

(Re)vision 2020

Land Use Element



“The butcher and the baker are the new endangered species in Taos.”

- Taos resident

“....we can expect such development which will stretch the ‘shoe string’ type of growth; inconvenient, unattractive, and usually uncontrollable.”

- Town of Taos Comprehensive Plan. 1961

Executive Summary

The terms “smart growth” and “sustainable development” are widely used but rarely defined beyond political rhetoric or “green washing” a construction project. Vision 2020 was a noble attempt to define smart growth and sustainable development, but it fell short of its promises for measureable outcomes and accountability. It has become too easy for developers and engineers to disregard Vision 2020 as “only advisory” or “just a plan.”

Most comprehensive plans don’t go far enough to define what the objectives really are, nor do the maps illustrate a clear direction for future growth. The maps that are often included in a comprehensive plan are ambiguous, using concentric circles and extra-wide lines to specify land uses. The most specific “objective” of a typical comprehensive plan is to “recommend the formation of a steering committee to review the possibility of amending the water conservation requirements of the landscape ordinance.” This objective is simply timid and useless. The plan should state very clearly how, when and why the landscape ordinance should be amended and who should be responsible for doing the work. Another typical objective of a comprehensive plan is to “work cooperatively with the county to ensure affordable housing for the community.” This objective is painfully obvious and equally useless.

The age (1999) and often ambiguous nature of Vision 2020 requires a “revision.” The Vision 2020 document needs to be revised and the community needs to re-vision the future. Most importantly, the Town needs to respond with measurable success and a clear set of goals, policies, and objectives that make developers and local government accountable for development decisions.

(Re)vision 2020 puts the principles of smart growth and sustainable development into practice. It includes detailed maps and specific recommendations for the day to day development decisions that are consistent with the long range vision. It makes the connections between the trends and challenges in the community and the complimentary interventions that are necessary to improve the built environment. It relies on previous studies, adopted plans, sound planning, and public opinion.

Taos did not become a great place by accident. Taos was built with specific design and development requirements. Historical land use patterns were very intentional. The Law of the Indies allocated land uses for the benefit of the entire community. It allocated land uses for residents, food production, waste management, religious ceremony, and transportation.

Similar to the Law of the Indies, the Land Use Element allocates land uses to form a collection of complete and compact neighborhoods. The Land Use Map identifies each neighborhood while the series of goals, policies, and objectives offer clear guidance for future development.

This aerial photo is from 1948. It reveals the traditional development pattern of Taos. Downtown Taos was (and still is) a complete and compact neighborhood. There were schools, churches, parks, plazas, and businesses mixed with a variety of residences. The neighborhood was surrounded by farms and open space, giving it a unique identity. A network of roadways made these amenities accessible while the architecture made it memorable. The Land Use Element of (Re)vision 2020 seeks to replicate this pattern and fulfill our moral obligations to future generations of Taosenos.



Downtown Taos was designed and built as a compact and complete neighborhood. It has a definite center and edge. The development pattern has been lost with recent development. (Re)vision 2020 intends to bring these traditions back to Taos.

Introduction

Taos is a great place. From the top of Wheeler Peak to the center of Taos Plaza, Taos provides all the benefits of the beautiful natural environment and the amenities of a fabulous urban environment. Although many people enjoy the quality of life in Taos, many more people live in poverty while suburban sprawl threatens the rural character, natural resources, and affordability of Taos.

**Taos is a great place because it is loved.
It is loved because it is a great place.**



Many people in Taos are opposed to new development, and with good reason. Recent development contradicts the long-standing design traditions of Taos. New development should not only be consistent with design traditions, but it should provide economic and social benefits while contributing to environmental quality and public health. Comprehensive planning is perhaps the most powerful tool to avoid the consequences of inappropriate development. Conversely, it can preserve rural traditions, protect existing neighborhoods, and enable new communities with dignity and opportunity.

(Re)vision 2020 is a part of a larger effort to replace Vision 2020 as the Town's comprehensive plan. The American Planning Association defines a Comprehensive Plan as "the adopted official statement of local government's legislative body for future development and conservation."¹ A comprehensive plan is typically updated every 5 years with a 20 year horizon. Updates often incorporate new demographics, maps, and an evaluation of new priorities and opportunities. The Vision 2020 Master Plan was adopted in February 1999. It is not only outdated but it is unwieldy. It includes 7 vision statements, 3 land use "scenarios", 32 goals, 120 objectives, 125 policies, and 32 strategies, making it difficult (if not impossible) to evaluate the merits of development proposals against the expectations of Vision 2020. Unlike Vision 2020 which was adopted at one time and as one document, this Comprehensive Plan will be adopted one element at a time, allowing each element to be more specific and focused.

The Land Use Element is the third element to be prepared and adopted by the Town Council. The Housing Element and the Community Economic Development Element were adopted prior to the Land Use Element. These elements are described below:

- **Housing**

This element describes and quantifies the supply and demand for all types of housing (e.g. - special needs, subsidized rental, market rental, entry-level homeownership, and move up homeownership). It also outlines the financial strategies and development opportunities to provide affordable housing to low- and moderate income families. The plan identifies zoning amendments that can support affordable housing. Additionally, a 2010 affordable housing study states, "...the City and County must find new ways to make land with necessary infrastructure available at costs far lower than currently available. This will likely require substantial changes in zoning to allow much higher [sic] density of residential development." – **The Market for Affordable Housing in Taos, New Mexico. 2010. Jeffrey Mitchell, Ph.D. University of New Mexico – Taos & Town of Taos.**

¹ Planning and Urban Design Standards. American Planning Association. John Wiley & Sons. 2006. p. 6.

- **Community Economic Development**

The Town Council approved the Community Economic Development Element on June 14, 2011; however, this Element is incomplete and needs to be fully written and adopted. This element recognized the inseparable relationship between economic development, community development, and land use. It addresses relationship between basic economic development and community development, which focuses on the added social benefits from business activity, such as health care, art and culture, recreation, and affordable housing.

Many of the recommendations reinforce and shape the goals, policies, and objectives of the Land Use Element. For example, the Plan highlights the important relationship between economic development initiatives and the need for natural resources conservation, mitigating traffic congestion, local food production, preserving open space, and developing recreation facilities as fundamental aspects to sustaining a strong economy. In other words, a community that can sustain a high quality of life can attract, grow, and retain profitable and innovative businesses.

The future elements of (Re)vision 2020 will be completed and adopted in the following order.

- **Infrastructure**

The Infrastructure Element will address the necessary improvements and priorities for roadways (including bicycle and pedestrian facilities), water and wastewater systems, storm drainage facilities, and “dry utilities” such as natural gas and electric utilities, communications and data services. It will also define the design standards and level of service standards for new infrastructure development.

- **Natural Resources**

This Element will address the benefits and strategies for preserving and protecting surface and ground water and air quality.



Sprawl threatens the vast natural resources of Taos. Farms and ranches are often converted to residential subdivisions, having harmful and irreversible impacts to soil, water, and wildlife.

- **Parks & Recreation**

The Parks & Recreation Element will include recommendations for the locations and types of trails, parks and playgrounds, and other types of indoor recreation facilities.

- **Community Services**

This Element will identify the needs for police and fire protection facilities as well as priorities for other community services including the library, the Convention Center, recycling, and the landfill.

- **Historic Preservation**

The priorities and strategies for preserving and restoring historic resources will be addressed in this Element, including recommendations for revitalizing the economic activities in downtown. Historic resources include buildings, acequias, rural landscapes, historic districts, archeological resources, and landmarks.



The majority of businesses in Taos depend on tourism. The historic Taos Plaza is certainly the one of the most visited destinations for tourists, but it has lost its appeal to local residents. Revitalizing the downtown will be a high priority in the Historic Preservation Element.



After each Element is adopted, the next phase of (Re)vision 2020 is to extend the scope of each Element to the three mile planning and platting jurisdiction of the Town. **Map #1** identifies the one-mile concurrent zoning authority as well as the three-mile platting and planning jurisdiction.

The Land Use Element is “comprehensive” because it applies to all land within the Town boundaries. It also recognizes the jurisdictions over land use and development at all levels of government. It is considered comprehensive because the development decisions (including the decision to prevent development) impact the quality of life for everyone in the community. Furthermore, it is “comprehensive” because it represents the values and expectations from the entire community as they are articulated in the vision statements, goals, policies, and objectives.

Since Vision 2020 was adopted, the Town has completed several studies and plans that should be incorporated into the appropriate element(s) of (Re)vision 2020. These include:

- the EPA Study for the Paseo del Pueblo Sur Corridor,
- the SmartCode Charrette Report,
- the Regional Water Plan and the 40-year Water Plan,
- the annual Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plans,
- the Bicycle Master Plan and Safe Routes to School Action Plans,
- the Taos County Climate Adaptation Plan,
- the Traditional Neighborhood Development District Infrastructure Standards Manual,
- the National Endowment of the Arts Resource Team Report and Our Town Charrette for the Arts & Culture District.

Many of the growth challenges facing Taos can only be solved with the full cooperation of all levels of government. The Taos County Comprehensive Plan and the Phase I & II Growth Management Plan should also be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan, particularly when the scope of the Comprehensive Plan is extended to the three mile planning and platting jurisdiction. Plans from the New Mexico Department of Transportation, Taos Pueblo, the University of New Mexico, and utility providers should also be incorporated.

The Town may adopt plans that address specific topics or are specific to an area of town. The Town adopted a Bicycle Facilities Master Plan and a neighborhood plan for Chamisa Verde, for example, and should consider adopting other master plans that complement (Re)vision 2020. Topics may include acequia restoration, climate adaptation, arts and culture, hazard mitigation and emergency evacuation, food security, renewable energy, and downtown parking.

The Land Use Element was created with extensive public input and feedback. The Town presented the draft to several agencies of local and state government, community organizations, businesses, and individuals. The Land Use Element was formally approved by the Town of Taos Planning & Zoning Commission and the Town Council. The following organizations and individuals provided helpful feedback on previous drafts.

- Taos Housing Corporation
- Taos County Chamber of Commerce – Economic Development Committee
- Taos Friends United
- Foothills Neighborhood Association
- Taos County Association of Realtors
- Taos Pueblo
- New Mexico Department of Transportation

- New Mexico Environment Department
- Carson National Forest
- Bureau of Land Management
- Taos County Planning Department
- The Taos Project
- Taos Native Plant Society

The following organizations participated in the Community Preference Survey:

- Taos Entrepreneur Network
- Taos Tourism Council
- Taos Library Staff
- Thrive Taos
- Taos Middle School Students
- Vista Grande High School Students
- Planning & Zoning Commission (and attendees)
- Taos County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
- Town of Taos Staff
- Taos Native Plant Society

The Town thanks all those individuals and agencies that assisted in the creation of the Land Use Element. Special thanks and gratitude to the members of the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission who volunteer their time and expertise to the community.

Purposes

The primary purpose of the Land Use Element of (Re)vision 2020 is to establish the goals, policies, and objectives for managing the physical development of the community. The Town Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, and the staff of the Planning, Zoning & Building Department will reference the plan when making decisions regarding specific development projects and programs. They will also use it as a guide to revising the Land Use Development Code and the official zoning map, enabling the Town to comply with state statute 3-21-5 that requires a municipal zoning authority's regulations and restrictions to be "in accordance with" the comprehensive plan. The public can use the plan to help shape land use and development policy and keep the Town accountable for development and zoning decisions. The plan is a communication tool for the Town Council and the public that helps everyone understand alternative approaches to land development, natural resources conservation, and growth management.

In his book *The Urban General Plan*, T.J. Kent outlines the fundamental purposes of a Comprehensive Plan:

1. To improve the physical environment of the community as a setting for human activities – to make it more functional, beautiful, decent, healthful, interesting, and efficient
2. To promote the public interest, the interest of the community at large, rather than the interests of individuals or special groups within the community.
3. To facilitate the democratic determination and implementation of community policies on physical development.
4. To effect political and technical coordination in community development.
5. To inject long-range considerations into the determination of short-range actions.
6. To bring professional and technical knowledge to bear on the making of political decisions concerning the physical development of the community.

"One of the most important and practical purposes of a comprehensive plan is to give guidance to the specific land use regulations adopted by the local government. Such regulations include:

1. zoning ordinance
2. official zoning map
3. subdivision regulations, and
4. growth management tools"

- **Steve Burstein, ACIP. Comprehensive Plan Template. Undated.**

Regional Setting

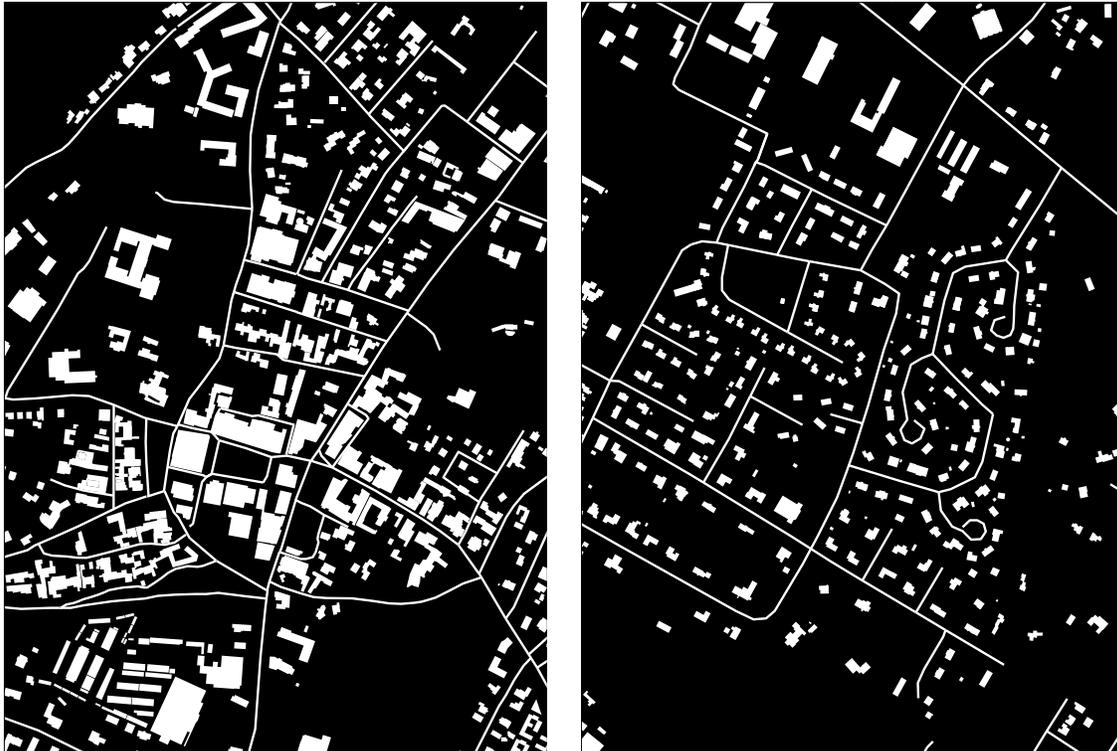
The Town of Taos is a growing rural community. Despite the small size, Taos offers amenities not found in similar communities. The Taos region includes an exceptional urban mixed-use atmosphere, such as Taos Plaza and the historic districts, as well as pristine natural environments such as the Rio Grande Gorge and the Carson National Forest. The **Vicinity Map (Map #2)** shows the location of the Town in relation to surrounding communities, public lands, and natural resources.

The Town of Taos was incorporated in 1934 following a devastating fire in Taos Plaza. The Town originally incorporated a total of 588 acres. Since then, the Town boundaries have expanded 93 times. The Town is now more than 3560 acres, with 19 more annexations proposed in 2012. The physical expansion of development has encroached into the greenbelt, a ring of forest and irrigated agriculture land that surrounds the Town.

The trend of recent development (i.e. – sprawl) creates animosity toward new development. The animosity is understandable. New development often leads to increased traffic congestion, spoiled views, and lost opportunities for providing alternative transportation, recreation, or other types of neighborhood amenities.

“The Town is surrounded by small, mostly unincorporated, traditional communities, including Ranchos de Taos, Talpa, Llano Quemado, Los Cordovas, and Cordillera to the south; Upper and Lower Ranchitos to the west; Cañon to the east; and El Prado to the north. Most of these communities are not outgrowths of the Town of Taos, but were settled as land grant villages during the Spanish Colonial period. Since then, commercial and residential development has connected them to the Town, yet these communities take pride in their individual identities apart from each other and the Town of Taos. Residents in these areas travel into the Town of Taos for shopping and services, but still find many of their daily needs met in nearby community centers and plazas, where schools, churches, gasoline stations, and small convenience and grocery stores exist. The areas between the urban parts of the Town and these smaller communities contain mostly farms and ranches, yet agricultural and grazing uses are diminishing in the face of ever increasing development pressure.” - **Town of Taos Vision 2020 Master Plan. page 30.**

Development does not have to be all bad, however. What makes the difference between the type of development we fight and the type of development we embrace is often a matter of design. Design is more than architecture, however. There are many examples of appropriate architecture in Taos, but the overall design often makes the difference. To illustrate the differences, the following diagrams show the contrast between a traditional development patterns versus a conventional development pattern.



The traditional development pattern on the left is an image of downtown Taos. It illustrates good urban design and a development pattern based on the Laws of the Indies, the document of laws prescribed to new land grant communities by the king of Spain in the seventeenth century. The Law of the Indies outlined the standards for developing new urban lots as compact, centered, and defensible spaces that preserved farm lands and water resources. The image shows the location of the plaza in the center of the neighborhood, the small size of each block, the network of streets, and the transition from high density development in the center toward lower density development leading into open space and irrigated agricultural lands. The image on the right shows a conventional development in Taos. It illustrates a series of disconnected residential subdivisions, dead end roads, and uniform density throughout the neighborhood. The

development pattern of the right consumes land, requires driving almost everywhere, and offers few amenities to the neighborhood.

The setting of the Town of Taos region is generally characterized by the following:

- large amount of federal land,
- thirty percent of land within the town limit is undeveloped,
- rivers and acequias provide surface water to irrigated agricultural lands,
- conventional development erodes the traditional character and appeal of Taos,
- sprawl threatens rural landscapes and the environmental integrity of the green belt,
- world class tourism and recreation amenities in close proximity to the Town (e.g. – Taos Pueblo, Taos Ski Valley)

Taos is located in a beautiful setting, but the impacts of sprawl threaten the beauty and livability of Taos.

The 2010 Taos County Community Health Profile describes Taos as follows:

Taos County has a history of geographic isolation. The conditions created by this isolation have inspired the development of a multi-textured, resilient and creative community, as well as produced specific challenges for area residents. The layered influences of decades of colonization and integration have also presented particular challenges to the residents of Taos County. While Taoseños are proud of the tri-cultural character and colorful history of their community, the high rate of immigration into the community by a relatively wealthy and older population has resulted in the creation of distinct subcultures that are less integrated into the traditional cultures of Taos. As a result it has been said that there are “two Taoses” – one that is enjoyed by an affluent population that takes advantage of a lifestyle that includes luxury residences, expensive restaurants, skiing, a golf course, and, a wide variety of cultural and artistic events; and, one in which over 17% live in poverty, over 30% do not have health insurance and the median income is “significantly worse” than the state average.” - **Taos C.A.R.E.S Health Council. page 13.**

Legal Framework

State statutes, state case law, and the Town's Land Use Development Code provide a legal framework for the scope of the Land Use Element.

Planning – State statute §3-19-9 requires the Town of Taos planning commission to “prepare and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality and the area within the planning and platting jurisdiction of the municipality, which in the planning commission’s judgment bears a relationship to the planning of the municipality.” Although the Town is preparing a “Comprehensive Plan,” the terms “master plan” and “comprehensive plan” are interchangeable. Therefore, the Comprehensive Plan (titled “(Re)vision 2020) and the associated elements will satisfy this legal requirement.

The 2002 New Mexico Court of Appeals case of West Bluff Neighborhood Association v. City of Albuquerque further defines the legal framework of land use planning, assigning the role of a comprehensive plan as “advisory” versus mandatory. The case states that “Legislature has assigned to master plan for physical development of municipality the role of guide, enabling municipal planning commissions to use reasonable discretion in applying master plan’s provisions to actual decision-making processes involved in municipal development.” In other words, it is up to the local planning commission and/or elected officials to determine if a specific development project is consistent with the comprehensive plan; however, statute 3-21-5 states that a municipal zoning authority’s regulations and restrictions to be “in accordance with” the comprehensive plan. Therefore, the Land Use Element includes specific recommendations to update the Land Use Development Code to make the Town’s development regulations and restrictions “in accordance with” the goals and policies of the Land Use Element.

