

Parks and Multi-Use Trails in Doña Ana County: A Health Impact Assessment

Camino Real Consortium
Regional Leadership Committee
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Doña Ana PLACE MATTERS Team

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- **Community members**
- Doña Ana County Planning Department
- Great Conversations
- Groundwork Doña Ana
- NM Department of Health Public Health Division, SW Region
- NM Health Equity Partnership
- NMSU Anthropology Department
- NMSU Borderlands Center for Educational Studies
- Ocotillo Institute for Social Justice
- Office of Senator Tom Udall
- Paso del Norte Health Foundation Institute for Healthy Living
- Unified Prevention Coalition

What is a Health Impact Assessment (HIA)?

An HIA analyzes the **impact**

of a **proposed** plan or policy

on the **health** of a population

by making **predictions** and **recommendations**

The Objectives of the HIA

- Analyze the impact of the Draft Comprehensive Plan on health.
 - Focus on one area: parks, multi-use trails, and recreational spaces.
- Advance health equity in Doña Ana County.

How Does the HIA Link to the Comprehensive Plan?

- The Livability Principles
 - Support our **existing communities**
 - Preserve our **heritage**
 - Provide more **transportation choices**
 - Promote **equitable, affordable communities**
 - Enhance **economic competitiveness**
 - Coordinate **policies and leverage investment**

Why Did We Choose Parks and Multi-Use Trails?

- Community members expressed frustration with walkability and physical activity options.
- Other organizations are addressing complementary health policy issues.
- Policies and investment in these areas would impact health in multiple ways.

The HIA Process

- Focus groups in five locations
 - Butterfield (and residents from Organ)
 - Chaparral
 - Doña Ana
 - Hatch (and residents from Rincon, Rodey, and Salem)
 - Vado/Del Cerro
- Literature review
- Epidemiological data
- Geospatial analysis

The Context

- Nationally, children ages 8 to 18 spend about 44 hours per week in front of a screen.
- Only 46% of adults and 31% of adolescents in Doña Ana County meet recommendations for physical activity.
- 68% of adults and 26% of youth in Doña Ana County are overweight or obese.

Why is Access to Parks and Multi-Use Trails Important?

- Physical activity improves physical health:
 - Helps prevent and manage diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, obesity, etc.
- Physical activity and socialization can improve mental well-being.
- People with access to parks and trails may be more physically active and socially engaged.

Vulnerable Populations

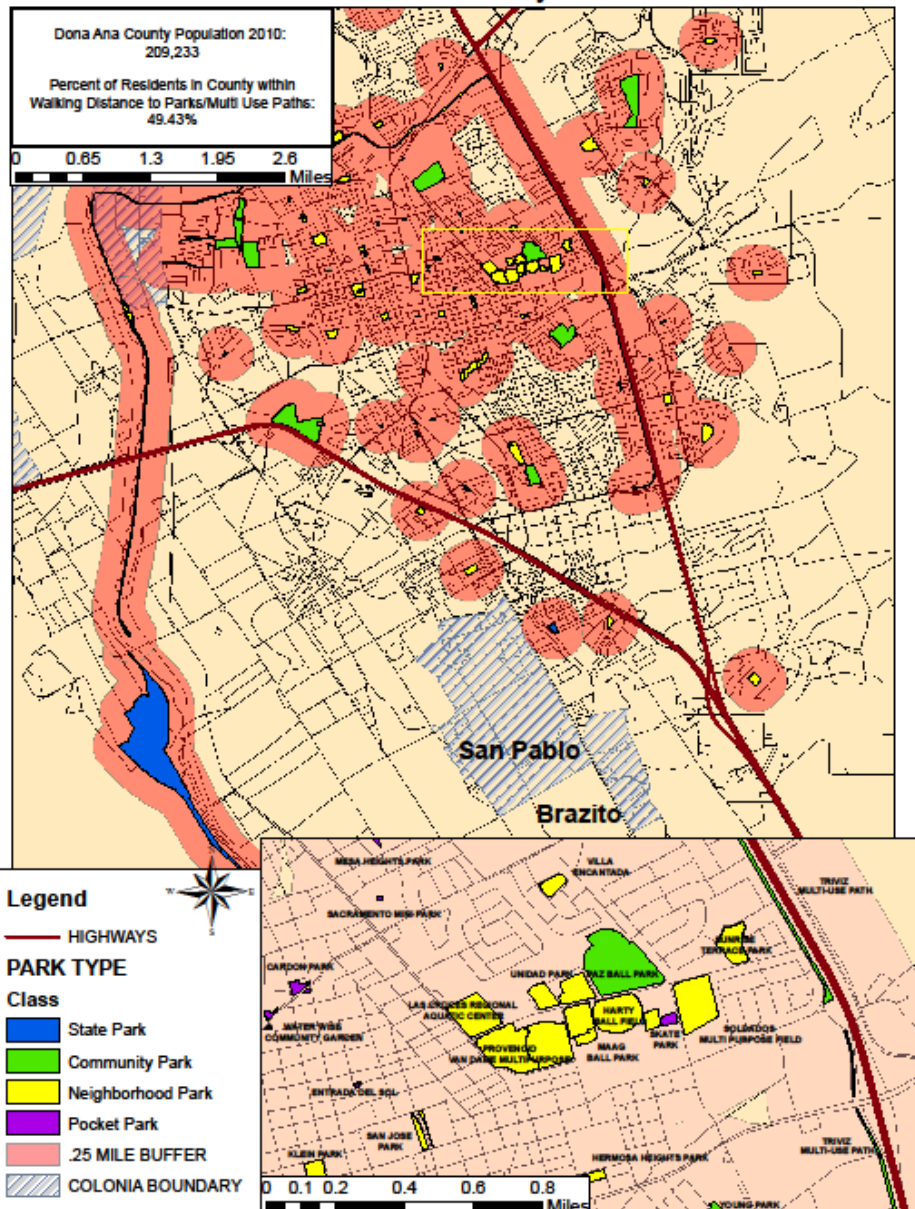
- Residents of unincorporated communities
- Low-income residents
- Children and adolescents
- Older adults

