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3 The following are summary minutes for the meeting of the **City of Las Cruces – Health**
4 **Policy Review Committee** on May 4, 2022. At 3:00 p.m. at City Hall, 700 S. Main
5 Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

6
7 **Members Present:**

- 8 Becky Corran, City Councilor, District 2
9 Kasandra Gandara, City Councilor, District 1

10
11 **Members Absent:**

- 12 Yvonne Flores, City Councilor, District 6
13 Kathryn Olszowy, Ex-Officio member
14 Adrian Larson, MountainView, Member

15
16 **Others Present:**

- 17 Phillip Catanach, Parks & Rec, Recreation Services Administrator
18 Marina Montoya, Parks & Rec, Administrative Assistant
19 Karla Walton
20 Christine Rivera, City Clerk
21 Greg Shervanick,
22 Becky Baum, Recording Secretary, RC Creations, LLC

- 23
24 **I. Call to Order:** Councilor Gandara called the meeting to order.
25
26 **II. Conflict of Interest:** There was no conflict of interest.
27
28 **III. Acceptance of the Agenda:** Councilor Corran motioned; Councilor Gandara
29 seconded. The agenda was accepted.
30
31 **IV. Approval of the Minutes - April 6, 2022:** Councilor Corran motioned; Councilor
32 Gandara seconded. The minutes were approved.
33
34 **V. Discussion Items:**
35
36 **1. Lift Up Las Cruces - Karla Walton:** Councilor Gandara introduced Karla
37 Walton and thanked her for everything she's done. Karla Walton gave the
38 presentation. Lift Up Las Cruces is made up of many people from each section
39 within the City. They were faced with the question of how they can make a
40 permanent impact in poverty and crime. First they researched and modeled
41 things after a program the city of Fort Worth has; they researched other
42 municipalities as well. This became a multi-departmental effort to improve the
43 City one neighborhood at a time. This allows the City to identify concerns in
44 areas and focus their limited resources in one place to make a larger impact.

1
2 The program has a two generation approach; they are combining parent and
3 child interventions to interrupt the cycle of poverty. Families, neighborhoods,
4 and communities are better if they poverty cycle is broken. The three main
5 goals are to break the poverty cycle, address public safety concerns, and to
6 create a positive impact in the social determinants of health. The first
7 neighborhood selected is in District 1 because of crime rate and poverty; a map
8 was shown of the area. It is near Apodaca Park between Solano, E. Madrid,
9 Elder St, Juniper, Kilmer, and Spruce. There are roughly 560 properties in the
10 area with a mix of renters and homeowners; there is a mobile park, public
11 housing, a couple businesses and etcetera. The area is broken into two tracks.
12 The first track has 78% low to moderate income and the second track has 57%
13 low to moderate income. An interactive map was shown that shows all the
14 crime from October 2020 to September 2021, violent crime, property crime,
15 and domestic crime.
16

17 The social determinants of health (SDOH) is defined as the conditions in the
18 environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age
19 that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and
20 risks; up to 60% of health is determined by your zip code. The SDOH is divided
21 into five domains: access to healthcare, neighborhood, social and community
22 context, economic stability, and education access. The SDOH has been
23 greatly researched by multiple groups, academia, public health experts,
24 doctors, and etcetera. The impact of violence and crime include people who
25 survive enduring physical pain and suffering and may also experience mental
26 distress. Those who fear crime in their communities may engage in less
27 physical activity and report poorer self-rated physical and mental health; this
28 also increases risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, and etcetera.
29

30 Domestic violence cause additional health issues such as eating disorders,
31 depression, and suicidal ideation. Children who are exposed to violence
32 develop behavioral problems, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress
33 disorder. They may also show increased signs of aggression starting in upper-
34 elementary school. The effects of exposure can result in greater risk for
35 substance use, risky sexual behavior, and unsafe driving behavior. A vicious
36 cycle is created which may continue with the children as they grow up. A study
37 published by the American Diabetes Association used data from old
38 community health centers and discovered roughly 37% of individuals with
39 diabetes reported housing instability.
40

41 Next steps include a bilingual survey which is being developed, building a
42 budget and work plan, develop a team of champions to include different groups
43 such as nonprofits and community leaders, and plan an introductory event.
44 The bilingual survey is being done with a consultant; currently they are working
45 on the questions which will be brought to this Board for feedback. The survey
46 will have questions regarding neighborhood concerns, household needs,

1 household income, improvements, as well as classes and programs the
2 community is interested in taking. This is to build a base line and trust with the
3 community. The survey will be printed and sent by mail; the City is paying for
4 the postage. An incentive will also be offered to take the survey. Participants
5 will be entered into a drawing to win one of five \$100 gift cards. After the
6 program has finished they will create a new survey to see the impact.

7
8 Greg Shervanick asked what the difference between neighborhood concerns
9 and improvements were; improvements are more regarding what type of
10 projects the community would like to see and the concerns is more regarding
11 public safety. Certain conditions will be ranked as well. It is important to
12 funding to know the household income, age, and ethnicity; it is not required for
13 the people to fill in that information. One of the key metrics is to increase the
14 household income as well so base information needs to be established.
15 Councilor Gandara added that this survey is in addition to surveys already in
16 the neighborhood; Community Schools, Resilience Leaders did a survey pre-
17 COVID which may provide more information, and etcetera.

