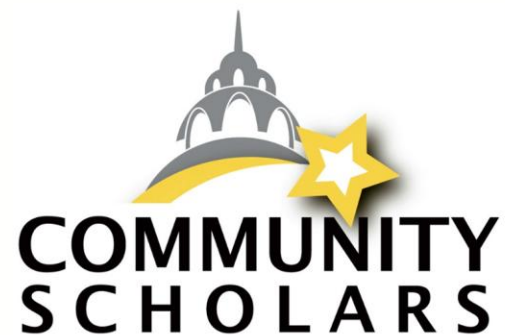


TWO DECADES
OF **CHANGE:**
EL PASO GROWTH
& QUALITY OF **LIFE**

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Two Decades of Change
El Paso Growth & Quality of Life

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El Paso’s proximity to Mexico has attracted many industries, primarily those in the manufacturing sector.¹ Fort Bliss became the economic force driving El Paso’s population growth during the 1940s and 1950s.² Tourism, food processing, manufacturing and textiles became major industries by the 1980s. In 1986, one-fourth of El Paso’s population was composed of military personnel due to the growth that was occurring in Fort Bliss. Additionally, the city experienced an increase in population due to immigration from Mexico. By 1990, El Paso’s population had grown by 32 percent.³ The following table displays the growth the County of El Paso has experienced over this period.

Table 1: El Paso Population

Year	Population
1990	591,610
2000	679,622
2009	751,296

Source: Southern Rural Development Center

Despite its mass growth, El Paso’s quality of life had declined for many. However, through initiatives and policies introduced between 1990 and 2010, El Paso’s quality of life began to change. This report is designed to detail and analyze that change. While this research could also be pertinent to public policy analysts and research organizations, this report was created in order to benefit the public. Our aim is to analyze quality of life in the context of public policy so as to inform the general populace about issues relevant to anyone who lives in the city of El Paso.

Purpose

The purpose of this piece of Community Scholars’ research is to analyze growth in El Paso from 1990 to 2010 and how it has impacted the quality of life of the city over the last 20 years. This report will explore the economic, educational, infrastructural and cultural factors of growth in context of quality of life.

In order to begin discussing the impact of continual growth on the city, determining what constitutes quality of life is necessary. Community Scholars defines quality of life as one’s happiness and well-being. It is measured by looking at a city’s economy, education, infrastructure and culture. Additionally, government policies affect quality of life, and will also be examined. This report will provide an understanding of how El Paso’s quality of life has changed from 1990 to 2010 in context of these economic, educational, infrastructural and cultural factors.

Literature Review

Studies have been conducted ways to measure the quality of life in certain cities, areas and nations. The Economist Intelligence Unit’s, (EIU) quality of life index created a methodology to measure the quality of life of a specific nation. The report states that quality of

¹ (Simcox, 1993)

² (Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, 2011)

³ (Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, 2011)

life is achieved by measuring the “subjective life-satisfaction surveys to the objective determinants.”⁴ In addition, the report offers nine variables to help determine quality of life. Among them include material well-being, health, political stability and security, family life, community life, climate and geography, job security, political freedom and gender equality. The index not only accounts for economic perspectives, but also for family and community views as well as the climate of the region. These variables produce a definition of quality of life, but the report fails to take into account certain quality of life characteristics.

One of these characteristics is the infrastructure of an area. Aspects of this branch include the quality of roads, educational opportunities, public safety and the amount of recreational areas. These factors need to be considered when determining quality of life, along with factors identified by the EIU’s quality of life index.

Education affects the subjective aspect of quality of life by improving a citizen’s economic status. This leads to an ability to attain higher education, and in turn to earn higher wages. As a result, more disposable income for the citizens would be available, which in turn could help provide more services for the community. Citizens with a higher education can provide more advanced and higher quality services to the area, which in turn affects the quality of the life.

In addition, cultural aspects are a major determinant of quality of life. Cultural events such as concerts and festivals improve quality of life by providing entertainment opportunities for citizens. These events also draw in people from outside the city and contribute to a city’s economy. Thus, quality of life is affected because an influx of visitors to a city can stimulate the economy through tourism.

Community Scholars also utilized The Economist’s indicators of job security and material well-being to create a definition for quality of life. These indicators include unemployment rates, median household income and poverty rates.

According to a report by Mercer Human Resource Consulting, quality of life is determined through analyzing the environment of an area using certain criteria. These factors include the political, social and economic environment, the medical and health considerations of the area, schools, education, the public services and transportation offered, recreational opportunities, consumer goods available, housing and the natural environment of the area. Each of these categories is divided up to form subcategories. For example, socio-cultural environment is further divided to consider the media and censorship of the area, while political and social environment takes into account the internal stability, law enforcement and crime rates in an area. The report also bases quality of life on more general, less objective factors including a person’s emotional state and personal life.⁵

In this Community Scholars report, several of these factors, including figures such as median household income, will be analyzed by district. Aspects such as educational, cultural and infrastructural factors will also be measured. Several factors that Mercer Human Resource Consulting uses to define quality of life will be incorporated into this report.

⁴ (The Economist, 2005)

⁵ (Mercer Human Resource Consulting LLC., 2007)

An El Paso based Community Facilities report states that facilities that provide service and recreational opportunities have a significant effect on the quality of life in El Paso. Facilities that have an impact include government-related, educational, recreational, arts and cultural, utility and public safety facilities. The report states that as population grows, services become increasingly difficult to offer to the public, which consequently has a negative impact on the quality of life in that area. The Community Facilities report attempts to define quality of life by the services that are provided to the people in a specific area. This report focuses solely on the facilities offered to the people of El Paso and the policies that could improve these facilities in order to obtain a better quality of life.⁶

Community Scholars will use the impact of these facilities to measure how quality life in El Paso has changed over the past two decades. To somewhat quantify the effects of art and culture on El Paso, we will look into various festivals, museums or other cultural facilities that have been introduced to the city. In addition to this, Community Scholars will look into the educational attainment of residents of El Paso to determine the effectiveness of El Paso's schools. By doing this, we can see the impact of El Paso's different facilities and services on quality of life in El Paso from 1990 to 2010.

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's "Quality of Life - A Concept Paper: Defining, Measuring and Reporting Quality of Life for Canadians" report focuses on social, health, economic, and environmental conditions as factors for quality of life. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat does not equate standard of living with quality of life, but instead considers quality of life the quality and quantity of goods and services available to the people. According to the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, there is an increasing demand for citizens to have an active role in the policy making process and agenda setting. Quality of life reporting can help notify procedures for giving citizens an active role in policy making. Canada already has a range of quality of life models that share a number of indicators such as crime rates, poverty rates, life expectancy and quality of physical environment.

