Town of Taos,  
New Mexico  
400 Camino de La Placita  
Taos, New Mexico 87571  
505 751-2000  

The Hon. Frederick A. Peralta, Mayor  

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TOWN OF TAOS, NEW MEXICO
RESOLUTION NO. 99-6

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE VISION 2020 MASTER PLAN.

WHEREAS, As provided by NMSA 1978, §3-19-9 through 3-19-12 (1993), the Town of Taos has the authority to adopt a Master Plan for the physical development of the municipality and the planning and platting jurisdiction of the municipality in which the planning commission's judgement bears a relationship to the planning of the municipality;

WHEREAS, The Vision 2020 Master Plan has been developed with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the municipality which will, in accordance with existing and future needs, best promote health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development;

WHEREAS, Under New Mexico case law, Dugger v. City of Santa Fe, 114 N.M. 47, 834 P.2d 424 (Ct. App. 1992), "the New Mexico Legislature intended any master plan adopted by a municipality to be advisory in nature";

WHEREAS, The implementation of the Vision 2020 Master Plan is dependent on available funding and resources and the authority of elected and appointed officials of the Town of Taos;

WHEREAS, Due to the long-range nature of master plans, the planning commission may amend, extend or add to the Vision 2020 Master Plan or carry any part or subject matter into greater detail;

WHEREAS, The Town of Taos Planning Department Staff has based the Vision 2020 Master Plan on careful and comprehensive studies of existing conditions, probable future growth of the Town of Taos, and extensive and diverse citizen input from Taos area residents;

WHEREAS, The Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Commission has recommended to the Town of Taos Council that the Vision 2020 Master Plan be adopted to include all sections of said plan, including Section I/Introduction, Section II/Land Use, Section III/Agricultural Lands and Open Space Preservation, Section IV/Economic Development, Section V/Community Design, Section VI/Infrastructure, Section VII/Housing, Section VIII/Community Facilities, and Section IX/Conclusion, together with the accompanying maps, charts, descriptive and explanatory matter, and the attached errata sheet; and

WHEREAS, The Town of Taos may make changes necessary to correct grammar, spelling or enhance the appearance of the Vision 2020 Master Plan between the date of approval of the Plan by the Town of Taos Council and the date of final printing. These changes will not alter the substantive content of the Vision 2020 Master Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the Town of Taos, meeting in Regular Session, and after having held a public hearing on the matter,

1. That the Vision 2020 Master Plan and errata sheet recommended for approval by the Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Commission are hereby approved and adopted by the Town of Taos Council;

2. That all actions (not inconsistent with the provisions of this Resolution) heretofore taken by the Town of Taos Council and its officials, including the Vision 2020 public participation process, the publication of notices, and the determination therein provided, are hereby ratified, approved and confirmed;
3. That a copy of the Vision 2020 Master Plan shall be available for inspection and purchase for a reasonable charge at the Town of Taos Planning Department during normal and regular business hours at Town Hall, 400 Camino de la Placita, Taos NM 87571. The final version of the Vision 2020 Master Plan will be available by March 31, 1999, and a draft version will be available until such time;

4. That this proposed Resolution 99-6 shall affect take upon repeal of Ordinance 86-1.

ADOPTED this 16th day of February by the following vote:

Council Member Erlinda Gonzales

Council Member Bobby Duran

Council Member Meliton Struck

Council Member Frank Cruz

FREDERICK A. PERALTA, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Lorraine Gallegos, Town Clerk

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM:

Tomas R. Benavidez, Town Attorney
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OUR GOALS FOR THE YEAR 2020...

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

Agricultural and Open Space Preservation
Taos' quality of life is maintained by preserving and enhancing our cherished open spaces and agricultural lands.

Economic Development
The Taos economy is diverse, self-sustaining, and provides rewarding jobs that pay well.

Community Design
Taos retains its small town character and sense of community, respects and maintains cultural diversity, and builds upon history and traditions while utilizing appropriate technologies.

Infrastructure
Community infrastructure is of high quality and accessible to all.

Housing
All Taos families and households have the opportunity to own quality, affordable housing.

Community Facilities
Community facilities are of high quality and available to all, allowing residents to enjoy life-long quality education and recreation.

VISION STATEMENT:

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, Taoseños will flourish in their home community.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Thank you to the Town of Taos and Taos County residents who made the Vision 2020 Master Plan a reality.

Alexander, Peter
Alire, Theresa
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Vigil, Jenina
Vigil, Natalie
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Webster, Diane
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Wilton, Richard
Wittenberg, Susan
Woodall, Bill
Woolridge, Timothy
Yachinich, Ron
Yellin, Lara
Zamora, Luis

Participants' names were taken from sign-in sheets. Unreadable names were omitted.
SECTION I
INTRODUCTION

The 1999 Town of Taos Vision 2020 Master Plan is a long-range guide for the physical development of the community.
The 1999 Town of Taos Vision 2020 Master Plan is a long-range plan for the next 21 years. It is comprehensive in that it covers an entire geographic planning area, and encompasses all the functions that make a community work, including land use, transportation, housing, and recreation. The Master Plan is a guide for decision makers, including Town of Taos Planning Commissions, the Town Council, the Mayor, the Town Manager, and Planning Staff. Its policies identify community desires and indicate how local government will act to achieve those desires. Most importantly, the Vision 2020 Master Plan is a physical plan. While reflecting social and economic values, it guides the physical development of the community by addressing the locations of various land uses, the design and densities of buildings, and the preservation of natural resources and important lands.

The Vision 2020 Master Plan is organized into sections. Section I/Introduction provides a general context for the Plan. It includes an Executive Summary; the boundaries of and authority for the Plan; a description of the community-based planning process, relevant plans, ordinances and studies; and a list of Town of Taos commissions and boards. The Introduction also provides information necessary to understand the Taos community and its need for planning, such as area geology, geography, history, community demographics, growth trends, and urban form. The final section of the Plan, the Conclusion, summarizes the need for the Plan and contains a glossary of terms.

Sections II through VIII are plan elements common to most Master Plans. Much overlap occurs among the plan elements, as they are interrelated components of a community’s development. Land Use encompasses the physical plan for the community by showing how and where the planning area will develop. In many ways, the other plan sections are sub-elements of Land Use that also reflect strong social and economic values. Agricultural Lands and Open Space Preservation addresses the importance of maintaining Taos’ agricultural fields, open spaces, breathtaking landscape, and precious natural resources. Economic Development lays the groundwork for diversifying the Taos economy and enhancing the economic opportunities that exist in Taos today. Community Design aims to make the appearance of buildings, streets, signs, and other physical elements reflect Taos’ rich history, small-town character, and sense of community. Infrastructure addresses the need to expand and improve public utilities and transportation to meet the growing population. Housing focuses on providing affordable, safe, and beautiful places to live that enhance community and family interaction. Community Facilities expresses the need to plan for new and improve existing educational and recreational facilities, including parks, recreation centers, schools, and the library.

Sections II through VIII are organized similarly. Each contains an inventory of existing conditions - a virtual snapshot of "where Taos is now." Existing conditions describe current and proposed Town facilities and policies and challenges to be met. Each plan section also includes goals, objectives, policies, and implementation. Goals for each plan element are conceptual ideas of how the community wants Taos to be in the year 2020. Objectives describe ways in which we can achieve the goals. Policies are the specific action steps that the Town needs to take in order to reach the goals and the vision of the Master Plan. Finally, implementation reorganizes the policies to formulate a comprehensive action plan that Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department Staff can follow in the years to come. Ranging from broad and conceptual to specific and action-oriented, the goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures are all needed to successfully achieve the Vision Statement for the Vision 2020 Master Plan.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 1999 Town of Taos Vision 2020 Master Plan is a vision plan whose goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures were developed from extensive and diverse citizen participation in the Town of Taos and Taos County. The major themes expressed in the Vision 2020 Master Plan are:

- Growth and development that protects Taos’ landscape and natural resources.
- Diversification and improvement of the economy.
- Preservation of open space and agricultural lands.
- Enhancement of quality of life, small town character, and sense of community through the use of history and traditions, appropriate technologies, and design.
- Provision of community facilities, infrastructure, housing, and other opportunities that allow a diverse community of various cultures, classes, and ages to flourish.

