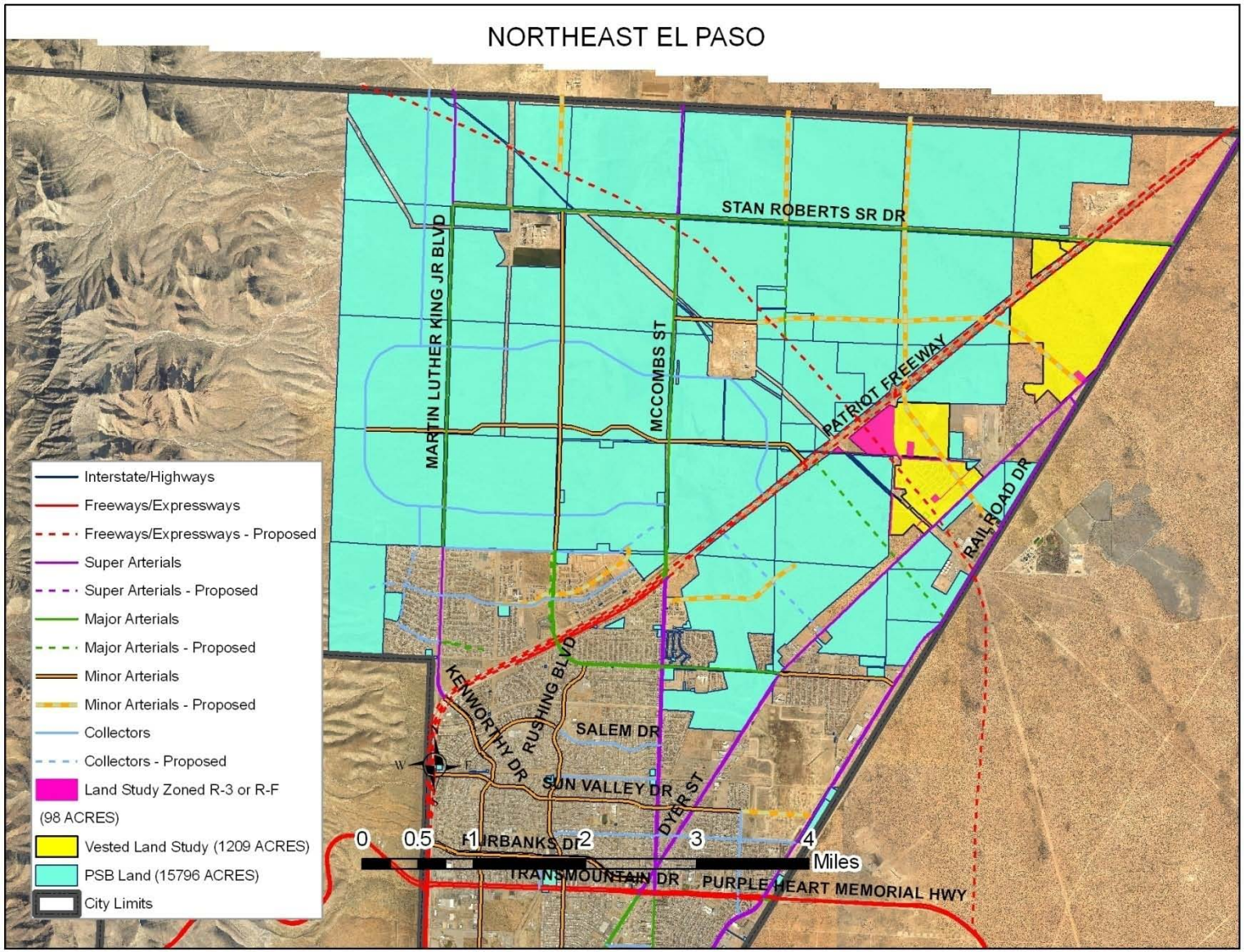
Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