Findings: What Affects Access Here?

1. Proximity

- Nearly 50% of county residents live more than 0.25 mile from a park or multi-use trail.

Buffer Analysis of Parks and Trails, Las Cruces, Dona Ana County, 2015



Data Courtesy: Dona Ana County Community Development Department, New Mexico Community Data Collaborative (NMCCDC), BBER UNM

Author: Richard Wright
Date: 2/28/15

Findings: What Affects Access Here?

1. Proximity

2. Facilities and amenities

- Shade, water fountains, restrooms, seating, mixed amenities

3. Safety concerns

- Poor lighting
- Trash
- Loose dogs
- Substance use
- Unfenced areas
- Unsafe driving
- Lack of sidewalks



Park in Salem

Predictions

The Comp Plan is adopted in its current form



1. No plan for new parks and trails in underserved areas and future growth areas
2. No asset management plan for parks and trails
3. No emphasis on park and trail safety



- ↓ Access to recreational spaces
- ↓ Facilities and amenities in existing recreational spaces
- ↓ Park and trail safety



↓ Opportunities for recreational activities



↓ Park and trail usage



- ↓ Physical activity
- ↓ Social capital
- ↑ Chronic disease
- ↑ Health disparities

How PLACE MATTERS Can Help

We can assist the County by:

- Crafting health language for incorporation into guidance documents:
 - Comprehensive Plan and Unified Development Code
- Facilitating discussions between community members and policy makers on health issues.
- Building capacity of residents and leveraging volunteers.
- Providing input into the policymaking process.