Because New Mexico case law considers master plans to be advisory and non-binding, they need to be implemented through regulations and ordinances to have equal standing with local laws. As a result, the policies identified in the Vision 2020 Master Plan have been structured into a five-year implementation plan (Figure 1) that includes the revision of existing and the creation of new ordinances and regulations. The following initiatives will be undertaken to make the vision of the Master Plan a reality:

- Updates of the Town of Taos’ Land Use Development Code to revise the zoning map, strengthen natural resource protection, and enhance community character through performance-based community design overlay zones.
- Updates of existing and creation of new ordinances for landscaping, dark skies, signage, and noise.
- Annexation of rapidly developing areas that need centralized water and sewer.
- Master Planning to create a network of open spaces, agricultural lands, parks, and recreational areas that will encourage non-motorized transportation through trail linkages.
- Master Planning for transportation, including relief routes, public transit, and multi-use trails.
- Master Planning, on-going education, and support to diversify the Taos economy and attract small, sustainable industries with high-paying jobs.
- Regional planning through the creation of Intergovernmental Council (IGC) Task Forces.
- Inclusionary zoning, land banking, land purchases, and the creation of a Community Housing Development Organization (CHODO) to increase the availability of affordable housing.
- Resource allocation for community facilities.
- Capital improvements planning, special assessment districts, and franchise agreements to expand and improve infrastructure.
- Support for the formation of neighborhood associations and neighborhood-specific ordinances and regulations.
- Update of the building code to encourage the use of solar energy and sustainable technologies.
- Development of a one-stop shop for building permits.
- An educational campaign to keep Taos clean and beautiful.
### 5-Year Implementation Plan

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Figure 1
The policies identified in the Vision 2020 Master Plan have been structured into a five-year implementation plan.
PLANNING AUTHORITY AND PLANNING AREA BOUNDARIES

The Town of Taos Council, the governing body of the Town of Taos, has the authority to adopt plans for the physical development of areas within the Town's Planning and Plating Jurisdiction, which extends three miles outside of the Town's municipal boundaries on private land. Within this jurisdiction, municipalities are empowered by state statute (Section 3-19-5 NMSA 1978) to plan, review, and approve subdivisions within the unincorporated areas of surrounding counties. However, the County retains sole authority for zoning and regulation within a municipality’s Planning and Platting Jurisdiction. As a result, the Town of Taos has chosen not to master plan its Planning and Platting Jurisdiction, but to include the input of residents in this jurisdiction in this Master Plan.

The planning area for the Town of Taos Vision 2020 Master Plan includes the Town’s municipal limits and the Extra Territorial Zone (ETZ) which extends approximately one mile on private land outside of Town limits. Empowered by Section 3-2102.B. (6) NMSA, the Town of Taos established extra territorial authority with Taos County through a Joint Powers Agreement in August 1978. Ordinance No. 660, establishing the ETZ, was adopted later in October of 1979. In the Extra Territorial Zone, the Town and County share authority for planning, subdivision, and zoning. The two local governments appoint commissioners to the ETZ Commission, which recommends land use policies and development controls and oversees development to ensure compatibility with local plans, policies, and ordinances for the ETZ.

The Town of Taos is surrounded by Taos Pueblo, federal Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands. Taos Pueblo retains authority over the lands it owns in fee, just as the federal and state governments retain authority over the lands they own (including national parks and monuments, courthouses, post offices and state offices, parks, and universities). The Town of Taos possesses limited jurisdiction on sovereign, state, and federal lands when concerns of health, safety, and welfare are in question. Figure 2 depicts the Town of Taos limits, ETZ, and Three-Mile Planning and Plating Jurisdiction, as well as Forest Service and Taos Pueblo land boundaries.

The 1999 Town of Taos Vision 2020 Master Plan supersedes the 1986 Town of Taos Comprehensive Plan. Based on a 20 year timeline, it is intended to be a flexible, living document that may be amended in subsequent years as the needs of the Town of Taos change. Implementation of this plan is dependent on available funding and resources.
Figure 2
This Vicinity Map of the Taos area depicts the Town limits, ETZ, and Three-Mile Planning and Platting Jurisdiction.
VISION 2020 PLANNING PROCESS

The Town of Taos Vision 2020 Master Plan is, first and foremost, a community-based plan. Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department Staff and Consultants developed the Plan entirely from the input of diverse Town of Taos and Taos County residents. Extensive citizen input was solicited through various community events whose results were used to draft and continuously revise the contents of the Master Plan. The planning process aimed to provide citizen participants with the information necessary to make informed choices about the future of the Town of Taos. Over 350 community members participated in Vision 2020 events during 1998 (Figure 3). These community members were both male and female, represented various lengths of residency, age, and ethnic groups, and lived in evenly distributed areas of the Town of Taos and Taos County. Within such a diverse group of participants, a great deal of consensus about how to make Taos a better place to live made it possible to develop a truly community-based Master Plan.

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<th>What We Did</th>
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<td>Conducted survey and met with community groups.</td>
<td>Formed a steering committee of key stakeholders.</td>
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<td>Trend analysis and public input.</td>
<td>Participated from 100 diverse Taos area residents.</td>
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<td>Met with 15 neighborhood and focus groups (125 people).</td>
<td>All day Open House attended by 180 diverse Taos area residents.</td>
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<td>Public meetings and comment period open to all.</td>
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SECTION I/Introduction

1996 Town of Taos Community Survey and Focus Groups

In 1996, the Town of Taos contracted Antonio Delgado, PhD to initiate the Vision 2020 Master Planning Process. By holding a series of 16 focus groups and conducting a written survey at locations throughout the Town, issues were identified to form the basis of the Master Plan and to create a collective image of the Taos community.

Issues identified in the Community Survey fall into the following categories:

- Community Identity issues including the rural, mountain lifestyle; the unique history and individual character of the Town and region; the desire to preserve cultural heritage; the use of design guidelines to maintain architectural traditions; the identities and unique priorities of individual neighborhoods; the panoramic vistas; and the preservation of traditional agricultural practices.
- Natural Resources/Environmental issues including the concern that growth (particularly commercial development) will deteriorate limited natural resources, and the desire to preserve environmental quality by enhancing air and water quality and by encouraging the practice and use of recycling and alternative energy sources.
- Land Use issues including assuring that new development serves the needs of local residents and that the Taos Plaza is preserved.
- Development Control issues including annexation policies, zoning and subdivision regulation, zoning in the Extra Territorial Zone, and the coordination of plans at all levels.
- Infrastructure issues including solid waste disposal, "green" infrastructure such as trails and greenbelts, water quality and quantity, wastewater, water conservation through ordinances and water saving building codes, and maintenance of the acequia system.
- Transportation issues including proper planning: reducing traffic congestion; a by-pass of the Town for thru-traffic; improvement of traffic circulation inside Town; developing public transportation, including a shuttle to the Ski Area; a bike and trails network; pedestrian pathways; and alternative modes of transportation and parking on the periphery of the plaza.
- Housing issues including provision of affordable housing for the elderly and low-income residents and more multi-family housing development.
- Economic Development issues including providing better, higher paying jobs for current residents, diversifying the economy so it is less tourism dependent, increasing job options, and developing telecommunications infrastructure.
- Community Services and Facilities issues including the need for community centers, the need for more youth activities and opportunities located for maximum convenience, and the concern that land use be compatible with and not degrade the natural environment.


Town of Taos Administration and Planning and Zoning Department Staff invited representatives from the Town’s boards and commissions, other local governments, and key stakeholder organizations to form the Vision 2020 Community Action Team (CAT). CAT members represented the points of view held by different constituencies in the planning area. The CAT's function was to serve as a steering committee for the planning process and to help plan the content of community participation events through study, discussion, and consideration of issues relevant to Taos.

In its initial meetings, the CAT discussed how land use and growth have affected the community by examining different views held by Taos residents about the rapid change Taos has experienced. CAT members expressed regret for the way Taos has developed and the loss of its rural character. By reflecting on the past, the CAT examined the roots of Taos’ present state and expressed their hopes for Taos’ future. The CAT then began to consider the strategies and tools currently being used in other communities to address issues of growth and development. The CAT continued to be instrumental in the Vision 2020 Planning Process by helping to organize the Town Hall and by developing a potential land use scenario for the Open House.
Town Hall, February 20, 1998
The Town of Taos Town Hall brought together a group of 100 diverse Taos area residents to answer the questions: "What do you like best about living in Taos in the year 2020?" and "How do we get there?" Participants were provided in advance with a Community Profile that contained demographic, employment, housing, and land use statistics based on a projected growth rate for the year 2020. The Profile was developed by the Town of Taos' Master Plan Consultants, Dekker/Perich/Sabatini, with help from the University of New Mexico's Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER), and served to give participants a basic understanding of the growth and changes Taos may be experiencing in the year 2020.