Platting & Subdivisions – Platting is synonymous with subdivision. Subdividing is the act of legally dividing land into two or more parcels for the purpose of selling the individual parcels. Although state statutes require the Town to have “platting” jurisdiction, subdivisions and zoning work hand in hand. Consequently, it is difficult for the Town to approve a subdivision within the three mile planning and platting jurisdiction without the development standards and permitted uses that are included in a typical zoning ordinance. Furthermore, the

statute does not distinguish between residential or commercial subdivisions.

The most reasonable method for synchronizing subdivision standards within three miles of the Town boundary is for the Town and the County to agree to the zoning districts, development standards, and the administration of subdivision proposals.

Zoning – As mentioned above, state statute §3-21-5 requires regulations and restrictions (e.g. – zoning) be in accordance with a “comprehensive plan.” The statute §3-21-5 provides for concurrent zoning authority within one mile of the Town boundary; however, the Town and County do not have the same zoning districts. As with subdivisions, the most reasonable method for coordinating zoning within one mile and three miles of the Town is for the Town and the County to agree to the zoning districts, development standards, and administration of development proposals.

Planners and lawyers across New Mexico agree that the state statutes must be amended to clarify the relative responsibilities between a municipality and a county with regard to planning, subdivisions, and zoning. Regardless of the current or future status of state statutes, development in the County affects the Town and vice versa. Taos Pueblo, federal land and land grant communities are also affected by development within the Town. In the interest of land use planning, coordinating infrastructure investments, and providing equitable, coordinated development across the region, **Table 1** outlines the possible division of responsibilities for planning, subdivision, zoning, and even building permits within the Town limit, the one-mile concurrent zoning jurisdiction, the three mile planning and platting jurisdiction, and the County.

Annexation – State statutes outline three methods for the annexation of land by a municipality. These are:

- The Arbitration Method, Sections 3-7-5 through 3-7-10 NMSA 1978, allows the municipalities to annex contiguous territory if the municipal government can declare that the benefits of annexation be made within a reasonable time frame to the desired territory.
- The Municipal Boundary Commission, Sections 3-7-11 through 3-7-16 NMSA 1978, establishes an independent commission to determine annexation of a territory to the municipality. The commission will meet whenever a municipality petitions to annex

territory or a majority of the landowners of a territory petition the commission to annex the territory into the municipality. The municipality or property owners can petition the Commission to annex a territory into the Town.

- The Petition Method, Section 3-7-17, NMSA 1978, requires a petition signed by the majority of property owners by acreage in a contiguous territory supporting annexation into a municipality.

The Town is pursuing annexation of 19 areas adjacent to the Town boundary where the Town will pursue annexation according to the Municipal Boundary Commission method. Not only would these annexations clean up the Town's boundaries, but they would clarify property tax rates, zoning, 911- addressing, police jurisdiction, and potential expansions to water and sewer utilities.

Navigating state statutes as a framework for land use planning is a challenge. Many statutes are unclear, ignored, or without precedent, but the political challenges to land use planning are perhaps more challenging. Regardless of what state statute allows or does not allow, the Town and the County should coordinate land use planning, subdivision standards, and annexations with the overall intention of managing growth, protecting property values and natural resources, and providing efficient public services.

The Town of Taos Land Use Development Code (LUDC) – The LUDC provides additional legal framework for land use and development decisions. The LUDC requires the Planning & Zoning Commission “To approve, disapprove, modify, revise and update, as required, the Town of Taos master plan for the town.” However, a “master plan” (often synonymous with “comprehensive plan”) contains public policy, and because only the Town Council can approve public policy, all of the elements of (Re)vision 2020 will be approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Town Council.

The LUDC gives the authority to the Planning & Zoning Commission to implement the Town Council's land use policies through subdivision approvals as well as the authority to review and recommend to the Town Council a wide variety of zoning decisions. The LUDC requires that any change to the LUDC must be consistent with “the direction and intent of the existing town of Taos master plan.”

Table 1.

Table 1 outlines the possible responsibilities of the Town and the County with regard to planning, subdivision and development review, zoning, and building permits.

	Adoption	Planning	Subdivision Standards & Development Review	Zoning Districts	Building Permits
Town Limit	The Town will adopt the Land Use Element by resolution. The Town will adopt an ordinance requiring zoning decisions to be consistent with the Land Use Element. State Statute 3-19-10 requires the Town to adopt the Comprehensive Plan during a public hearing.	The Town will work closely with Taos County, Taos Pueblo, federal agencies, community organizations, and citizens in updating the Land Use Element. The Town is responsible for writing the Land Use Element and facilitating the public review and approval process.	The Town will be responsible for administering subdivision applications according to the Town's subdivision standards.	The Town will be responsible for designating zoning districts within the Town limit.	The Town is responsible for reviewing and approving building permit applications and issuing a certificate of occupancy within the Town limit.
Within One Mile of the Town Limit	The Town and County will adopt the Land Use Element by joint resolution. The agreements regarding the relative responsibilities for planning, platting/subdivisions, zoning, and building permits will be approved by a Joint Powers Agreement between the Town Council and the County Commission.	The Town will work closely Taos County, Taos Pueblo, federal agencies, community organizations, and citizens in updating the Land Use Element. The Town is primarily responsible for developing the Land Use Element and facilitating the public review and approval process. The Town will incorporate the Taos County Comprehensive Plan and the Taos County Growth Management Plan PHASE I: Future Land Use.	The Town will be responsible for administering subdivision applications. Because the Town and County apply different subdivision standards, the Town will apply the more restrictive regulations when reviewing applications. The Town will provide the County with staff reports and the record of decision with regard to subdivision applications for the Taos County Planning to Director's concurrence and signature on the plat. Appeals would be made to the Town Council.	The Town will be responsible for designating zoning districts. According to state statute, these zoning districts must in accordance with the "comprehensive plan." The Taos County Growth Management Plan PHASE II: Implementation includes zoning districts for individual neighborhoods. The neighborhoods that have developed a Growth Management Plan (e.g. – zoning) include Canon, Las Colonias / West Mesa, and Ranchos de Taos. The Talpa and Chamisa neighborhoods are located within one mile of the Town limit but have not completed a plan.	The Town will review building plans against the development standards of the applicable zoning district (e.g. – setbacks, building height, parking, etc.) within one mile of the Town limit. The County will be responsible for reviewing and approving building plans according to building codes and will be responsible for inspections and issuing a certificate of occupancy.
Between One Mile and Three Miles of the Town Limit	The Town and County will adopt the Land Use Element by joint resolution. The agreement regarding the relative responsibilities for planning, platting/subdivisions, zoning, and building permits will be approved by a Memorandum of Understanding between the Town Council and the County Commission.	The Town will work closely with local and tribal governments, community organizations, and citizens in updating the Land Use Element. The Town is primarily responsible for developing the Land Use Element and facilitating the public review and approval process. The Town will incorporate the Taos County Comprehensive Plan and the Taos County Growth Management Plan PHASE I: Future Land Use.	Taos County will be responsible for administering subdivision applications. Because the Town and County apply different subdivision standards, the County will apply the more restrictive regulations when reviewing applications. The County will provide the Town with staff reports and the record of decision with regard to subdivision applications for the Town's Planning to Director's concurrence and signature on the plat. Appeals would be made to the County Commission.	Taos County will be responsible for designating zoning districts. According to state statute, these zoning districts must in accordance with the County's Comprehensive Plan. Taos County prepared the Growth Management Plan, PHASE II: Implementation. The Growth Management Plan includes the neighborhoods of Canon, Las Colonias West Mesa, Ranchos de Taos The Talpa, Chamisa, Upper Las Colonias, Vista Linda, and the Lower Rio Pueblo neighborhoods.	Taos County will be responsible for reviewing building permit applications, inspections and issuing a certificate of occupancy.

Beyond Three Miles of the Town Limit (Taos County)	Taos County is responsible for planning. Taos County adopted a Comprehensive Plan by Resolution #2004-69 on October 4, 2004. Taos County also adopted the Growth Management Plan Phase I: Future Land Use by Resolution 2007-04 on March 2007.	Taos County is responsible for planning. Taos County adopted a Comprehensive Plan by Resolution #2004-69 on October 4, 2004. Taos County also adopted the Growth Management Plan Phase I: Future Land Use by Resolution 2007-04 in March 2007.	Taos County will be responsible for the development standards for subdivisions and administering subdivision applications.	Taos County is responsible for designating zoning districts. According to state statute, these zoning districts must be in accordance with the County's Comprehensive Plan.	Taos County will be responsible for reviewing building permit applications, inspections and issuing a certificate of occupancy.
Taos Pueblo	Taos Pueblo is a sovereign nation and is not required to adopt the Land Use Element.	The Town will work cooperatively with Taos Pueblo in developing and updating the Land Use Element.	Taos Pueblo is a sovereign nation and responsible for all development activity within Taos Pueblo.	Taos Pueblo is a sovereign nation and is responsible for all development activity within Taos Pueblo.	Taos Pueblo is a sovereign nation and is responsible for all development activity within Taos Pueblo.
Federal Land	The Federal government is not required to adopt the Land Use Element.	The Town will work cooperatively with the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service in developing and updating the Land Use Element.	Each federal government agency is responsible for all development activity for federal lands.	Each federal government agency is responsible for all development activity for federal lands. Development is subject to applicable federal laws.	Each federal government agency is responsible for all development activity for federal lands.
Land Grants	Land grant communities are not required to adopt the Land Use Element.	The Town will work cooperatively with land grant communities in developing and updating the Land Use Element.	Taos County will be responsible for the development standards for subdivisions and administering subdivision applications.	Land grant communities are responsible for zoning within the commonly owned land within the land grant.	

If only a portion of a parcel falls within the one mile or three mile border, the parcel will be treated as if the entire parcel falls within the border. This should avoid unnecessary confusion regarding the proper jurisdiction for planning, platting / subdivision approval, zoning, building permits. The JPA would need to address the applicability of the state exemptions for family lot splits and other subdivision exemptions.

An alternative to a Joint Powers Agreement is for the Town Council and the Taos County Board of Commissioners to approve an Extra-Territorial Zone (ETZ). An ETZ may prove to be more efficient. To avoid the inefficiencies and confusion of the previous ETZ, the effective management of a new ETZ would require a map that clearly defines the ETZ boundaries (by parcel), designated zoning classifications, and development standards. The Town would be completely responsible for land use planning, zoning, subdivisions, building permits, and code enforcement within the ETZ boundary. The County's existing neighborhood overlay zones and neighborhood plans would be incorporated into the ETZ.

Trends & Challenges

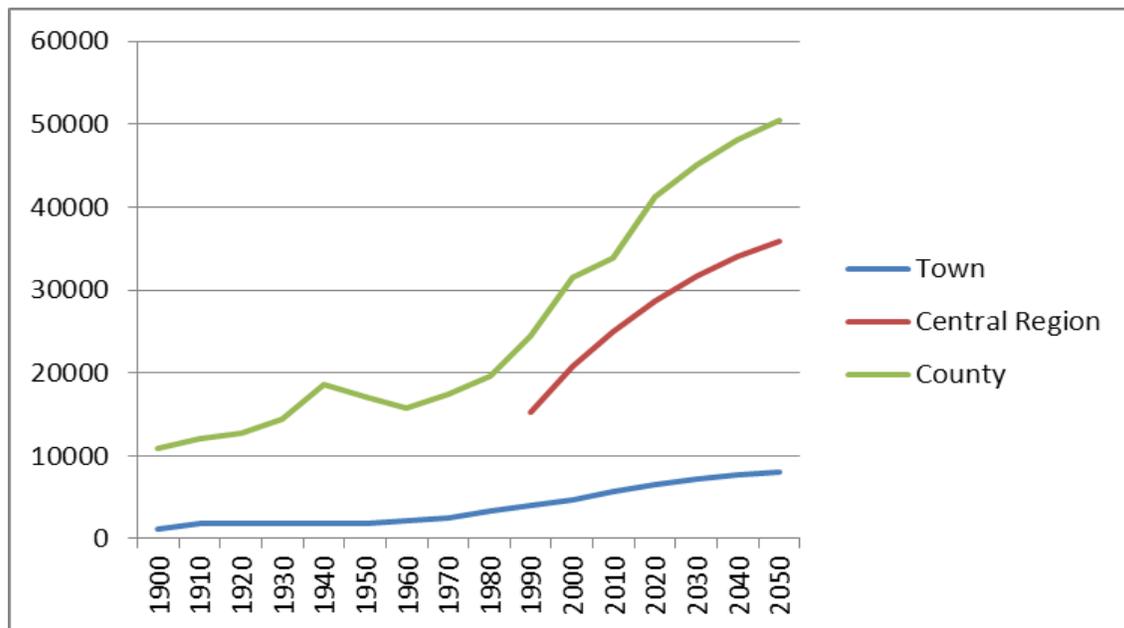
Trends in the community present many challenges as well as opportunities. The trends and challenges that impact land use and the built environment are outlined and described below. These trends and challenges are used to shape the goals, policies, and objectives.

- **The population will increase dramatically.**

This trend is not remarkable. Many communities will experience population growth in the next decades. What is remarkable about this trend is the steep rate of growth projected for Taos and Taos County. The challenge for the Town is to anticipate the needs and provide quality community services.

While some communities have actually lost population, Taos has seen a steady increase in population for many decades. Population projections for the Town of Taos, Taos County, and the Central Region reveal steep increases over the next 40 years. **Chart #1** shows the population projections for the Town of Taos, Taos County, and the Central Region of Taos County.

Chart #1. Population projections.



The estimate for the Town of Taos population in 2050 is 8,093. Taos County is projected to be 50,546 by 2050. The Taos County Growth Management Plan: Phase I Future Land Use estimates the total population of Taos County Central Sub-Region, which includes the Town of Taos, Arroyo Seco, Taos Pueblo, Taos Ski Valley, Arroyo Hondo, Ranchos de Taos, and El Prado, will increase to a total population 35,909 by 2050. The Central Sub-Region represented over 70 percent of the total population in Taos County in 2009.

Table #2 outlines the population data by decade for the Town of Taos, The Central Sub-Region, and Taos County.

Table #2. Population data.

YEAR	Town	Central Region	County
1900	1225		10889
1910	1830		12008
1920	1832		12773
1930	1847		14394
1940	1864		18528
1950	1815		17146
1960	2163		15784
1970	2475		17516
1980	3369		19546
1990	4065	15227	24487
2000	4700	20834	31484
2010	5716	25016	33879
2020	6468	28665	41208
2030	7145	31667	45070
2040	7669	34015	48087
2050	8093	35909	50546

In releasing population estimates, the Census Bureau said New Mexico will rank 4th in the nation in 2030 in the percentage of population 65 and over (26.4 percent). Only Florida - at 27.1 percent - and Maine and Wyoming, at 26.5 percent, will have a larger segment of elderly residents. In 2000, people 65 and over accounted for 11.7 percent of New Mexico's population and those under 18 represented 28 percent. In 2010, 14.1 percent of the population will be 65 and over and that will grow to 26.4 percent - totaling 555,184 - in 2030.

One limit to the population growth is the availability of jobs in urban areas. Many locals are likely to move out of Taos in search of employment in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Denver, or Phoenix. The exodus of locals could be detrimental to the living cultures of Taos.

“Although Taos enjoys an abundance of community assets, not all are enjoyed equally by Taos County residents and so this description would not be complete without discussing the effects of gentrification. Gentrification is a general term for the arrival of wealthier people in an existing modest or low income area that results in a related increase in rents and property values, and changes in the community’s character and culture. The social, economic, and physical impacts of gentrification are often exacerbated by differences in race, class, and culture. Earlier residents may feel embattled, ignored, and excluded from their own communities. New arrivals are often mystified by accusations that their very arrival in the area and/or efforts to improve local conditions are perceived as hostile or even racist. In Taos, the influx of artists and wealthier transplants have resulted in a community filled with art galleries, cultural events and a myriad of leisure opportunities as well as upscale residential developments. Unfortunately, the benefits of these changes are often enjoyed disproportionately by the new arrivals, while the established residents find themselves economically and socially marginalized. In particular, the following types of changes have occurred in Taos:

Demographics: An increase in median income, a decline in the proportion of racial minorities, and an increase in the proportion of older residents.

Real Estate Markets: Large increases in rents and home prices and a change in land use from agricultural to commercial and luxury residential development.

Culture and Character: New ideas about what is desirable and attractive, including standards (either informal or legal) for architecture, landscaping, public behavior, noise, and nuisance. In addition, cultural values and traditions are resulting in loss, frustration and displacement.”

- TAOS COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH PROFILE. FY 2009. Taos C.A.R.E.S. Health Council C.A.R.E.S. = Community Action Resource Enhancement Strategies. www.taoscares.com. p. 42.

- **Undeveloped land cannot accommodate the projected growth.**

This is also not a remarkable trend. People require land for living, commerce, transportation, and recreation. As the population grows so will the demand for developed land.

The current Town boundaries encompass 3,563 acres. And with a total population of 5,716 in 2010, the average resident takes up .62 acres of land. With a population projection of 8,093 by 2050, the Town will need to be 5,011 acres to accommodate the population growth. At the current rate, the Town will need to annex at least 1,417 acres of land into the Town boundaries at the current density.

At the current allowable residential density of the Town's existing zoning, there is enough undeveloped land to build between 3,198 and 1,919 additional homes. There is enough undeveloped commercially zoned land to build between 24.7 million and 14.8 million additional square feet of commercial buildings and between 1.2 million and 2.0 million square feet of mixed use buildings. Although the Town can accommodate a considerable amount of new development, the Town will eventually run out of developable land, leaving no choice but to increase the allowable densities or annex adjacent property.

Map #4 identifies the undeveloped parcels within Town boundaries. Undeveloped land with available infrastructure should be the focus of new development.

- **The Town's infrastructure budget deficit will increase.**

Every year the Town Council adopts the Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan (ICIP). The ICIP is a "wish list" of un-funded infrastructure projects for a five year period. The average ICIP budget between 2007 and 2012 was \$76,793,789. The types of projects included in the ICIP range from new roadways, replacing old water and sewer lines to parks, trails, vehicles, buildings, and computers. The ICIP shows the clear deficit between the infrastructure needs and the Town's ability to afford the necessary infrastructure improvements.

Continuing the pattern of low-density development and investing in infrastructure along the fringe of Town will increase the budget deficit and lead to greater system inefficiencies, particularly with water and sewer systems.

“Low-density, dispersed development requires longer pipes, which lose more water through leakage and raise transmission costs. Infrastructure investments that support water system expansion over upgrading and maintenance of existing networks can lead to increasingly inefficient systems, greater waste, and higher capital and operating costs.” **Growing Towards More Efficient Water Use: Linking Development, Infrastructure, and Drinking Water Policies. US Environmental Protection Agency. page 3.**

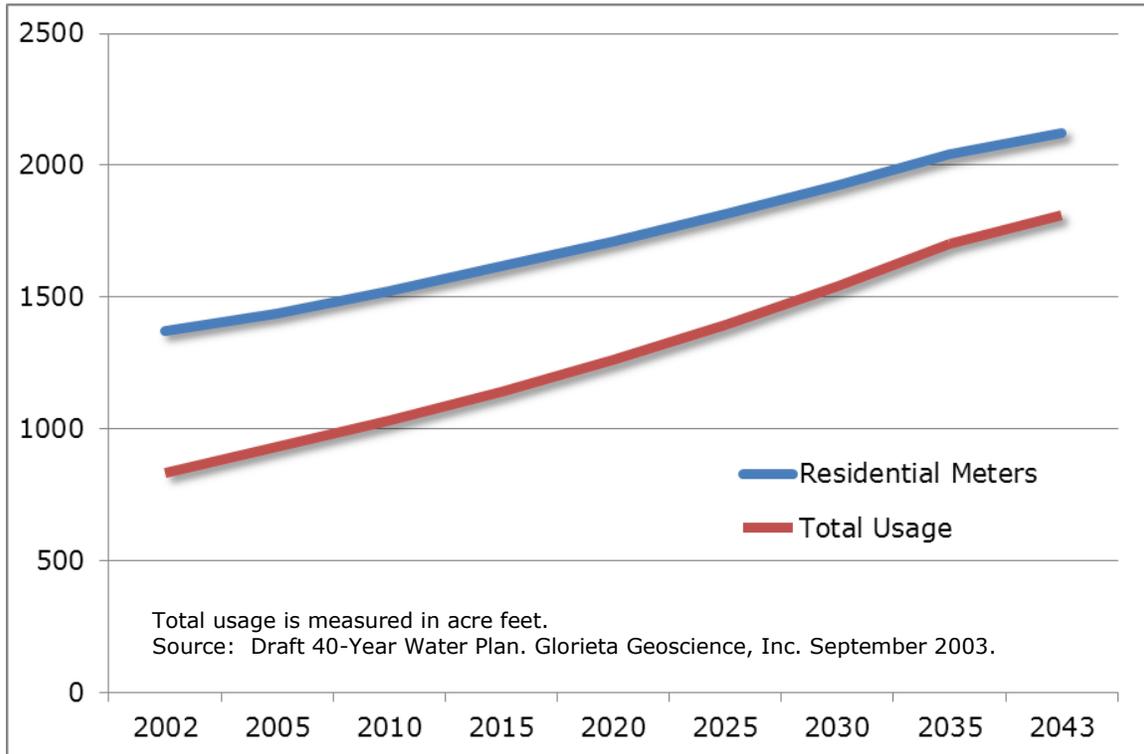
- **Threats to water resources will increase.**

There is a strong consensus that development should not harm water resources. However, there are several threats to the Town’s water resources. Considering the impacts of drought and the projected population increases, it has never been more important than now to secure a sustainable water supply and protect water from unnecessary pollution. Unfortunately, the individuals and agencies that make decisions about land use are not always the same as those making decisions about water resources. Land use is primarily a function of local government while water regulations and allocations are decided among acequia associations, local, state, federal, and tribal governments as well as individuals, developers, mutual domestic water associations, and a variety of environmental organizations.