SERVICE SOLUTIONS SUCCESS



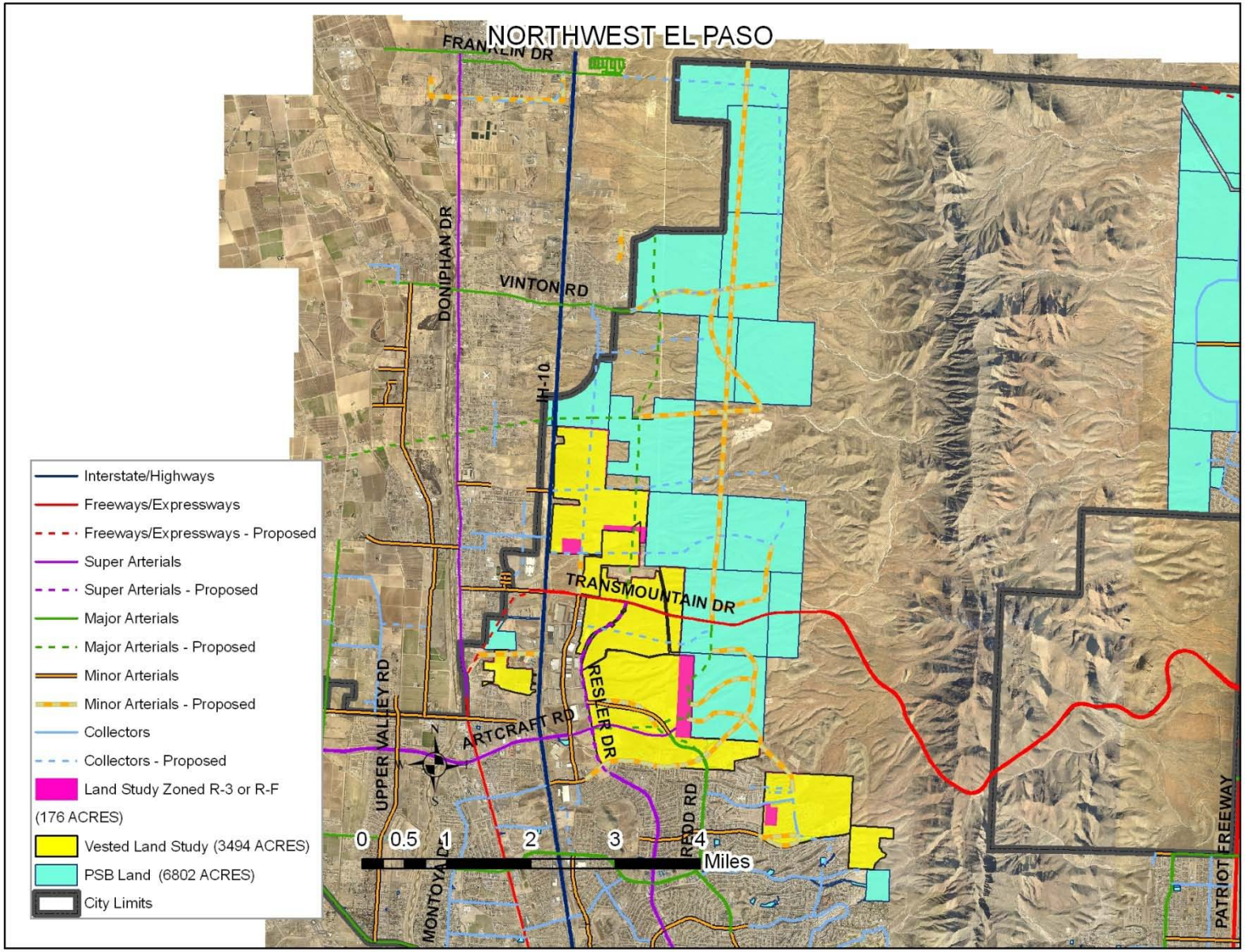
Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