During the Town Hall, participants were divided into eight groups that were facilitated by community volunteers. At the end of the day-long event, all groups came together to present their visions for the Town of Taos and their strategies for achieving those visions. Similar themes emerged from all groups as important. These included open space and agricultural land preservation; a self-sufficient, strong economy that pays good wages and does not rely on tourism; respect for diverse cultures; recreational and youth opportunities; affordable housing; a good quality of life; planning; education; and water and natural resource protection. Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department Staff used the results of the Town Hall to draft vision, goal, and objective statements for the Master Plan.

Community Meetings, March-May 1998
Following the Town Hall, Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department Staff convened a series of Community Meetings for neighborhood areas (Figure 4) and professional groups in the Town of Taos, Extra Territorial Zone, and Three-Mile Planning and Platting Jurisdiction. One hundred twenty-five Taos area residents participated in fifteen Community Meetings, where they reviewed the vision, goal, and objective statements developed from the Town Hall, and considered how they would like to see land use develop in the Town of Taos and Extra Territorial Zone. Participants supported the work that came out of the Town Hall, and also wanted to encourage mixed-use, infill development, and open space throughout the town.

The Community Action Team used the results of the Community Meetings to develop a land use scenario for the Open House. Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department Staff hope to use the Community Meeting groups to initiate neighborhood associations and to encourage neighborhood-specific planning and regulation in the future.

Open House, June 17, 1998
The Vision 2020 Open House brought together over 180 Taos area residents to walk through and comment on five stations during a 12-hour period. Participants reviewed "Opportunities and Constraints," a station that reiterated findings from the Community Profile, and presented maps showing important natural resources, current zoning, land use, and development. A second station allowed participants to comment on the vision, goal, and objective statements, which had undergone revision after the Community Meetings. Participants were also encouraged to view the Town’s Geographic Information System (GIS), a mapping program very valuable to long-range planning, and to vote on a Community Image Survey, a slide-show of different kinds of streetscapes, open spaces, and residential and commercial developments. Most importantly, participants reviewed and voted on three land use scenarios for the year 2020 (Figures 18-20), one of which showed full build-out based on growth projections, another developed by the CAT from the results of the Community Meetings, and a third that focused on natural resource protection. Participants chose the third scenario, but also expressed support for infill development in areas with existing infrastructure, many of which fall within the 100-year floodplain. To resolve this contradiction, the Vision 2020 Master Plan supports infill in areas with existing infrastructure, while encouraging revisions of the Land Use Development Code to strengthen natural resource protection regulations, especially in sensitive areas.
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Policy Committees, August-September 1998
In August 1998, Town of Taos Mayor Frederick Peralta appointed town elected and appointed public officials, regional and local government representatives, and community leaders to a Policy Committee to develop policies for the Master Plan. The 70-person Policy Committee was divided into seven subcommittees, one for each draft plan element (Agricultural Lands and Open Space Preservation, Community Design, Community Facilities, Economic Development, Housing, Infrastructure, and Land Use). Committee members included the Mayor, Town Manager, Town Council Members, Planning & Zoning and ETZ Commissioners, representatives from Taos County, Community Action Team Members, neighborhood representatives, and other community members knowledgeable about or engaged in discussing topic areas covered by the Master Plan.

Policy committee members were directed to develop policies for the community-generated vision, goal, and objective statements. Workbooks provided by Dekker/Perich/Sabatini guided the policy development process by presenting goal and objective statements for each plan element, an explanation of the policy framework, a suggested consensus-building process, case studies, and potential implementation tools. At the final Policy Subcommittee meeting in September 1998, representatives from each subcommittee presented their policies to the larger group. Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department Staff reorganized the policies for inclusion in the Master Plan and used them to develop implementation strategies.

Figure 4
Community meetings were organized by identifying traditional communities and distinct neighborhoods within the Town, ETZ, and Three-Mile Planning and Platted Jurisdiction.
RELEVANT PLANS, ORDINANCES, AND STUDIES

The following is an overview of existing and past plans and implementing ordinances in the Taos area, highlighting the main points from each document.

The 1963 Comprehensive Plan was the first official planning effort for the Town of Taos. Traditional zoning (also known as Euclidian zoning after the town of Euclid, Ohio where it was first adopted) was first established at this time. The Plan addressed the issues created by growth or lack thereof in the 1950’s, including land use conflicts, traffic and parking problems, and pressures to expand existing community services. The 1963 Plan, as well as succeeding planning documents, emphasize Taos’ unique character, its tri-cultural history, and its role as the only major trade center in Taos County. It also identifies the socio-cultural and architectural traditions that have created an irregular pattern of land uses and lot shapes and sizes that have been formed by the splitting of parcels as they are passed down through the generations.

The 1963 Comprehensive Plan notes a decline in population during the 1950’s due to out-migration of Taoseños, but projects population growth in the 1960’s and beyond. The Plan identifies a desire to find methods to attract new residents to the area to off-set the effects of out-migration. There are several factors contributing to out-migration and immigration in Taos, including the seasonal nature of both the agricultural and the tourist economies. The 1963 Plan very nearly predicts population growth by estimating that 3,200 people would reside in the Town of Taos by 1983. The actual 1983 population turned out to be 3,444.

The 1963 Plan also identifies a critical need for education in vocational skills to “upgrade a preponderantly unskilled labor force.” Lack of educational opportunities contributed to out-migration by younger people, and led to the desire to attract outsiders who may have skills not readily available in Taos. The availability of skilled workers and higher paying jobs, and the question of whether jobs are being filled by local long-term residents or in-migrants, remain issues today. Other issues identified in the 1963 Plan that persist include economic ups and downs, disharmonies between long-time residents and in-migrants, and out-migrations by certain sectors of the population.

According to the 1963 Plan, growth in Taos is controlled by the boundaries with Taos Pueblo on the north and east, the National Forest on the southeast, irrigated farmland to the west and southeast, and by inevitable expansion along the major highway routes. While federal and tribal lands continue to prohibit growth today, irrigated farmland is no longer considered a restriction on development. As family farms have decreased in economic viability, development pressure has increased.

The Plan also identifies a desire to maintain the Plaza as the Central Business District with a pedestrian atmosphere. As in 1963, traffic circulation around the Plaza continues to be an issue today. But because the focus of the Plaza has changed, residents’ everyday needs are met mostly by shopping centers and big box retailers south of the Plaza on Paseo del Pueblo Sur (NM 68).

1973  Planning Implementation Program:  Town of Taos
Comprehensive planning in the early 1970’s was extensive, expanding the 1963 plan to include documentation and analysis of the Town’s administrative structure, an economic base analysis, as well as land use planning and goals and objectives identification. The 1973 Plan emphasizes the value of citizen participation and that planning is a process involving a four step cycle of analysis, evaluation, planning, and implementation.
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The 1973 Plan echoes some of the sentiments identified in the 1963 Plan and issues being discussed today. For example, in 1973 there was a general feeling that agricultural farmland had been urbanized, disrupting the lifestyle and environment in Taos. The Plan also states that Taos’ single most valuable asset is its undeveloped beauty.

Another timeless issue is the desire to keep youth in the region through training and employment opportunities. The 1973 Plan identifies the perception that educated or skilled young people leave the community to find jobs that just are not available in Taos.

The 1973 Plan encourages Taos to develop at a pedestrian scale and to mitigate impacts of and reliance on the automobile. It also identifies the need to establish historic districts to protect buildings and sites that are important to the historical fabric of the town and vicinity as “the past is never far from the present in Taos.” Two historic districts, the La Loma Plaza and Downtown Taos, have been formed, and many additional buildings in Taos are listed on both the National and State Registers. The 1973 Plan encourages new structures to be innovative yet compatible with the existing building forms in Taos.