Development decisions need to be made with a full understanding of the impacts to water quality and quantity, including ground water and surface water. Increases in demand for water puts tremendous pressure on elected officials and water management agencies to resolve water adjudications and seek additional water rights, increasing the legal and political costs of water management.

There can be no doubt that the demand for water will increase as the population increases. **Chart #2** shows the projections for water use and the estimated number of residential meters that will be added to the Town’s water delivery system.

Chart #2. Water demand.



Other threats to water resources in Taos are:

- sprawl will increase construction costs and energy costs and political pressure to develop more, deeper water wells and transport water over greater distances that service fewer residences and businesses,
- increases in water pollution and erosion from storm runoff from roads, driveways, parking lots, and irrigated agriculture.
- decreases in water quality due to proliferation of septic tanks,
- changing patterns in the location, timing, and intensity of rain and snowfall represent threats to water quality and quantity,
- the City of Albuquerque and the City of Santa Fe have water deficits.

According to the draft of the 2011 Town of Taos 40-Year Water Plan prepared by Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, "the overall water quality near Taos is acceptable." However, the 40-Year Water Plan also

highlights the fact that non-point source pollution, including leaking underground storage tanks, septic tanks, and “urbanization” are threats to water resources. The Plan further states, “Collectively, septic tanks and other on-site domestic wastewater disposal systems constitute the single largest known source of groundwater contamination in New Mexico.” - **2011 Town of Taos draft 40-Year Water Plan. Daniel B. Stephens & Associates. page 22.**

In terms of the Town’s available water rights, the draft 40-year Water Plan states, “The Town needs to transfer water rights to address offset requirements associated with several of its current permits.” Offsets require that the Town’s pumping of ground water does not impact surface water. The Plan includes the following estimates of water demand:

- 2011 Water Demand = 950 acre feet / year
- 2020 Water Demand = 1,100 to 1,200 acre feet / year
- 2050 Water Demand = 1,300 to 1,800 acre feet / year

The Town’s current permitted consumptive use water right is 1,464 acre feet per year. Therefore, based on the demand estimates, the Town will need to acquire additional water rights before 2050. Considering the political and legal obstacles to transferring water rights, conservation will be more critical and useful as a strategy for protecting water resources and ensuring an adequate water supply to meet the estimated demand.

- **Traffic congestion will increase.**



Many possible solutions to Taos’ traffic congestion problems have been proposed, including a relief route circumventing the Town, allowing regional traffic to “by-pass” the Town and move on to their ultimate destination. Although a relief route would alleviate

some traffic congestion on Paseo del Pueblo Sur, the Town must use multiple strategies to reduce traffic congestion. Taos cannot build itself out of traffic problems. In reality, widening roads only temporarily reduces congestion. New road capacity increases the use of the road. Property values along the road increase, attracting more development and traffic.

Although there are many practical reasons for driving (e.g. – weather, disability, small children, and time constraints), there are a number of reasons why most people are forced to always drive everywhere. The separation of land uses and the lack of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure make it safer and more comfortable to drive than to walk or ride a bike. Nationwide, people are driving much more than ever. “The number of vehicle miles travelled by light-duty motor vehicles (passenger cars and light-duty trucks) increased 40 percent from 1990 to 2007, as a result of a confluence of factors including population growth, economic growth, urban sprawl, and low fuel prices over much of this period.” - **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Inventory of US Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks. 1990-1007. USEPA Report 430-R-09-004.**

“As the population of the Town and surrounding communities has grown, traffic volumes have increased significantly. Levels of service for key roadway segments and intersections throughout the existing road network have decreased, especially during the past five years, due to the limited capacity and lack of connectivity of the primary arterials.” **Taos Congestion Relief Study. Phase 1B Report. DETAILED EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES. Gannett Flemming West. 2002. p. 8.**

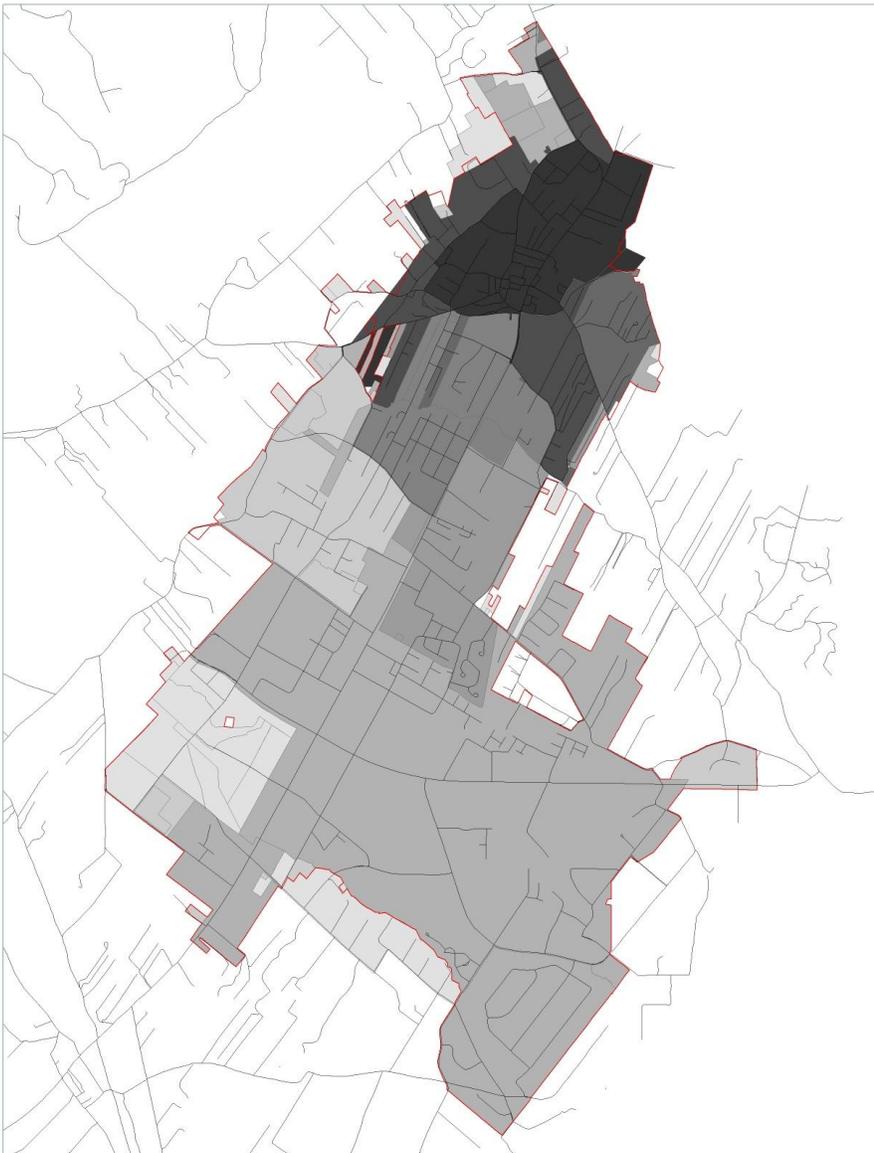


Another trend contributing to traffic congestion (and poor public health) is occurring every day at the schools. Enos Garcia Elementary, Taos Middle School, and the Taos Charter School all participated in the Safe Routes to School (SR2S) program in 2010. One part of the SR2S program is to conduct a tally of the students to determine their mode of transportation to and from school. The tally showed that a vast majority of students either drive or take the bus to and from school. The tally also revealed that most students live a considerable distance from school, making walking or biking more difficult. Safety factors such as traffic speed, traffic volume, and the lack of safe street crossings were frequently mentioned by parents as barriers for not allowing their children to walk/bike to/from school.

These trends must be reversed if Taos is to maintain a respectable quality of life, protect land, water, and air resources, promote public health, and contain infrastructure expenses. Although most of the specific strategies and recommendations for resolving traffic congestion will be included in the Infrastructure Element of (Re)vision 2020, the trends can be largely resolved with comprehensive land use planning.

- **Current development patterns are unsustainable.**

Land development results in permanent impacts to the natural environment, including air and water resources. The low density development across our landscape damages wildlife habitat, diminishes public health, and erodes the unique character of Taos. Traditional communities such as Ranchos de Taos and Canon have been losing their rural character due to suburban sprawl. The environmental, human health and aesthetic impacts will worsen if new development occurs in the same pattern.



Map #6 shows the growth of the town boundaries. The darkest polygon shows the Town boundaries when it was originally incorporated in 1934, then the slightly darker polygons show the growth of the Town borders in ten year increments.

The amount of undeveloped land gives us an unprecedented opportunity to re-vision the way Taos develops.

**Map #6.
Historical Growth
of Town
Boundaries.**

Brookings Institution National Research:

- Residential and commercial development in the next 25 years will eclipse anything seen in previous generations as the nation moves to accommodate rapid population growth,
 - About half the homes, office buildings, stores and factories that will be needed by 2030 don't exist today,
 - "To serve that population, almost 60 million housing units will have to be built. About 20 million of these units will replace destroyed or aging homes. In addition, half of the largest metropolitan areas will have to add as much or more commercial and industrial space as existed in 2000. Phenomenal growth in the South and West has turned deserts and soybean fields into cities. These Regions, which face water limitations, will experience the greatest surge in construction in the next 25 years. If development patterns don't change, subdivisions will continue to sprout on farmland farther from metropolitan areas, requiring more roads and sewer lines."
 - The U.S. will need 59 million new housing units by 2030, 2.2 million per year,
 - "For generations, Americans favored single-family homes on larger lots. Development spread to where land was cheaper but within commuting distance to jobs. Communities must decide whether they want to develop policies consistent with those preferences or constrain them. There are signs that people want more choices. Frustration with long commutes is mounting. Downtown housing is enjoying a revival. Even suburbs are creating city-styled town centers that combine stores, offices, condos and townhouses in a walkable environment. But change is coming slowly and we are going to wind up with anywhere between 60% to 70% of development occurring where it always occurred since WWII...on the outer edge."
- **Arthur C. Nelson, Toward a New Metropolis: The Opportunity to Rebuild America, Brookings Institution, Washington, DC. 2004.**

"With the population of near 6,500 over the Taos market area including the Pueblo, projected for about 1980 we can expect such developments which will stretch the 'shoe string' type of growth; inconvenient, unattractive, and usually uncontrollable." - **Town of Taos Comprehensive Plan. Franke & Cornell. 1961.**

"If the Town allows generic development types along its main entrance into the historic core, the classic qualities that have made Taos a destination for artists, intellectuals, and seekers, as well as a very special place for its historic families, will be diminished. Over time, this could have a significant negative impact on the town's core industry, tourism, as well as detracting from the qualities that have made Taos so special over the centuries." - **Taos Smart Growth Implementation Assistance: Concepts for the Paseo del Pueblo Sur Corridor. US Environmental Protection Agency & ICF Consulting. 2006. p. 10.**

The visual blight of recent development is another trend that must be corrected. Outside of a few zoning districts, the design and character of new development can have disastrous results for the image and character of the community. Several plans and reports have alerted the Town to this trend, and each recommends a new set of development standards that create and preserve the rural character and urban design traditions of Taos.

Development patterns have permanent and damaging impacts to public health. Although the Town is not primarily responsible for public health or education, the Town can influence land use and development patterns that promote greater public health, education, and physical activity. Research clearly shows the relationship between land use and development patterns and public health. The community needs to have greater access to recreation and safe, fun, healthy activities. Otherwise, many of these trends will continue.

According to the New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Report for Taos County, in 2009:

- 36.5% reported watching television for 3 or more hours a day
- 23.4% reported playing video games 3 or more hours a day
- 54.9% reported 3+ hours total screen time daily (TV, video or computer not related to school)
- 73.4% did not have daily PE at school

- **Taos residents prefer mixed use neighborhoods with access to open spaces, recreation facilities, diverse housing, and transportation alternatives.**

The Town has sponsored a number of public events in the last several years with the intent of discussing urban design, zoning, transportation, and future development patterns in Taos. The public has had many opportunities to share their ideas and concerns about the location and design of future development. One opportunity came in December 2005 when the Town was awarded a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program. The EPA sent a team of planners, an architect, a transportation engineer, and an economist to study the development opportunities and traffic patterns along Paseo del Pueblo Sur. The study recommended design alternatives for the roadway and proposed many solutions for reducing traffic congestion, but perhaps more importantly, the public had the opportunity to share their vision for future development in Taos. In terms of land use and development issues, there was a strong agreement among those that participated that Taos should:

- preserve open space
- have a mix of housing types
- provide parks and urban open space
- ensure longevity of good Taos urban design and architecture

Citizens from all over Taos had another opportunity to share their vision during a five day charrette held in 2007. The purposes for holding the charrette were to introduce the SmartCode to the community, generate a common vision for the future development of Taos, then to create a land use master plan and development code based on the vision. Several focus group meetings were held with elected and appointed officials, developers, community groups, and the general public. Town officials and the team of consultants entered the charrette knowing that Taos needed new tools for implementing the vision. The two highest ranking images used in the Community Preference Survey were images generated from the charrette.

The community's support for mixed-use neighborhoods is also apparent in the numerous policies and recommendations of Vision 2020. In fact, mixed use neighborhoods are the places in Taos we cherish the most. They are the Taos historic districts, Ranchos de Taos, Canon, and Arroyo Seco. The demand is to replicate these traditional patterns in new development.

Nation-wide market research also supports these preferences. According to Smart Growth America and National Association of Realtors, "6 out of 10 prospective homebuyers chose a higher-density, mixed use community." - **Smart Growth America and National Association of Realtors. 2004 American Community Survey: National Survey on Communities, Washington, DC, October 2004.**

Also.....

Today's fastest growing households are:

- young professionals
- empty nesters
- single parents
- couples without children
- senior citizens

They create demand for:

- the live/work/walk experience
- apartments, condos and townhouses

Higher-density development offers homes that are within reach of vital community members such as:

- teachers
- nurses
- fire fighters
- police officers
- retail salespeople

Demand for higher-density homes will hit new highs by 2015 due to an influx of:

- 78 million downsizing baby boomers
- 78 million children of the baby boomers graduating from college
 - 9 million new immigrants
 - service and municipal employees priced out of the neighborhoods where they work

- **Arthur C. Nelson, Toward a New Metropolis: The Opportunity to Rebuild America, Brookings Institution, Washington, DC., 2004.**

- **More rural open space & farms will be converted to development.**

In late 2011, the Hutton Group, a development company from Tennessee, submitted an application to the Taos County Planning Department to seek approval of a Special Use Permit to construct an 8,200 square foot Family Dollar store on vacant property located immediately adjacent to the Overland Sheepskin buildings in El Prado.

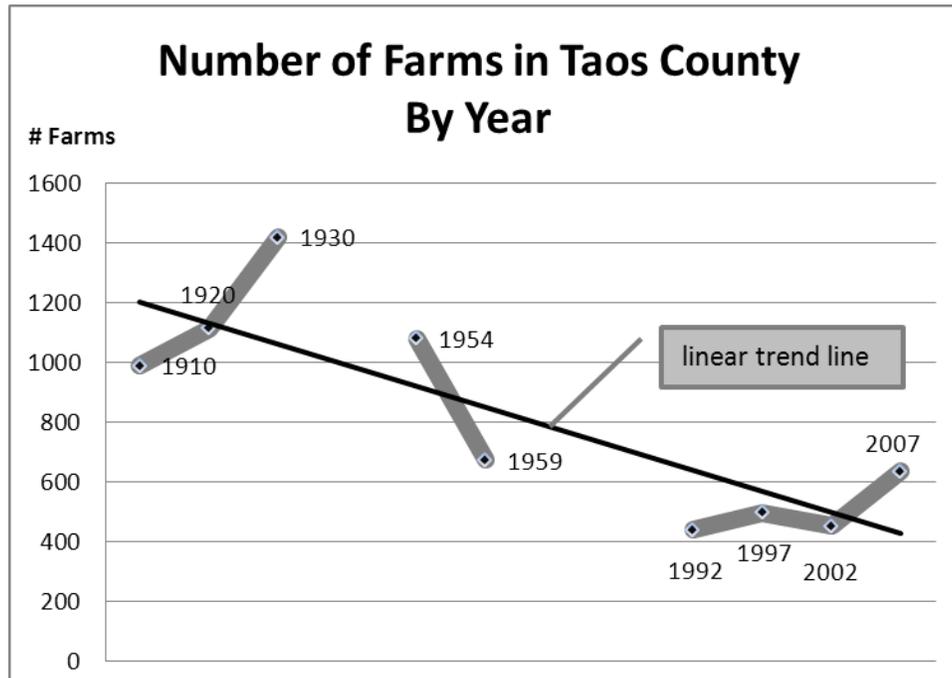


The development proposal and the immediate opposition from the community highlighted the political intensity surrounding land development on rural open space. Both the County and the Town need better tools for protecting rural open space and farms from inappropriate development.

Across the United States, critical agricultural land is being developed at a rate higher than population growth. "The US Department of Agriculture analysis concluded that developed land in the contiguous United States increased 34 percent between 1982 and 1997. During the same 15 year period, population grew by about 15 percent. Thus, our footprint is getting bigger: land consumption occurred more than twice the rate of population growth."- **EPA Watershed Academy Web**, <http://cfpub.epa.gov/watertrain/index.cfm>

Local data related to farmland development is sparse and inconsistent, but what can be quantified is outlined in **Table #3** shows the trend in the number of farms in Taos County is illustrated in Chart N. The trend is clearly downward.

Table #3.



There was a decrease of 53,100 acres of farm land between 1954 and 1959 in Taos County. There were 420 farm workers in 1949 and only 180 in 1959. - **Source: US Census of Agriculture. Various Dates.**

The American Planning Association Policy Guide on Agriculture Land Preservation (1999) recommends a comprehensive approach to protecting rural open spaces and agricultural land. The approach must include zoning, reform tax reform, supportive businesses and local economic development policies, environmental stewardship, and technical and financial support from a host of local partners that can maintain a critical mass of rural lands to feed and sustain the community.

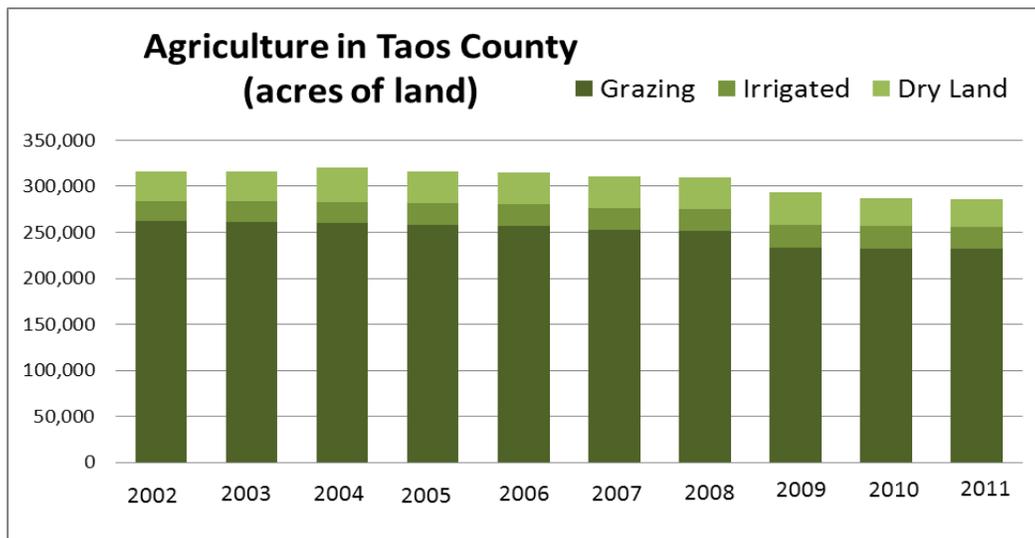
While the land use and development trend is toward converting irrigated agriculture to other uses, there are tremendous opportunities in enhancing the local agriculture industry. Strong partnerships exist among the many stakeholders that already work together to increase the community's food security, create jobs, protect water resources, and reverse the trends in public health and nutrition. In 2010, for example, the Town contracted with Collaborative Green, a Taos-based consulting firm, to study the opportunities in developing a sustainable food system in Taos. The report states, "More and more people are moving in the direction of localized food. Localization means that

people consume local, unprocessed food grown in the state, they purchase NM Processed foods, buy food from local producers and grocery stores that carry local foods, and eat out at local restaurants that offer locally prepared food.” – **The Taos New Mexico Food Systems Report. Collaborative Green. 2010. p. 16.**

Food security is when at all times, people have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Poor health outcomes disproportionately affect those populations that struggle with food security. The issue of food security is important when addressing the increasing rates of diabetes, obesity, and other health conditions such as pregnancy among adolescents. During the period from 2004 to 2006, New Mexico had the second highest rate of food insecurity in the United States. - **TAOS COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH PROFILE. FY 2009. Taos C.A.R.E.S. Health Council C.A.R.E.S. = Community Action Resource Enhancement Strategies. www.taoscares.com. p. 272**

Although irrigated agricultural land is vulnerable to development, the amount of land assessed for agriculture by the Taos County assessor is somewhat stable. However, Taos County recognizes the difference between lands that are assessed as agriculture for tax purposes and the amount of land that is actively used for harvesting food or grazing horses, sheep, goats, or cattle.