According to the 2008 City of El Paso's Citizen Survey prepared by The Institute for Policy and Economic Development (IPED) at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), the most important municipal departments that contribute to a city's quality of life are community development, parks and recreation, libraries, museums and cultural affairs, performing arts, visitors bureau and the zoo. According to the survey, El Paso's most positive quality was its reliable weather and comfortable climate, while its most negative qualities included lack of employment opportunities and insufficient salaries. 75 percent of the population has shown interest in revitalizing the Downtown area of the city.⁷

According to the survey, a city's environment also contributes its citizens' quality of life. Overall, according to this IPED, quality of life in El Paso is best measured through community development and recreational activity.⁸ This survey did not take into account the health and well-being of residents in a city.

⁶ (City of El Paso, 1999)

⁷ (León, Olmedo, Quiñones, Soden, & Vargas, 2008)

⁸ (León, Olmedo, Quiñones, Soden, & Vargas, 2008)

Community Scholars will take into consideration the city's environment, happiness and well-being of the citizens, new buildings, public safety, entertainment, medical health and education in measuring El Paso's quality of life over the past 20 years. Although this survey places the most importance on community developments and recreational activity, Community Scholars will look into a variety of different factors that have an impact on quality of life in El Paso.

In a 2010 Community Scholars report titled "El Paso City Services, Balancing Need, Equity & Fairness", the distribution and accessibility of government services were evaluated in regard to quality of life in El Paso. The report defined quality of life and investigated the methods of distribution that the city government of El Paso used in each of its districts. In contrast, Community Scholars will use census data to measure several main factors of quality of life in El Paso including economics, infrastructure, education, and culture. Community Scholars will also investigate what policies were implemented in the last twenty years and what impact they had on the city's quality of life. This report will also include more detailed analysis of every district in El Paso in 1990, 2000 and 2010 in order to make precise observations and conclusions.

In the report, Community Scholars measured recreational services and their availability in the eight city council districts of the City of El Paso. In an interview with City Representative Carl Robinson of District 4, Robinson stated that there are competing theories of distributing services across the city. Furthermore, Robinson noted that certain services should be distributed based on utilization, while maintaining an understanding that reasonable distribution based on need is very important. The services report analyzed the relationship between distribution and access to certain services in various districts around the city. It was determined that the distribution of services to districts was directly related to the size and economic status of the different districts. When considering access to public services and socioeconomic status, the report concluded that Districts 2 and 3 have the highest quality of life within the city. These districts are located in the central core part of the city and were developed prior to 1960. The high quality of life in these districts is due to balanced service distribution and roadway connectivity, which allows for increased accessibility.⁹

Methodology

In the following Community Scholars report, City Representatives were asked to elaborate on the quality of life in their respective districts as well as all of El Paso. U.S. Census data was also collected and analyzed for 1990, 2000 and 2010 in order to gain a full understanding of the quantitative aspect of growth. Urban sprawl, border security and their negative impacts on El Paso were also analyzed. The policies and initiatives used to counter these controversial topics were also studied, as well as past reports on quality of life. Unlike a past report that focused on community services, this report will look at El Paso's past, present and future in services, employment, education, infrastructure and overall growth. Community Scholars also offers a conclusive statement on which factors impacted economic progress the most as well as recommendations for how to improve upon its quality of life in the future.

⁹ (Hernández, Martínez, & Landeros, 2010)

Economic Development

Economic factors are major determinants for calculating the quality of life, including changes in how specific industries have grown or declined. These changes are analyzed along with the unemployment and poverty rates of an area to determine the economic status of a population. Median home values and affordability also indicate the quality of the average home and the cost to afford it. These factors affect an individual's overall wellbeing.

El Paso saw several changes within its industries from 1990 to 2010. Among the greatest changes were the increase in the service sector and the decrease in the manufacturing sector. From 1990 to 2000 the amount of *maquiladoras* increased significantly, which helped promote economic growth due to industry transfers from Mexico to the United States.¹⁰ In addition, agricultural industries decreased from 1990 to 2010 along with wholesale and retail trade as seen in the table below.

Table 2: El Paso Number of Employees per Industry

Industry	1990	2000	2010
Natural Resources, Mining, and Construction	14,591	9,917	15,500
Service	84,485	109,919	120,700
Manufacturing	37,874	27,548	16,600
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	60,660	46,853	55,600

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; REDco

As shown above, El Paso has transitioned from a manufacturing-based economy to a service-oriented economy. This is shown through the increasing percentage of civilians employed in the service industry in the past two decades, and the decreasing percentage employed in goods production. El Paso has transitioned from a manufacturing-based economy to a service-oriented economy.

Employment and poverty are both also economic markers of quality of life. The following table displays both rates for the County of El Paso for the comparison years of 1990, 2000 and 2010.

Table 3: El Paso County Unemployment & Poverty

Year	Unemployment Rate	Poverty Rate
1990	11.8%	26.3%
2000	6.8%	25.2%
2010	6.3%	24.9%

Source: Southern Rural Development Center

There has been a decrease in both unemployment as well as poverty in the county. There was a large decrease in unemployment between 1990 and 2000, with only a small decrease of 0.5 percent following in 2010. Poverty has also only decreased 1.4 percent in 20 years. Another economic measure of quality of life is the median household income. The median household income is another major aspect of quality of life, displayed in the following table.

¹⁰ (REDCo, 2011)

Table 4: El Paso Median Household Income

Year	Percentage
1990	\$32,248
2000	\$37,309
2008	\$36,519

Source: Southern Rural Redevelopment Center
Adjusted for Inflation

Over the past 20 years, the median household income, when adjusted for inflation, has increased approximately \$4,000. There was a slight decrease from 2000 to 2008 of approximately \$800.

Housing affordability is another measure of quality of life. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, housing affordability is defined as a household paying no more than 30 percent of their income on housing.¹¹ Housing affordability increased beginning in 1990, but saw a decrease starting in 2004. This decline resulted from an increase in interest rates.¹² Prior to 2004, interest rates were low and according to CNN Money, low interest rates resulted in “rising salaries and stock market returns can create enough wealth to offset the negative effects of rising mortgage rates.”¹³ This causes people to feel more secure about their financial status, which creates a higher demand for homes.

Housing affordability in the 2000s is detailed in Table 5 below. The lower the index number, the less affordable housing is in the region.