18
19 Brooker T. has done an asset mapping and a needs assessment of their
20 families; they are implementing strategies related to the community there such
21 as a community garden. The survey also asks where the participant receives
22 news and updates about the City of Las Cruces activities. The survey will have
23 three phases; the survey is sent out, a reminder to do the survey, and a final
24 chance to finish. The budget includes Telshor Fund money which is used to
25 help support the physical, mental, developmental, emotional, or social
26 continued well-being, safety, or improvement for the lives of sick, indigent, and
27 low income Las Cruces residents. They are also applying for grants; a
28 Congressional request was made and is pending.

29
30 Parks and Rec will be increasing summer activities at Apodaca Park; family
31 game nights every Thursday beginning June 9th, music in the park on Sunday
32 nights in August, movies in the park beginning June 11th, and activities put on
33 by LCPD. Pop up events will also happen with nonprofits and other partners.
34 Having LCPD around is helpful in showing people that the police can be
35 trusted. A list was shown of the bands and movies that will be happening at
36 Apodaca Park; the movies will start at dusk.

37
38 Public Works have a couple projects for FY23. One is on Calle Sosa/ Ash Ave
39 to Mulberry Ave for pavement replacement and ADA ramps which will be a
40 total of \$64,000. The second is N Willow St/Mulberry Ave to Ash Ave for
41 pavement replacement and ADA ramps which will be a total of \$55,000. There
42 will be bike and pedestrian improvements on Walnut/Madrid; ADA
43 improvements, signing and striping, bike lanes, sidewalks, curb and gutter,
44 utilities, and assessing the lighting situation in the area. That total will cost
45 \$2,966,527.
46

1 Housing includes Natalie Green developing the Energy Efficiency/Home
2 Rehab Pilot Program. It will be a partnership with Utilities, El Paso Electric &
3 CAP, and Economic Development. It will explore state block grant funding and
4 CDBG. The Fire Department is in the process of developing two programs:
5 Adopt-a-School and Explorer Program. The Fire Department will visit Loma
6 Heights Elementary weekly during lunch to visit and will eventually duplicate in
7 other locations. The Explorer Program is a weeklong day camp for middle
8 school age students to include hands-on training, STEM activities, and
9 mentorship opportunities.

10
11 The Police Department have many activities to build trust and keep it within
12 the community. Some activities include June 2021 Meet and Greet, July 2021
13 Apodaca Park, September 2021 Loma Heights 9/11 ceremony, December
14 2021 "Silent Knight", March 2022 pop-up event, April 2022 movie night with
15 Loma Heights and career day with Booker T Washington. Councilor Corran
16 stated she's excited for these programs as this should help build trust and
17 reduce crime. The question on the survey regarding programs and classes
18 the community may want lists many options for participants to choose from;
19 they may choose all if they wish. Some included on the list are career
20 coaching, job training, budgeting, financial literacy, credit, parenting classes,
21 English as a second language, GED, adult high school diploma, digital literacy,
22 computer training, small business craft training, and other if they have an idea.
23 Some services are already provided but they may not know or having a
24 language barrier.

25
26 There has been discussion of having classes in a more central location for
27 communities such as at the schools; financial literacy and etcetera. Housing
28 Authority and La Casa are thrilled these are happening and suggested having
29 education on harm reduction and issues with meals, drug use, and etcetera. It
30 is important to break stigmas, especially with mental health. Another question
31 that will be included on the survey is "what needs do you or any member of
32 your household have right now? Childcare, early learning programs,
33 emergency assistance, immigration services, addiction support, caregiver
34 services, youth programs, help applying for public benefits, help with financial
35 legal issues, help removing a criminal record, repair assistance for the house,
36 translation support, transportation assistance, internet access, or something
37 else".

- 38
39 **2. Distress Index Tools (88001 Area) Presentation - Paris Rubio:** Paris Rubio
40 gave the presentation. There have been four meetings Councilor Gandara has
41 held regarding legislative, police interaction, behavioral health, and public
42 safety. Participants were encouraged to bring up their concerns during these
43 meetings. These items included bail reform, violence, sexual assault, funding
44 for police, police vacancies, number of judges, lack of behavioral health
45 services, mental health/co-occurring disorders, increase in substance abuse
46 and addictions, lack of services for people suffering from addictions, lack of

1 housing, and lack of services for grandparents raising grandchildren as their
2 own.

3
4 Crime statistics for violent crime were shown between 2020 and 2021; there
5 was a large increase in aggravated assault. Crime statistics for property crime
6 were shown between 2020 and 2021. Both are specifically within the 88001
7 zip code. Felony larceny spiked; Councilor Corran clarified that felony larceny
8 is anything greater than \$1,000 but not something like a car. Strengths within
9 the City include being voted the nicest place in America in 2019, voted the
10 happiest city in New Mexico in 2020, 9th best run city, and as a whole the
11 community does a great job of coming together and working as one. Distressing
12 indexing observes the economic wellbeing of many zip codes within the US;
13 focuses on seven metrics to determine how national growth and prosperity
14 lift up or leave behind individual communities and the residents who
15 call them home. The research was done by the Economic Innovation Group
16 in 2018 and pinpoint the economic disparities and hardships each community
17 face that determine the distress score. Zip code 88001 currently has a distress
18 score of 93; zero being more prosperous zip codes.