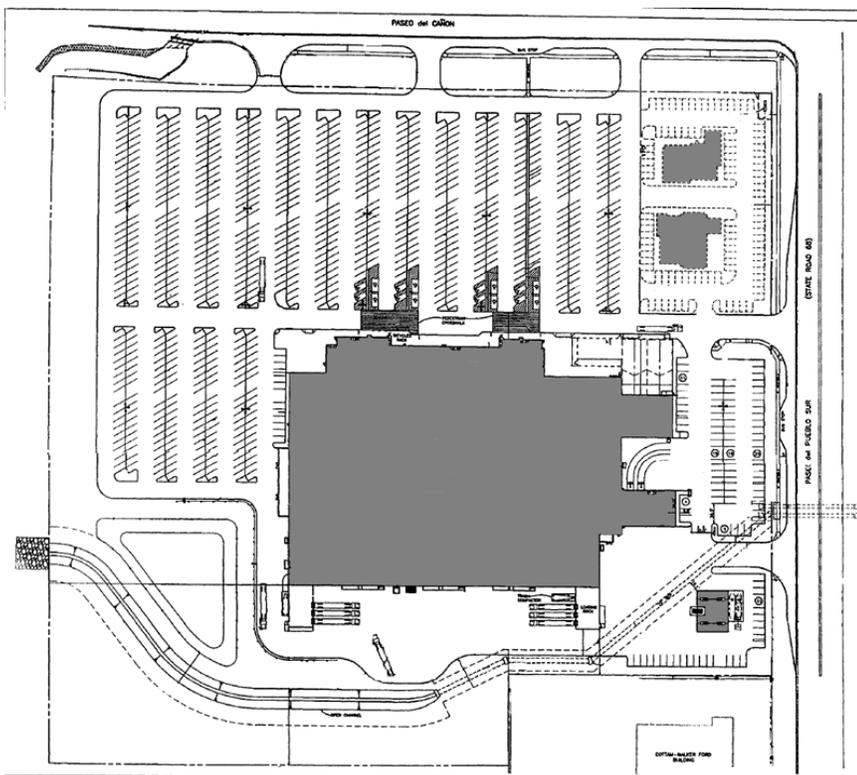
Table #4. Agriculture in Taos County.



- **Another “big box” will locate in Taos.**

Whether it is a Super Walmart, Target, LOWE’S, or Home Depot, a big box national retailer will move to Taos. Unfortunately, the hideous design of big boxes and the questionable economic benefits are at odds with the Town’s goals. Nonetheless, the population growth will eventually attract another big box. Regardless if the box is 30,000 or 80,000 square feet, it is not enough to decorate a big box with “Pueblo style” architecture, add a bike rack or native landscaping. The development must be more civilized and contribute to the character and fabric of the community. The design must eliminate the visual blight of the parking lot, properly address the massing and fenestration of the building, and consider the contribution the development makes to the future of the neighborhood.

The site plan for the Walmart Supercenter that was proposed in 1999 is a typical big box design. The Town responded to the proposal by conducting a survey of the community and eventually amending the LUDC to limit the size of commercial buildings to 80,000 square feet; however, the LUDC does not properly address the design of such a large development nor does it require any new development to consider its context, particularly how the development enhances the neighborhood or relates to surrounding properties.



Big box developments are typically designed with a vast expanse of parking, limited and unused pedestrian facilities, minimal landscaping, and disregard to the character of neighborhood. The only amenities are the parking lot, drainage facilities, and “pads” for future development of fast food, gas stations, or other national retailers.

Summary

The Town will re-direct these trends and challenges toward land development patterns that are more financially, environmentally, and socially sustainable. The Town will also utilize all of the planning and regulatory tools at its disposal to encourage higher density development where infrastructure can support it. Conversely, the Town will prevent development in rural areas that are gifted with natural and scenic resources. These tools range from zoning regulations and financial incentives to a variety of education efforts and design assistance.

The Town would serve the elderly population by designing and building higher density housing with smaller units, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods with access to public transit, businesses, and public services. The aging population presents opportunities for new business development and the need to re-vision how the Town designs the built environment. The elderly are less able to drive, need access to health services, and have different housing needs than younger populations.

The low-income levels of most residents also have implications for land use planning and the built environment. One of the main strategies for providing affordable housing is by increasing the allowed density of development while also providing access to recreation, employment opportunities, child care, and other public services that can be made available in mixed-use, walkable, and compact neighborhoods.

If the trend of low density, single-use development (e.g. – sprawl) continues, the Town will not only run out of developable land, but it will be less capable of providing essential services for those who need them the most. Specifically, the elderly, children, and those living in poverty that rely on public services.

The Vision

Taos is a socially and culturally diverse community. Forming a common and completely cohesive vision of Taos requires a fluid and dynamic process. The common challenge to the entire community is to accommodate new growth while preserving the small town character that defines Taos. Visioning is a never ending process where elected leaders and residents must always ask themselves:

- Where do you take friends and family when they come to Taos?
- What places do you avoid?
- What places bring special memories?
- What places truly define Taos?
- What places would make you feel a sense of loss if they were razed or dramatically altered?

The visions statements from the Vision 2020 Master Plan and the Taos County Comprehensive Plan helped formulate the more specific goals, policies, and objectives for land use and development. A Community Preference Survey was also completed to add illustration and images to the overall vision for Taos. The vision statements from each document are outlined below:

“In an area of mass conformity, the individual character of Taos should be preserved as a valid statement of its location and past history and incorporated into future development which will utilize this distinction for the benefit of the community to always improve Quality of Life for all.” – **Town of Taos Comprehensive Plan. 1986.**

▪ **Town of Taos Vision 2020 Master Plan**

“Taos is a community that addresses the needs of its residents, first and foremost. By balancing the need for increased opportunities and the need to protect the unique qualities that Taos residents value, Taosños will flourish in their home community.”

The Vision 2020 Master Plan vision statement that is specific to land use is:

“Growth and development protect and enhance the natural resources, unique landscape, historic character, distinct neighborhoods, and economic opportunities of the Taos Valley.”

- **Taos County Comprehensive Plan**

The Taos County Vision statement is:

“Taos County is comprised of diverse and traditional communities, with strong land and water connections and a rich cultural heritage. Our neighborhoods are places where generations of families can live, work and be involved in the Taos community. We treasure our rural and agricultural traditions rich with diverse and multi-cultural heritages. We will strive to sustain our cultures and traditions through preserving our historical roots, creating vibrant neighborhoods, encouraging viable locally based economic development, caring for our natural resources, and protecting the health, safety and prosperity of all Taos County citizens, as we improve our quality of life for future generations.”

- **Community Preference Survey**

The vision statements from The Vision 2020 Master Plan and Taos County are inspiring and valid. However, as a part of the continuing visioning process, the Town completed a Community Preference Survey between 2007 and 2012 to illicit specific comments and feedback from the community. The survey included 16 questions and 27 images. The survey is included as **Appendix 1**. Each respondent was asked to rank the 27 images as to the appropriateness to Taos.

The most popular image was this image of the "greenbelt." The average score was +2.92. Does this image show residential development encroaching on farmland or is it the open farmland and rural character of the landscape that people voted for?



This image received the second highest ranking as to its appropriateness for Taos. Some of the written comments about the image were:



- "As town center expands, this is the look that new construction should have. Very Nice."
- "Love the liveliness of the street and the bike lane. The center line of trees is also great."
- "Yes!!"

The average score was +2.59, where a rank of 3.0 is "very appropriate."

This image received the lowest ranking as to its appropriateness for Taos. Some of the written comments about the image were:



- “No consistency in design. Seems to be for cars only.”
- “Roads, buildings, etc. pretty unattractive as you enter the heart of town.”
- This could be better. We look so run down.”
- “Don’t like.”

The average score was -1.03, where a rank of 2 indicates “somewhat inappropriate” for Taos. It is unfortunate that this image is the gateway to the Taos Downtown Historic District and is ranked as the least popular image of all 27 included in the survey. This location should express a strong sense of local pride and represent the great architectural traditions of Taos.

The survey shows that the quality and appearance of development is very important, particularly on issues of density, landscaping, traffic, and architecture. Not only does quality design and traditional architecture become an economic asset, but they become a source of community pride and personal identity.

The strongest issues that emerged in the written portions of the survey are:

- a need for more trees and native landscaping,
- the desire for preservation of rural open spaces and views,
- adding bike lanes to roadways,
- a concern for safety and existing gang activity,
- while many responded that Taos is a very desirable place to live, many also expressed a strong desire to move out of Taos for greater employment opportunities.

Of the 16 questions, the most important issues that had the highest average score were:

- “Water Resources Planning and Conservation” (+2.97)
- “Environmental Protection and Land Conservation” (+2.90)
- “Maintenance of Culture and Traditions” (+2.77)

- **The Negative Vision**

Although the community has expressed a positive vision for the future of Taos, many people describe the vision in negative terms. In other words, there is a clear and strong consensus that Taos should not develop into another Espanola, and Espanola should not turn into another Santa Fe, and Santa Fe should not become Albuquerque, and so on.

The negative vision is a useful reference and should be used to evaluate the merits of specific development proposals. Does a new development make Taos look and function like Espanola? If so, how? - urban sprawl, traffic congestion, impact to water and valuable land resources, visual blight?



This image had an average score of - 1.77 (between “somewhat inappropriate” and “inappropriate” for Taos). It resembles Espanola.

This data and images will be used to evaluate the trends and challenges as well as inform the goals, policies, and objectives for (Re)vision 2020.

Goals, Policies & Objectives

The hierarchy of goals, policies, and objectives create a planning framework for making decisions and taking action. Although most planners often disagree about the definitions of goals, policies, and objectives, the following definitions will be used throughout the Land Use Element and forthcoming Elements.

A **goal** is a broad statement that describes the desired results and accomplishments of what is envisioned for the community. A goal reflects the common values and aspirations of the community. Whether the goal is aimed at affordable housing or natural resources conservation, the goal guides decisions and sets direction for immediate action.

A **policy** statement describes the intentions and interpretations of a goal in further detail. A policy is not mandatory on the part of the Town, but it implies a firm commitment. In the process of making land use and development decisions, policies can be in conflict with each other, and the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Town Council must use discretion and judgment in balancing the competing needs of the community and evaluating alternatives. The more applicable and specific policies should be given greater consideration over less applicable and more generic policies.

Objectives are specific and measurable. They outline a sequence of actions and considerations that must be taken to accomplish the policies associated with a goal. A good objective includes a schedule for when the objective(s) will be completed and identifies who will be responsible for completing the objective. Objective statements bridge the gap between the goals and policies and how to accomplish them.

For example:

In a hypothetical development proposal, the Planning & Zoning Commission is reviewing a development application to change the existing zoning of 26 acres from a low-density residential zone to a medium density residential zone. The location of the project is in an area identified by the Comprehensive Plan for agriculture and rural zoning, not medium residential development. The Comprehensive Plan includes a policy to protect agriculture land and the rural character of the Town. However, the Comprehensive Plan also includes policies to promote clustered subdivisions and increases in open space dedications. The developer is proposing to cluster the homes away from the most irrigable lands and to restore the existing but abandoned acequias. The development plan includes an area for

a common garden and tree orchard. The developer tells the Planning & Zoning Commission that he is talking with the local affordable housing organization to subsidize at least four of the units to be available to low-income families, but has not made a commitment. Although there are positive aspects of the proposed development and are consistent with the plan's policies, it is still located in irrigable agriculture land. The developer is asking the Town Council to change the priority of a new roadway project in the Capital Improvements Plan so the new development will have adequate road access by the time the subdivision is built. However, the Comprehensive Plan also includes a policy that new developments should pay for the necessary infrastructure. The development puts the policies in conflict with each other. All other standards for subdivisions are met, and the Planning & Zoning Commission needs to balance the weight of each policy and use discretion to make a decision to approve the subdivision, deny it, or place conditions on the developer to comply with all the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Table 5 outlines each objective according to the corresponding goal. The table identifies the proposed schedule for completing the objective, the responsible party, the resources needed, and the deliverable(s) or indicators of success.

Goal

Natural resources are protected from inappropriate development.

Policies

1. Natural resources not only sustain our lives but they define the rural character and quality of life in Taos. Additionally, many cultures in Taos define themselves by their divine relationship to nature. Natural resources must be protected because of their cultural, environmental, and economic benefits.
2. Open space, forests, wetlands, and watersheds clean water and air pollution through natural processes. The infiltration of rain and snow into the ground cleans the water and allows the underground aquifers to recharge the supply of water.
3. Natural resources are most productive when they are preserved and managed as an inter-connected regional network. The network consists of open space and wildlife corridors, watersheds, farmlands, acequias, parks, wetlands, and arroyos. The network must be restored and preserved at the regional level. The Town will take a leadership role in facilitating regional cooperation among all levels of the community to preserve natural resources.
4. New development will be closely evaluated for its impacts to natural resources. Accordingly, the Town will encourage natural resources conservation through sustainable design and innovation during the initial phases of site design and development planning.
5. Septic tanks and the proliferation of domestic water wells pose a threat to water quality and human health. The Town will encourage existing developments to hook up to the Town's centralized water and sewer systems to minimize the potential environmental impacts of unregulated domestic wells and septic tanks.
6. Buildings have tremendous and long lasting impacts on natural resources. The Town will encourage sustainable design in the construction industry.
7. The Town will encourage water conservation through public education and outreach initiatives.

8. "The Town will continue to evaluate its water rights in comparison to demands and will update projections periodically to account for changed conditions." - **Draft 40-Year Water Plan. Daniel B. Stephens & associates, Inc. 2011. August 31, 2011. page 42.**

Objectives

1. PROVIDE PUBLIC EDUCATION AND DESIGN ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPERS.

The Town will regularly update the Planning, Zoning, and Buildings Department web page to include all applications, standards, maps, reports, and links to local, regional, and national planning and building organizations.

Developers, engineers, and architects need to be more aware of the sustainable design alternatives that exist in the Land Use Development Code. The Planned Unit Overlay, Traditional Neighborhood Development District, and the Rural Historic Landscapes Overlay all allow greater flexibility in the design and development process to promote sustainable development and natural resources protection. These zoning alternatives will be offered to developers during meetings of the Development Review Committee. The Planning, Zoning, & Buildings Department will offer design assistance to developers who express an interest in designing their development according to the standards of these zoning alternatives.

The Town will offer design assistance to builders and architects to ensure compliance with the requirements of the High Performance Building Ordinance.

The Town will provide adequate financial support for staff training and continuing education in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Accredited Professional (LEED AP) and the Home energy Rating System (HERS) Rater credentials.

Public education and design assistance will be on on-going process. The web page will be updated by the end of 2012.

2. AMEND THE HIGH PERFORMANCE BUILDING ORDINANCE (HPBO) TO IMPROVE THE REVIEW PROCESS FOR COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS UNDER THE LEADERSHIP IN ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN BUILDING DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION (LEED BD + C).

The HPBO requires an applicant to submit the LEED checklist with the building permit application but it does not require the applicant to submit a site plan, floor plans, or other mandatory documentation to support the checklist. All of the supporting materials are to be submitted prior to requesting a Certificate of Occupancy, leaving the applicant and the Town vulnerable to miscommunication and missed opportunities for improving the building's performance. LEED BD +C allows points to be confirmed at the design phase or at the construction phase, allowing the staff and the design team to be more explicit and focused on the points, standards, documentation requirements, and potential synergies. Therefore, the HPBO will be amended to require the applicant to submit the applicable and necessary documentation and the design phase prior to receiving a building permit, then the applicant will be required to submit all other necessary documentation for those points that are applicable to the construction phases prior to receiving a Certificate of Occupancy.

The HPBO also allows an applicant to submit building plans that comply with an alternative standard than the LEED BD+C. The Amendment will include a list of acceptable and comparable high performance building programs to allow applicants to select from a list of alternatives. Two alternatives to include are Green Globes and the Living Building Challenge.

The amendment to the HPBO will be completed by the end of 2012.

2. ADOPT A GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE MAP AND ASSOCIATED LAND DEDICATION AND RIPARIAN PROTECTION ORDINANCES.

The current open space dedication requirement contained in the LUDC allows developers with a certain size and type of project to choose if they will utilize a portion of their property as public or private open space. They also have an option to pay a fee "in lieu of" the open space dedication. The fees are used for open space acquisitions, recreation programs, and capital improvements. However beneficial an open space dedication might be, it is often disconnected from other open space or is not accessible to the general public.

Open space will be dedicated according to a comprehensive "green infrastructure" plan. The plan will include a map that identifies properties with environmental, scenic, or recreational value to the entire community. These plans must be closely coordinated with the neighborhood plans so each neighborhood can have access to open space. The map must also identify the possible trail connections and riparian corridors between each property, thereby creating a network of green infrastructure. The open space dedication requirement of the LUDC will be updated to require a developer to

dedicate the green infrastructure that is identified on the green infrastructure map. If a property is not on the map, the developer will be required to pay a fee to offset the costs of developing open space within the same neighborhood where the land development is located. The ordinance will also require set-backs from riparian areas and arroyos.

This type of ordinance requires an extensive degree of public education, legal scrutiny, and outreach to be successful. The economic and environmental costs and benefits of the ordinance must be clearly understood by the property owners affected by the ordinance as well as the general public. Elected officials and Town staff must be fully aware of the legal issues in order to fight illegitimate "takings" claims and to understand the requirements for implementing the ordinance during the building permitting and inspection process.

The ordinance(s) must address at least the following issues:

- the allowable uses and land improvements within riparian buffers, for example:
 - allowing gates and other irrigation improvements within the buffer to allow the operations and maintenance of acequias,
 - allowing certain agricultural activities within the buffer,
 - allowing trails and security fencing,
 - allowing porous pavement or gravel parking lots.
- designating buildings and other structures within the buffer as "legal non-conforming" uses and prohibiting them from expansion or reconstruction if destroyed by flood or fire,
- restoration requirements for native vegetation, if any, and the minimum and maximum buffer set-back requirements,
- addressing up-stream water pollution sources and open space uses that are outside of the Town's jurisdiction,
- storm drainage best management practices that protect water quality / impervious surface requirements,
- conformity with state laws, subdivision regulations, and existing Town policies for storm drainage and development within the FEMA floodplain,
- preserving the economic value of the property to avoid "takings"; implementing a transfer of development rights program or density transfer process,
- variance procedures and criteria,
- creating a legally defensible and fair fee structure,
- guidelines for riparian crossings such as trails, utility lines, or roadways.

A green infrastructure plan and the related ordinances will enhance the quality of life and improve property values, leading to more economic development opportunities for Taos in the long run. It will also protect natural resources prior to development, avoiding the higher costs of retrofitting parks, trail, and riparian buffers into existing development.

The Green Infrastructure Map will be completed and approved no later than 2013. The corresponding ordinances will be completed no later than 2014.

3. ADOPT AND IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN.

The Town worked with the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps and the Climate Solutions University to prepare a draft of the Taos County Climate Adaptation Plan. The Plan recommends strategies to the Town and other communities in Taos County, preparing for the already apparent and eminent impacts of global climate change. The plan recommends the formation of an Action Team to conduct a majority of the work outlined in the plan. The Town will participate in the Action Team to help carry out the specific objectives of the Plan.