Table 5: Housing Affordability Index in El Paso 2004-2009

Year	Housing Affordability Index
2004	1.74
2005	1.50
2006	1.24
2007	1.13
2008	1.17
2009	1.35

Source: Texas A&M University Real Estate Center

As seen in Table 5, the decrease in housing affordability began in 2004. In 2005, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission approved doubling the size of Fort Bliss to Congress through the Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC).¹⁴ BRAC resulted in a large influx of soldiers and families who came looking for homes in El Paso. Because of this, demand for housing has increased in El Paso, this affecting housing affordability.¹⁵

Education

El Paso’s educational facilities have had a significant impact on its growth for each level of educational attainment. El Paso’s three largest school districts, El Paso Independent School

¹¹ (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2011)

¹² (Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, 2006)

¹³ (Max, 2004)

¹⁴ (Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, 2006)

¹⁵ (Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, 2006)

District, Socorro ISD and Ysleta ISD, employ over 19,000 employees.¹⁶ UTEP employs around 2,300 people and has an annual budget of about \$200M.¹⁷ The impact of UTEP on El Paso’s economy can be seen throughout the city. According to the Institute for Policy and Economic Development at UTEP, the university’s effect on the businesses around it has resulted in nearly \$349M in local sales per year.¹⁸

According to Hispanic Business Magazine, UTEP has grown to be the number one engineering school for Hispanics and is among the top ten Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs for Hispanics in the country.¹⁹ Professional, technical, two-year and online schools have also developed, such as Western Technical College, Howard Payne University, Webster University, and the University of Phoenix.²⁰ These all accommodate for El Paso’s booming growth and increase in population. El Paso has also seen an increase in the number of higher education degrees. Table 6 below shows the increase in higher education and the decrease of El Paso educational attainment below the high school level.

Table 6: El Paso Educational Attainment Percentages

Year	Less<High School	High School	Some College	Bachelor’s +
1990	36.3%	23.0%	25.5%	15.2%
2000	34.2%	22.5%	26.6%	16.6%
2009	30.1%	23.9%	28.8%	17.2%

Source: Southern Rural Development Center

According to the Southern Rural Development Center, from 1990 to 2009 the number of people without a high school diploma has declined and the number of people with some college experience or bachelor’s degree has increased. This in theory should improve the quality of life because there are now more highly educated people who can provide advanced services to the community, such as doctors and engineers.

Infrastructure Development

According to Howard Frumkin, urban sprawl is the rapid expansion of metropolitan areas, referring to a complex pattern of land use, transportation and economic development.²¹ If urban sprawl development occurs without consideration for infrastructural aspects, future transportation challenges, or commercial needs, it can have a negative impact on quality of life.²² In the past few decades, many of El Paso’s residents moved out of Central and into the East and West sides of El Paso, thus causing an absence of a concentrated central core.²³ Table 7 shows the losses and gains of residents in Central El Paso and the East and West Sides from 2000 to 2010.

¹⁶ (Carter, 2011)

¹⁷ (Institute for Policy and Economic Development, 2003)

¹⁸ (Schauer & Soden, 2003)

¹⁹ (REDCo, 2011)

²⁰ (REDCo, 2011)

²¹ (Frumkin, 2002)

²² (School of Forest Resources and Conservation Department; Florida Cooperative Extension Service; Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences; University of Florida, 2006)

²³ (El Paso Times, 2008)

Table 7: Urban Sprawl in El Paso 2000-2010

District	Loss/Gain in Residents	Population Increase/Decrease
1	19,345	27.10%
2	4,052	5.70%
3	-4,543	-6.40%
4	10,825	15.10%
5	41,475	59.70%
6	18,106	26.60%
7	-2,632	-3.80%
8	-2,368	-3.30%

Source: City of El Paso, Planning and Economic Development

As Table 7 displays, growth in El Paso took place outside of Central El Paso from 1990 to 2000. The Central Area of El Paso lost residents as more people began moving to the East and West Sides.

Public Parks The creation of multiple-use facilities and parks utilized by the public have also affected quality of life. In order to meet quality of life needs, the City of El Paso required the creation of new and more reliable infrastructure and utilities for the population. The Master Plan, created in 2006, has improved the quality of life and characteristics of the city by allowing citizens to have access to parks and recreational areas. The Master Plan included preserving open space, improving detention and drainage systems and providing more access to public parks.²⁴

Crime and Enforcement Over the past two decades, El Paso has become a safer city. As shown in Table X, the crime rates of El Paso from 1990 to 2005 have diminished considerably according to El Paso Police Department.

Table 8: Number of Violent Crimes in El Paso

Year	Population	Total Violent Crimes
1990	515,342	5,111
2000	563,662	4,396
2005	601,839	2,622

Source: El Paso Police Department

As seen in the table, the total amount of violent crime has decreased even though the population has increased significantly. This means that the percentage of violent crimes in context of the growing population has decreased overall.

Murder rates have decreased, and in 2010 El Paso reported only five murders for the entire year; the lowest rate in over four decades.²⁵ Part of this can be attributed to El Paso's large immigrant population; generally, the larger the immigration population, the safer the city is; as immigrants are less likely to commit crimes.²⁶ From 1990 to 2010, police initiatives such as the Human Trafficking Task Force, Youth Initiative Program (YIP) and Community Response Against Street Hoodlums (CRASH), were created to provide quality emergency service and law

²⁴ (Halff Associates Inc., 2010)

²⁵ (Arteaga, 2011)

²⁶ (Balko, 2009)

enforcement with advancing technology.^{27 28} This vastly improved the quality of life of El Paso by decreasing crime rates and violence. The progress in safety and law enforcement has made El Paso one of the safest cities in the U.S.

City Infrastructure In July 2006, a storm hit El Paso with a series of torrential rains and flash floods. This series of rains are now referred as Storm 2006 according to El Paso Water Utilities.²⁹ The Storm of 2006 flooded the city of El Paso, leaving millions of dollars in damage for the city. The storm damaged 1,516 homes, 100 roadways and 53 commercial properties.³⁰ The Salvation Army developed a program called Operation AYUDA, in which shelter, food and clothing was provided for the city of El Paso.³¹ The storm proved that El Paso's drainage systems weren't properly structured to manage heavy rains, and Storm 2006 highlighted the shortcomings of El Paso County's infrastructure.³² As a result, the Public Service Board (PSB), which deals with the city's water issues, developed the Stormwater Master Plan (SMP). The purpose of this plan was to create long-term solutions to improve the city's water drainage system. Currently, El Paso has stormwater drainage systems in the East, Northeast, Central, Northwest, West Central and Mission Valley regions.³³

Culture

Today El Paso has a rich mix of cultures. Museums, downtown revitalization, restaurants, music events, festivals and entertainment enhance the city's culture. Culture is a relevant and important part of quality of life.

