

POLICY BRIEF:

SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

FAST FACTS:



50% of Las Crucesians are adversely affected by extreme heat. Paved streets can make summer temperatures feel like 140°F in summer afternoons. The city's shade canopy covers less than 4% of its land area.

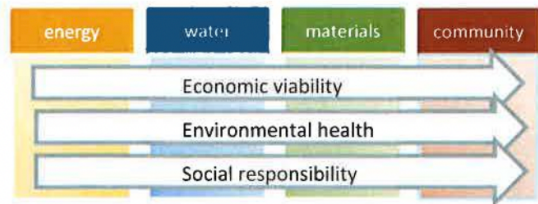


Las Cruces generates more than 8.5 mt CO₂e per resident, which is lower than the state of New Mexico and the country at large.

City of Las Cruces' Green House Gas Emission Reduction Targets (from 2018 baseline)

- 19% or greater by 2030
- 73% or greater by 2050

Sustainability touches all aspects of our everyday lives.



According to the National Weather Service in July 2023, Las Cruces broke its previous record for the longest streak of days with temperatures more than 99 degrees Celsius – joining more than 3,000 temperature records shattered throughout the U.S. in this timeframe. Data from the US Environmental Protection Agency shows that Las Cruces will likely continue to experience increased occurrences of extreme heat, drought, dust storms, wildfires, and flooding as a result of climate change.

Throughout my eight years of municipal stewardship representing District 1 on City Council, I have worked closely with Las Cruces' Sustainability Office to help the residents, organizations, and businesses of Las Cruces balance economic vitality, environmental health, and social responsibility with an emphasis on equitable approaches to addressing climate change, clean energy, and resiliency. Page two of this policy brief highlights some of the best practices and programs resulting from this work to be strengthened within my first 100 days of service as your mayor. Together they provide a roadmap to drive community sustainability and resilience — fundamental components of my vision of a “Healthy Las Cruces” framework.

Best Practice	Program
Actionable and aggressive planning climate change modeling and mitigation planning	The Climate of Las Cruces Climate Action Plan
Energy retrofits	Seven city buildings, annual savings of \$35,000 each
Access to solar power	Solar Panel Adaptation As of 2021, nearly 25% of the city's electricity comes from on-site solar installations.
Transition from gas utility to energy utility	RFPs for consulting services to oversee transition and retrain and retain existing staff
Green Infrastructure	Sonoma Ranch Blvd street median engineered with a swale (depression) to facilitate rainwater collection for landscape use and flood control
Increase tree canopy	Pilot programs in progress: Tree Steward volunteers , Tree City USA designation NeighborWoods NM
Heat Mitigation	Shade structures at bus stops and parks. Plans for reflective sealant for rooftops and pavement.
Water conservation and reclamation	Las Cruces Utilities water reclamation efforts generate up to 600,000 gallons per day for landscape irrigation. Las Cruces 40-year Water Plan

Resilience building targets:

- Increase public transportation use by 15 percent by 2030 and 35 percent by 2050.
- Promote electric vehicle adoption in the entire community by 22 percent by 2030 and 50 percent by 2050.
- Prioritize active transportation development by 40 percent by 2050.