The recommendations of the plan focus on protecting water, air, and forest resources, economic development, and the built environment. These issues are being addressed in various Elements of (Re)vision 2020. The specific recommendations related to water, air, and forest resources will be included in the Natural Resources Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Town will update and adopt the Climate Adaptation Plan and appoint a staff member to serve on the Climate Adaptation Action Team no later than June 2012. The recommendations of the Climate Adaptation Plan will be incorporated into each Element of (Re)vision 2020 as each element is completed and adopted by the Town Council.

4. UPDATE THE 2011 GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) EMISSIONS INVENTORY.

The Town completed a comprehensive inventory of the greenhouse gas emissions in 2011. The population demographics that were used for the inventory were based on the 2000 US Census. The inventory needs to be updated to include the 2010 population demographics that will create a more accurate inventory of our GHG emissions.

According to the inventory, "Present day policies and continuing improvement in clean energy technology suggest the GHG emissions could decrease by 50 percent or more by 2030. Such decrease is attainable with substantial population growth. However, this growth would need to exclude new, major industries that would be reliant on the heavy use of fossil fuels. The decrease in emissions can be driven by:

- Increase building energy-use efficiency,
 - Increased use of passive solar, solar thermal, and geothermal pump installations,
 - Increased fuel efficiency and fuel switching for passenger and commercial vehicles,
 - Reduced vehicle miles travelled using several planning and policy options; and
 - Increased generation of electricity using energy sources such as solar, wind, geothermal and biomass power that are responsible for relatively minor GHG emissions."
- **Greenhouse Gases Emissions Profile and Forecast: Taos & Vicinity, New Mexico 2009-2030. page. 10.**

The GHG emissions inventory provides extensive data that is critical to protecting air quality. The inventory puts air quality concerns in the broader context of land use and transportation policies.

The GHG Emissions inventory will be updated no later than June 2012. The recommendations of the inventory will be incorporated into the applicable element of the Comprehensive Plan as they are prepared and adopted by the Town Council.

5. UPDATE, ADOPT, AND IMPLEMENT THE 2011 DRAFT TOWN OF TAOS 40-YEAR WATER PLAN.

The Town hired a water resources consultant to prepare the 40-Year Water Plan. Still in draft form, the plan summarizes information on water rights and compares the Town's current water rights with the projected demands for water. The plan also analyzes the Town's water systems, water supply, and the historical water demand. It recommends various strategies for ensuring the future water supply for the next 40 years. The Town is responsible for providing a reliable, sustainable water supply and should adopt and implement the plan.

Updates of the plan will consider requirements for new development to include water conservation plans and a water budget with subdivision applications, including design and best management strategies to capture runoff, re-use water, and recharge the aquifer.

The plan states that the average per capita demand for water in all sectors (residential, commercial, and municipal) was 192 gallons per day, leaving room for an aggressive conservation program. The plan should outline the responsibilities, deadlines, and outcomes of the water conservation strategies.

The Land Use Plan and proposed annexations will also be included in the analysis to determine future water demand. Drought scenarios will be analyzed to determine the need for reserving and storing water during drought conditions.

“In addition to careful management and long term-planning, the Town will require new wells, water rights, and related infrastructure in order to meet future demands and supply new service areas.” - **Draft 40-Year Water Plan. Daniel B. Stephens & associates, Inc. 2011. August 31, 2011. page 59.**

Goal

Agricultural land is in productive use and protected from inappropriate development.

“Agricultural land also supplies products with little market value, but enormous cultural and ecological importance. Some are more immediate, such as social heritage, scenic views, open space and community character. Long-range environmental benefits include wildlife habitat, clean air and water, flood control, groundwater recharge and carbon sequestration.” **American Farmland Trust. Fact Sheet. Why Save Farmland? January 2003.**

Policies

1. The Town recognizes the complex obstacles to preserving irrigated agriculture. The obstacles are financial, political, legal, and cultural. It takes a strong coalition of dedicated partners to revitalize the agriculture industry in Taos. In other words, if local farmers cannot earn a decent living, then their land is vulnerable to development pressures. Therefore, the Town will seek out partnerships with farmers, ranchers, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA's), acequia commissions, and community organizations to create an economic climate where agricultural businesses will thrive. Furthermore, the Town realizes that most of the productive agricultural land in Taos has already been developed and that the Town must work cooperatively with Taos County to make policies and objectives most effective.
2. The Town will create a regulatory environment that preserves and protects agriculture and ranching, including amendment to the Land Use Development Code.
3. The Community Economic Development Strategic Plan (also called the Economic Development Element of (Re)vision 2020) supports the agriculture industry as a specific area of focus for economic development activity. Additionally, the Plan encourages the sale and manufacture of gourmet and organic foods. The Town will support gardening and animal husbandry as a source of recreation and a source of locally grown, healthy food.

4. Ecotourism and agri-tourism represent opportunities for business development and preserving agricultural lands. The Town will encourage business and entrepreneurial land uses within rural areas that will help capture more income generated by value-added products and more innovative businesses.
5. The Town will support land owners and community organizations in acquiring conservation easements and purchasing development rights.
6. The Planning & Zoning Commission and the Town Council will not approve zoning applications that convert fallow or active agriculture and ranching lands to residential or commercial development.

Objectives

1. Amend the Land Use Development Code to protect agricultural lands and encourage agriculture and gardening.

The LUDC will be amended to address the following:

Right to Farm – The Town will adopt a Right to Farm ordinance. The ordinance will protect lands that are designated as “rural” in the Land Use Plan. Land owners will be protected from complaints from neighbors that seek to restrict or eliminate normal agricultural activities. This type of ordinance states that as long as the farmer is operating within the requirements of the ordinance, they are allowed to continue their activities and cannot be considered a nuisance. Right to farm laws are intended to protect farmers and ranchers from nuisance lawsuits and can protect the property owner from lawsuit from neighborhood who move in after the farming operation was established. Composting, for example, is a specific use that will be protected by the ordinance.

“Many stakeholders have concluded is that Taos is missing, at a minimum, two critical elements in its agriculture infrastructure. The first element is a food storage, processing, and distribution locus, ideally encompassing a year-round marketplace for locally owned food, as well as a bakery and a restaurant. The second missing element is ready access to capital in all forms: grants, loans, and venture capital.” – **The Taos, New Mexico Food Systems Report. Collaborative Green, LLC. May 2010.**

Agriculture Zoning – This amendment will allow contemporary forms of gardening and agriculture (e.g. – cold frames and greenhouses) in urban and sub-urban areas identified on the Land Use Plan. Agricultural zoning should allow biomass, wind, and other renewable energy generation operations because they allow additional revenue for the property owner and are often compatible and even complimentary with agricultural uses.

Zoning is the most restrictive of all the strategies, but it limits development and use of the property to agriculture and related facilities. It includes large lot requirements with only one residence allowed per lot. Any uses that are not compatible with farming are not allowed (e.g. - residential subdivisions). Some agriculture zoning is area based, meaning that only a portion of the entire property can be developed for residential while the balance of the property is only developed for agriculture (the larger the property, the larger the percent of the property that must be dedicated to farming, for example). Agriculture zoning can be used to create a concentration of agriculture lands within the community to avoid farming on isolated lands where neighbors are likely to experience nuisances associated with farming (noise in the early morning, smells from livestock). Maintaining the critical mass will provide an adequate amount of farming activity to support local agriculture serving businesses such as tractor repair, fencing supply, gates and corrals, hay and alfalfa production.

The LUDC amendments will allow an appropriate amount of animal husbandry in residential zones provided that anticipated impacts of noise, smell, etc. can be mitigated with sheltering, buffering, and proper management and site design for the proposed uses.

Cluster Zoning – This zoning strategy requires or allows development to be clustered together on small lots to protect irrigable agricultural lands. The property owner typically retains ownership of the protected lands or puts it in a conservation easement on it is owned and managed by the homeowners association.

Clustered zoning is a technique used to conserve rural and agricultural landscapes while preserving land values and increasing open space. A clustered development allows a greater density of development on a smaller portion of land; it includes shorter, narrower roads, less impervious surfaces, lower infrastructure costs, and opportunities for shared civic spaces and a “sense of place.” The increases in undeveloped land within the property provide more opportunities for farming and gardening, increased wildlife habitat, vegetation, and improvements to water quality.

Agri-tourism Zoning - The Town will amend the LUDC to allow agri-tourism uses within the rural zones. The amendment will address the allowed uses, conditional uses, adaptive re-use and permitting of building renovations (for an office use), parking and lighting requirements, hours of operation, kitchen and cooking / food services, retail sales, and similar issues that protect the character of the rural zones from inappropriate impacts. Agri-tourism uses may include a bed and breakfast, a rodeo facility, equestrian academies, campgrounds, hunting lodges, equipment repair and maintenance, and temporary uses such as festivals, retreats, weddings, camping, etc. Others include garden centers, commercial composting, "pick your own" food markets, food processing, ranch stays, and farmers markets.

The LUDC will be amended no later than 2015.

2. Adopt a Food Security Master Plan

The food industry is heavily dependent on transportation, fossil fuel, hormones, and genetic engineering. The local food supply could not feed the community if there were a catastrophe in energy or transportation. The natural gas outage in the winter of 2011 alerted the community to our vulnerabilities. In response to this potential crisis, the Town will create and adopt a master plan for local food production. The focus of the plan is to provide the local capacity for Taos to generate its own food supply.

The Master Plan will be adopted no later than 2016.

3. Adopt an Acequia Restoration Plan

The Town completed a restoration plan for the acequias in the Historic Overlay Zone in 2011. The plan included an assessment of existing conditions, detailed maps, design standards, set-back requirements, and a proposal for an interpretive trail, water features, and potential funding sources. This plan will be expanded to all the acequias in the Town. The plan will include recommendations for amending the LUDC to require a developer to restore an acequia located on their property prior to receiving a building permit or development approval. The restoration would satisfy the open space dedication requirement, if applicable.

The Restoration Plan will be adopted no later than 2014.

4. Facilitate economic and business development initiatives that support the full spectrum of the agriculture system in Taos, including the growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, consuming, and disposing of food.

There are numerous organizations in Taos that are passionately involved in the agriculture industry. Tierra Lucero, the Taos Valley Acequia Association & Acequia Commissions, the Taos Farmer's Market, many CSAs, Taos Pueblo Red Willow Center, Taos County Economic Development Corporation, Taos Chapter of the New Mexico Green Chamber of Commerce, De La Tierra a La Cosecha, the Food & Agriculture Council of Taos, Agriculture Research Education & Implementation, Taos Community Foundation, Taos School District, Holy Cross Hospital, Farm to Table, Shared Table, religious organizations, and more.

The Town will act as a full partner with these organizations to facilitate business development and will use the full range of options under the Local Economic Development Act to support their efforts. The Town will dedicate staff to participate in steering committees, boards, or other organized efforts to enhance the agricultural industry.

The Town will actively participate in an on-going basis.

"American democracy is rooted in an agricultural past and founded on the principle that all people can own property and earn a living from the land. The ongoing relationship with the agricultural landscape connects Americans to history and to the natural world."

- **American Farmland Trust. Fact Sheet. Why Save Farmland? January 2003.**

"Fertile soils take thousands of years to develop. Creating them takes a combination of climate, geology, biology and good luck. So far, no one has found a way to manufacture them. Thus, productive agricultural land is a finite and irreplaceable natural resource."

- **American Farmland Trust. Fact Sheet. Why Save Farmland? January 2003.**

Goal

The Town develops as a collection of complete and compact neighborhoods with access to transportation alternatives.

Policies

1. The Town believes that everyone should live in a great neighborhood, and that the neighborhood should be the organizing principle for land use planning.
2. Neighborhoods should be compact and complete. A compact neighborhood is organized around a central public space with diverse commercial activity and opportunities for social interaction. A complete neighborhood offers a variety of housing types for a variety of income levels and families (e.g. – single-family, apartments, duplexes, and live/work units). Public services and businesses are accessible to meet the daily needs of its residents.

Goal Six of the Community Design element of Vision 2020 states that “Neighborhoods are the building blocks for creating a Town fabric unique to Taos and its region” (p. 68). Objective One of Goal Six of the Community Design element is to “Support and encourage neighborhood self-identification in order to develop self-determination for the broader community.” (p. 68).

3. A neighborhood should be designed and developed to offer transportation alternatives, including a roadway network with adequate sidewalks, transit stops, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian amenities such as benches, shade trees and engaging shop fronts; transportation networks, including transit routes and bicycle facilities, should be planned in coordination with land use. Transportation networks should connect neighborhoods to each other and connect individual neighborhoods to the region.
4. Civic spaces such as parks, playgrounds, and plazas should be embedded in neighborhoods and not isolated from day to day activities. Each neighborhood should include the appropriate size, type, and location of civic spaces. Civic buildings and public gathering places should be provided within each neighborhood at a location that reinforces

community identity. They should be built in a highly visible and accessible location in the heart of the neighborhood – at the terminus of a street, on a hill, or in the neighborhood plaza.

5. Not every property in Taos is associated with a neighborhood, nor do all property owners desire mixed land uses or higher density. Some “neighborhoods” have adopted covenants and restrictions which limit the use of property within their subdivision. Some covenants mandate limited density (e.g. – one home per 2 acres) or in some cases regulate the size and architecture of each residence (e.g. - at least 1,200 square feet, a grass lawn, and “Pueblo” style architecture). The Town recognizes the legal status of covenants & restrictions and will integrate the requirements into neighborhood plans and zoning codes whenever possible.
 6. Sprawl is the enemy of responsible local government. However, sprawl can and should be repaired with neighborhood plans. The Town will give priority to existing neighborhoods when preparing a neighborhood plan over an undeveloped area that is a candidate for a neighborhood plan.
 7. The local economy relies heavily on tourism, and one of the major destinations for tourists is the historic downtown of Taos. The attraction to the downtown is derived from the unique architecture and historic buildings, the diversity of shopping and restaurants, museums, social, cultural, and civic institutions, social events, and the pedestrian friendly atmosphere. As such, the downtown historic district is an ideal model for neighborhood planning.
 8. New development should be integrated into the existing neighborhood through land use, transportation, and design.
-

Objectives

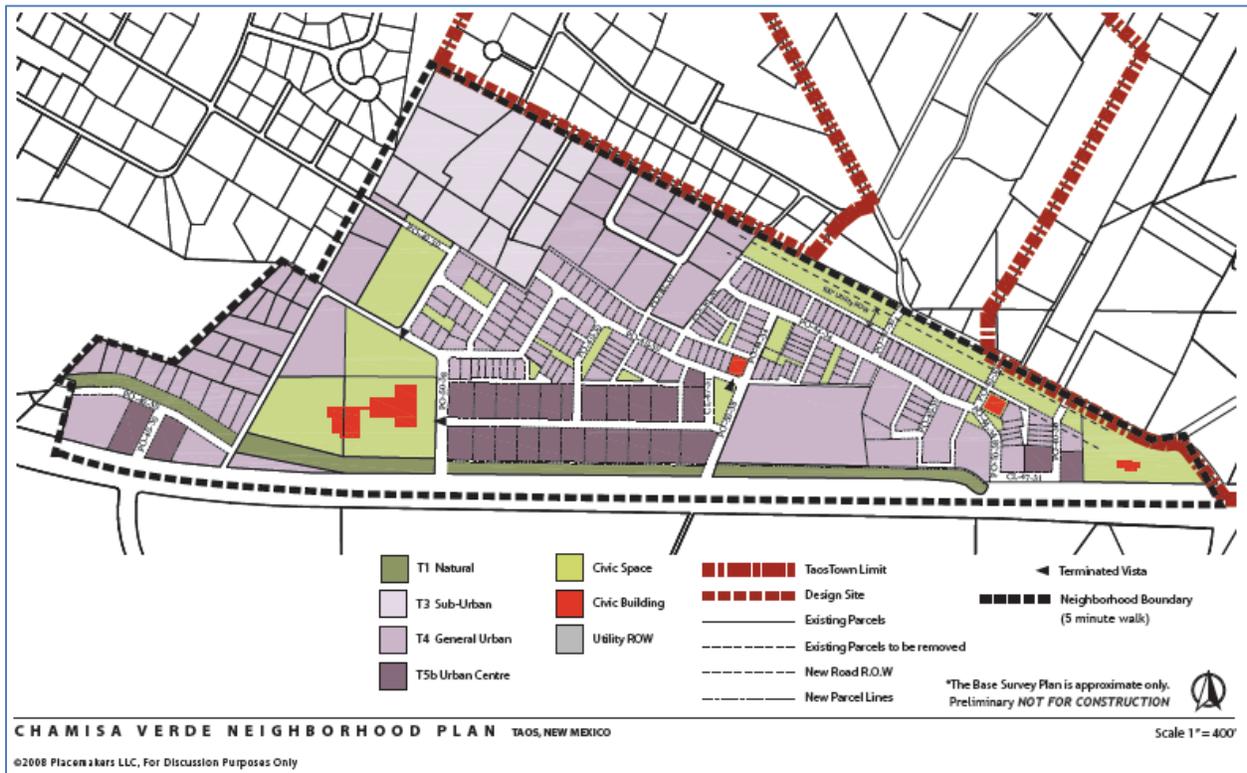
1. Adopt Neighborhood Plans & Form Based Codes

Several properties are ideal candidates for neighborhood planning and form based codes. The Town's form based code is called the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND). One neighborhood is already zoned to the design standards of the TND District. It is the Chamisa Verde Neighborhood. **Map #7** illustrates the neighborhood plan. The ordinance that applied the TND District to the Chamisa Verde Neighborhood requires the Town Council to approve the Land Use Element (see Town Ordinance 09-01). Additionally, the ordinance requires the Town Council to approve a neighborhood plan prior to re-zoning any property to the TND District.

All properties are eligible for the TND District zoning; however, the best candidates are those areas with larger parcels of undeveloped land which are surrounded by infrastructure. These areas are identified on the Land Use Plan.

Walkable, compact, and complete neighborhoods are better for the environment when compared to conventional developments consisting of subdivisions and shopping malls. "One of the most comprehensive studies, conducted in King County, Washington, by Larry Frank of the University of British Columbia, found that residents of the most walkable neighborhoods drive 26 percent fewer miles per day than those living in the most sprawling areas. A meta-analysis of many of these types of studies finds that households living in developments with twice the density, diversity of uses, accessible destinations, and interconnected streets when compared to low-density sprawl drive about 33 percent less."

Map #7. The Chamisa Verde Neighborhood Plan.



Another model for neighborhood planning and form based codes is the Clustered Land Development (CLD). The main difference between the TND and the CLD is that the CLD requires at least 50% of the total area within the neighborhood be zoned for rural uses or undeveloped open space. The Land Use Map designates areas at the fringe of the Town limit as CLD where the rural character and natural resources are more sensitive to development.

Adopting a neighborhood plan and the TND or CLD District zoning requires extensive public participation. The Planning & Zoning Department will meet with property owners in the designated areas. Each property owner should have a full understanding of the costs and benefits of re-zoning the property to the TND or CLD Districts. The planning requirements outlined in the LUDC (see Section 16.16.230) will also be outlined. A number of site studies and reports have been prepared for specific areas and will be used as the basis for the neighborhood plan. The Town's consultant, PlaceMakers LLC, prepared **Map #8** and **Map #9** for two locations of undeveloped property to demonstrate the traditional development pattern of the TND District.

Map #8. The Goodman Property Neighborhood Plan.



- | | |
|--|--|
| A Market Plaza | H Small Plaza / Outdoor Dining |
| B Civic Pavilion | I Plaza |
| C Restaurant Box with Outdoor Patio on South Side | J Civic Building |
| D 80,000sf Box | K Courtyard Housing |
| E Green with Playground | L Green with Enhanced Drainage Way and Playground |
| F Mid-Size Box for Pharmacy, etc. | M Retail Box Parking @ 4/1000 sf |
| G "Garden Plaza" on Garden Center side of Big Box | N Typical Residential Lots (see Page 5) |

The TND or CLD can be applied to any area of Taos, provided that the planning requirements of the LUDC are met. The Land Use Map will serve as the guide for determining neighborhood boundaries, land uses, transportation patterns, and civic spaces. Applying the TND or CLD to areas already developed is more difficult, however, because of existing covenants that prohibit mixed use, limit density, or non-conforming buildings, block perimeters, and roadways. Fortunately there are many strategies to help repair sprawl and create compact and compete neighborhoods. These include:

1. density bonuses for dedicating rights-of-way that connect roadways, land dedications for civic spaces; allow a guest house or casita "by right" in the rear yard.
2. reduce parking requirements; allow on-street parking to be counted towards parking requirements; include transit stops,
3. allow mixed use developments and live-work units by right; allow different building types "by right" (i.e. - courtyard houses, townhomes, side-yard houses),

4. require residential and commercial subdivisions to plan and design for future roadway connections; coordinate phased developments and site planning with adjacent property owners,
5. update the Traffic Access Manual to include a complete streets design policy; re-design intersections for multi-modal transportation, particularly for enhanced pedestrian and bicycle mobility, handicapped accessibility, and safety,
6. encourage and incentivize the development of liner buildings and small scale infill within underutilized parking lots and large rear yards,
7. design and develop usable civic space and open space; identify properties that can be developed as civic spaces and civic buildings.