Downtown Revitalization In the 1990s, the downtown area of El Paso started to increase the quality of its commercial and transportation centers. In 1996, El Paso created the Downtown Redevelopment Plan, which provided construction for 13 different projects, including the Civic Center Expansion and Union Plaza Public Improvements.³⁴ By 2006, El Paso City Council renewed the Redevelopment Plan and adopted the Downtown 2015 Plan. The Mills Plaza District restoration, the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ), and the creation of the Facade Improvement Program were among the programs issued by the city, and highly encouraged renovation in the area.³⁵

Entertainment District El Paso has also developed a diverse entertainment district. There are many attractions that have had an impact on population growth and economy boosts, such as amusement parks, restaurants, nightclubs, festivals and museums. Because of El Paso's unique border location and Hispanic makeup, the cultural diversity of the city affects entertainment. The numbers expressed in Table 9 displays the number of establishments in El Paso that have licensed to sell alcohol. The table includes restaurants and bars.

²⁷ (Carrillo, 2011)

²⁸ (City of El Paso, 2011)

²⁹ (El Paso Water Utilities - Public Service Board, 2009)

³⁰ (City of El Paso, 2006)

³¹ (City of El Paso, 2006)

³² (Ortega, 2007)

³³ (El Paso Water Utilities - Public Service Board, 2009)

³⁴ (Williams, 1999)

³⁵ (City of El Paso, 2011)

Table 9: Active Alcohol Permits Licenses

Year	Permits
1990	102
2000	412
2010	1,178

Source: Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission

As shown in Table 9, the number of active permits and licenses for alcohol has increased from 1990 to 2010 by 1,076 businesses. By 2010, businesses started to request more permits to serve alcoholic beverages. This increase in bars has contributed to the growth of the entertainment district of El Paso and also to its cultural diversity.

Music Events Musical festivals and events such as Dancing in the City, Music Under the Stars World Festival and Alfresco Fridays contribute to El Paso’s diverse cultures. Dancing in the City, an outdoor dance concert, provides a variety of music styles from both local and visiting artists.³⁶ Music Under the Stars World Festival, an outdoor concert, has had over 25 summer live concert series.³⁷ The concert features both local and international performers at the Chamizal National Memorial with a variety of cultural music throughout the series of concerts.³⁸ Alfresco Fridays is an outdoor musical event held in the Arts Festival Plaza in Downtown El Paso. It will be entering its 9th season in 2011, featuring Latin, Classic Rock Reggae, Jazz, 70’s, Mariachi, Funk, Salsa, Cumbia, Latin Funk and Blues.³⁹ These events keep people in the El Paso area and benefit local restaurants and shopping centers.

Neon Desert was the first festival of its kind in the city of El Paso. In 2011, Splendid Sun Productions introduced the music festival to El Paso with local food vendors, merchants and artists. The festival benefited Amor Por Juárez, an organization that donates to the youth in Juárez and Creative Kids, a program which provides art education to thousands of children in El Paso.⁴⁰

Festivals El Paso’s cultural diversity is exhibited through the different festivals held in the city. Every year during Labor Day weekend, the Hispanic Cultural Center has a Fiesta de las Flores, (Festival of Flowers) during which attendees enjoy games, food, arts and crafts, a car show and other entertainment. The largely popular Greek Festival held in the Greek Orthodox Church in El Paso introduces the city to Greek music and food, while the Adair Margo gallery has a season each year during which it displays the work of artists around the country and world.⁴¹ Cultural events contribute to El Paso’s growth by attracting more tourists to the city. Arts and culture influence El Paso’s quality of life and long-terms economic success. The following table represents the events’ attendance figures and date of creation.

³⁶ (Events El Paso, 2011)

³⁷ (City of El Paso, 2011)

³⁸ (KVIA, 2010)

³⁹ (93.1 Kiss-FM, 2011)

⁴⁰ (Neon Desert, 2011)

⁴¹ (El Paso Convention and Visitors Bureau, No Date)

Table 10: Most Popular Festivals and Music Events

Event	Date of Creation	Annual Attendance Figures
Dancing in the City	2010	N/C
Music Under the Stars World Festival	1983	2,000-5,000
Alfresco Fridays	2002	N/C
Neon Desert	2011	10,000
Street Fest	2011	N/C
The Classic Film Festival	2008	38,000

Source: El Paso Music Events and Festivals

*N/C=Not Calculated, Tracked

As shown in Table 10, most of the events began around the year 2000. Although some of the events are only once a year, they all attract many local and international patrons.

National Policy

In order to fully understand the transformations that occurred in El Paso within the past two decades, one must consider what policies have been made. Policies can affect entire communities, regions, or nations. Federal policies can have an impact on several different aspects of a community. For this reason Community Scholars' definition of quality of life includes policies at the national, state, and local levels.

NAFTA The North American Free Trade Agreement was one of the most influential national policies enacted during the 1990s. Its basis was to eliminate trade barriers and increase economic growth between all North American nations.⁴² These barriers include tariffs, taxes, or anything that would inhibit a good from crossing a border as trade. The concept of free trade implies that an influx of goods and services from neighboring countries will mutually result in a higher standard of living.⁴³ According to a previous report done by Community Scholars, Mexican tariffs were approximately at a 25 percent tax before NAFTA was created.⁴⁴ NAFTA then removed these tariffs and taxes. By eliminating these taxes, businesses would have a larger accessible market and United States trade to Canada and Mexico would be expanded. NAFTA also gave corporations the freedom to establish plants in Mexico.

As a result of NAFTA, 25 percent of United States trade to Mexico flows through El Paso.⁴⁵ This has a huge effect on El Paso's economy. From a business perspective, NAFTA was useful in increasing cheap trade because restrictions were eliminated. It also helped small businesses open trade to markets in Mexico.⁴⁶

To international and small businesses, NAFTA was beneficial by creating cheaper trade and more opportunities.⁴⁷ However, companies realized that it was much more profitable to produce goods in Mexico and then sell to the United States. According to the Economic Policy Institute, approximately 766,000 jobs were lost in the United States because of businesses

⁴² (Kehoe, 1995)

⁴³ (Kehoe, 1995)

⁴⁴ (Dominguez, 1998)

⁴⁵ (REDCo, 2011)

⁴⁶ (Small Business Resources for the Entrepreneur, 2011)

⁴⁷ (Carrera, 2006)

relocating to Mexico as a result of NAFTA.⁴⁸ Many of these businesses had *maquiladoras*, which are factories that can be entirely U.S. owned. Table X below shows the increasing number of *maquiladora* employees from the creation of NAFTA to 2000. The policy widened the gap between the wealthy and low-income, and according to Alexandra Spieldoch from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, it “worsened the economic divide” between North American countries.⁴⁹ This growth in the *maquiladora* industry can be seen in Table 11 below.