1986 Town of Taos Comprehensive Plan: Ordinance No. 86-1

The 1986 Comprehensive Plan was intended to update the 1963 and 1973 comprehensive planning efforts. This plan did not specify new goals and objectives, but assumed that the goals and objectives from the 1973 Plan remained important. The 1986 plan is divided in three sections, Policies, Land Use, and Capital Improvements Programming.

As in previous decades, the 1986 Plan emphasizes the desire to preserve the unique character of Taos and its rural mountain quality of life. The Plan also introduces a new implementation effort: identifying the priorities of the different neighborhoods in Taos. This concept has been used by Taos County in their 1997 Comprehensive Plan, wherein each neighborhood association identifies its own vision, goals, and objectives, rather than following overarching goals and objectives for the entire community.

The land use discussion in the 1986 Plan addresses annexation policies, zoning, and subdivision regulation. For the first time in Taos planning, the term “sprawl” is used and the concept of encouraging clustered development in higher density areas is introduced with the Planned Unit Development (PUD) zone. The 1986 Plan also made other zoning updates to the Land Use Development Code, and encouraged historic preservation by creating historic districts.

A strong need for infrastructure improvements, including water and sewer, is identified in the 1986 Plan, leading to the infrastructure planning achieved in the early 1990’s. These efforts, including the Wastewater Treatment Plant and Traffic Master Plan, have required coordination with other government entities, including Taos Pueblo and Taos County. Additional implementation that succeeded the 1986 Plan include the formation of a utility council, including representatives from El Prado, Cañon, and the Extra Territorial Zone, and the establishment of a business park through a joint effort between the Taos County Economic Development Corporation and the Town.

Several issues from previous plans, like affordable housing, encouraging a pedestrian environment, reducing traffic, and preserving the Plaza as a Central Business District, continue in the 1980's, as well.
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Town of Taos Land Use Development Code: Ordinance No. 92-14
The Town of Taos is authorized to control land use and development within its limits and Extra Territorial Zone through regulations and ordinances that comprise the Land Use Development Code (LUDC). The LUDC is currently undergoing revision, and is expected to conform to the 1999 Town of Taos Vision 2020 Master Plan when completed. The LUDC establishes performance criteria, zone districts, and procedures for various land use applications, including subdivisions. The Town Council receives its authority to adopt and enforce the LUDC from New Mexico State Statute.

Extra Territorial Zoning Regulations: Ordinance No. 660
The Extra Territorial Zoning Regulations Ordinance reflects a joint powers agreement between the Town of Taos and Taos County. The ordinance authorizes the Town to regulate land use within the Extra Territorial Zone through the use of zoning.

Historic Preservation Overlay Zone
Section 4-15.1 of the present Land Use Development Code designates a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone. The purpose of the Zone is to protect, enhance, and perpetuate areas of historical, cultural, architectural, artistic, or geographical significance located within the Town of Taos. Protection of these areas accomplishes many different objectives. It protects and enhances the Town’s economic base by continuing to draw tourists to the area. The Zone also fosters civic pride by protecting the Town’s unique cultural heritage and architectural design.

Sign Regulations Ordinance: Ordinance No. 95-15
The Sign Regulations Ordinance contains exact criteria for business owners desiring to erect a sign in the Town of Taos and the ETZ. Residents must apply for a sign permit by submitting an application for and drawings of the proposed sign, per the ordinance. The ordinance is currently undergoing revision, and will be recodified.

Landscaping Guidelines Ordinance: Ordinance No. 651
The intent of the Landscaping Guidelines Ordinance is to provide landscaped setbacks and enhanced streetscapes; screened parking areas, service areas, and roadways; and buffering between conflicting land uses. The ordinance governs all plantings, ground coverings, and visible construction except buildings and utilities, and mandates a landscaping plan for all planned unit developments, special uses, multi-family housing, and commercial and industrial buildings. Within the historic district, a landscaping plan must accompany all new plans for commercial development. The Landscaping Guidelines Ordinance is currently under revision.

Solar Rights Declaration Ordinance: Ordinance No. 649
The Solar Rights Declaration Ordinance prohibits new construction or landscaping from blocking the solar access of existing active solar collection systems.

Infrastructure Capital Improvements Planning (ICIP)
The Town of Taos participates annually in the State of New Mexico’s Five Year ICIP, to plan for capital projects within a five-year time frame. The Town also produces its own annual ICIP every May to budget for all projects that will require a capital outlay in the upcoming fiscal year. The ICIP process provides Town Administration and Department Heads a framework for planning, coordinating, and updating capital projects, as well as identifying funding sources and time frames for the projects.
SECTION I/Introduction

Plans by Other Jurisdictions

There are various other documents, studies, or plans by other governmental entities that may have some bearing on the current Vision 2020 Master Plan. They include:


- **Taos County, Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulations (September 1997)**: Intended to manage orderly, harmonious, and economically sound growth within Taos County.

- **Taos Municipal Schools, Mega Plan (1997)**: Proposes several committees to evaluate and assess different areas within the school district. Some of the areas include: facilities, personnel, curriculum, community relations/school climate, and support services.

- **Carson National Forest Plan (October 1986)**: Emphasizes protecting the Carson National Forest's natural resources and promoting the Forest as a high-quality recreational area. Some of the Plan's objectives include improving the Forest's fish and wildlife habitat, providing a mix of recreational opportunities, improving and maintaining the watershed and visual resources, low development of roads, moderate timber output, and an emphasis on personal use products such as vigas.
TOWN OF TAOS COMMISSIONS AND BOARDS

There are ten commissions and boards that are appointed by the Mayor or are supported by the Town and deal with various planning issues within the Town, ETZ, and Taos County. Private citizens that volunteer their time to sit on these decision-making bodies staff the boards and commissions.

Airport Advisory Board
Board that advises the Mayor and Council on airport safety, facility improvements, and plans for development within the airport overlay zone. The Board meets as needed.

Extra Territorial Zoning (ETZ) Commission
Board that reviews plans and holds public hearings on planned unit developments and subdivisions within the Extra Territorial Zone. The ETZ Commission meets once a month.

Friends of the Taos Public Library
Independent and volunteer board that meets quarterly to promote and support the Taos Public Library and its educational, cultural, and professional development programs and activities. It also raises funds for operation and maintenance of the Library facility.

Historic Preservation Commission
Commission that reviews plans and specifications for community development programs within the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone and the impact of development on historic districts and structures. The Commission meets once a month.

Housing Advisory Board
Board that meets every quarter to develop policy and establish tenant guidelines for low income families residing in the Town's affordable housing units.

Lodgers Tax Advisory Board
Board that makes recommendations to the Town Council on lodgers tax funding allocation toward projects and activities that support and develop tourism.

Mayor's Committee on Concerns for People with Disabilities
Board that makes recommendations to the Mayor and Council on infrastructure improvements necessary to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), fulfilling the Town's commitment to ensuring access for all citizens with disabilities.

Mayor's Graffiti Task Force
Task Force made up of volunteers who commit themselves to cleaning up graffiti throughout the Town. The Graffiti Task Force meets bi-annually.
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Municipality/County Zoning Authority
Board composed of two Town Council Members and three County Commissioners whose purpose is to hear appeals regarding proposed development from the ETZ Commission.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Board that advocates the interests of the Buildings and Grounds Department by promoting the different recreation programs that are designed around the community's needs and interests. The Board meets monthly.

Planning and Zoning Commission
Commission that reviews plans and holds public hearings on planned unit developments and subdivisions proposed within the corporate limits of the Town. The Commission meets once a month.
AREA GEOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY

The Town of Taos is located in Taos County, surrounded by traditional communities such as Ranchos de Taos, Cañon, Ranchitos, and El Prado. Taos is part of the scenic Enchanted Circle, which includes the communities of Angel Fire, Eagle Nest, Red River, and Questa located along US 64, NM 38, and NM 522. Its closest incorporated neighbor communities are Questa, Red River, and Eagle Nest. The Town of Taos is located 70 miles north of Santa Fe, the state capitol, an hour and a half drive on NM 68 which turns into US 84/285. It is approximately 44 miles from the Colorado border on NM 522 and is and a two and a half hour drive from Raton on US 64. South of Taos on NM 3 is Las Vegas, home to New Mexico Highlands University, Albuquerque, the state’s largest city and home of the state’s international airport, lies 135 miles to the south and is accessed by US Interstate 25. The Town of Taos (as well as the state’s major metropolitan areas in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Las Cruces) is located in the Rio Grande Valley, a deep and wide gorge cut by source waters from the Colorado Rockies through layers of volcanic basalt. The waters of the Rio Grande, originating from the peak of the San Juan Mountains, travel through southwestern Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas before reaching the Gulf of Mexico.