SERVICE SOLUTIONS SUCCESS



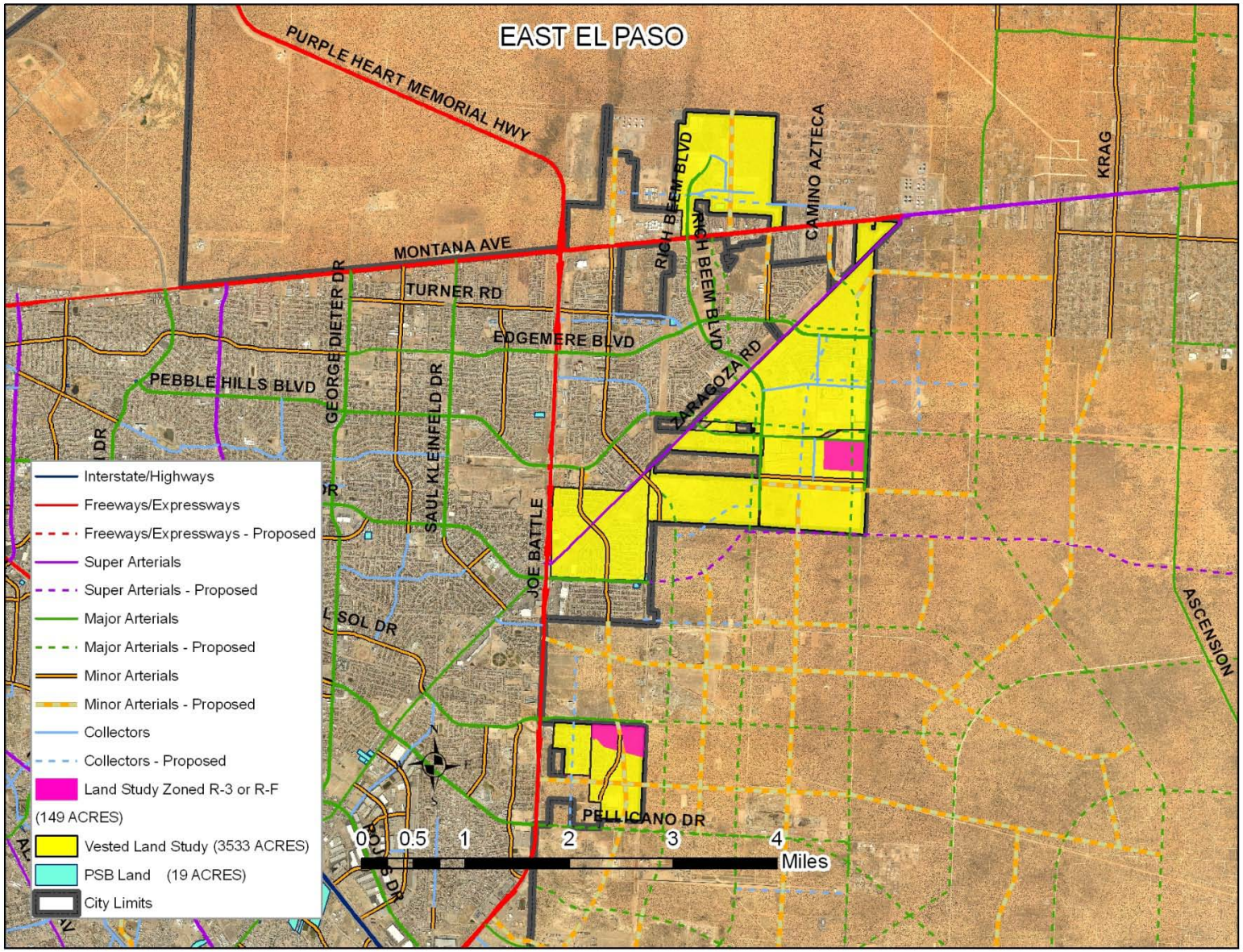
Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