Table 11: *Maquiladora* Industry Presence in Mexico

Year	Employees
1995	686,985
1996	801,257
1997	938,448
1998	1,036,743
1999	1,248,030
2000	1,338,970

Source: El Paso Regional Economic Development Corporation

As seen in the table, the *maquiladora* industry presence in Mexico more than doubled in the years after NAFTA was implemented. This is also indicative of the migration of manufacturing jobs from the U.S. to Mexico during the same time period.

Another effect that resulted from NAFTA was the rise of the U.S. trade deficit. From the 1990s to the 2000s, a boom and bust cycle occurred, in which a sharp increase in trade took place with a subsequent deficit. In 1993, the U.S. was at a trade surplus of \$1.6B with Mexico and employment rates were rising quickly. However, by 2003, the surplus steadily transformed into a \$40B deficit and a large amount of jobs was lost to Mexico especially in the manufacturing sector.⁵⁰ U.S. exports to Mexico have grown by about 95 percent and exports to Canada have grown by 41 percent by 2003. Conversely, there was a greater increase in imports, with a 195 percent increase on imports from Mexico and 61 percent from Canada.⁵¹ This caused a deficit in trade in the U.S. because there were more international imports than exports. This trade deficit resulted in lost jobs with an estimated 20,000 jobs lost per billion dollars in trade deficit due to NAFTA. This was seen in El Paso with the loss of 21,272 manufacturing jobs in 1993.⁵²

The policy also had an effect on the environment of El Paso and other border areas between the U.S. and Mexico. From 1990 to 1998, the number of *maquiladoras* nearly doubled, going from 2,100 to 4,000.⁵³

All of these effects of NAFTA have had an impact on the quality of life in El Paso. Due to the relocation of companies, thousands of jobs were lost to Mexico. As previously stated, economic inequality has grown in El Paso, displaced workers have increased and a worsening of

⁴⁸ (Economic Policy Institute, 2001)

⁴⁹ (Spieldoch, 2008)

⁵⁰ (Report of the U.S. Congressional, 2003)

⁵¹ (Scott, 2003)

⁵² (Report of the U.S. Congressional, 2003)

⁵³ (Report of the U.S. Congressional, 2003)

air quality occurred due to traffic congestion caused by the increased trade with Mexico. Overall, the quality of life has diminished in El Paso when considering these factors.

BRAC The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) act in 2005, has had a great impact on El Paso’s economy. In May 2005, the BRAC Commission expanded Fort Bliss into a heavy armor training post, which brought in thousands of troops and families.⁵⁴ This increase can be seen in Table 12 below which shows the population of Fort Bliss from the BRAC act in 2005 to 2010.

Table 12: Fort Bliss Population 2005-2010

Year	Soldier Population	Family Population
2005	9,330	15,330
2006	13,178	20,517
2007	14,126	21,795
2008	16,904	25,540
2009	19,292	28,759
2010	23,520	34,458

Source: Team Bliss Base Transformation Office

The population of Fort Bliss has increased, as a result of BRAC, from 2005 to 2010. El Paso will need to handle the influx of population with more housing and jobs.

Investment in Fort Bliss’s infrastructure has affected employment. According to a report by the Institute for Policy and Economic Development at the University of Texas at El Paso, the expansion of Fort Bliss has provided opportunities for several industries, such as the technical industry, which maintains structures at Fort Bliss.⁵⁵ From the start of BRAC in 2005 to 2010, approximately 40,000 jobs were added to the overall employment of El Paso. In addition to adding jobs, the expansion of Fort Bliss boosted business for industries in El Paso. Fifty-nine percent of construction corporations experienced at least a slight growth due to Fort Bliss. Also, 79 percent of health care and social assistance services experienced at least a moderate growth as a direct result of the expansion of Fort Bliss.⁵⁶

Immigration Act of 1990 Another national policy that had considerable effects on El Paso was the Immigration Act of 1990. This policy increased limits on immigration and created a focus on border security.⁵⁷ The act subsequently gave way to the creation of “Operation Hold the Line” in 1993 and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act in 1996.⁵⁸

The Immigration Act of 1990 as well as its predecessor, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), spurred an increase in border security, with a 500 percent budget increase and a 200 percent personnel increase by 2005.⁵⁹ Unlike previous operations, which emphasized on capturing illegal aliens after they had crossed the border, Operation Hold the Line focused on controlling the actual border and stopping people from crossing it.⁶⁰ Border Patrol apprehensions

⁵⁴ (Olmedo, Soden, Quiñones, & Gibson, 2007)

⁵⁵ (Olmedo, Soden, Quiñones, & Gibson, 2007)

⁵⁶ (Olmedo, Soden, Quiñones, & Gibson, 2007)

⁵⁷ (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, No Date)

⁵⁸ (Margerum, 2005)

⁵⁹ (Margerum, 2005)

⁶⁰ (Bean, et al., 1994)

refer to the number of illegal immigrants who have been detained while attempting to cross the border illegally. In the first year of its creation, apprehensions dropped approximately 72 percent.⁶¹ This was not a decrease in efficiency, but rather an improvement in border security. This is seen in Table 13 below.

Table 13: El Paso Border Patrol Apprehensions 1993-2004

Year	Apprehensions
1994	79,688
1996	145,929
1998	125,035
2000	115,696
2002	94,154
2004	104,399

Source: Homeland Security Affairs

Furthermore, from 2007 to 2008, apprehensions declined by 60 percent, decreasing from 75,169 to 30,126.⁶² Also, according to the El Paso Border Patrol, one in five immigrants apprehended had committed a crime within the U.S. prior to their arrest.⁶³ The zero-tolerance policy, in 2005, also had an effect on crime and immigrant apprehensions because it enforced a policy that all illegal immigrants are detained, instead of only immigrants with criminal backgrounds.