The Rio Grande Valley is bordered by part of the front range of the Rockies to the east, the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, and also by a series of volcanic formations to the west. Apart from the upthrusts of crust that formed the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, much of the current geology is a result of relatively recent volcanic activity. Lava flows provided the basalt that forms the base of soil for Taos County. Runoff waters from the mountain range as well as from the flow of the Rio Grande cut a steep canyon through the basalt layer, creating a drop of hundreds of feet from surrounding plateaus to the river basin. The Rio Pueblo de Taos runs along a similar canyon before joining the Rio Grande.

Volcanic activity also formed the existing peaks and mesas along the west of the river valley. The geological forces that formed the Taos Valley are at work along the entire Rio Grande Valley, creating a distinct and unique geography for northern New Mexico.

The Rio Grande River provides a natural division of Taos County, separating the east and west portions of the region. To the west of the river, the land is composed of high lava mesas, ranging in elevation from 6,000 feet in the south to 8,000 feet in the north. The lower elevation is covered with sage and grasslands. To the east, the landscape changes to the forests of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The eastern elevation reaches 13,151 feet at the summit of Wheeler Peak, the highest point in the state. The Sangre de Cristo range is northeast of town, while the Fernado mountain range is southeast. To the north of Taos, the land climbs to meet the San Luis Valley at an elevation of over 7,500 feet. To the south, the land descends into the broader valleys of the Rio Grande and its tributaries at an elevation of 5,500 feet.
Figure 5
Aerial View of Taos
HISTORY OF THE TAOS VALLEY

Indigenous Settlement

As the lowest and most easily accessible path between the mountains and the plains, the Taos Valley has been a major trade and travel route since human presence was first felt in the area. Archaeological evidence suggests that people have been using and moving through the Taos Valley for at least the past 9,000 years. The ancestors of the Pueblo people, commonly known as the Anasazi, were the first permanent inhabitants of the Valley. Room blocks and pit houses in the Taos area testify to their presence since 900 AD. Around 1200 AD, they aggregated into small above-ground structures of 50-100 rooms at Pot Creek, Arroyo Hondo, and Llano Quemado. Pueblo culture emerged in the 1300s, when a larger pueblo known as Cornfield Taos was built at the base of Taos Mountain. Taos Pueblo was constructed a few yards to the southwest around 1450, as two multi-story houses (North House and South House), located on either side of the Río Pueblo de Taos. Taos Pueblo is one of the most photographed (Figure 6) and painted structures in the world, and has been declared a World Heritage Site. The events of nature and man have only enhanced its beauty throughout the centuries, continually inspiring visitors and residents alike.

At the time of European arrival, all of the Taos Valley was the domain of Taos Pueblo Indians, whose world was demarcated by Taos Mountain and the Sangre de Cristos to the east, and the southern San Juan Mountains to the west. The Pueblo Indians depended on nature for their survival, and therefore treated it as the organizing element in their lives. The Pueblo itself was crafted from native materials: mud and timber. The fertile valley lands surrounding the Pueblo provided for the people who farmed them, as did the nearby hills and mountains where Taos Pueblo Indians hunted. The Río Pueblo de Taos, aided by the Pueblo's gravity-flow irrigation system, carried water to the fields from the Pueblo's mythical point of emergence, Sacred Blue Lake.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, connections intensified between Taos Pueblo Indians and other tribes on the plains. These tribes, including the ancestors of present-day Navajos and Apaches, developed routes and encampments alongside Pueblo hunting camps and ceremonial sites in the Taos Valley. A relationship of trading and raiding evolved between the groups, who would continue to interact in both war and peace.

The Spanish Colonial Period

In 1540, a Spanish conquistador named Francisco Vásquez de Coronado led an expedition into New Mexico, in hopes of discovering the fabled cities of Cibola. One of Coronado's officers, Hernando de Alvarado, visited Taos Pueblo, becoming the first known white man to enter the area. Finding no gold or silver to appease the Spanish Crown, Coronado's expedition quickly deemed land and Indian labor the

Figure 6
Taos Pueblo as it is today.
Section I/Introduction

Milestones of Spanish Settlement in the Taos Valley

1540
Coronado's Entrada into New Mexico: Alvarado arrives at Taos Pueblo

1598
Oñate establishes first colonial capital at San Juan Pueblo

1610
Taos Pueblo Mission established

1615
Taos Pueblo declared a Village

1680
Pueblo Revolt

1692-1696
De Vargas' reconquest of New Mexico

1715
Resettlement and reestablishment of Spanish civil government in the Taos Valley

centerpieces of conquest. After experiencing much resistance from the Pueblos, Coronado returned to Mexico, reporting that the Pueblo Indians were not as wealthy or as easy to conquer as had been expected. No further expeditions were authorized until 1598, when Don Juan de Oñate established the first colonial capital of San Juan de los Caballeros (today's San Juan Pueblo) on the ruins of an abandoned Pueblo village, Yuquenque.

During the 1600's, the Spanish strengthened their control in the Taos Valley. The Spanish settled in encomiendas, large plantations (sometimes with grants of Indian labor) bordering the Rio Grande River, appropriated profits from any discoveries made there, and attempted to rule the Indian population. The conquistadors and civil officials demanded great quantities of food and labor from the Pueblo Indians, while the Franciscan priests ordered that they build mission churches central to Christian conversion. In 1610, Fray Francisco de Zamora established the first mission at Taos Pueblo, and a resident priest oversaw the construction of a mission church in the 1620's. In 1615, the King of Spain declared Taos a village, hence the title "Pueblo," and thereby extended certain protections and controls over the area. Great tensions between the Spanish and Taos Pueblo Indians accompanied these events. In 1609, Oñate was accused of killing a young Taos leader by throwing him from a roof, and in 1613, Taos Pueblo refused to pay tribute and revolted against Governor Pedro de Peralta, who sent troops to the Pueblo. In January 1640, Taos Pueblo Indians killed several Spanish and their priest, Fray Pedro de Miranda. They then destroyed the church and took refuge at Cuartelejo Apache for 20 years. After returning home, hundreds of Taos Pueblo Indians starved to death during the drought of 1666. Pueblo Indians became increasingly convinced that they must act against Spanish rule. Finally, in 1680, a San Juan Pueblo leader named Pope initiated a unified and successful revolt from Taos Pueblo. The odds were in favor of the Pueblos, who numbered 24,000, not counting Apache involvement, against 2,500 colonists. The Pueblos killed all of the Spanish in the Taos Valley, except for two settlers who were away trading. Throughout New Mexico, twenty-one of the thirty-three Franciscan missionary fathers and some 380 settlers were killed. More lives would have been lost had the Pueblos continued their attack during the retreat of survivors to El Paso del Norte.

In the next 12 years, the Spanish made unsuccessful attempts to reconquer New Mexico. Finally, due in part to the faded alliance of the Pueblo Revolt, and the Pueblos' need for defense from raiding tribes, Diego de Vargas reconquered New Mexico in 1692 and was appointed governor. Taos Pueblo resisted and was the last of the Pueblo peoples to submit to Spanish rule. Spanish resettlement and the reestablishment of Spanish civil government in the Taos Valley did not occur until 1715.

The reconquest of New Mexico was radically different from Coronado's entrada in 1540. Realizing that New Mexico was rugged, geographically isolated, poor for mining and deficient in marketable resources, Spain kept the colony alive only to block westward expansion of the French and to maintain continuity for Christianized Indians. Spanish focus shifted from wealth and exploitation to permanent settlement,
and the government largely upheld the Laws of the Indies by outlawing encroachment on Pueblo lands, forced labor and evangelization, and other cruelties imposed on indigenous peoples. Only forty families who fled New Mexico during the Pueblo Revolt ever resettled the area. For the most part, resettlement occurred through the efforts of skilled Mexican volunteers, mestizos partly descended from Mexican Indians.

