

From Visions to Action: Citizen Efforts Blossom from Spring to Fall

GRIP's presentation of the 2020 Visions forum series stemmed from a desire to contribute the yeast of others' experiences to the vigorous ferment of ideas and actions shaping the future of this area.

By no means do we believe the forum series is responsible for these efforts. If anything, the contrary is

true: GRIP has been inspired to pitch in as best we can by the work so many others are doing.

The remarkable breadth of such work is an enormous community asset. From economic development and government accountability to natural resource conservation and organic food production, area residents are building

a better future. The politicians, we suspect, will follow.

This pull-out section features a sampling of what's happening, loosely based on the six breakout groups at the final 2020 Visions forum in June. We hope it is useful to those who would like to get involved and to those who already are.

Credit: Google™



A satellite image shows Silver City's growth into Arenas Valley

Community Design & Land-Use Planning in Silver City

Contact: Alan Wagman, (505) 538-9715

Goal: to promote growth management measures that will preserve the livability of the community and the friendly, small-town character of Silver City.

Needs: In order to prevent haphazard sprawl, the group needs political power, governmental support, professional help, and community involvement. Integrating the business community and its culture into this effort is seen as essential.

Existing Assets: The city infrastructure itself, an actively growing community, the spirit of interested people, and potential support from many organizations, including SIGRED, Hometown Initiative, Southwest Hispanic Roundtable, and GRIP.

Next Steps: To get started, the group needs to understand the town land use code, get educated about development, and support candidates friendly to a growth management approach. The group has identified the following next steps: form a political action committee for candidates friendly to managed growth efforts, work with these officials once elected, read and understand land use code.

Meetings: The group has not had regular meetings, but has met to plan specific actions as needed. Members do attend regular meetings of the city council, county commission, and planning-related committees.

Related efforts:

- Community Newsletter. Still at a formative stage, this idea responds to the need for accurate and timely information about proposals for land development and government ordinances. It would also provide citizen oversight of city and county officials and committees. Steve Hargrave, 313-0585
- Town of Silver City Trails and Open Space Committee. Joseph Gendron, Coordinator, 534-6367, or brownfields@zianet.com.

Community Cleanup Initiative

Contact: Joseph Gendron, (505) 534-6367 or brownfields@zianet.com.

Goal: Pollution, it was agreed, should be defined broadly to include light and noise pollution. Conducting an annual community-wide cleanup effort was discussed. The group also found it important to get at the roots of why people pollute, and how pollution in its many forms can be prevented.

In the end, no specific goal was chosen from among several suggestions, including: addressing the causes of community neglect; establishing community stewardship; creating community consciousness to prevent trash, light, and noise pollution; and promoting responsibility in communities.

Needs: surveys of how many citations are being given for existing codes, such as noise and nuisance ordinances; and support from government officials, church organizations, schools, boy scouts, and other community members.

Existing Assets: The group already has many resources to offer, such as time, research skills, community support, and a lot of experience from previous endeavors to address pollution concerns.

Next Steps: The group decided to research and develop a list of good citizenship responsibilities as well as other organizations on a federal and state level that may provide guidance or funding for future initiatives. Efforts already underway with the Dark Skies group will be continued.

Update: It has been suggested that Silver City pursue affiliation with a national organization called Keep America Beautiful.

Related Effort:

- A recycling committee has formed in the wake of this summer's decision by the Southwest Solid Waste Authority to suspend collection of glass and plastic. The committee aims to promote education, particularly in the schools, encourage political activism, and develop alternatives for recycling, including the possibility of local uses for some of the recycled materials, by governments, nonprofits, or businesses.

Meetings are being held every Tuesday at the Public Library from 5pm to 6pm. Contact Jane Olson, 534-9668 or travelplan@ugwa.org.