Quality of life was in turn affected by this tightening of the border. With a more secure border, public safety improved, resulting in a decrease in crime. When Operation Hold the Line commenced in 1993, not only did the number of border patrol apprehensions decrease, but the number of reported violent crimes decreased as well.

Border Security After the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, border security was amped up even further. According to an international policy report written by the TransBorder Project Director Tom Barry, after 9/11 the Customs and Border Protections (CBP) made its top priority to “keep terrorists and their weapons from entering the United States.”⁶⁴ Also, following 9/11, President George W. Bush announced a new Department of Homeland Security dedicated to border security. Over the course of 10 years since 2001, border spending tripled, 650 miles of fencing was built, the number of border agents doubled, and new technology has been implemented to secure the border.⁶⁵ In addition, El Paso has strengthened its Joint Terrorism Task Force and has created the Safe Streets Task Force, which combines agencies to improve safety.⁶⁶

State Policy

Funding from the State has led to the creation of new services and facilities in the city of El Paso. Money for these initiatives in the past 20 years has been secured through policies created through the Texas Legislature.

⁶¹ (Dunn & Palafox, No Date)

⁶² (Vaughan, 2009)

⁶³ (Vaughan, 2009)

⁶⁴ (Barry, 2011)

⁶⁵ (Mendoza, 2011)

⁶⁶ (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2011)

Paul L. Foster School of Medicine Health service policies have made an impact on El Paso's quality of life. The Paul L. Foster School of Medicine at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center is the first medical school to be established on the United States-Mexico border.⁶⁷ Funding for this medical school was secured during the Texas Legislature meeting in 2001. Not only was the medical center given \$40 million in tuition revenue bonds by the state, but \$11 million was put into a clinic expansion project. The ground breaking for the medical classroom building was held in 2005.⁶⁸ In 2009, the first class of the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine began. The impact of this school will be significant. It will train physicians on diseases that are currently affecting the El Paso population, such as diabetes and obesity. If these physicians decide to stay in the El Paso area, they will help to improve the low physician to patient ratio that El Paso has. By 2013, it is estimated that the school of medicine will have brought in \$1.31 billion dollars to the El Paso economy.⁶⁹

Regional Mobility Authority In 2003, senators and district representatives from around the state met for the 78th Texas Legislature. During this session, an amendment was added to House Bill 3588, a bill dealing with RMAs around Texas. The amendment, written out by Senator Elliot Shapleigh allowed for a Regional Mobility Authority (RMA) to be established in border cities with a population of over 500,000 people. This amendment was geared specifically towards El Paso, because no other border cities around Texas had a population this large.⁷⁰ In 2007, the Camino Real Regional Mobility Authority (CRRMA) was created through the efforts of El Paso City Council.⁷¹ Through the creation of an RMA, quality of life in El Paso has improved. The city's infrastructure has experienced positive growth, and continues to be enhanced with the creation of loops and bridges to help direct and decrease the flow of traffic.

Local Policy

Local policies are created in order to improve the quality of life in an area. El Paso has created ordinances in the last 20 years that have improved the city and its overall safety, thus making El Paso a better place to live.

Project ARRIBA In 1998, Project Advanced Retraining and Redevelopment Initiative in Border Areas (ARRIBA) was founded. Project ARRIBA is a high impact non-profit economic development program that focuses on highly skilled high-waged jobs in El Paso.⁷² Project ARRIBA recruits, trains and develops adults to be qualified high-skilled workers. In the past, El Paso's economy depended on low-wage employment which no longer offered El Pasoans a living wage. As a result, thousands of El Pasoans, who had never advanced in their education, faced situations that not only caused them to lose their jobs but also affected their quality of life.⁷³ The main purpose of this project is to provide residents of El Paso with advanced training and administrative services that provide them the skills required for high demand occupations. El Paso manufacturers and healthcare institutions struggled to deliver more responsive services, meaning there was a vast demand for high skilled labor. This program supported a working

⁶⁷ (UMC Foundation, 2009)

⁶⁸ (Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, 2011)

⁶⁹ (UMC Foundation, 2009)

⁷⁰ (Alvarez, Chagoya, Guzman, Landeros, Morales, & Salinas, 2007)

⁷¹ (Camino Real Regional Mobility Authority, No Date)

⁷² (Project ARRIBA, 2011)

⁷³ (Project ARRIBA, 2011)

partnership between private corporate partners, community-based organizations and training institutes that address these issues.⁷⁴ Since 1998, 627 participants have graduated from Project ARRIBA, 91 percent of which were Hispanic and 81 percent of which were female. Members of this project have met the Federal Low Income Guidelines and have either been displaced, unemployed or underemployed. Seventy percent of the applicants have earned a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) or higher. Project ARRIBA was designed to respond to the needs of El Paso citizens through extensive commitments from private, county, city and state organizations. Project ARRIBA also promotes a strong workforce development initiative that generates independent taxpayers who contribute to El Paso's growing economy. After participating in Project ARRIBA, the current average wage is over \$40,000 per year with benefits and a career path for the participants which helped improve their quality of life.⁷⁵

Smoking Ban In January 2002, El Paso became one of the first cities to pass an ordinance to ban smoking in public places. This regulation is meant to protect nonsmokers from the harmful effects of second-hand smoking.⁷⁶ El Paso's ban included all public places and was the strictest in the nation until New York and Boston enacted similar regulations.⁷⁷ The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Texas Department of Health analyzed that there were no significant changes in bars and restaurants in El Paso after the smoking ban took effect.⁷⁸ However, in a similar study by Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), gross sales of eating and drinking establishments dropped from \$571M to \$541M after the smoking ban was passed. According to Patricia Ayala, chairman of the El Paso association that supported the ordinance, the ban and the drop in smoking put El Paso in a place of prominence.⁷⁹

Quality of Life Bond Issues The Quality of Life Bond program was designed to address quality of life issues dealing with arts, zoos, parks, libraries, tourism and historic preservation in the city.⁸⁰ In 2000, voters passed the Quality of Life Bond which introduced four new libraries to the city.⁸¹ In 2004 the library portion of the Cleveland Square project was closed for expansion and renovation. The construction cost about \$12.6M and was made possible through the Quality of Life Bonds. The Chairman of the Bond Oversight Advisory Committee, Gus Haddad, said that this project was funded by three of the four proposals supported by the voters. The Main Library downtown was completed in 2006.⁸²

The West Side Community Skate Park, which was funded by the Quality of Life Bonds, opened in July 2009. The park was originally designed as a flat concrete pavement in order to encourage solo ramp equipment. However, Parks Director Barry Russell chose to listen to the skater's desires and instead constructed another concrete park. Although the park had an