After the reconquest, the Taos Valley was settled through the merced, or land grant system, whereby land was granted to individuals or groups of people for settlement. According to Spanish law, the settlers were to build multi-story homes with shared walls around a central plaza to provide for defense and social and economic activities. Defense was a great motivator for the creation of these plaza villages, since Comanche raids caused most Taos Valley residents to take shelter at the Pueblo between 1770 and 1789. Settlers owned their homes and the plots of fertile valley land (suertes) which stretched out from the plaza village, and were communal users of the land grant commons (ejido) located in the hills and mountains that contained timber and grazing lands. The Taos Valley was divided into several land grants, each containing one or more plaza villages. The Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant, originally awarded before the Pueblo Revolt, became home to the villages of Las Trampas de Taos (present-day Ranchos de Taos), Talpa, and Llano Quemado. The Guijosa Grant was awarded in 1715, and contained the villages of Los Cordovas and Cordillera. The Don Fernando de Taos Grant which encompassed present-day Taos Plaza was awarded in 1797, and included the villages of Don Fernando de Taos, La Loma, and Cañon. The community land grants of Rancho del Rio Grande (1795), Arroyo Hondo (1815), Arroyo Seco (1745), and San Cristobal (1827), along with the Lucero de Godoy (1697) and the Antoine Leroux (1742) individual land grants further extended settlement in the Taos Valley. Taos Pueblo was also formalized as a land grant in 1815, with special protections and provisions.

With permanent settlement as the new focus, Hispano settlers interacted greatly with their Pueblo and other Indian neighbors. The three groups engaged in trading, informally and through trade fairs. The annual Taos Trade Fair provided an opportunity for nomadic Indian tribes to ransom their captives, trade buffalo hides, horses, buckskins, and guns for Hispanic and Pueblo goods and crops. Because Pueblos and Hispanics were sedentary agriculturists, the two groups evolved many similarities in land use, built form, and community cooperation. Both groups, in isolation from a distant Spanish government, revolved around community-based forms of governance and mutual aid. In addition, Hispanics brought many new fruits and vegetables into the Taos Valley, and introduced livestock to the Pueblos. Hispanics took over and expanded abandoned Pueblo irrigation systems and re-named them acequias, an Arabic word meaning irrigation ditch. The Pueblos taught Hispanics to build with mud and timber, and adopted the Hispanic’s adobe

Figure 7
San Francisco de Asis Church in Ranchos de Taos, completed in 1815.
Section I/Introduction

Milestones During the Mexican Period in the Taos Valley

1821
Mexico declares Independence from Spain

1821
Santa Fe Trail opens

1826
Padre Martinez establishes the first school in the Taos Valley

1835
Padre Martinez brings the printing press to the Taos Valley

1843
Kit Carson makes his permanent home in Taos

molds and horno ovens brought from Spain. Significantly, the land grant system mingled with Pueblo tradition to produce the beauty of the historic plazas, buildings, and churches for which the Taos Valley is now known. Perhaps the best example of this is the world-famous San Francisco de Asis Church in Ranchos de Taos, completed in 1815 (Figure 7).

In the early 1800’s, the economic base of the Taos Valley began to shift from subsistence agriculture and local trade to larger trading markets and the use of currency. In 1803, the United States of America purchased the Louisiana Territory from the French, facilitating illegal trade between Americans and New Mexican merchants. With the confinement of most nomadic Indian tribes at the turn of the century, markets along the Camino Real became more accessible for northern New Mexico merchants, who sold their goods primarily in Chihuahua and El Paso. However, after 1810, mestizo uprisings in Mexico against Spanish rule blocked trading routes with Mexico.

The Mexican Period

In 1821, Mexico declared her independence from Spain. Most New Mexicans experienced few changes under Mexican rule, although significant changes in the constitution did occur. The new constitution granted full citizenship to sedentary Christian Indians with manhood suffrage and allowed Pueblo Indians to sell their land. Policy also legalized trade with Americans, and provided them with subsidies to settle in the territory. Spain had always prohibited such activities because it was wary of the United States’ desire for westward expansion and its illegal explorations of New Mexico in the early 1800’s. Finally, in 1821, the Santa Fe Trail was opened, marking the first legal crossing of Americans into Mexico, and encouraging future interaction between the two nations. Soon, American beaver trappers crowded the mountain streams around Taos, renowned for their resources and lack of regulation.

Trading relationships brought many Americans to settle, trap and trade in the Taos area. One of those Americans was Christopher “Kit” Carson who arrived in Santa Fe in 1826 and married a prominent Taoseña, Josefa Jaramillo, in 1843. The couple came to live permanently in Taos; their home is now the Kit Carson Museum. Among his many military accomplishments, Kit Carson is best known for exploring two routes to California, guiding General Kearny over the Gila Trail, and leading the charge to subdue and confine the Navajo and Mescalero Apache Indians. Kit Carson died in 1868 and is buried in the Taos cemetery that bears his name.

Another notable figure of the era was Padre Antonio José Martinez, whose prominent parents owned the historic Martinez Hacienda. Padre Martinez opened the first school in the Taos Valley in 1826 and in 1835 acquired New Mexico’s first printing press from which he published religious and educational materials and Taos’ first newspaper, El Crepusculo. Educated in Durango, Mexico, Padre Martinez served as the priest of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in Taos and as a legislator during the territorial period. Rumors about his personal life as well as his stances against the granting of lands to non-native New Mexicans and against the French leadership of the Catholic Church in New Mexico made him a controversial figure.
The American Period
On August 15, 1846, Mexican rule of New Mexico came to an abrupt halt when US General Stephen Watts Kearney arrived in Las Vegas and, faced with no resistance, claimed the territory for the United States. Ten years earlier, Texas had claimed its independence from Mexico after its American population reached a critical mass. Now, to accomplish its goal of westward expansion the United States of America declared war upon Mexico, seizing upon Mexico's liberal policies and post-revolution weaknesses. The Taos Valley immediately became a hotbed for resistance against US rule. On the night of January 19, 1847, a group of Hispanics and Indians killed and scalped Kearny's appointed Territorial Governor, Charles Bent of Taos, at his home. Six other visitors and American sympathizers were also killed, but Bent's wife and children, who were Spanish, were spared. The insurgents fled to Taos Pueblo, where they sustained bombardment from US forces for two days before the church was destroyed. One hundred fifty Indians and Hispanics, many of whom attempted to escape to the hills, were killed.

The US occupation of New Mexico lasted until 1848, when all of Texas, California, New Mexico, Arizona, and parts of Nevada were officially ceded to the United States following the US-Mexican War. President Fillmore officially established New Mexico as a territory in 1850, and Taos became a County on January 9, 1852. Incorporation of municipalities in the Taos Valley occurred principally in the next century following statehood: the Town of Taos incorporated in 1934 and Taos Ski Valley in 1996. US statehood was delayed by New Mexico's small Anglo population and by the US Civil War (1861-1865).

Nevertheless, the Taos Valley flourished during its Territorial Period. In 1898, two art students named Ernest L. Blumenschein and Bert G. Phillips undertook a sketching tour of the West. With the intention of traveling to Mexico, the two broke a wagon wheel near Taos, and decided to remain in Taos upon beholding the area's great beauty. They were later joined by Oscar E. Beringhaus who visited Taos annually until 1925 when he made it his permanent home; E. Irving Couse who came to Taos in the early 1900's; and W. Herbert Dunton who arrived around 1912. Together the six men founded the Taos Society of Artists in 1915 in order to sell their work through traveling exhibitions. In the years that followed, the Society grew as other artists became attracted to the organization's reputation and the impressive beauty of Taos. Other intellectuals, such as Mabel Dodge Luhan, D. H. Lawrence, and Andrew Dasburg also joined the Taos scene in the early 1900's, and added greatly to the social and intellectual life of the community. To date, Taos is known world-wide by artists, art customers, and inquisitive intellectuals who continue to find it a mecca of inspiration.

