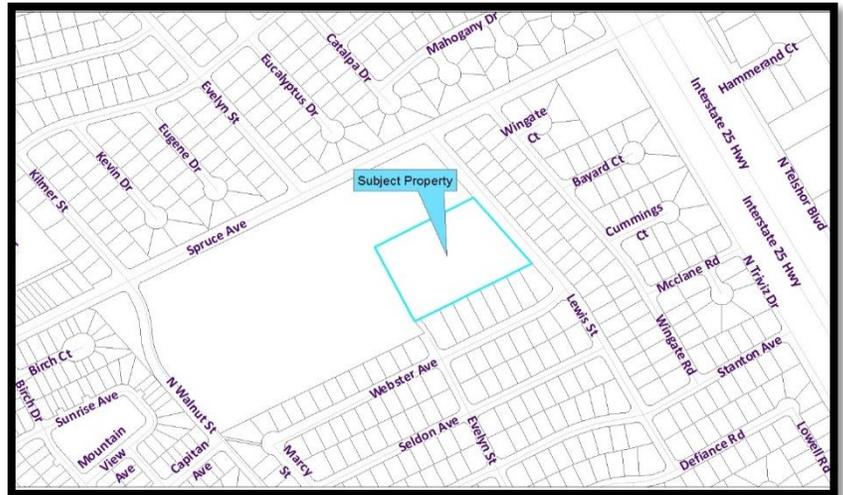


Sierra Tract Development Blueprint

Background

The City of Las Cruces (City) currently has an opportunity to develop a vacant 4.490-acre property known as Lot 2 of the Sierra Summary Subdivision (Sierra Tract). In 2013 the City obtained the property from the Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS) as part of a mutually beneficial agreement. The agreement obligated LCPS to transfer the ownership of this property to the City in exchange for City-made improvements to Bruins Lane which benefited LCPS by providing better access to their facilities.



Vicinity Map

Per this agreement, the City must use all or most of it for the creation of affordable housing within the (10) years from the date of closing, which is May of 2023. If the City fails to develop the property in accordance with the New Mexico Affordable Housing Act, the Affordable Housing Act Rules and the City of Las Cruces Affordable Housing General Oversight Ordinance within this ten-year time frame, the ownership of the property will revert back to LCPS.

The City, knowing that the undeveloped property is located in an established area, engaged the surrounding neighborhood to provide their input on the potential development of the site. The Community Development Department held two preliminary public information meetings on August 8, 2018 and August 11, 2018 with the property owners and residents within the area during which different housing types were presented for the proposed development of the property. The input and comments received during these meetings led the City to initiate a Community Planning Blueprint for the subject property. A Community Planning Blueprint is a policy plan for a defined area within the City's planning jurisdiction that further elaborates and promotes the vision of the City's Comprehensive Plan. A Community Planning Blueprint intends to address issues unique to a particular geographic area or that require an atypical set of analyses and actions. A blueprint may serve as a policy guide for City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, City staff and the public.

Adopted Policy

Several adopted City policy documents already support affordable housing opportunities within the corporate limits including the City of Las Cruces Affordable Housing Plan (AHP) and the City of Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan 2040 (Plan). Affordable Housing is the term used to describe housing, whether it is rental or owner-occupied, that is affordable no matter what ones' income. The United States government regards affordable housing costs to be at or below 30% to 40% of ones' income, meaning if you are paying more than 30% to 40% of your income towards housing expenses you are considered cost burdened and your home is not affordable to you. In 2017, the City of Las Cruces adopted the AHP. The AHP states that the City of Las Cruces is in need of subsidized rental housing for the general population. It is estimated a total of 5,000 renter households are currently in need of an affordable housing option. The AHP also states that there is a necessity for more

affordable home ownership opportunities and there is an estimated shortage of 1,800 owner-occupied affordable units in the City. The development of this property as affordable housing can assist the City with these two existing needs. The following list of supporting goals and actions in the AHP that will assist in facilitating affordable housing on the Sierra Tract are:

- Goal 2, Increase affordability of rental housing for low income households and special needs populations that have difficulty competing in the housing market.
 - Action 3, The City will conduct an RFP for purposes of hiring a developer to provide rental housing mixed use housing or for sale housing on the Sierra Summary Subdivision, Lot 2 owned by the City with a production target of 32 units.
- Goal 3, Expand homeownership options.
 - Action 4, Public/private partnership will construct affordable condo/rental development at Sierra Summary Subdivision, Lot 2 with a production target of 32 units.