⁷⁴ (Project ARRIBA, 2011)

⁷⁵ (Project ARRIBA, 2011)

⁷⁶ (Centers for Disease Control, 2005)

⁷⁷ (Foy, 2003)

⁷⁸ (Centers for Disease Control, 2005)

⁷⁹ (Foy, 2003)

⁸⁰ (Vote El Paso, No Date)

⁸¹ (City of El Paso, 2011)

⁸² (The City of El Paso, Texas, 2008)

insufficient account of \$180,000, architects were able to build a 12,000 square foot skate park featuring a bowl and street course.⁸³

Water Conservation Program In 1990, the El Paso Water Utilities-Public Service board asked a 40 member committee to review areas of water use and make recommendations on how to conserve water. The committee reported that wasteful uses of water must be eliminated in order to fulfill the goal of conserving 160 gallons per capita per day (GPCD).⁸⁴ Wasteful water uses included high volume plumbing, at-home car washing, evaporative cooling and lawn and garden irrigation. By practicing innovative water conservation, the El Paso Water Utilities aimed to decrease the GPCD by 20 percent. The El Paso Water Utilities hope to go from using 200 GPCD in 1998 to using 160 GPCD by the year 2000. The 2005 Water Conservation Plan’s goal was to use less than 140 GPCD by 2010. This goal was achieved and the plan now hopes to maintain using 140 or less GPCD until 2020.⁸⁵ Table 14 below shows that the El Paso Water Utilities achieved their goal in using 140 GPCD or less throughout the years.

Table 14: Historical Total System Water Consumption Data

Year	Population	Growth	Total Water*	GPCD**
1996	656,482	0.34%	40.11	172
1998	671,250	0.93%	39.95	164
2000	681,572	0.91%	40.43	159
2002	694,078	0.90%	38.46	153
2004	712,481	1.45%	34.66	139
2006	736,310	2.10%	35.46	136
2008	773,586	2.50%	35.32	133

Source: El Paso Water Utilities-Public Service Board

*Billion Gallons

**Gallons per capita day

Table 14 above shows how the El Paso consumption of GPCD declined throughout the past two decades. The El Paso Water Utilities Public Service Board met the goals for the 1991 and 2005 Water Conservation Plans and is continuing to use less than 140 GPCD.⁸⁶

El Paso’s Future Growth

Modern day El Paso continues to grow economically and improve its infrastructure. Community Scholars investigated the initiatives and policies that El Paso’s government intends on taking in order to create a more positive quality of life for its citizens.

Current Initiatives and Policies Modern policies and initiatives fall under two categories: economic and infrastructural. Economic factors include any changes that influence job availability, population change, industrial advancements or similar factors. Factors that fall under infrastructural include the construction of facilities or redevelopment of existing structures.

⁸³ (Skaters for Public Skateparks, 2010)

⁸⁴ (El Paso Water Utilities - Public Service Board, 2009)

⁸⁵ (El Paso Water Utilities - Public Service Board, 2009)

⁸⁶ (El Paso Water Utilities - Public Service Board, 2009)

Economic A central factor that will have an impact on expansion in El Paso is the population increase in Fort Bliss due to the influx of military families. Bob Cook, head of the Regional Economic Development Corporation (REDCo), estimated that 21,000 troops will transfer to El Paso bringing 27,000-33,000 family members. Cook projected an opening result of 6,000-7,000 spin-off job opportunities. Additionally, home production is expected to double to 8,000 homes per year.⁸⁷ Fort Bliss's new arriving troops and families will expand the home base to 34,000 residents by 2012. One of the preparation projects in the Fort Bliss area will require over \$4B in construction, and a 93-acre development of 1,100 apartments and a variety of shopping centers will also take part in El Paso's future development.⁸⁸ This production will attract more residents to live on the Fort Bliss base further expanding the quality of life for military families.

Larry Patton, President and CEO of Bank of the West, stated that El Paso is undergoing "unprecedented growth" and the Fort Bliss expansion has provided a significant economic boost which will help the city recover from the global recession.⁸⁹

Another modern factor which greatly affects El Paso's development is the drug war in El Paso's sister city of Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. El Paso is strategically located on the border of two states and two countries making the city an international gateway to and from Mexico. This location is significant because it impacts El Paso's growth both positively and negatively. While violent outbreaks increase across the border, El Paso continues to advance and prosper. Many businesses have relocated to El Paso because the streets of Juárez are not as lively or industrious as they once were. The new profits made by these immigrating businesses have boosted El Paso's economy. However, El Paso and Juárez rely heavily on each other and therefore one will experience a recession if the other is also at a decline.⁹⁰

REDCo President Bob Cook stated that during the great recession of 2008-2009, approximately 83,000 manufacturing jobs were lost in Juárez. Cook explained that plant managers in Juárez blamed the economy for the job losses rather than security concerns. From 2009 to March 2011, REDCo successfully added 28,000 jobs back into the manufacturing industry despite the increased drug war violence.⁹¹ This supports the idea that in order to recover from an economic recession, El Paso must be extremely competitive in recruiting, retaining and supporting industry and small businesses. The industries that are recruited must create better job opportunities and skilled employees in order to be successful. Through regional cooperation and strategic innovation as a border city, El Paso can create a variety of economic opportunities for the future.

Infrastructure El Paso's modern day infrastructure is still moving forward. El Paso's central district is in the process of redevelopment. This movement is part of what City Representative Steve Ortega referred to as a "Downtown Renaissance."⁹² Having a redeveloped downtown will help to provide El Paso citizens with more job opportunities as well as new sources of

⁸⁷ (KFOX TV, 2008)

⁸⁸ (MacFarlane, 2009)

⁸⁹ (Burge, 2009)

⁹⁰ (Grissom, 2010)

⁹¹ (Crowder, 2011)

⁹² (Schladen, 2011)

entertainment. It will also attract more tourists which will help improve business and the economy.

Currently El Paso is pushing for smart growth, which protects public health, creates environmental areas that people enjoy and expands economic opportunity. Implementing smart growth allows for more walkable streets, more parks, open space and a higher density development. The city is emphasizing Transit Oriented Development (TOD) through the plan for a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system.⁹³ By creating this new form of transportation, the city will attempt to decrease urban sprawl which is a factor in the economic and social decline of El Paso.