In 1912, New Mexico was admitted to the Union as a state. Fundamental differences between the US and Spanish and Mexican governments would greatly influence the future of the area. The US Constitution, based strongly in private property rights, did not recognize the communal nature of the Spanish and Mexican land grants. In the end, many land grants were lost, decreased in size, ceded
Section I/Introduction

Milestones During the American Period in the Taos Valley (continued)

1908
Carson National Forest established

1912
New Mexico becomes a State

1915
Taos Society of Artists Founded

1929-1942
The Great Depression

1934
Town of Taos incorporates as a municipality

1939-1945
World War II

1996
Taos Ski Valley incorporates as a municipality

...and wholly to the federal government, swindled away by corrupt lawyers and politicians, or broken up among individual heirs. While the US government confirmed most land grants of the Taos Valley, thousands of acres were not recognized, and in many cases, were ceded to the Carson National Forest, established in 1908. In recent years, land grants have suffered further land loss through sales to non-heirs. Pueblo land grants also have suffered land loss and undergone much litigation about their status. In 1864, President Lincoln signed Taos Pueblo's land patent, but various court rulings left the fate of Pueblo lands in question for decades. The Pueblo is now considered a formal US Indian reservation and is protected as such. However, the land afforded to both land grant heirs and Pueblo Indians is in most cases inadequate to support the land-based economy of old.

The reduced size of the land holdings and the introduction of the US monetary system greatly altered the economy of the Taos Valley. Since American occupation, Taos Hispanics and Pueblos have found it increasingly necessary to supplement family farming and livestock raising with other employment. At the turn of the nineteenth century, many Taoseños worked as migrant labor for large agribusiness operations and the railroads or as sheep sharecroppers (partidarios). But in the early 1930's, the Great Depression limited the availability of these jobs. Many Taoseños were shocked to find that they could not fall back upon the traditional agro-pastoral economy. Grazing and agricultural lands had been so reduced that a life of subsistence farming and local trade was simply not feasible. Taoseños thus became dependent on government employment projects, such as the Works Projects Administration (WPA). Today, the area receives a significant amount of transfer payment income from welfare and other public assistance and entitlement programs, including Social Security.

In recent years, Taos' agro-pastoral economy has continued to diminish, and is made up of small farmers whose contribution is rarely recorded in the formal economy. The area has become heavily dependent on tourism, which provides generally low-paying service jobs. Large employers include the Taos Ski Valley, the construction industry, and local government and schools. MolyCorp molybdenum mine in Questa and Los Alamos National Laboratory offer higher paying jobs for small numbers of Taoseños. Changes in social relations mirror these changes in the economy. While the communal spirit of the land grants and Pueblo live on, residents are more divided in the sense that they must compete for jobs and resources in an area where both are scarce. The sense of community that existed with the Pueblos and under Spanish and Mexican rule has been somewhat diminished, as young people have moved elsewhere for better job opportunities, thus disrupting intergenerational connections. Other events, such as World War II, in which a disproportionate number of Taoseños participated, have altered the traditional values of the region and moved people farther from their home communities.

As part of the United States, the Taos Valley has reaped benefits that were not available under Spanish and Mexican rule. Taos' educational system developed largely during the Territorial Period, when the Sisters of Loretto established the Academy of Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1863. Joined by a
Presbyterian Church and School in 1873, the Loretto Sisters accepted control of all public schools in the Territory in 1891. They retained control of the school system until 1929. In addition to a formal education, residents of the Taos Valley enjoy better health care, sanitation, and government services. The art community has also greatly enriched the lives of Taoseños and will continue to do so in the decades to come.

The history of Taos is a story of change, adaptation, and the interaction of three cultures that both complicates and enriches the reality in which Taoseños live today. The most striking feature of Taos, its impressive and nourishing landscape, remains reassuringly stable in a sea of great change. It continues to attract people from far and wide, just as it attracted its earliest settlers some 8,000 years ago. Through the richness of its history, Taos looks forward to a new millennium that will build upon the opportunities provided by this beautiful land and its diverse and dedicated people.

Figures 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Views of the plaza emphasize the vital connection between Taos’ past and present.
COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Population and Residency
In the 1970's and early 1980's, migration played a significant role in Taos' population growth. More than two-thirds of the in-migrants to Taos were White non-Hispanics. After 1985, due to a national economic recession, migration significantly declined. In the same period, the Taos region suffered economic setbacks associated with the closing of Molymine, an important regional employer. Overall, from 1980 to 1990, net migration accounted for 17.8% of the state's population increase. The effects of in-migration on population growth in Taos County, however, were significantly higher: 29.8% of the County's growth in the same time period resulted from in-migration. The rate of population growth has slowed during the past decade from 18.8% (1980 to 1990) to 12.1% (1990 to 1996). The Town of Taos grew at faster rates than the County as a whole (9.1% compared to 8.1%).

In 1996, population for the Town of Taos was approximately 5,000 residents. By the year 2020, the Town's population is expected to increase by two-thirds. The goals, objectives, and policies of the Vision 2020 Master Plan were developed in the context of these projections. The aim of the plan is to manage this future growth in ways that are beneficial to Taos and its residents.

Race and Ethnicity
Taos County has a higher percentage of "minorities" (national minorities account for the majority of Taoseños) than the state as a whole. 0000000In 1990, 64% of all Taos County residents were Hispanic, compared with 38.2% of all New Mexicans; non-Hispanic Whites accounted for 28% of the County's population (they comprised 50.4% of all state residents), and Native Americans accounted for 6.2% (they comprised 8.5% of all state residents). The percentage of Hispanics in Taos County, nevertheless, decreased from 86.3% of the population in 1970 to 64.1% in 1990. Non-Hispanic whites, which were 28% of the 1990 County population, appear to have increased through in-migration.

---

### Table 1
**Historical and Projected Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Taos County</th>
<th>Town of Taos</th>
<th>Ratio of Town to County</th>
<th>Growth Rate</th>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>12,008</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>14,394</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>18,528</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>17,146</td>
<td>1,815</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
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<td>15,934</td>
<td>2,163</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>17,516</td>
<td>2,478</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>19,546</td>
<td>3,269</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>23,184</td>
<td>4,313</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<td>July 1-Estimates</td>
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<td>19%</td>
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<td>1991</td>
<td>24,157</td>
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<td>20%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<td>20%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>25,985</td>
<td>5,270</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 1-Projections</td>
<td>27,715</td>
<td>5,856</td>
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<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>29,893</td>
<td>6,546</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>32,062</td>
<td>7,243</td>
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<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>34,252</td>
<td>7,966</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>36,387</td>
<td>8,695</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Estimates by Bureau of the Census as of November 1997.
**Taos not yet incorporated.

Source: Bureau of Business and Economic Research, UNM
Median Age

The median age in the Town of Taos increased almost ten years between 1970 and 1990, a greater increase than was experienced nationally (Table 2). This is partially a result of the out-migration of women of child bearing age. According to BBER, between 1990 and 1995, the County experienced a net loss of more than 400 women between the ages of 15 and 39. The in-migration of White non-Hispanics may also have affected median age trends in Taos. As a group, White non-Hispanics possess the oldest age structure of any ethnic group and have a low and declining fertility rate.

### Median Age

**Historical and Projected Median Ages**

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Taos County</th>
<th>New Mexico</th>
<th>United States</th>
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<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>29.5</td>
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<td>1970</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Bureau of Business and Economic Research, UNM, projections by Dekker/Perich/Subatini*

**Table 2**

The median age in the Town of Taos increased almost ten years between 1970 and 1990, a greater increase than was experienced nationally.
URBAN FORM PAST AND PRESENT

Human settlement in the Taos Valley existed long before the first Europeans entered the area in 1540. While Taos Pueblo was officially established as a village when the King of Spain declared it so in 1615, historic maps showing exact boundaries of the Town are not readily available.