Adopting a TND or CLD may not be necessary to enable all of the recommendations of the neighborhood plan. The LUDC zoning districts or a hybrid code may be perfectly adequate to accommodate the proposed land uses and preferred development pattern within a particular neighborhood plan. Additionally, some of the form based code requirements may conflict with existing covenants and restrictions of individual's properties (condominiums for subdivisions). The intent of each neighborhood plan is to enable the opportunities of the people that live in each neighborhood, not to impose a "one size fits all" zoning code across the entire Town.

Map #9. The Cunnygham Property Neighborhood Plan.



The Town will complete one neighborhood plan per year.

2. Adopt a Downtown Master Plan

In 2009 the Town pursued and received designation by the State of New Mexico as an Art & Cultural District (ACD). The ACD designation provided the Town with technical and financial resources to conduct public outreach efforts and to prepare a master plan for the downtown. The ACD has already completed a number of plans and reports:

1. The Resource Team Report which analyzed the major assets of the community and made broad recommendations for development of the ACD. District. The Resource Team Report was completed over a three day period of focus groups and community meetings, which were well attended, with over 250 participants.
2. The very prestigious National Endowment for the Arts "Your Town: The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design" Charrette grant that is awarded to only two (2) communities a year. The Taos ACD worked collaboratively with UNM's Design Planning Assistance Center to spend two and a half days with thirty six (36) community members from all walks of life to examine the current status of and possibilities for the Taos ACD starting at the Taos Plaza and working outward to the limits of the ACD. The results of the charrette outline mostly physical improvements that could be pursued by the Town in partnership with private entities that will greatly assist with the revitalization of the historic district and the heart of the ACD and community.

Next steps for the ACD include community prioritization of physical improvements, completion of a Cultural Plan already underway, a study of the condition and impact of the creative economy on Taos by UNM's Bureau of Business and Economic Research, and finally a Downtown Master Plan that will pull all of these documents into a cohesive whole.

The master plan would not be complete without a thorough analysis of parking lots, the utilization of parking spaces, and the alternatives for managing each lot to provide revenues to the Town and businesses. The recommendations of the parking plan will be considered in the larger context of making the downtown a more friendly environment for pedestrians.

What are the necessary preconditions for any place to be a pedestrian friendly environment? It must have.....

- 1) the proper physical infrastructure
 - a. sidewalks that are regularly maintained and cleaned (at least 6 feet wide in a place like the Plaza); free of obstructions such as sign posts, utility poles, etc.; the alleys on the south side should be improved as pedestrian walkways into the parking lots on the south (behind La Fonda and in front of the old Modern Business Products building)
 - b. outdoor seating for restaurants (see below)
 - c. night lighting for security and visibility
 - d. landscaped areas for snow removal
 - e. informative and attractive signage
 - f. trash collectors and trash removal schedules
 - g. redesign and re-construct the Plaza itself to improve pedestrian access and circulation (remove many of the walls, hard surfaces, and steps – this will require an extensive re-design of the storm water system)
- 2) fun and authentic activities, events and attractions
 - a. Taos plaza live, car show, fiestas, Runway Vigilantes, gallery openings and exhibits, block parties, tax free promotions, etc.
 - b. restaurants with patio seating
 - c. rehabilitate the courthouse and the plaza theater
 - d. mixed uses (add residential development within proximity to the plaza, including live/work units – South Station and Artspace, for examples)
 - e. businesses stay open later of on evenings with special events
- 3) efficient traffic circulation
 - a. parking management for the existing public lots (also to determine if the Plaza really needs a parking structure and/or to determine how the Town can better manage the current public lots)
 - b. parking meters (keep the existing ones, remove them all, remove only some and replace others with mid-block stations that take accredit card, other options?)
 - c. eliminate employee parking in prime retail spaces
 - d. turning circles / round-a-bouts on intersections
 - e. clearly designated handicapped parking spaces
 - f. designated loading and unloading spaces (related to signage)
- 4) safety
 - a. lighting (from above)
 - b. police bicycle and foot patrol
 - c. signage above (from above)
 - d. pedestrian crossings (pavement markings, signage, etc.)
 - e. police presence at the sub-station at the public bathrooms

This outline is a comprehensive approach to the HUGE and complicated tasks of setting priorities.

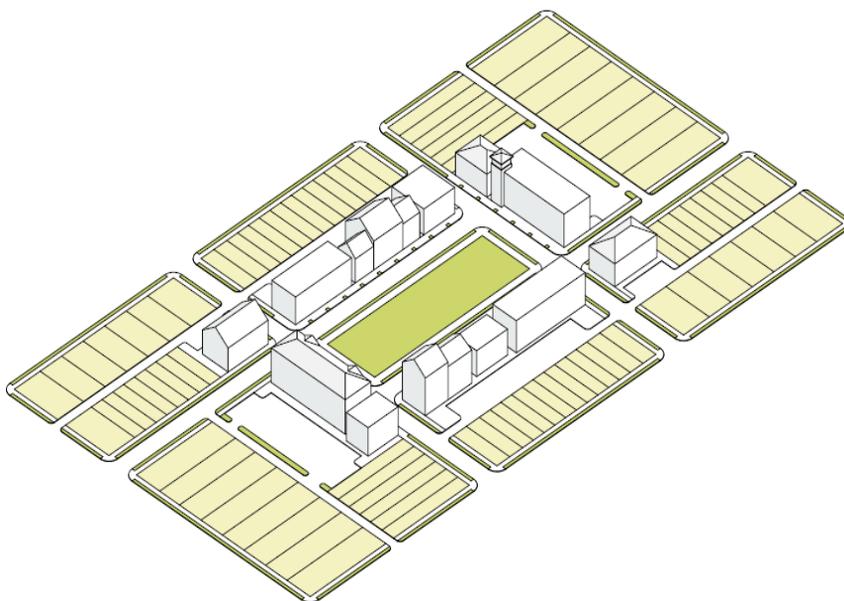
The Downtown Master Plan will be completed no later than 2014.

3. Amend the LUDC's Development Standards for "Large Scale" (e.g. - Big Box) Development.

The Economic Development Element includes a policy toward big box development. The policy states that the Town will "Revisit limitations of big box development with possible creation of a big box zone." The intention of the policy is to allow big box retail businesses to locate in Taos as a means of preventing locals from shopping out of town. While the Town wants to promote local retail shopping, the Town also wants to commercial buildings to demonstrate the unique character of community.

"The area will profit most if the same standards of preservation to protect the character, architecture, and traditions are applied throughout. The standards to apply to residential, commercial and industrial developments. The greatest danger lies in undue commercialization, gaudy signs, and any slight indication that the visitor is not welcome." - **Town of Taos Comprehensive Plan. 1963.**

Therefore, the Town will amend the LUDC to require the development proposal of a big box to be accompanied by a TND Neighborhood Plan and a corresponding TND zoning ordinance.



This image shows what a large scale retail development could look like if developed according to the design standards of the TND District. It is clearly consistent with the Town's design tradition.

The Town will consider an amendment to the LUDC to allow “big box” development only after extensive public input and an analysis of the full economic, social and environmental impacts of allowing big box retail. The Town will:

1. Meet with land owners of properties that are most likely to be developed as big box retail; discuss the planning and zoning requirements of the TND,
2. Conduct public informational meetings to gather public input regarding the positive and negative impacts of big box,
3. Present the comments and concerns to the Planning & Zoning Commission, the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Town Council; request direction from the Town Council,
4. Customize the TND development standards; prepare the draft ordinance and conduct public hearings.

The ordinance should consider at least the following:

- Standards for subdivisions, mixed use requirements, new roadways and alleys, transit access, and minimum block sizes,
- Standards for appropriate design, size, and number of signs, as most big boxes include gigantic and unsightly signs,
- Prohibitions to overnight parking, particularly for recreational vehicles.
- Requirements to protect water resources from pollution originating in parking lots and rooftops,
- Conditions related to the aesthetic impacts of outdoor storage, employee areas, shopping cart storage, loading docks, temporary sales for outdoor displays and landscaping materials, etc.,
- Dedication requirements for public spaces such as a plaza, trail, or neighborhood park,
- If the new development replaces an existing building (e.g. – the existing Wal-Mart on Paseo del Pueblo Sure), a feasible plan for the adaptive re-use or demolition of the existing building (e.g. – a “white elephant” ordinance),
- Architectural standards for articulating the building facades, glazing, massing, and disguising the parking lot(s).
- Encouragement for the developer to build separate yet integrated buildings for potential stand-alone departments such as a pharmacy, jewelry, grocery, or apparel.

Finally, the Town will encourage the developer to select a site, if not already a priority to redevelop the existing site (e.g. – Wal-Mart), for infill development to add the requested retail space(s).

The Town will adopt the ordinance no later than 2014.

About the Arts & Cultural District

What is an Arts and Culture District?

- An Arts and Cultural District (ACD) is a recognized, branded, mixed-use, compact area in which a high concentration of arts and cultural facilities serve as the anchor.

What is the intent of an Arts and Culture District (ACD) designation?

- The formation of a district is intended to:
 - Support arts and cultural-based economic development
 - Form collaborative working relationships in a formal structure
 - Create and enhance an economic market niche
 - Leverage and enhance a community's creative economy
 - Target a specific district's artists, artisans, cultural entrepreneurs and cultural institutions

What are the benefits of receiving an ACD?

- The selected communities will receive two years of start-up services from the state Arts and Cultural District Council made up of cooperating statewide partners to:
 - Further define the Arts and Cultural District using Arts and Cultural assets as catalysts for downtown revitalization and community economic development
 - Promotion and assistance with the development of the Arts and Cultural district based on partnerships, to achieve financial sustainable for the ACD
- Assistance with receiving Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits and **doubling** of the New Mexico Historic Property Tax Credit
- Incentives for creating live/work spaces
- Specialized technical assistance in the field of planning and economic development
- Tourism Department support for marketing and promoting the ACD
- Access to the Main Street Capital Outlay Fund, New Mexico Historic Preservation Loan Fund, Cooperative Advertising funds, and the Main Street Revolving Loan Fund
- Potential locating of a Museum of New Mexico Foundation *New Mexico Creates* shop
- Potential access by participating artists and craftspeople to sell their creations on the Museum of New Mexico Foundation's e-commerce site
- New Mexico Finance Authority planning grants
- District featured on EDD website www.offtheroadnm.com



- What are the criteria selection and expectations for the ACD?
 - The area has a special coherence that is distinguished by physical and cultural resources that play a vital role in the life and development, including economic and cultural development, of a community
 - The proposed District will focus on
 - a cultural compound
 - a major art institution
 - art and entertainment businesses
 - an area with arts and cultural activities or cultural or artisan production
 - the promotion, preservation and educational aspects of the area and culture of the community
 - Contributing to the community through interpretive, educational, and recreational uses

The ACD Steering Committee governs and sets policy for the Arts and Cultural District based on its mission which includes cultural and heritage tourism and support of the workers, crafts people, artisans, and cultural enterprises and institutions within the district boundary.

Goal

Special districts are planned, designed, and developed according to their unique impacts, needs, and opportunities.

Policies

1. The Town recognizes that not all land uses are compatible within neighborhood environments but are still essential to the economy. These uses should be concentrated into a special district. Some examples include an industrial district, an airport, a college campus, or a regional sports complex. A special district is necessary to meet the needs of the entire region, not only the immediate neighborhood. However, light industrial uses have little or no impact outside of the building in which they are contained, and therefore can be embedded within neighborhoods so residents have easier access to employment.
2. The Town's recognizes the need for industrial uses. Some specific uses that are classified as "industrial" include storage and sales of building and construction materials, heavy equipment storage and repair, "junk yards" and industrial processes that cause odor, smoke, vibrations, or other offensive impacts outside of the building. While the Land Use Development Code and the Zoning Map include the M-1 (light manufacturing) zone, this area should be treated as a special district to accommodate the more intense impacts of industry.
3. The Taos Regional Airport is essential for a fully functioning community. It provides quick access to Taos for tourists and businesses. Additionally, many pilots simply enjoy the freedom of flying. The airport expansion will increase safety and enhance economic opportunity; however, the Town fully recognizes the impacts that the airport has to surrounding communities and will minimize and mitigate the impacts in full cooperation with Taos Pueblo, Taos County, the Federal Aviation Administration, and property owners.

Objectives

1. Adopt a Master Plan for the Industrial Districts

The Town's M-1 zone consists of 185 acres. The area is an assortment of land uses, including single-family residences, live/work units, and retail. The Vista Grande High School and the Eco Park are also located in the M-1 zone. Before additional uses are allowed and to avoid further incompatibility, the Town will create a master plan for the district to facilitate the industrial economy and manage the impacts of industrial land uses. The proper transitions from heavier industries to light industry and existing residential uses will be planned and designed to minimize non-conforming uses and provide for adequate infrastructure.

Other industrial areas within the Town's planning and platting jurisdiction also deserve the benefits of a master plan. These areas include the intersections of NM 64, 522, and 150 (also known as the "old blinking light") and the waste water treatment plant in Los Colonias.

The Town will complete the master plan no later than 2015.

2. Adopt a Master Plan for the Taos Regional Airport

The Town will work closely with the Airport Advisory Board, Taos Pueblo, Taos County Planning Department, and the Las Colonias / West Mesa Neighborhood Association in preparing a master plan for future improvements to the Taos Municipal Airport. The 2013 – 2017 Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan includes several planned improvements for the 832 acres (+/-), including:

1. Crosswind Runway & Fencing
2. Civil Air Patrol Hanger
3. T-Hanger Pad & General Aviation Parking Ramp
4. T-Hanger Pad
5. New Terminal Building for Crosswind Runway
6. Crosswind Runway Hangers
7. Taxiway Lights
8. NavAid Relocation
9. Snow Removal Equipment Building for Kodiak Snow Plow and Tractor

The airport has unique needs and impacts to surrounding properties that must be fully understood and mitigated. The land surrounding the airport is within the Town's Planning and Platting Jurisdiction, however, the County

has already completed a neighborhood overlay zone for the area. The Town will coordinate with the Las Colonias / West Mesa Neighborhood Association in preparing the Master Plan.

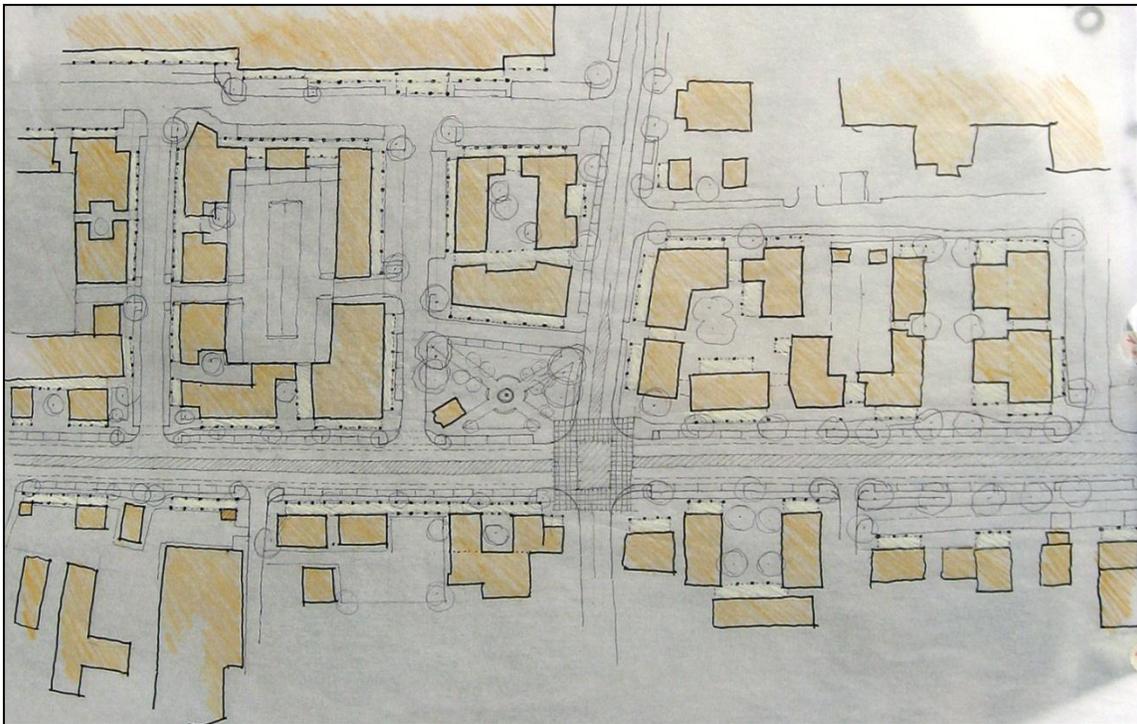
The Town will complete the master plan no later than 2013.

Goal

Development pays for itself.

Policies

1. The Town believes that tax payers should not be responsible for the infrastructure costs associated with private developments. Land developers and builders should be required to pay for the full cost of infrastructure, including water and sewer line extensions, roadway improvements, storm drainage facilities, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and acequia restoration.
2. Infrastructure improvements should encourage infill development and redevelopment of underutilized land. Infill and redevelopment accommodate more growth in an already developed area rather than using undeveloped land on the periphery of the community. Infill development takes priority over outward growth.



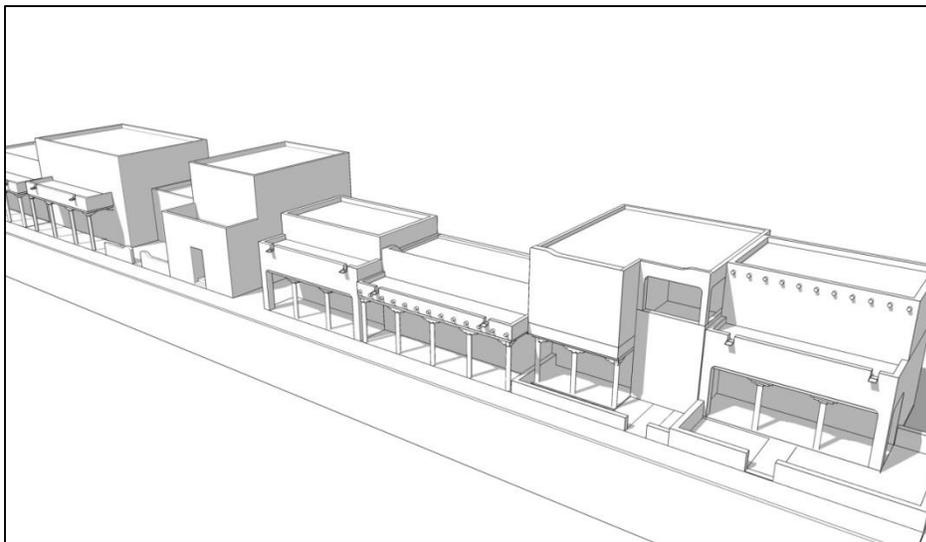
This rendering depicts infill development at the intersection of Paseo del Pueblo Sur and La Posta. Infill not only takes advantage of existing infrastructure, it can create memorable places with distinctive quality and urban design. PlaceMakers. 2007.



This series of images demonstrates the power of infill in creating memorable places with lasting value. The image on the top shows Paseo del Pueblo Sur as it appears today. As new development occurs and the roadway is redeveloped, the character of the street is transformed into a vibrant and appealing place. PlaceMakers. 2007.



3. Often called a “fix-it-first” policy, the Town will repair existing infrastructure prior to constructing new infrastructure. The annual Capital Improvements Plan budget and the Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan will prioritize repairs and upgrades to existing infrastructure in areas already developed over new construction, particularly if the new infrastructure is located on the fringe of the Town. This policy encourages infill and re-development. The values of redevelopment and infill properties are likely to increase as a result of higher infrastructure capacity. The higher property values will encourage land owners to develop, reducing development pressure on surrounding areas that possess open space, pristine views, and irrigated agriculture.
4. The Town will encourage the development of liner buildings to increase infill opportunities, mask unsightly parking lots, and create a safe and interesting environment for pedestrians.