19
20 The seven metrics and their percentage for zip code 88001 is no high school
21 diploma which is 17.7%, poverty rate which is 36.4%, adults not working which
22 is 30.3%, housing vacancy rate which is 11.5%, median household income
23 which is \$28,300, change in employment which is -1.6%, and change in
24 establishments which is -2.8%. Poverty within Las Cruces is currently 24.4%;
25 Doña Ana County is at 27.9% which is slightly higher compared to New Mexico
26 as a whole; Bernalillo County is at 18%; Santa Fe County is at 14.4%. Within
27 Las Cruces Hispanic families suffer from poverty the most and the City holds
28 the highest percentage of childhood poverty at 37.5%. The current
29 unemployment rate is 6.9% within New Mexico as of September 2021. Resilience
30 Leaders conducted a 100% community survey and many people expressed they
31 lack any form of transportation with 63% of people admitted public
32 transportation doesn't go where they need to go. Many people suffer from
33 mental illness which holds them back from looking for and keeping a job.
34 50% of the people surveyed are not able to find a quality provider within their
35 community. There's a lack of childcare services and job training skills. 41%
36 of people surveyed stated that the job training available is not relevant to their
37 area of need.

38
39 Housing within Las Cruces increased with an average of \$275,550. In regards
40 to affordable housing 33% of single parent households, 27% of people with an
41 annual income below \$25,000, and 20% of people with an Associate's degree
42 or below need access to affordable housing. The biggest concern regarding
43 affordable housing was that the waitlist application was too long. Councilor
44 Gandara clarified that this survey was a county survey. Resilience Leaders
45 was created in 2017 in Doña Ana County to prevent and reduce childhood
46 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), family trauma, and social adversity.

1 They provide 10 surviving and thriving services in order to address childhood
2 maltreatment. These include medical/dental care, behavioral health care,
3 food, housing, transportation, parent supports, early childhood learning,
4 community schools, youth mentors, and job trainings. ACE is defined as
5 traumatic events that occur before a child reaches the age of 18 and include
6 all types of abuse and neglect, such as parental substance use, incarceration,
7 and domestic violence. ACE can also include situations that may cause
8 trauma for a child such as having a parent with a mental illness or being part
9 of a family going through a divorce.

10
11 Councilor Gandara stated that their hope and vision is that providers working
12 with adults and children will use the tool to identify an ACE score of each
13 person who then can be referred immediately. There are roughly 75 different
14 agencies that participate at different levels. There are sector leaders who have
15 goals and objectives. Currently they are in the implementation of SMART
16 experiments which range from things such as transportation and education.
17 Tomorrow the leaders will learn how to utilize the bus system within the City in
18 order to better help others learn. The hope is to also partner with the City and
19 encourage everyone to get on the bus and learn to navigate the bus system to
20 reduce the carbon footprint. Ms. Rubio continued with the survey results. 68%
21 of people have had issues accessing affordable housing; 38% have trouble
22 with access to medical care services; 49% have had problems obtaining
23 mental health services. The main issues include unable to find a provider,
24 waitlist is too long, costs are too high, no insurance coverage, and
25 appointments do not work with their own schedule.

26
27 Councilor Gandara added that there were roughly 1,200 respondents to the
28 survey. The partnership with the City will be specific to building trust and
29 engaging the community. They have some money from the Anna Age 8
30 institute to do some murals and book club events to bring awareness about
31 average childhood experiences. They would like to also do murals throughout
32 the City and imagine what the neighborhoods would look like with 100%
33 services; will partner with the City Art Board and artists to create these murals.
34 These will be community art works. Councilor Gandara added that it will be
35 interesting to find ways to engage the community as there wasn't much
36 response from those in 88001 when she canvased the area. Councilor Corran
37 stated that discussions on things such as domestic violence can also be
38 extremely complicated. The presentation will be sent to the Board.

39
40 **VI. Future Discussion/Task Listing:** Councilor Gandara and Councilor Corran will
41 find future discussions. Councilor Gandara stated she had conversations with
42 physicians in town who are concerned with the lack of workforce, specifically
43 pediatricians. She suggested bringing the doctor in to talk to the Board. They
44 could also do a presentation on the Leakage Study.

1 Councilor Gandara asked where they're at to recruiting people to the table. Philip
2 Catanach stated they've looked a list of people who used to come; a Rabbi has
3 moved away and someone from Texas National Reserve who oversees Las
4 Cruces is no longer available but someone else could come, the hospitals,
5 Department of Health, and NMSU. NMSU has a representative and the two
6 hospitals have representatives but one hasn't shown up in a long time. Mr.
7 Catanach will reach out to those groups.
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9 **VII. Next Meeting Date - June 1, 2022:**

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11 **VIII. Adjournment:**
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Chairperson