SERVICE SOLUTIONS SUCCESS



Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

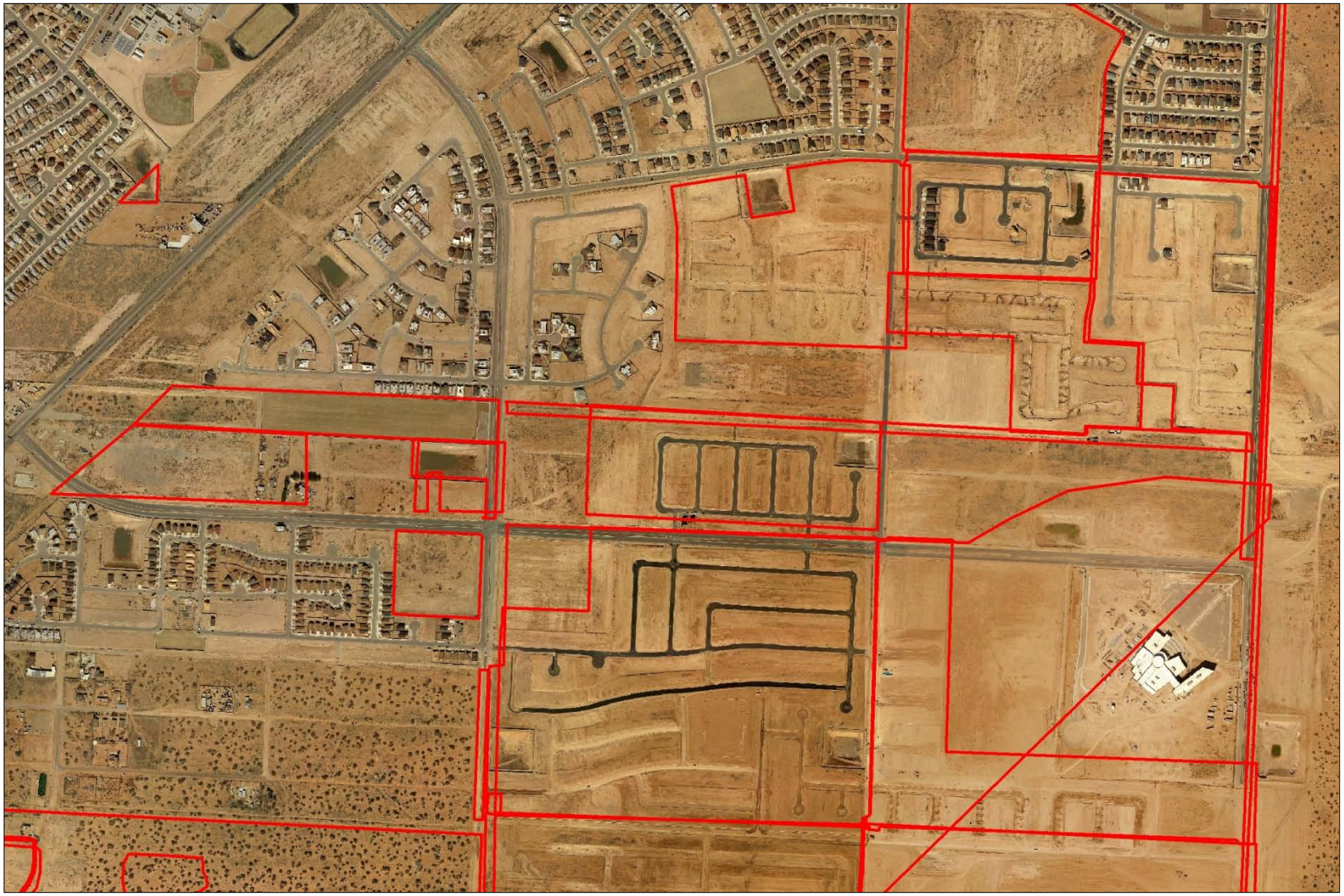
SERVICE SOLUTIONS SUCCESS



Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

SERVICE SOLUTIONS SUCCESS

New Subdivisions - Eastside



Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

SERVICE SOLUTIONS SUCCESS

New Subdivisions - Westside

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

Vesting – Expand Title 19 vesting procedures to other sections of the code.

- Encourage developers to use new codes and ordinances
- Create cost sharing opportunities with developers on infrastructure improvements if they are compliant wit the ITE Urban Thoroughfares Manual
- Vested properties – 8,884 acres
- PSB-managed properties – 24,224 acres

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

- **BRT Corridors** - Establish zoning overlays for Bus Rapid Transit Corridors that include roadway standards (from ITE Urban Thoroughfares Manual) and design standards for abutting properties (from adopted SmartCode)

- **Special Area Plans** – Adopt special area plans for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) related to BRT, ASARCO, the MCA and the El Paso International Airport. Encourage El Paso Community College to use special area plans on new campuses and campus expansions.

- **Scenic Corridors** - Identify scenic corridors within the City and establish appropriate regulations and overlay zoning

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

- **City-Owned Land** - Ensure a higher level of sustainability on land that is owned or purchased by the City of El Paso
  - Adopt a policy that City land for sale or lease will be zoned SmartCode if it is to be developed.
  - As a City policy, we will not approve any future sales of PSB land not zoned SmartCode unless there is a demonstrated, reasonable justification for an alternate zoning
  - Acquire land for SmartCode development projects in key areas

- **City Improvements** – All City of El Paso public infrastructure improvements must meet smart, sustainable growth standards.

