

Strategic Plan | Regional Assessment

Middle Rio Grande Region:

To develop as accurate a picture of the state of the region as possible, the MRGDC staff and its consultants took to the road during the month of May for a series of community meetings for the purpose of identifying the needs as well as the strengths of each county in the Middle Rio Grande Region. The community meetings were followed by a four-month period of review on behalf of the MRGDC Board of Directors and the Economic Development Committee. The Committee zeroed in on several needs including: Safety/911 - the way calls are received at the 911 center and are transferred/dispatched to the proper emergency team, i.e. fire department, EMS, etc.; Consolidated Planning/Solid Waste - the need for regional unity over solid waste issues/regional waste management institution; Consolidated Planning/Infrastructure - the need to address connectivity/technology gaps and the need for access to affordable broadband services; Consolidated Planning/Transportation - the need to study the pros and cons of MPO/RPO benefits to the region; Community and Economic Development/Business Development - the need to increase public education to correlate with workforce needs; Community and Economic Development/Community and Human Development - the need for the establishment of a top tier University in the region; and Community and Economic Development/Aging - the need to address alternative living quarters/housing and assistive living quarters and the need to expand on the aging plan to include transportation and duplication of services.

The following is a listing of regional needs and opportunities as recognized during the community meetings. The list is not prioritized by order of importance. A particular need and/or opportunity was chosen as regional if it appeared in the needs assessment of more than three of the nine counties of the Middle Rio Grande Region. The Action Plan (begins on page 91) is the only section of the strategic plan that has any reference to order of importance on a regional level.

Regional Problems/Needs:

SAFETY

Criminal Justice

- Youth Facilities/Services/Activities
- Youth and Community Drug Prevention & Deterrence Programs
- Juvenile Justice Services
- Substance Abuse Services
- Address Gang Activity in the Community
- Implement Education and Coordination among Local Resources within the Community
- Address issue of Parental Involvement & Accountability with Youth

Public Safety

- Funds for Personnel and Infrastructure
- Increased Training of Law Enforcement

- ❑ Officers need more Support/Community Involvement
- ❑ Regulatory Authority to address Environmental Problems
- ❑ Funding for EMS and Fire
- ❑ Improve Emergency Care

911

- ❑ Address the issue of how 911 calls are received, transferred and dispatched.
- ❑ Ability to Track Cellular Phone 911 Calls
- ❑ Continue mapping and addressing component of 911
- ❑ Increase public education outreach of proper use of the 911 system

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

Water

- ❑ Public Awareness of Water Issues
- ❑ Regional Unity over Water Issues that include bi-national/cross-border needs
- ❑ Services and Technical Assistance from State Agencies

Solid Waste

- ❑ Address Issue of Illegal Dumping
- ❑ Public Awareness of Solid Waste Issues
- ❑ Lack of state/federal programs and funding for Recycling Programs
- ❑ Federal and State Rules bureaucracy impedes solutions
- ❑ The need for Regional Unity over Solid Waste Issues/Regional Waste Management Institution

Infrastructure/Transportation

- ❑ Study the pros and cons of an RPO or MPO designation for the region
- ❑ Connectivity/Technology - Affordable Broadband for Communities/Businesses
- ❑ Need air service for region
- ❑ Expertise in Planning and Development
- ❑ Federal/State coordination with Local Transportation Needs
- ❑ Inadequate funding for roads/highways
- ❑ Mass transit system

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Development

- ❑ Regional Strategies for Job Creation/Economic Development/Marketing
- ❑ Incentive Programs to Stimulate Economic Development
- ❑ Economic Dependence Upon Federal Funds
- ❑ Capital Investment in Housing/Affordable Housing
- ❑ "Brain Drain" & other Out-Migration Problems
- ❑ Increased Public Education to correlate with workforce needs
- ❑ Convention Facilities
- ❑ Alternate Income Sources-Niche markets, etc...
- ❑ Value added processing
- ❑ Global Market Vision

- ❑ Need for a regional geographic service area adhered to by all state agencies

Community & Human Development

- ❑ Increase Leadership Capacity
- ❑ Address the "Digital Divide"
- ❑ The need for the establishment of a top tier University in the region
- ❑ Public Awareness of Economic Development Efforts
- ❑ Politics Play a Large Role in Setting Goals/Hinders Participation of Qualified People
- ❑ Inability to keep up with service demands-infrastructure and service needs

Aging

- ❑ Alternative Living Quarters/Housing & Assisted Living
- ❑ Ombudsman Program
- ❑ Funds for Nutrition Services/Center
- ❑ Adult Day Care
- ❑ High Insurance/Medication Costs
- ❑ Transportation for elderly; duplication of services
- ❑ Address long-term elder care

GIS/Technology

- ❑ Local Technical Assistance
- ❑ Basic Mapping Services

Regional Strengths/Opportunities:

SAFETY

- ❑ Sense of Regional Cooperation
- ❑ Presence of some neighborhood associations
- ❑ Two judicial districts
- ❑ Violent crime rate below state average
- ❑ Presence of local law enforcement
- ❑ Presence of best 911 Technology available
- ❑ Consolidated 911 Plan for the Region

CONSOLIDATED PLANNING

- ❑ Mild winters, long growing seasons
- ❑ Presence of local landfills
- ❑ Presence of recycling centers
- ❑ Presence of public awareness in regards to environmental issues
- ❑ Regional presence of technological infrastructure

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- ❑ Enterprise Communities/Enterprise Zones
- ❑ CNATC - Central North American Trade Corridor (Hwy 83)
- ❑ Existing local plans/Previous strategic planning experience
- ❑ Untapped tourism potential

- ❑ Diverse, bi-cultural communities/ties to Mexico
- ❑ Abundance of land
- ❑ Large, willing, able, and trainable population
- ❑ Good place to raise kids/small community environment
- ❑ Strong religious participation
- ❑ Willing government structure
- ❑ Access to area hospitals
- ❑ GIS mapping technology is accessible