This illustration shows the architectural diversity of liner buildings that conform to local architectural traditions. PlaceMakers. 2007

5. Annexing property that already receives Town services is another way that development can pay for itself; however, the Town, County, and property owners need to be fully informed about the costs and benefits of annexation. Town Council Resolution 09-04 (adopted in July 2009) articulates the Town’s policies toward annexation. The annexation policies state that County islands located within the Town’s boundaries complicate jurisdiction and provision of public services; it is of mutual interest and benefit for the Town of Taos and Taos County to jointly plan for the limits of the incorporation of the Town of Taos; and that an annexation policy for the Town of Taos is essential to the orderly development of the community and for land use planning in general.

Article 1 states "The Town shall not initiate the annexation of land through the arbitration method or by petition of the Municipal Boundary Commission without notifying the Chair of the Taos County Board of Commissioners prior to taking such action."

Article 2 states, "The Town of Taos Department of Community and Economic Development shall provide notification to the Taos County Director of Planning and Taos County Manager of any citizen petition to annex property into the municipal boundary of the Town of Taos prior to any formal action by the Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Commission."

The Community Economic Development Element outlines the Town's current annexation policy specific to providing water and sewer services to properties situated outside of the Town boundaries. It states, "The policy of the Town has been to allow properties outside of the municipal boundaries to receive water and/or sewer service provided that the Town Council approves the connection and that the recipient pay a fifty percent premium on the service or 1.5 times the standard rate. This practice does not capture the true costs of providing the service outside of the municipal boundary. A better practice would be to require annexation or approval of an annexation development agreement that includes a premium payment until the property can be annexed, prior to receiving Town services. A pre-annexation development agreement functions as a deferred annexation petition that guarantees that the property will annex to the Town once the Town limits reach the property and requires that any development on the property meet the Town standard. Annexation is a concern in the community and has not been supported by a very vocal portion of the community and aggressive annexation should not be pursued, however the practice of providing services to properties outside of the municipal boundary without requiring annexation or an annexation development agreement should be reconsidered."

The El Valle de los Ranchos and the El Prado Water and Sanitation District provide domestic water and sewer services to areas adjacent to the Town boundaries. In some circumstances it will be more economical for one of these organizations to provide water and sewer services or may already have plans to extend services. Regardless, the Town will discuss the feasibility of providing water and / or sewer services to these areas prior to formally annexing properties within the service areas of these organizations.

Objectives

1. Amend the Land Use Development Code to Incentivize Infill and Redevelopment

Infill is the “development that occurs on previously undeveloped lots within existing developed areas.” Redevelopment is defined as “development of a site that has been previously developed and is typically covered with impervious or compacted surfaces.” **Using Smart Growth Techniques as Stormwater Best Management Practices. US Environmental Protection Agency. pp. 37 & 48. EPA 231-B-05-002. December 2005.**

In 2007, the Town completed an inventory of all existing land uses within the Town limits and the former Extra-Territorial Zone. Although some development has occurred since 2007, twenty-four percent of all the land was classified as “undeveloped.”

Infill and redevelopment of land will:

- Recycle used land,
- Reduce development pressure on rural land,
- Avoid expenses for new infrastructure,
- Encourage walking and transit, thereby reducing vehicle miles traveled and traffic congestion; improve air quality
- Improve water quality,
- Use less energy,
- Clean-up contaminated properties.

“By one estimate, for every acre of land redeveloped brownfields, we save 4.5 acres of open space.” - **Getting to Smart Growth II: 100 More Policies for Implementation. Smart Growth Network and the International City/County Management Association. p. 52-53.**

The Town will amend the LUDC to offer specific incentives for infill and redevelopment:

- Provide density bonuses (e.g. – increase the minimum allowable lot coverage),
- Reduce or waive utility hook-up fees,
- Permit construction by right instead of requiring public hearings,

- Reduce parking lot requirements; allow and encourage shared parking (require a formal agreement to address number of spaces and maintenance and snow removal),
- Give the Code Administrator discretionary authority to approve reduced set-back requirements,
- Prepare and approve a map that identifies the specific properties that are eligible for these incentives; approve the map and incentives at a public hearing and neighborhood meetings to facilitate public participation,
- Allow landscaping in-lieu-of parking spaces or impose a fee in-lieu-of parking spaces; use the fees for storm water pollution protection and mitigation.

The Town must be flexible in applying development standards where there is discretion allowed so that redevelopment is financially feasible for the property owner. Stormwater, parking, and setback standards can complicate a redevelopment project to the point where it is more feasible for the owner to do nothing or seek another “greenfield” location.

The Planning and Zoning Department will present the proposed amendments and map to the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Town Council no later than 2013.

2. Identify Public Finance Alternatives to Pay for Infrastructure

A wide variety of public finance strategies will be researched to determine the most effective strategy to pay for infrastructure, transit, trails, renewable energy generation, civic spaces and land conservation within each neighborhood. These alternatives include at least the following:

- Impact Fees,
- Metropolitan Redevelopment Area,
- Tax Increment Development Districts,
- Business Improvement Districts,
- Economic Development Local Option Gross Receipts Tax,
- Quality of Life Local Option Gross Receipts Tax,
- Grants,
- Loans,
- Property Tax Reforms, and
- Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs.

A full outline and analysis of each alternative and its potential applications will be presented to the Town Council no later than 2014.

3. Annex Properties that Are Receiving Town Services; Implement the 2007 Annexation Strategic Planning Study.

Vision 2020 recommended annexation of several areas located within and adjacent to the Town of Taos. Since 1999 when Vision 2020 was adopted, several properties have been annexed and the Town and Taos County have abolished the Extra-Territorial Zone. This Land Use Element replaces the recommendations of Vision 2020 with regard to annexation to reflect the most current information and political climate. Also, the Town completed the Annexation Strategic Planning Study in 2007 while new infrastructure has expanded. The Community Economic Development Element includes an annexation policy which states "The Town of Taos will examine the possibility of annexing those properties where services are provided by the town in order to capture the revenues generated on those sites that will directly support the provision of said services."

Annexation is a complex legal, financial, and political issue. There are many circumstances where the Town and property owners would benefit from annexation. There are also reasons why annexation could be a bad idea.

Reasons for the Town to annex property:

- If the Town already provides infrastructure and community services but does not get fair share of property taxes or gross receipts taxes,
- The Town can protect water resources by providing domestic water and centralized sewer service,
- A boundary "clean-up" will resolve issues of police protection and confusion about zoning, building permit processes, and code enforcement,

Reasons for the Town to not annex a property:

- Additional costs for infrastructure improvements and maintenance,
- Additional costs for police and fire protection,
- Additional administrative costs for planning, zoning, building permits, and code enforcement.

Reasons for property owners to be annexed:

- Property owners can vote in municipal elections,
- A possible reduction in fire insurance rates depending on distance to a fire station and water services available for fire suppression,
- Avoid the on-going expenses of pumping the septic tank and maintaining a well,

- Greater certainty of jurisdiction with regard to planning, zoning, building permits, code enforcement, etc.
- The neighborhood association or property owner prefers to develop property under the Town's zoning classifications and development review process.

Reasons for property owners to not be annexed:

- Potential additional property taxes,
- Potential loss of investment of well and septic system.

The Planning and Zoning Department researched every annexation since the Town was originally incorporated in 1934. The research found several discrepancies between the survey plats, legal descriptions, and ordinances, resulting in a perplexing and highly irregular Town boundary. To resolve the discrepancies, the Town is pursuing annexation of 19 areas (consisting of 181 separate properties). These annexations will clean up the Town's boundaries and resolve the current ambiguity with regard to police protection, eligibility for municipal elections, and a wide variety of municipal services such as building permits, zoning review, and code enforcement. These properties are identified on **Map #10**.

The Town will annex these properties no later than 2012 through the Municipal Boundary Commission.

The 2007 Annexation Strategic Planning Study included 9 areas for consideration. These areas are also identified on **Map #10**. A summary of the issues related to each of the areas are outlined in the **Annexation Table**.

Goal

Development decisions are predictable, transparent, and inclusive.

Policies

1. Planning is most effective when there is clear community support for the plan and transparency in making development decisions. Transparency in the planning process increases accountability for elected officials, appointed officials, and staff who are expected to implement the plan. The Town believes that the entire community deserves the most accurate and timely information about land use and development decisions; therefore, all ages and cultures will be included in designing public outreach and education efforts.
2. The Town believes that the neighborhood is the basic organizing principle of land use planning and encourages the formation of neighborhood organizations. Neighborhood planning will be participatory and inclusive, allowing those most affected by development decisions to determine the character and magnitude of development that occurs within their neighborhood.
3. The Town will utilize the most popular and accessible formats of public participation and education, including email notices, print and radio media, web pages and blogs, social media, public hearings, charrettes, and open house events. The Town will be proactive in providing planning information to the public rather than assume the public will receive information by coincidence.
4. The Town recognizes that land use planning and development decisions have impacts beyond the Town's limits. No single government entity has full legal jurisdiction, political power, or funding capacity to implement all of the goals, policies, and objectives of (re)vision 2020. There are many factors that influence development decisions, including market forces and economic trends, budget limitations, and county, federal, state, and tribal plans and regulations. The Town's policy is therefore to collaborate with Taos County, Taos Pueblo, federal and state agencies as well as local community organizations in land use planning and development decisions.

Town Council Resolution 09-04 (adopted in July 2009) articulates the Town's policies toward land use planning in the Planning and Platting Jurisdiction with specific regard to Taos County. The resolution includes Article 3 relating to the Land Use Element. Article 3 states, "The Town of Taos Department of Community and Economic Development shall work with the Taos County Planning Department to develop those portions of the comprehensive land use element of the Town of Taos Comprehensive Plan that include the area within the Planning and Platting Jurisdiction provided under NMSA 1978 3-19-5 A (2). That portion of the land use element of the Town of Taos Comprehensive Plan exterior to the Town municipal boundary and within the Town's Planning and Platting Jurisdiction shall be submitted to the Taos County Board of Commissioners for their approval or suggested changes before it is adopted by the Town Council of the Town of Taos."

Objectives

1. Adopt the Land Use Map as an Ordinance

The ordinance will require any application for a zone change to be consistent with the allowed zones identified on the Land Use Plan (**Map#10**); otherwise, the applicant or stakeholder would have legal recourse to appeal the decision. Adopting the Land Use Plan map as an ordinance will give land owners greater predictability in the type of developments that can be permitted in their neighborhood. It will also give the Town the ability to be proactive in changing the zoning so that future development accomplishes the goals of (Re)vision 2020. It also increases the Town's ability to plan for infrastructure, open space, and recreation facilities.

The ordinance will specify that any amendment to the Land Use Element or the Land Use Map will require a preliminary and final public hearing before the Planning & Zoning Commission and at least one hearing before the Town Council. An amendment may be initiated by the Planning & Zoning Department, the Planning & Zoning Commission, the Town Council, or the public.

The ordinance will be adopted no later than June 2012.

2. Adopt an Ordinance that Requires Consistency Between Plans and Budgets.

The public deserves a high level of predictability in the outcomes of a plan and how the day to day decisions are made when compared to plans and budgets. The public spends countless hours at meetings during the planning process. They should feel confident about what can or cannot happen on adjacent properties. The consistency requirement is an excellent way to achieve predictability and accountability.

The consistency requirement is a legal requirement that development decisions be consistent with an adopted plan. The consistency requirement can be implemented in many ways. For example:

“The idea that local land-use decisions should be consistent with an independently adopted local comprehensive plan is a fundamental concept of planning practice.” - **Brian W. Ohm. *Practice Consistency.* ZONING PRACTICE. November 2005. American Planning**

- Staff reports for a proposed development would include a “finding of consistency,” requiring an evaluation of the proposed development against the goals, policies, and maps of (Re)vision 2020.

- Annual budgets adopted by the Town Council would need to be consistent with (Re)vision 2020. For example, the projects included in the annual Capital Improvements Plan would have to be consistent with the projects identified in the 5-year Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP). And the projects identified in the ICIP would have to be included in (Re)vision 2020.

- All plans adopted by the Town Council (e.g. - master plans, neighborhood plans, etc.) would include an analysis of consistency with (Re)vision 2020.

Many planners and lawyers are concerned that the consistency requirement increases litigation, but on the contrary, the consistency requirement will most likely decrease litigation because it will require more predictable decisions. It ensures that development decisions are not arbitrary or capricious, but they are grounded in the public interest and the articulated goals and policies of (Re)vision 2020.

The following plans will be included in the ordinance:

1. Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan. It will no longer be a wish list, but a living document that increases predictability and gives focus and priority to projects so they are more likely to receive the full funding needed,
2. Annual Budget, including the Capital Improvements Plan,
3. Neighborhood Plans,
4. Master Plans that are specific to particular geographic areas of the community (e.g. – the Historic District) or specific topics (e.g. –renewable energy)
5. Investments to extend public utilities and roadways

The ordinance will state very clearly that the Town Council will not approve a plan or budget if it is not found to be consistent with the goals, policies, and maps of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Town Council will adopt the resolution no later than December 2012.

3. Update the Land Use Element at Least Every Five Years

The plan will be more manageable and relevant when updated regularly. Updates will reflect the most current goals, policies, and objectives of the Town Council. The update to the Plan will be accompanied by a brief report. The report will include, at minimum, the following:

1. The number of objectives that have been accomplished, including a revised list of objectives to be implemented over the following five years;
2. The effectiveness of each policy;
3. The problems or new opportunities that have emerged;
4. The data that needs to be updated;
5. The recommended changes and updates to maps and other data.

An amendment to the Land Use Plan will be approved only by an ordinance of the Town Council, with all property owners within 300 feet of the property to be notified by certified letter. The request for amending the Land Use Map will be reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission at a public hearing.

The Town will update the goals, policies, and objectives no less than every 5-years, or more often if the Planning and Zoning Commission deems necessary, from the date the Land Use Element is adopted by the Town Council. The Planning and Zoning Commission will recommend updates to the Town Council.

4. Create a Comprehensive and Searchable Database that Utilizes Geographic Information System (GIS) for Decision Support and Monitoring Development Applications and Code Violations.

GIS is a very powerful tool for implementing (Re)vision 2020. It should be used to evaluate the infrastructure impacts of development projects, prioritize land conservation programs, evaluate infrastructure investments, refute "takings" claims, and generate maps and produce data for the public and other government agencies. GIS can be integrated with a searchable database so the staff can review prior approval dates of nascent development projects, identify code violations, create public notification letters, and a variety of time and location sensitive issues.

The database will be operational no later than 2014.

5. Approve a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with Taos County Regarding the Three Mile Planning & Platting Jurisdiction and the One Mile Concurrent Zoning Jurisdiction.

Both the Town and County share a need to manage growth in Taos Valley. State law permits the Town and County to agree to which government will be responsible for planning, platting, and zoning within three miles and one mile of the Town boundaries. **Table 1** offers a starting point for discussions between the Town and County. Managing development according to the Table may prove unwieldy, however and contrary to the goal of making development decisions more predictable, inclusive, and transparent. An alternative to the JPA is for the Town and County to approve an extra-territorial zone and to appoint individuals to an extra-territorial zoning commission. The ETZ may be the most effective way to manage growth. The Town's Planning & Zoning Department will outline the potential costs and benefits of each alternative to the Town Council and the Board of County Commissioners.

The Town and County will sign an agreement (or agree not to agree) by the end of 2014.

Table 5. Implementation

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GOALS	OBJECTIVES	SCHEDULE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	RESOURCES NEEDED	DELIVERABLES OR INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
Natural resources are protected from inappropriate development.	1. Provide public education and design assistance to developers.				
	2. Amend the High Performance Building Ordinance (HPBO) to improve the review process for commercial buildings under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design - Building Design and Construction (LEED BD + C).				
	3. Adopt a green infrastructure map and associated land dedication and riparian protection ordinances.				
	4. Adopt and implement the recommendations of the climate adaptation plan.				
	5. Update the 2011 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory.				
	6. Update, adopt, and implement the 2011 draft Town of Taos 40-Year Water Plan.				
Agricultural land is in productive use and protected from inappropriate development.	1. Amend the Land Use Development Code to protect agricultural lands and encourage agriculture and gardening.				
	2. Adopt a Food Security Master Plan.				
	3. Adopt an Acequia Restoration Plan.				
	4. Facilitate economic and business development initiatives that support the full spectrum of the agriculture system in Taos, including the growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, consuming, and disposing of food.				
Mixed use, walkable neighborhoods are the organizing principle of planning.	1. Adopt neighborhood plans and form based codes.				
	2. Adopt a Downtown Master Plan				
	3. Amend the LUDC's development standards for "large scale" (e.g. - Big Box) development.				
Special districts are planned, designed, and regulated to meet the unique needs and character of the district.	1. Adopt a Master Plan for the industrial districts				
	2. Adopt a Master Plan for the Taos Regional Airport				

Development pays for itself.	1. Amend the Land Use Development Code to incentivize infill and redevelopment				
	2. Identify public finance alternatives to pay for infrastructure				
	3. Annex properties that are receiving Town services; implement the 2007 Annexation Strategic Planning Study.				
Development decisions are predictable, transparent, and inclusive.	1. Adopt the Land Use Map as an ordinance				
	2. Adopt an Ordinance that requires consistency between plans and budgets.				
	3. Update the Land Use element at least every five years.				
	4. Create a comprehensive and searchable database that utilizes Geographic Information System (GIS) for decision support and monitoring development applications and code violations.				
	5. Approve a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with Taos County regarding the three mile Planning & Platting Jurisdiction and the one mile Concurrent Zoning Jurisdiction.				

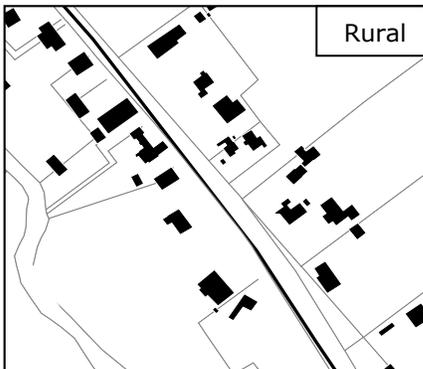
Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan organizes the Town into neighborhoods. Each neighborhood will have its own identity and be treated as a complete unit. Corridors connect neighborhoods as well as define neighborhood boundaries. A corridor can be a natural preserve or a transportation corridor. Each neighborhood includes a spectrum of land uses. The spectrum runs from rural to sub-urban, urban, and urban center. Instead of defining each individual parcel as residential, commercial, or industrial, the spectrum distinguishes each land use by its overall character. This method of defining each land use allows a more meaningful analysis of how each neighborhood should (or should not) develop. It also recognizes that each neighborhood should develop as mix of land use instead of homogenous subdivisions.

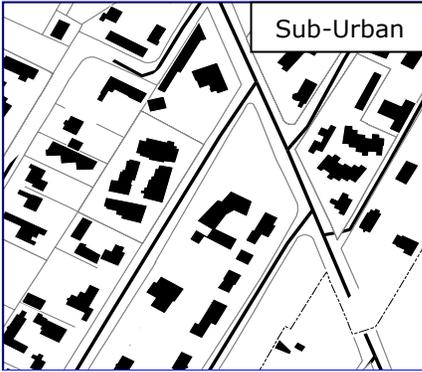
Map #11 shows the existing land uses within the 3-mile planning and platting jurisdiction. The land use pattern does not create complete neighborhoods but illustrates the vast amount of sub-urban subdivisions which encroach on rural communities.

Each neighborhood is organized to include the following land uses:

Development Preserve - The development preserve consists of lands that are (or should be) protected from development because of their environmental value. It includes conservation easements, wetlands, rivers and riparian habitats, arroyos and floodplains, and acequias. These lands provide critical environmental services to the community. They protect water resources, air quality, provide habitat for wildlife, scenic beauty, and recreational opportunities (e.g. – hiking and landscape photography).

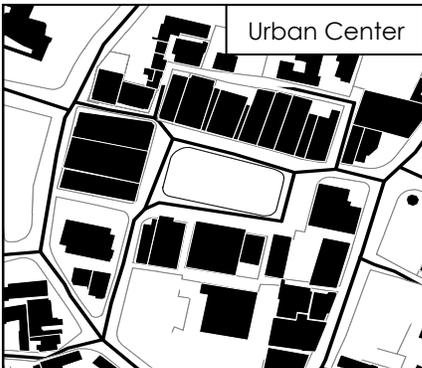


Rural - Rural land uses are defined by low-density, single family detached residences with large set-backs where residences are mixed with agriculture and ranching. Barns, stables, and storage are common. It also includes occasional commercial, civic, and industrial uses such as gas stations, churches, sand and gravel mining, and bed & breakfast operations. Large lots and suertes are common.



Sub-Urban - Includes medium-density, single-family detached residences with lot sizes between $\frac{1}{2}$ acre and $\frac{1}{4}$ acre. A guest house or a studio apartment may be found on the same lot as the primary residence. Some commercial uses and multi-family residential development may be found, but typically only on intersections. It includes some home occupations and live / work units.

