

One Valley, One Vision

Bill Mattiace and Charlie Scholz

“We want to make Dona Ana County and all of its communities, a truly great place to live, work and play for all of its residents of all ages, backgrounds, cultures and economic levels.”

This is the opening statement of our Vision 2040 report, *One Valley, One Vision*. We began to work on this project almost five years ago when Bill Mattiace, who was the Mayor of Las Cruces at the time, said we were going to hire a company from Buffalo, New York to give us a view of what Don Ana County would look like in 2040. The consultant from Buffalo presented us with their final report in the Fall of 2008

The public response to that report was almost entirely negative. Not only was there disagreement with the findings of that consultant, but also there was genuine disappointment that the plan they came up with did not begin to really address the needs and concerns of the people who were surveyed. That report was more like a snapshot of our present situation rather than a look into our future.

So two years ago we sat down and started it again. Building on the information that the consultants had gathered, a group of about 45 individuals, representing various interest groups and governmental organizations in our county, met monthly to gather information and exchange views on what they thought Dona Ana County would look like thirty years from now.

This May we had the final meeting of the Steering Committee of the 2040 Commission. We read the draft copies of the final report and we gave the staff our final comments.

This new report, *One Valley, One Vision*, incorporates the information and opinions that were gathered by the consultants from Buffalo. But it goes beyond that. What we have come up with is a broad and deep look at the strengths and

weaknesses, the goals and the possibilities for Dona Ana County. Our work has resulted in a well thought-out projection of what our area can become economically and physically while still maintaining the natural beauty and the special culture that has drawn so many people to our land.

All planning is an ongoing process. As our needs change, we must adapt or adjust our planning efforts to reflect those changes. So *One Valley, One Vision* is a living document. It does not mandate a specific course of action. Rather it points out directions in which we might go.

For example, using the 2010 Census data, the 2040 Commission has developed growth projections for various areas within the County for the next thirty years. This doesn't mean that growth cannot occur in other places. It merely means that what we are projecting are the most likely places for that growth to happen.

Similarly, our report suggests that the agencies and governmental groups, who are responsible for the various parts of our land and those who are in charge of particular operations in the County, should work together with one another. We didn't order them to do that. We just recognized that intergovernmental and inter-agency co-operation, in conjunction with the stakeholders affected by the decisions and actions of those bodies, is necessary to make a better future for all of us.

Having this shared vision can mean stronger economic growth, recognition of the value of our unique environment and preservation of the rich historical and cultural heritage that is Dona Ana County.

We're proud to have been a part of the process that has created *One Valley, One Vision*. We hope you read the document and work with your community to make it come true.

William “Bill” Mattiace is the former Mayor of Las Cruces and the Chair of the 2040 Commission. Charles B. “Charlie” Scholz is the Chair of the Las Cruces Planning and Zoning Commission and the Vice-Chair of the 2040 Commission.