The City’s Plan also encourages the development of the Sierra Tract for affordable housing. Please see the following list of goals and policies listed within the Plan that support the development of affordable housing:

- Goal 2, Create a variety of development choices for individuals and families of all socioeconomic levels.
 - Policy 2.3, Provide a supply of housing available to low and moderate income families within all areas of Las Cruces. To accommodate this, the City supports a partnership approach, between public and private sectors, to ensure affordable housing needs are met.
 - Policy 2.8, Encourage the use of alternative housing types, styles and living arrangements as a means of making available housing opportunities for those who may not otherwise obtain suitable housing through conventional means.
 - Policy 2.10, New affordable housing stock shall be well distributed throughout the city and compatible with surrounding densities.

The construction of affordable housing on the Sierra property will contribute to the City addressing these goals and the community’s need.



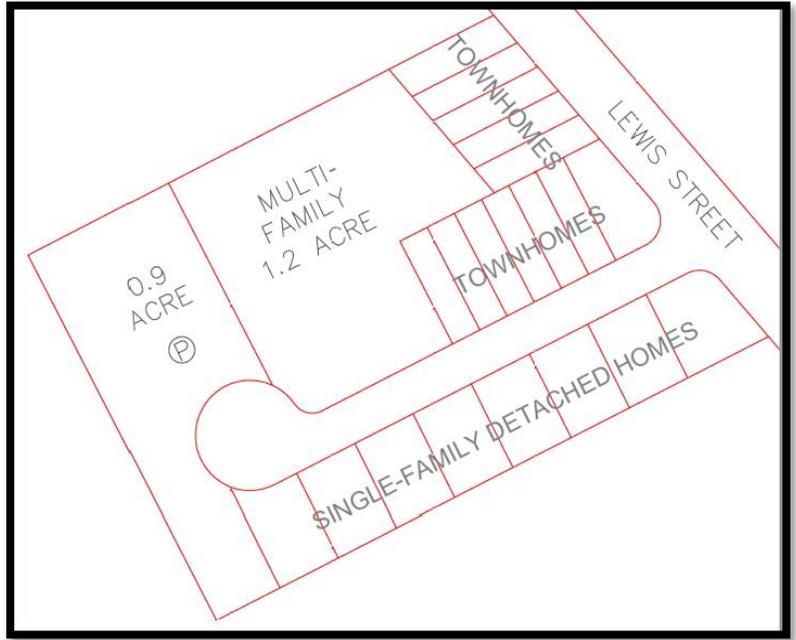
Aerial Map

Purpose

The Sierra Tract Development Blueprint (Blueprint) is intended to address the conditions of the agreement between the City and the LCPS to develop the property for affordable housing and assure the creation of housing that seamlessly transitions into the existing neighborhood. This Blueprint will provide policy that will guide the City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Affordable Housing Land Bank and Trust Fund Advisory Board, City staff and the public for the build-out of the property. It will also articulate the goals for the property regarding land use, aesthetics and urban design. The Blueprint is a planning tool

that can be used to evaluate and address fiscal impacts, neighborhood and stakeholder concerns and public needs. The Blueprint will also inform the Request for Proposals (RFP) process for the property.

City staff considered five potential conceptual housing site layouts for the property, but, after evaluating the options, one site layout best helps the City achieve its development goals for the property while being more in character with the existing neighborhood. The layout includes a mixture of single-family detached homes, single-family attached dwellings (townhomes) and multi-family dwellings (apartments). This conceptual housing site layout can potentially satisfy everyone’s needs and wants and assist the City, its development partners and the adjacent residents to visualize what can be developed on the property.



Conceptual Site Layout

Blueprint Boundaries

The Blueprint boundaries are Lot 2 of the Sierra Summary Subdivision as shown in Exhibit A. The undeveloped subject property is generally located east of Sierra Middle School, south of the school’s parking lot that is located along Spruce Avenue and west of Lewis Street. Evelyn Street terminates at the southwest corner of the subject property.

Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

The Sierra Tract presents a unique set of issues, challenges and opportunities related to its development and build-out. The Blueprint provides a means to identify these. It is important to consider the following items when determining the most appropriate way to utilize the subject property. These considerations include:



Zoning Map

Land Use

The existing zoning designation of the subject property is R-1a (Single-Family Medium Density), which would allow for the development of the property for one single-family dwelling without subdividing the property

into additional lots. Subdividing the property would allow the creation of multiple single-family residential lots as long as all requirements of the City of Las Cruces Subdivision Code, the City of Las Cruces Design Standards and the 2001 Zoning Code, as amended, are followed. The AHP identifies that a minimum production target of 32 dwelling units should be developed on the Sierra Tract. Strictly developing the property with single-family detached homes would not meet the production target identified by the AHP. The existing R-1a zoning designation does allow for the property to be subdivided for a townhome development that potentially can meet the 32 dwelling unit production target, but would not help the City achieve its goal of providing a variety of housing types.

Additionally, since the subject property is located within the urban core of the City and is vacant, there is the opportunity that the property can be developed following the Infill Development Process (IDP). The utilization of the IDP for the property could permit additional housing types including multi-family dwellings. A mixture of housing types provides an opportunity for additional dwellings on the site. The City of Las Cruces Affordable Housing Plan encourages the use of the IDP to allow flexibility in site design and zoning development standards as a means of offering suitable opportunities for successful affordable housing creation. The challenge is to successfully integrate housing through the IDP that fits into the existing neighborhood. An IDP proposal for the Sierra Tract is the best way to develop the property with flexible design and use as part of a public process.

Site Design

The development of the Sierra Tract will require the review and consideration of several site design features and existing conditions. These considerations include the existing topography, local street and pedestrian networks, public utilities, and other public improvements (lighting, fire hydrants, landscaping).



Site Photo

Topography. The existing topography of the property has a gradual drop in grade from the southeast corner of the property to its northwest corner near the Sierra Middle School athletic fields and parking lot. This change in slope for the site is roughly 3%; such a change in grade allows the northwest corner of the property to be a desirable location the ponding of storm water as required for all residential development. The use of the existing slope also allows utilization of the site with minimal grading and land disturbance.

Streets. The property can currently be accessed from two streets.: Lewis Street and Evelyn Street.

These adjacent roadways are local streets with a primary purpose of providing pedestrian and vehicle access to individual residential lots. Lewis Street provides the most obvious and easiest access. Evelyn Street currently terminates at the Sierra Tract and is an unimproved dirt stub-out from Webster Avenue. It is anticipated that additional traffic generated from the construction of housing will be minimal. However, the design of street and pedestrian connectivity for the site must be aware of safety and traffic concerns related to the existing streets and homes. To accommodate the housing types proposed for the property, a new local street will be necessary to provide access to the residential lots. This proposed street will most

likely connect with Lewis Street. The use of Evelyn Street for immediate access to the site is more problematic due to its unimproved condition and reduced right-of-way width (less than the required 50 foot minimum). However, design of the site needs to also take into consideration the potential of extending Evelyn Street northward to Spruce Avenue.

Utilities. All the required utilities necessary for the develop the property exist adjacent to the property. The water, gas, sanitary sewer, and electric utilities located in the Lewis Street right-of-way and can be extended to the blueprint site. These utilities will all be installed and located underground per City standards and not distract from the existing neighborhood character. City utilities have the capacity to serve the added residents.

Public Improvements. All public infrastructure improvements are required to be built to the City's Design Standards. Additionally, the installation of neighborhood improvements such as storm water ponds and sewers, pedestrian access and connectivity, street lights, fire hydrants and street signage will need to be sensitive and contribute to the improvement, conservancy and vibrancy of the existing neighborhood and middle school.

Architectural Design

The architectural design should also be kept in mind when any type of development occurs on the subject property. A good architectural design of the development can help alleviate the neighborhood concerns regarding the style of the development and how it will fit in with the existing developed area. A good architectural design will also be an opportunity for the City to show its ability to develop attractive, well built, affordable housing and set a general concept for future developments. The architectural design of any proposed new development shall be in keeping with the existing neighborhood and transition smoothly into the adjacent school property and its facilities.

Vision Statement

The Sierra Tract Development Blueprint shall guide the development of this parcel to create a quality, innovative, affordable housing development that will be conscious of the concerns of the existing surrounding developed area and will meet the needs and desires of the City. The Sierra Tract Development Blueprint will result in a quality, well-constructed and safe neighborhood.

Goals and Actions

Goal 1. Create an affordable housing development with a site design/architectural theme that is compatible with the existing surrounding neighborhood.