Health Language Examples

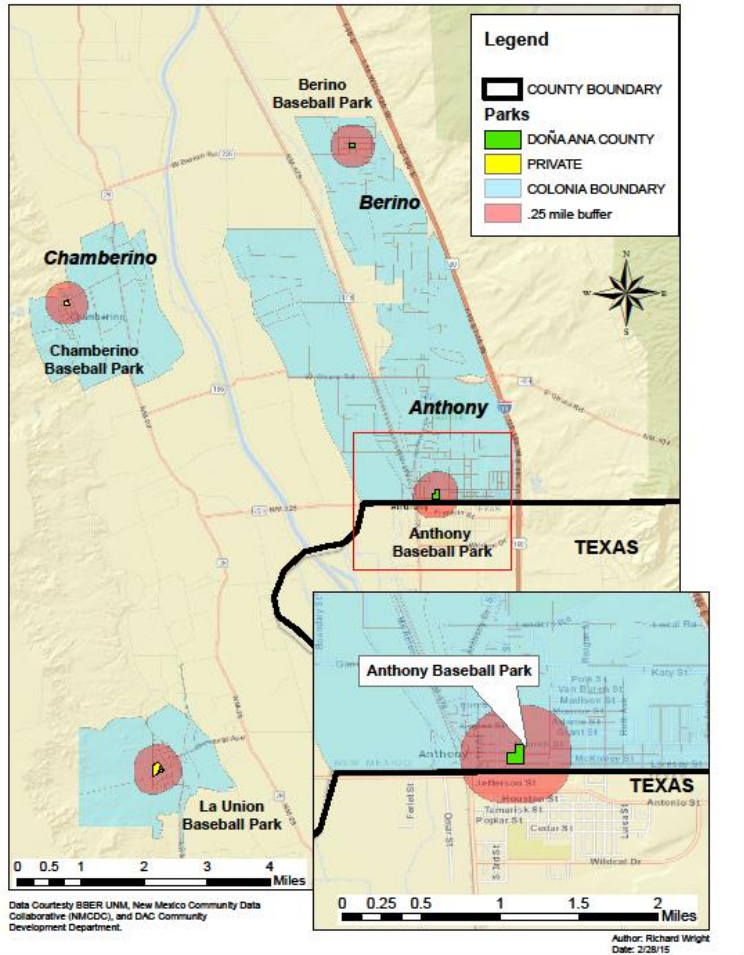
- “How can public services be delivered in an efficient and effective manner so that our communities are safe, vibrant, **healthy**, and socially interactive?” (p. 2)
- Link health to plans for civic, community, and open space (p. 67)
- Leverage network of irrigation canals and arroyos to expand opportunities for recreational activity (p. 106)
- Strategically allocate funds and collaborate with community coalitions to advance active living (p. 107)
- Develop a County Master Plan (with an asset management component) for Parks and Recreation (p. 107)

Recommendations

1. Improve opportunities for residents to access existing multi-use trails and parks.
2. Establish additional multi-use trails and parks.

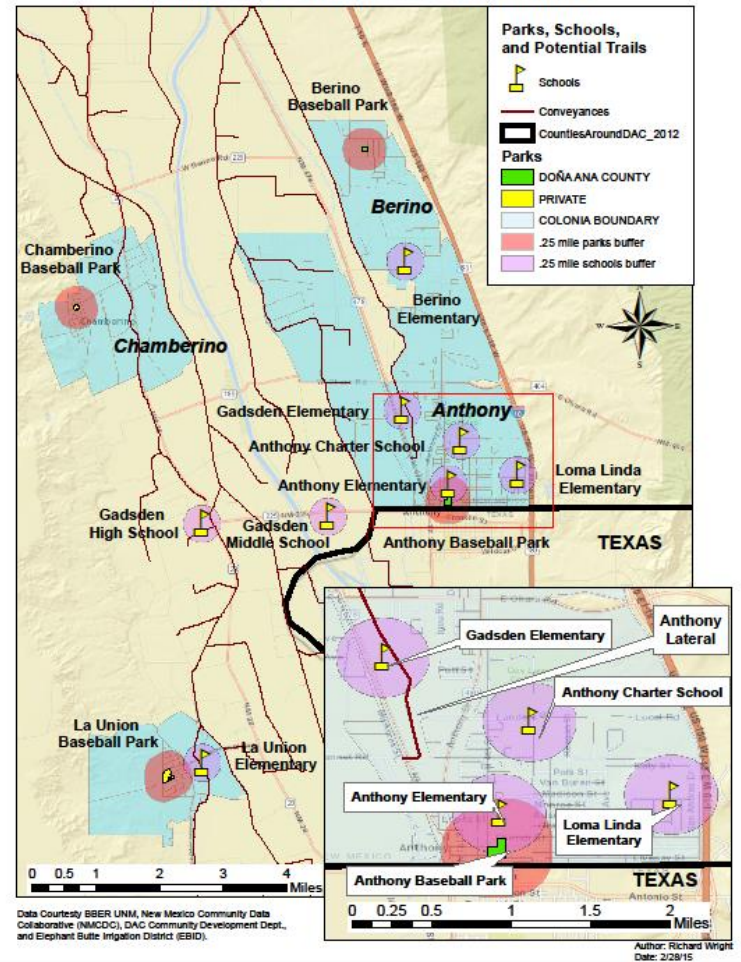
Shared Use Opportunities

Current Parks in a Southern Sector of Dona Ana County, .25 Mile Buffer, 2015



Current access

Example of a Parks/Schools/EBID Shared Use Agreement, .25 Mile Buffer around Parks and Schools



Access with school and EBID shared use agreements in place

Recommendations

1. Improve opportunities for residents to access existing multi-use trails and parks.
2. Establish additional multi-use trails and parks.
3. Adopt a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach.
4. Access diverse funding sources.

Thank you!



Park at Vado/Del Cerro Community Center

Doña Ana PLACE MATTERS Team

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