Urban - Includes a larger variety of higher density single-family residential units as well as multi-family residential developments; duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, courtyard housing, and live / work units are present; a wider variety of commercial developments and community services are available on intersections.



Urban Center - Includes high intensity commercial activity, retail, and office developments mixed with multi-family residential uses. It includes townhomes, apartments and attached buildings; buildings often have shared walls with the parking lot located behind the building.

Civic – A civic space is a property that is owned, developed, and managed for public use. It includes open space, public buildings, parks, plazas, playgrounds, cemeteries. The increased density in urban centers require increased access to civic spaces (plazas, formal gardens, active play and passive play parks & playgrounds) due to smaller yards. Different types of civic spaces are appropriate for each type of land use. For example, a small plaza or a small playground is appropriate for an urban land use. Undeveloped open space is most appropriate for rural land uses. A park or sports field is most appropriate in the sub-urban land uses.

TND & CLD - The Land Use Plan map identifies areas as a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) or a Clustered Land Development (CLD). These districts contain all of the land uses for a complete neighborhood. **Table #6** defines and describes the TND and CLD:

TND District		CLD District	
DEFINITION			
A type of urban neighborhood that allocates a mixture of districts and is limited in area by walking distance or density. An example of a TND is downtown Taos.		A type of rural neighborhood that allocates a mixture of districts, and is limited in area by walking distance but not density. An example of a CLD is Arroyo Seco.	
APPROPRIATENESS			
The TND District is most appropriate for larger areas of undeveloped land that is surrounded by existing development.		The CLD District is most appropriate for rural areas that are at risk of being overcome by suburban sprawl.	
ALLOCATION OF DISTRICTS			
Preserve	no minimum	Preserve	no less than 50% of Preserve and / or Rural
Rural	no minimum	Rural	no less than 50% of Preserve and / or Rural
Sub-Urban	between 10% and 30%	Sub-Urban	between 10% and 40%
Urban	between 30% and 60%	Urban	between 5% and 20%
Urban Center	between 5% and 30%	Urban Center	not permitted

Zoning a neighborhood to the TND or the CLD requires approval of a neighborhood plan. The neighborhood plan would include the location of the proposed land uses according to the required allocations, identification of the locations and types of proposed thoroughfares and public spaces, and plans for infrastructure improvements.

All development applications will be evaluated according to the standards of the existing zoning, but in the event of a request for changing the existing zoning, only the following zoning classification would be allowed within each of the land uses. Alternatively, a land owner, neighborhood association, or another party (including the Town) can update the Land Use Element to change the Districts to allow the desired zone. All areas of Taos are eligible for the TND District zoning.

Table #7. Land Use Plan Zoning Matrix

		Land Use Designation				
		Rural	Sub Urban	Urban	Urban Center	Special District
Zone	ARO	x				
	RA-20	x				
	RA-10	x				
	RA-6	x				
	RA	x				
	R-1	x	X			
	R-2		X			
	R-3		X			
	R-4		X			
	R-6		X			
	R-14		X**	X		
	C-1		X**	X		
	C-2			X	X	
	CBD				X	
	HCPD				X	X
	M-1					X
PUD	X	X	X	X	X	

* allowed only if accompanied by a PUD or RHL overlay zone

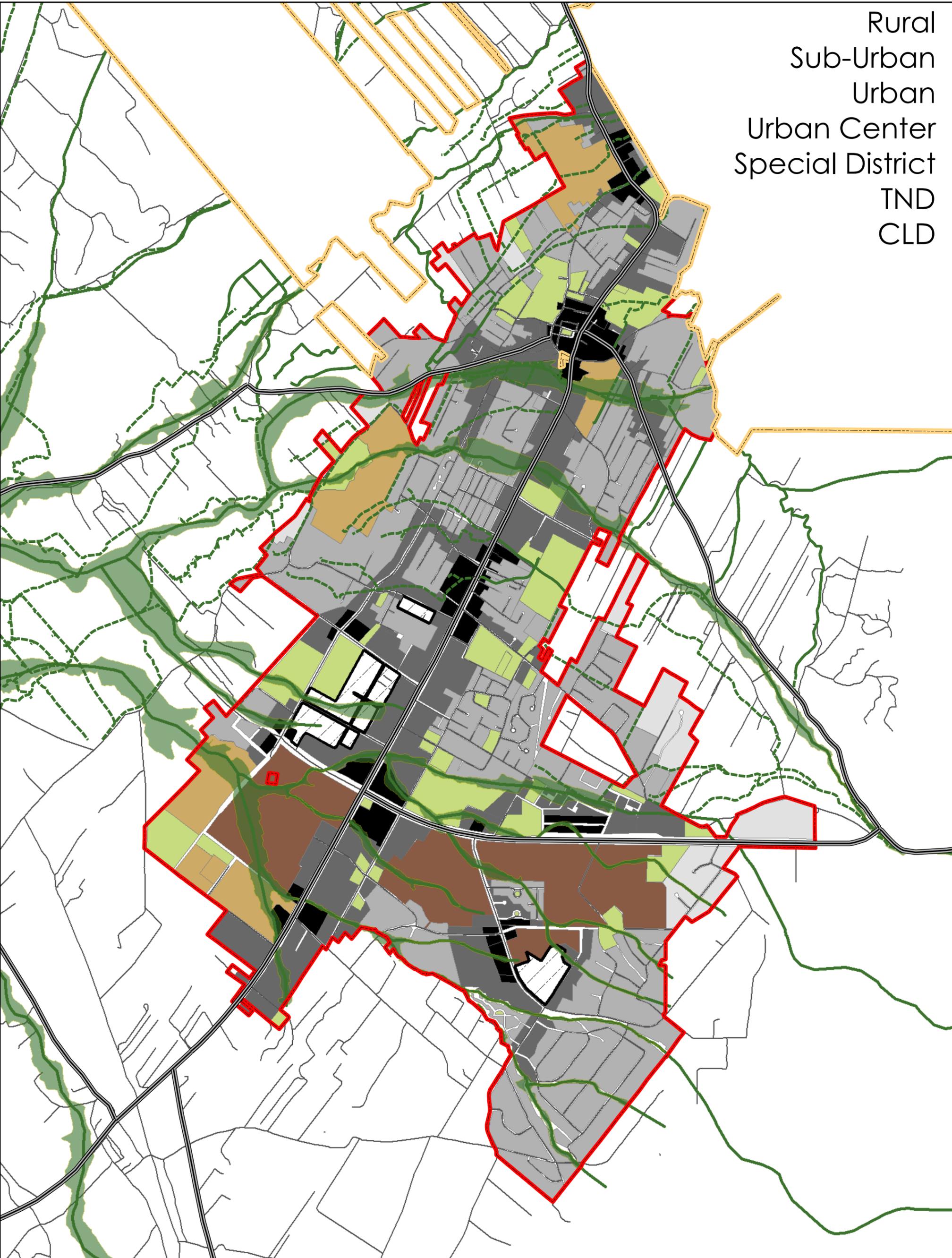
** allowed only on intersections of existing or proposed thoroughfares, provided that the proposed development is supported by a traffic study

The following criteria were used to identify the land uses in the Land Use Plan:

1. existing land uses & corridors
 2. existing density & parcel size
 3. adopted plans (e.g. – Chamisa Verde Neighborhood Plan)
 4. existing infrastructure
 5. natural resources
 6. smart growth principles
 7. public input
-

Preferred Districts

- Rural
- Sub-Urban
- Urban
- Urban Center
- Special District
- TND
- CLD



Conclusion

The main challenges to accomplish a sustainable future are to introduce higher density developments into existing suburbs, to protect rural landscapes at the fringes of Town, to make transit and other transportation alternatives more viable, and to make development decisions that are consistent with the goals, policies, and objectives of (Re)vision 2020.

One of the common threads throughout the Land Use Element is to promote greater density. The arguments against density are understandable. Many people oppose density because it can ruin views, causes traffic, and damage natural resources. But the benefits of increasing the development density far outweigh the costs, provided that the density is located in the right place and it is designed properly. The Land Use Element will certainly accomplish these requirements if it is implemented in a timely and deliberate manner.

Some of the benefits are higher density development are:

- It promotes affordable housing (national and regional trends show a growing market for higher density),
- It creates a critical mass of housing (consumers) for neighborhood commercial development (grocery store, video rentals, pharmacy, restaurant, coffee shops, etc.), and community services (day care, parks, post offices),
- It creates opportunities for transit (bus stops), and reduces dependency on cars for youth and elderly while reducing the amount of time we spend in our cars,
- It relieves pressure in the real estate market to develop land in rural communities where suburban development is undesirable and not sustainable,

Density, if properly designed, can:

- Help balance the Town budget
- Transform declining neighborhoods into lively places
- Reduce traffic congestion
- Provide housing options within financial reach of working people
- Preserve land for parks and outdoor recreation

Accomplishing the goals of (Re)vision 2020 requires a deliberate and collaborative effort by the entire community. Everyone has a role to play:

The role of Town staff:

- Commit time and research to accomplish the objectives
- Reach out to the public and elected officials for meaningful discourse
- Provide regular updates to the community regarding the plan
- Seek training and technical assistance whenever available

The role of elected and appointed officials:

- **Change the regulatory climate**
 - Update zoning and land use regulations to be consistent with (Re)vision 2020
- **Change the economic climate**
 - Provide density bonuses
 - Incentivize the type of development we want
- **Change the dialogue**
 - Educate citizens – density brings new amenities, new jobs, new tax revenues, new opportunities
- **Change the political climate**
 - Build citizen support for higher-density growth by creating a community-based vision for growth
 - Assure citizens you will insist on quality

The role of the business community:

- Attend **planning meetings**
- **Lobby** for zoning changes that allow higher density and mixed uses
- **Locate** businesses near public transportation and existing infrastructure
- **Encourage employees** to actively support proposals for higher-density housing near jobs and transportation

The role of the public.....

- **Get educated** about the importance of compact, mixed use development and spread the word.
- **Get involved** early in comprehensive community planning.
 - Urge local leaders to support a community-based vision for the future
- **Attend planning meetings** and insist on:
 - Quality design that fits in with the community
 - A proven track record of success
 - An integrated transportation system

With federal and state budgets diminishing, the Town will need to find its own sources of funding for infrastructure and public services. It becomes more important for the Town to be ever more efficient with its investments.

The Land Use Element establishes the long term goals, policies, and objectives for land use and development; it includes maps that identify areas that are intended for higher density development and those areas intended for preservation; it gives land owners, businesses, and residents a sense of confidence in the future development of their neighborhood. Most importantly, it keeps the Town accountable for development decisions.

Taos is indeed a great place. However, the things that make Taos great are at risk. The landscapes, cultures, and history make Taos an attractive place for visitors from all across the world. Many people who visit Taos decide to stay, build a house, and retire. Others have lived in Taos all their lives and intend to stay forever. Every person that moves to Taos and every child born here brings new demands on local government. The need for managing growth, balancing budgets, and preserving the unique character of Taos is never more apparent than now, and the decisions made now impact the livability of Taos far into the future.

THE TAOS INDEX

671,000 tons of carbon sequestered from national forests in Taos County;

427,276 tons of carbon emissions in 2009

Number of kilowatts of solar electric power that is produced at Town Hall:
51; percent of total Town Hall electricity demand = 50%

Tons of carbon dioxide emissions from the average resident of Taos County
in 2009: 12.7.

Average in US: 27.2

Number of town-owned buildings that received an energy and water audit in
2010: 17

Minimum number of homes needed to meet the current demand for
affordable housing: 294

Priority number of the Artspace affordable housing for artists in the Town of
Taos Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan: 6; priority number 1:
Alexander Gusdorf ECO Park Phases II and III

Average price for a single family home in Taos between 2006 and 2010:
\$299,900.

Percent of all Taos households that can afford the average priced house in
Taos: 15

Average gallons of water used per day per person in the Town of Taos: 192;
average in US: 179

Kilowatt hours of electricity consumed by the average person per year in the
US in 2009: 95,688.

Taos County: 40,634

The minimum Home Energy Rating System score required for all new homes
built in the Town of Taos: 70; HERS rating for the average new home built in
the US = 100. Average existing home in the US: 120.

Average number of acres the Taos Land Trust has conserved per year since
1993: 422

Percent of Taos County residents considered obese in 2006: 17.1

Percent of youth that considered themselves overweight or obese in the
same year: 28.9

Percent increase in the cost of fresh fruit since 1989: 77

Increase decrease in the cost of fats and sugars since 1989:33

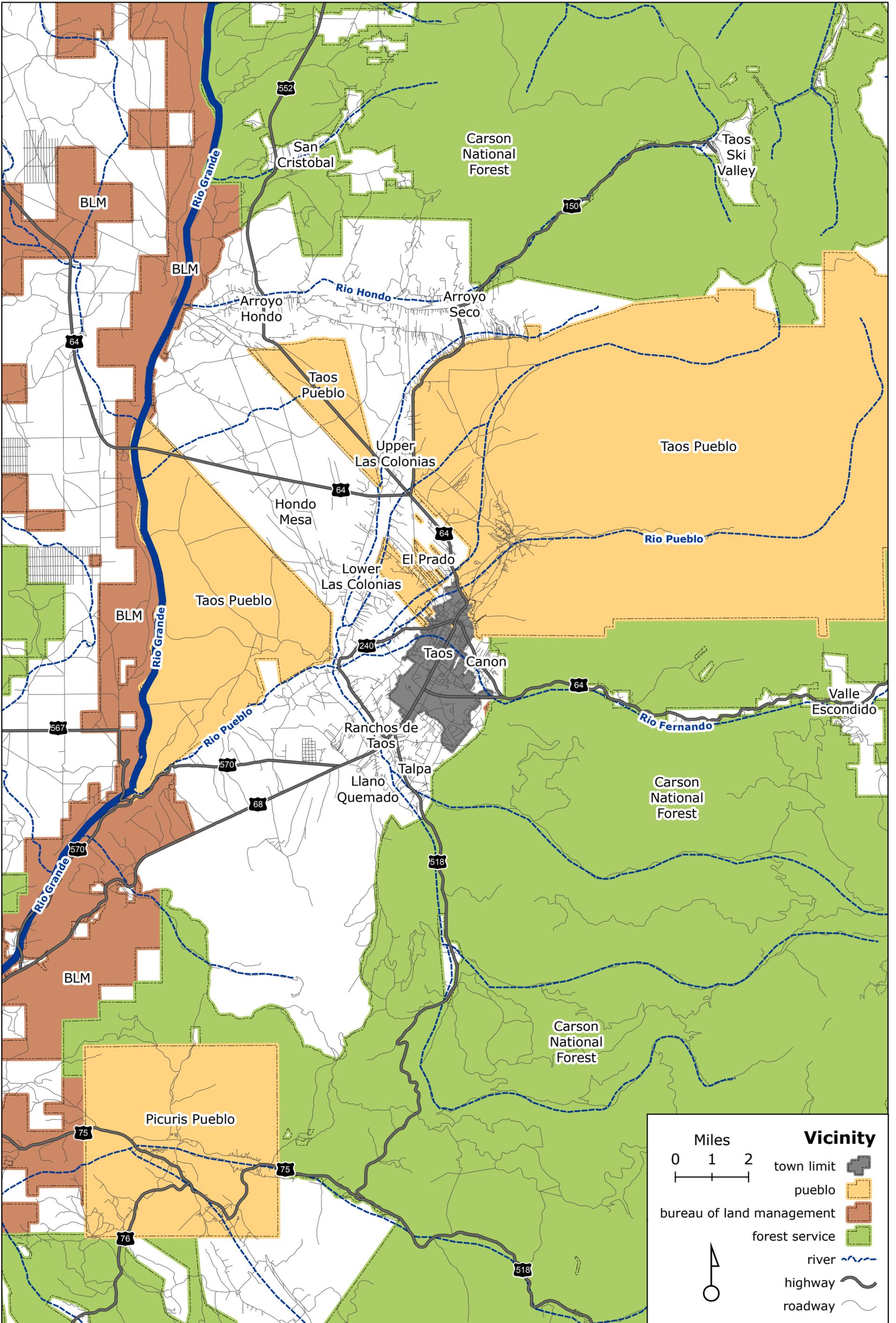
Percent of food consumed in Taos County that is grown in New Mexico: 3

Number of days the Taos food supply would last if there were a catastrophe:
4-5

Taos County suicide rate between 2002 and 2009:29.8 (per 100,000)

New Mexico rate in the same period: 18.0

nationwide: 10.9



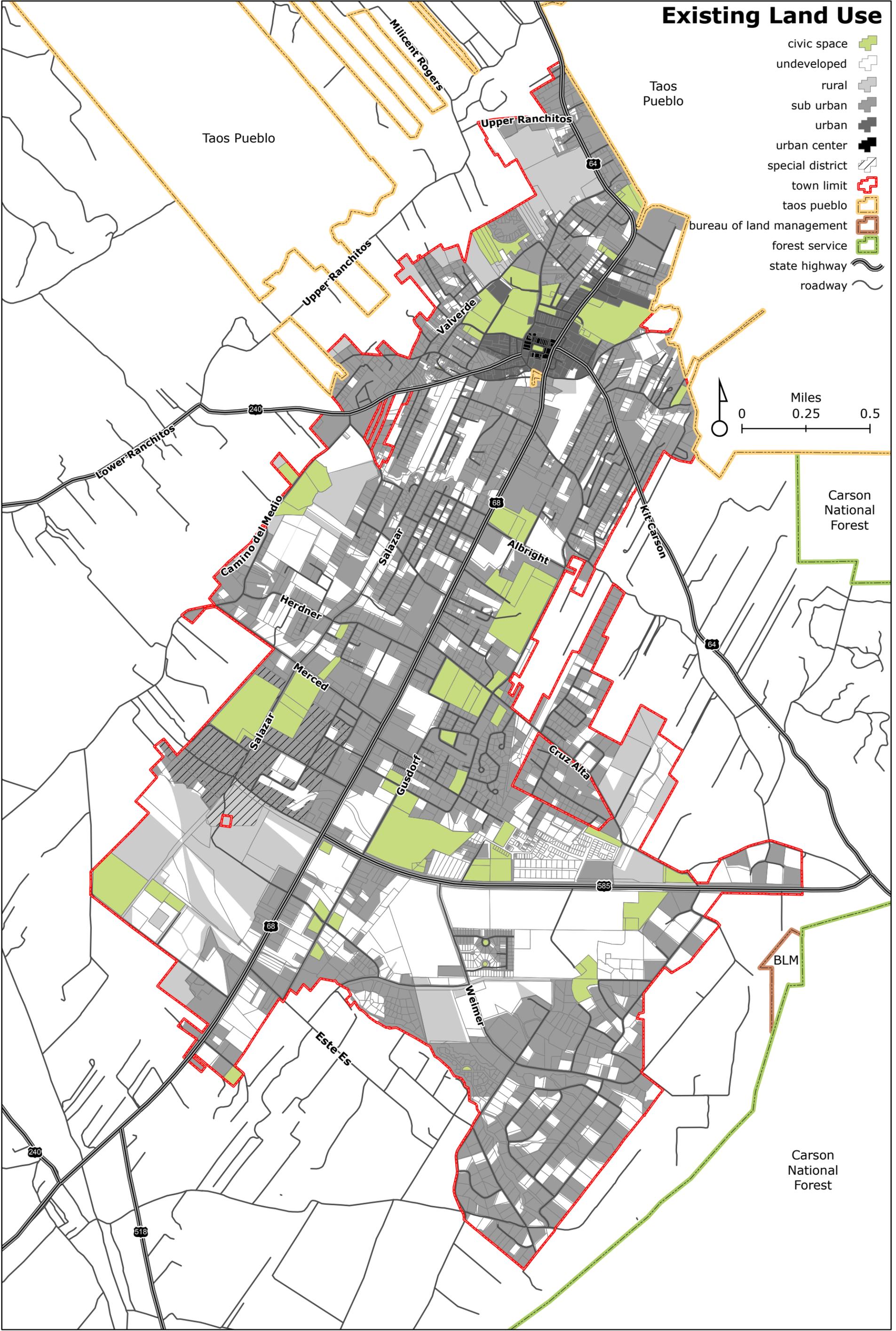
Miles
 0 1 2

Vicinity

- town limit 
- pueblo 
- bureau of land management 
- forest service 
- river 
- highway 
- roadway 

Existing Land Use

- civic space 
- undeveloped 
- rural 
- sub urban 
- urban 
- urban center 
- special district 
- town limit 
- taos pueblo 
- bureau of land management 
- forest service 
- state highway 
- roadway 



Building Density and Development Patterns

- town limit 
- land parcel 
- Building 
- state highway 
- roadway 
- taos pueblo 
- bureau of land management 
- forest service 