Action 1. Encourage the development of the residential structures with a southwest style. Metal façade residential structures shall be discouraged.

Action 2. In order to promote a visual interest in housing design styles and avoid monotony, the development shall provide a variety of house facades. This can be achieved by providing different design options such as different surface material, reversed floor plans, different roofing styles, variation in building heights, variation in the location of doors, windows, patios, porches and garages in the street facing façade of the structure.

Action 3. Any potential developer shall incorporate Americans with Disability Act (ADA) accessible dwellings into the proposed development.

Goal 2. Utilize the Infill Development Process (IDP) to develop the property.

Action 1. An IDP proposal shall be encouraged to develop the subject property as a mixed-use residential development with single-family detached homes, single-family attached homes and multi-family residential units. The IDP proposal shall include any variances deemed necessary for the development of the Sierra Tract.

Action 2. A minimum of 32 residential dwellings shall be developed on the property with a maximum of 18 multi-family residential units.

Action 3. Designate all single-family residential dwellings as owner-occupied dwellings only.

Goal 3. Integrate and compliment the residential homes directly adjacent to the property.

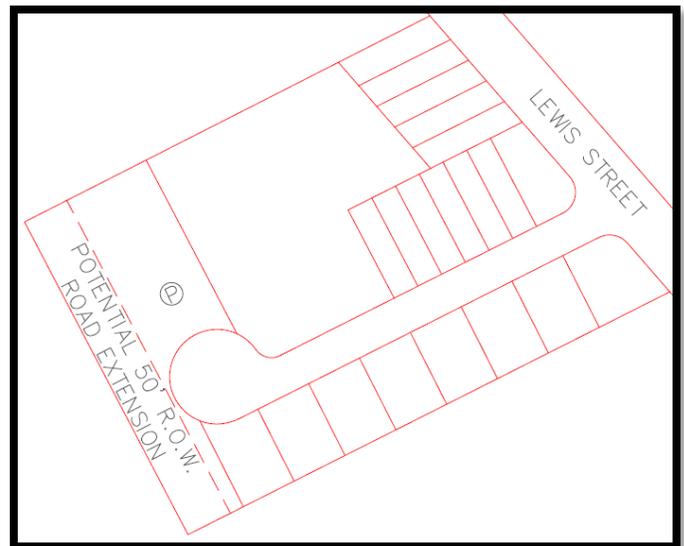
Action 1. The development of the Sierra Tract directly adjacent to the existing single-family residential homes shall be limited to single-family residential development such as detached single-family homes and attached single-family homes (townhomes).

Action 2. See Goal 1, Action 1 & 2.

Goal 4. Provide connectivity.

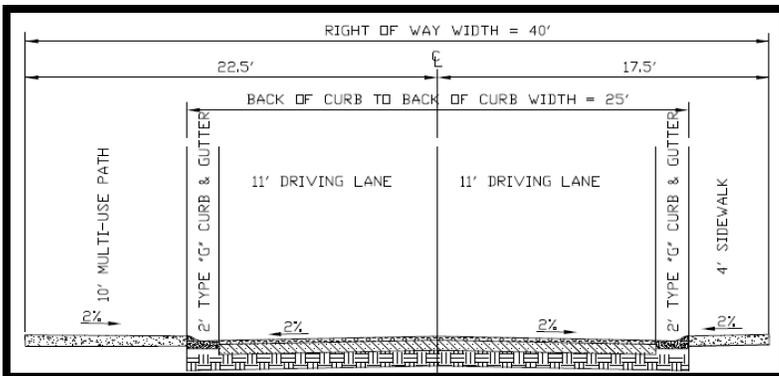
Action 1. Encourage a modified street cross-section for the internal roadway of the development to include a multi-use path.

Action 2. Designate the western most side of the property for no structural development to allow for the potential extension of Evelyn Street south of the property, north to Spruce Avenue. A minimum of a 50-foot wide area shall be delineated.



Potential Future Road Extension

Goal 5. Provide public benefits to the surrounding neighborhood.



Potential Street Cross-Section

Action 1. Develop a multi-use path within the property to provide a pedestrian path from the existing adjacent residential area, into the new development and to Sierra Middle School.

Action 2. See Goal 1, Action 1.

Action 3. Designate and design an area within the open/ponding area of the development for a community garden.

Action 4. Encourage the development of an open/green space within the designated multi-family development area that can be utilized by the residents of the multi-family development and the public.