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

- **Fair Cost of Development** – New development that is not zoned SmartCode should pay the full cost of providing infrastructure as allowed by state law.

- **SmartCode** – Improve existing SmartCode. Consider making SmartCode mandatory either city-wide or in certain areas.

- **Incentives**
  - Require SmartCode zoning for all City economic and community development incentive programs, unless the project is less than 5 acres in size or is an appropriate reuse of an existing building
  - Determine appropriate incentives for pilot SmartCode projects

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

- **Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)** – A TDR is a land use tool which allows zoning density to be transferred from a sending area to a receiving area. The transfer of development rights does not ever increase the cumulative possible total density allowed in both the sending and receiving areas. The City needs to amend the code's current provisions to allow more flexibility in designating sending and receiving areas, and TDR must work in conjunction with more stringently applied zoning changes. When zoning is easy to acquire on undeveloped land, TDR has little chance of success.

- **Urban Growth Boundary** - Adopt an Urban Growth Boundary to allow planning and prioritization for agricultural, open space and other non-development oriented land uses. Amend the annexation policy to allow involuntary annexations. UGB should match the Impact Fee service area but should have a longer horizon (30 years).

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

- **Residential Design Standards**
  - Require landscape design standards to include tree installation for single-family and two-family suburban residential homes (types of trees should be from approved tree manual)
  - Allow Accessory Dwelling Units based on criteria
  - Limit runoff from private property into public right of way via water harvesting
  - Require a building line on plats
  - Amend City code or policies so that street and infrastructure for non SmartCode residential developments are not accepted unless a Home Owners Association (HOA) is formed for that development

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

- **Commercial Design Standards**
  - Building Placement – require buildings be placed at or near the front property line
  - Landscaping – increase landscape standards, including screening any parking lots adjacent to right-of-way; require appropriate tree types
  - Parking – Establish maximum parking requirements and restrict off street parking in front of commercial establishments
  - Signage – reduce size and height and implement design criteria
  - Require water harvesting

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

- **Parkland Dedication**
  - Refine park and open space classifications and standards, to include additional types of pocket parks, plazas and public squares
  - Allow parkland dedication of less than one acre
  - Require tree planting as part of park improvements
  - Require additional amenities based on park type as part of initial dedication
  - Revise standards for pocket parks to forego frontage on all sides
  - Establish new criteria for the placement of amenities within park spaces

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

- **Streets Design Standards**
  - Adopt new cross sections based on ITE Urban Thoroughfares Manual
  - Require appropriate tree type and density for cross sections
  - Adopt priority list and develop corridor identities based on neighborhood characteristics
  - Tie street cross sections to building placement, landscaping and design standards on adjacent properties
- **Utility Placement**
  - Prohibit overhead utilities except where necessitated by power requirements

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

- **School Standards** - Implement design standards that would
  - Make schools safe to walk to
  - Restore schools as civic places and neighborhood centers rather than special districts.

  This is allowed through the Texas Attorney General ruling that allows municipalities to "enforce … reasonable land development regulations and ordinances against an independent school district for the purposes of aesthetics and the maintenance of property values."

  - Promote shared uses of facilities
  - Encourage local school districts to adopt design criteria available in www.smartgrowthschools.org and their Report Card.

Smart Growth Implementation Strategies

- **Land Preservation** – Preserve farmland to enhance water supply protection, provide recreation opportunities and provide for local food systems.
  - Potential methods of preservation include:
  - Urban growth boundaries (UGBs)
  - Transfer of development rights (TDRs)
  - Purchase of development rights (PDRs)
  - Right-to-farm laws
  - Establishment of land trusts/conservation easements

Smart, Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies

- **Education** – Invest in educating City staff, Council Members, Boards and Commissions members and area partners on the importance of sustainable development
  - Require key City staff to become CNU-A certified, currently we have 40 City employees from 14 departments enrolled in the certification program
  - Create a scholarship program for CNU-A certification
  - Create an online database of educational materials to share with the community and our development partners
  - Work with the local development industry to ensure the financial feasibility of smart development
  - Listen to and educate the public about housing, neighborhood and city-wide development options

Action needed for Implementation

Establish staff taskforces to research these recommendations and create a timeframe and bring back specific changes for adoption by City Council.