Another priority for El Paso's community is raising the per capita income in order to create and maintain a strong economic base. In order to achieve this goal, a plan for the City of El Paso will focus on education and economic development. This plan will be aimed to create an economically, socially, physically and environmentally sound city. Additionally, an enhanced quality of life and sustainable community can be reached through partnerships with neighbors to attain regional cooperation.⁹⁴

Education in El Paso is also vital for progress. El Paso County offers a broad range of education through nine school districts. Knowledgeable citizens are more able to make informed decisions, have and create better job opportunities, and participate in civic concerns. El Paso must support and pursue educational policies and facilities which provide its citizens with educational opportunities. El Paso recently approved \$645M in bonds to build new schools and to renovate existing campuses in the city.⁹⁵

Maintaining a healthy environment in El Paso is a priority. El Paso must preserve its natural resources while also keeping within federal clean air standards. The aesthetics of a city contribute to its quality of life and the attitudes of its residents. A clean, beautiful city attracts new residents and visitors which positively impacts the economy. Design standards, landscaping, and maintaining clean and attractive buildings are all parts of keeping a healthy environment. A positive economic transition must include a rapidly changing environment.

In addition to the difficulty experienced improving the environment, El Paso currently faces water shortages and may completely run out of this natural resource in the next 20 years.⁹⁶ The longest period of time without rain in El Paso was 109 days in 2002 until this was beat in 2011. The Rio Grande is one of the state's main sources of water, and provides water for much of the population; however, demand is at an increase. Texas' population is expected to double by 2050. In order to increase the water supply, there are plans for the division of the Rio Grande's water as well as the creation of new reservoirs.

A conflict that is continuously harmful to El Paso's development is illegal immigration. Southern border patrol ensures prevention of illegal immigration as well as potential security breaches. El Paso, being a border city between two countries, is vulnerable to illegal immigration and trade. Despite the Border Patrol's best efforts, these issues continue to hurt El Paso because

⁹³ (Shahan, 2011)

⁹⁴ (Campos, 1999)

⁹⁵ (REDCo, 2011)

⁹⁶ (The Economist, 2001)

the city is already populated to nearly maximum capacity. However, it can also help the economy because of a boost in civilian labor force and residents seeking employment.

Southern border security is a controversial issue for El Paso's growth and safety. After the national terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, enhanced borderland security has become a top priority for the United States. Prior to the attack, national border patrol inspected only for drugs and illegal immigration. After the September 11th attack, borderland security has raised its' awareness of possible terrorist access into the nation. This is relevant because El Paso is a main entry point from Mexico into the United States.

Discussion

Quality of life has improved in El Paso from 1990 to 2010 through economic, educational, infrastructural and cultural growth. El Paso transitioned from a manufacturing based economy to a service oriented workforce in the 1990s which impacted overall growth and quality of life. Initiatives and policies introduced in the 2000s, such as quality of life bonds, improved El Paso's infrastructure. The City of El Paso is currently experiencing unprecedented growth mainly through military expansion and medical development.

Conclusions

Analysis of census data from 1990 to 2010 highlighted El Paso's economic disadvantage in comparison to national levels. El Paso's poverty levels increased while average median household income decreased, indicating a negative trend in terms of wealth. Although the unemployment percentage in El Paso declined from 1990 to 2000, the rate returned to previous levels. Despite increased median home values, El Paso experienced less development than national and state improvement. "Growth" is a difficult concept to operationalized and while the community advanced in many critical areas, the community continues to be hindered by low educational attainment and certain economy activity as compared to other geographic areas.

Music events and festivals introduced in El Paso have improved culture and arts in the last 20 years. Music Under the Stars, Alfresco Fridays and Dancing in the City are all music events which contribute to cultural entertainment in El Paso. Cultural festivals such as Fiesta de las Flores and the Greek Festival promote culture from different countries.

In comparison to the United States, El Paso's educational attainment has experienced positive and negative trends. Residents of both El Paso and the nation earned a higher educational attainment from 1990 to 2010. However, the number of high school undergraduates only decreased in the United States while El Paso's 2010 undergraduates surpassed 1990 and 2000 figures.

Quality of Life bonds have had a significant impact in the city of El Paso. The Quality of Life Bond program addressed quality of life issues including arts, zoos, parks, libraries, tourism and historic preservation in the city. These bonds, approved by voters, improved the city through the creation of new highways, parks, libraries and other various projects which affect quality of life.

The two biggest factors impacting El Paso's future economic growth are military and medical development. Incoming Fort Bliss troops and their family members contribute towards the increased population and creation of job opportunities in El Paso. The new medical school will train professionals locally which will retain physicians in the area. Additionally these students will conduct research on diseases, such as diabetes, which affects the health of El Paso's residents. The children's hospital will balance the pediatrician to children ratio and attract new physicians to the area.

NAFTA had a negative and positive impact in El Paso. Businesses and large corporations increased trade with the elimination of taxes and tariffs. A significant fraction of the United States trade with Mexico passed through the El Paso border. NAFTA also caused several manufactory employers to relocate to Mexico and establish maquiladoras, which increased the service industry in El Paso. Although various jobs were lost by relocating companies, an increase in displaced workers occurred as a result of NAFTA. This growth in the service industry was beneficial to El Paso's economic development. The following section offers recommendations to City leaders to address issues regarding factors that affect quality of life.

Recommendations

More music events such as the 2011 Neon Desert Music Festival and "Streetfest" should be introduced in order to promote tourism and business. These events attracted large crowds and culture to El Paso's downtown area and also impacted the economy through increased profits. Music festivals contribute to the city by further advertising both nationally and locally.

El Paso must continue to improve its education, from primary and secondary schools to the university level. The local university has continued to make a motion towards improving the quality of education in the community. Part of this effort has been a push for "Tier 1," a status used by the Texas legislature to designate universities that excel in research efforts. UTEP needs to continue their efforts in order to improve educational attainment throughout the city. Government entities must also do their part to adequately fund public education.

El Paso needs to expand its mass transit systems reach and availability. While recent initiatives have improved Sun Metro to one of the best systems in the country, more programs like BRT should be implemented.

El Paso should provide more opportunities for college graduates, so that professionals are retained in the local work force. Even with improved educational opportunities, many professionals will leave the local workforce to pursue other ventures in cities where there is more opportunity if none is available in the city.

More quality of life bonds should also be introduced in the city in order to accommodate for new growth. With more quality of life bonds, El Paso will be given more facilities and will have laws that improve its citizens' happiness. This, in turn, will improve El Paso's quality of life.

The city should continue to invest in and support local economic drivers, such as the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine and Fort Bliss' expansion. These factors will greatly impact development in the Paso del Norte region.

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