Land ownership and control during Spanish colonial times were established through land grants rather than by incorporated municipalities with local governments. The University of New Mexico has an 1896 United States Department of Interior Map of the State of New Mexico illustrating Spanish land grants in the area. The Town of Taos, with the Plaza at its core, fell into the domain of the Don Fernando de Taos Grant. The 1917 Township and Range map shows the Taos Pueblo Grant with vague limits for the unincorporated Town. A 1932 Township and Range Map specifically shows private claims within the Pueblo Grants, and gives another vague definition of the town's limits. Clearly defined boundaries of the Town have only existed since 1934, when the Town of Taos was incorporated as a municipality. However, historically and in the present, municipal limits have not been the limits of growth in Taos Valley.
SECTION II
LAND USE

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL RESOURCES, UNIQUE LANDSCAPE, HISTORIC CHARACTER, DISTINCT NEIGHBORHOODS, AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES OF THE TAOS VALLEY.
SECTION II/LAND USE
EXISTING LAND USE

Development Patterns
The Town of Taos is the center of urban development in the Taos Valley, containing its major commercial centers, institutions, healthcare facilities, and its largest concentration of residences and employment. 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. Current development patterns are shown in Figure 14.
Natural Resource Constraints
Floodplains, excessive slopes, and poor soils constrain development at different locations in the Taos Valley. Key geographic features, including the Rio Grande River, the Rio Pueblo de Taos, individual feeder streams, foothills, and mountainsides will continue to shape development patterns in the years to come. Increasingly, however, other factors will come into play. These include water availability and quality, the desire to preserve prime agricultural soils and open places, and economies offered by locating new development in areas within or in close proximity to municipal services and infrastructure. The natural resource constraints to development in Taos appear in Figure 15.
Section II/Land Use

Current Land Use

Current land use in the Town of Taos has been shaped by existing development patterns, natural resource constraints, and infrastructure availability. Land use does not always correspond to zoning, but refers to the actual use of a piece of property. For example, a parcel may be zoned commercial because of its location along a major road, but may actually be used for agriculture. In the future, the owner of that parcel has the option to open a business on that property, but may choose to continue farming, build a family home, so long as zoning and land use regulations permit these less intensive uses. Current land use in the Town of Taos consists of a commercial corridor that flanks Paseo del Pueblo Norte/Paseo del Pueblo Sur, the main highway through town, and includes the Taos Plaza and Central Business District. Institutions (schools, health centers, government offices, etc.), small industries, offices, residences, and a significant number of vacant properties extend outward from the main highway on arterial roads. Rangeland and properties that appear to be irrigated in aerial photographs, surround the Town to the west, east, and south, creating greenbelts of varying sizes around the community. Figure 16 depicts current land use in Taos.
Note: Figure 17, Current Zoning, is a simplified version of the Official Town of Taos Zoning Map. Please contact the Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department for the official version of the map.

**Current Zoning**

Zoning in the Town of Taos consists of discrete zones for open space, rural-agricultural, residential, commercial, and manufacturing uses. Performance standards overlay these discrete zones to provide flexibility for appropriate development.

Zoning is intended to direct development to certain areas of the community and to limit it in others. Current zoning limits development in the Extra Territorial Zone by permitting only one house per three acres in the greenbelt areas of Ranchitos, Cañon, south of Paseo del Cañon West, and south of Este Es Road. Defined residential areas in the greenbelts allow one house per acre, encouraging development along the main roads and away from agricultural fields. Within the Town of Taos limits, commercial development (including offices) is encouraged along the main highway and in the Plaza area. Higher-density housing and neighborhood commercial provide a transition between the main highway corridor and the single-family residential housing on the perimeter of the Town limits. Parks and other open spaces are interspersed throughout the Town. Most industrial zoning occurs in the Paseo del Cañon West/Salazar area. Current zoning is featured in Figure 17.
SECTION II/LAND USE

FUTURE LAND USE

At the Vision 2030 Open House described on pages 7-10, residents were asked to rate three land use scenarios for the year 2020. The scenarios were developed by weighing population and economic growth projections, natural resource protection, and community input from the Vision 2020 process. The scenarios provide a context for the land use recommendations in the Vision 2020 Master Plan. Clearly, choosing a physical plan for the future of Taos is a challenging balancing act that requires consideration of economic, social, and aesthetic values.

Scenario 1
Scenario 1 (Figure 18) is a trend scenario based on existing land use regulations and projections for population and employment growth. Under Scenario 1, development patterns will remain much the same. This scenario received the fewest votes from Open House attendees, indicating that Taos area residents want to see existing regulations changed and current development patterns altered.

Commercial Development: The scenario projects that all commercially-zoned vacant land will be developed, resulting in a dense commercial corridor along Paseo del Pueblo Norte and Paseo del Pueblo Sur with little visual or physical relief. Additional commercial corridors will also grow given projected densities along intersecting roads, such as Paseo del Colón and Chamisa Road. Scenario 1 does not provide enough vacant commercial land to support employment projections and, therefore, falls short of Vision 2030 goals for economic development.

Residential Development: Under Scenario 1, most vacant residential land will be developed to meet projected residential growth at current actual densities, providing a housing mix that matches the current inventory of housing: 67% single-family, 26% multi-family, and 7% mobile homes. Without increasing densities or the percentage of multi-family units, land consumption will increase, and limits on the amount of land available for housing may cause higher land and housing prices. Continued residential growth at low densities and the separation of residential from commercial areas may increase the cost of infrastructure and the number of vehicle miles traveled by Taos residents.

Open Space: Scenario 1 does not reflect any desire to preserve agricultural land or open space. While current zoning may generally maintain the greenbelts around the Town of Taos, residential development will continue to encroach in these areas. The lack of sufficient land for commercial, industrial, and office uses may also encourage development of the greenbelt.

Figure 18
Scenario 1 shows Taos in 2020 at full build-out. This map was developed from growth and employment projections and existing regulations.

Table 3: Scenario 1 Acreage and Percent Acreage of Land Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>2879.25</td>
<td>26.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial, Office, Industrial, Manufacturing, and Institutional</td>
<td>120.34</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space</td>
<td>187.39</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenbelt</td>
<td>5079.31</td>
<td>47.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeveloped</td>
<td>976.19</td>
<td>9.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation/Parking Lots</td>
<td>413.67</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10791.35</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 19
Scenario 2 balances natural resource protection with economic development and housing needs. It was developed by the CAT in response to input from the Community Meetings.

Scenario 2
Scenario 2 (Figure 19) was developed by the Community Action Team from the results of the Community Meetings. This scenario balances natural resource protection with economic development and housing needs. Scenario 2 received twice as many votes as Scenario 1, but about half the votes of Scenario 3, indicating that it is a moderate yet less favored scenario.

Commercial Development: Scenario 2 attempts to address the need to accommodate new employment in Taos by creating employment centers for commercial, industrial, and other employment uses and by creating neighborhood commercial/mixed use centers for small-scale neighborhood serving businesses and services in residential areas. Neighborhood commercial/mixed use centers and employment centers concentrate commercial activity in discrete areas and direct some activity off of the main corridor and into residential neighborhoods. This may reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled, allow for "park and ride" opportunities and greater pedestrian access to services closer to neighborhoods. The scenario locates neighborhood commercial/mixed use centers in order to provide neighborhoods with individual focal points. In many cases the beginnings of these centers already exist.

Scenario 2 also directs dense commercial development to a higher densities encouraged district in the more developed areas of the Town where infrastructure already exists. This preserves agricultural land and open space in the ETZ, but also places development pressures on the 100 year floodplain and areas containing important agricultural soils that fall within the more developed areas of the Town. Higher densities will necessitate careful site design review in order to mitigate the impact on the floodplain, natural drainages, agricultural soils, and other natural features. Without strong land use controls, greater densities may result in erosion and disruption of natural drainage patterns.

Residential Development: Scenario 2 accommodates projected residential growth by increasing single-family densities to as much as 6 units per acre in the higher densities encouraged district, and by increasing the overall percentage of attached and multi-family residential development at 14 dwelling units or higher per acre. This increase in density and in the percentage of multi-family units will decrease land consumption for urban dwellers, and may forestall increases in land and housing prices. While higher densities decrease the cost of infrastructure, they will also burden existing infrastructure designed for lower densities. As stated above, proper planning and site design review will be needed to mitigate the impacts of higher density on the natural environment.

Open Space: Scenario 2 largely preserves the current inventory of agricultural land by decreasing densities in the greenbelt surrounding the Town, by directing development to the higher densities encouraged district, and by increasing densities in more developed areas. It also recognizes the importance of open spaces in the developed areas of Town by preserving individual open spaces and trails identified as important to the community. Scenario 2 also enhances accessibility to parks and other recreation opportunities.

Table 4: Scenario 2 Average and Percent Acreage of Land Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Acreage Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>3142.94</td>
<td>50.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial, Office, Industrial</td>
<td>1281.84</td>
<td>20.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing, and Institutional</td>
<td>1281.84</td>
<td>11.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OpenSpace</td>
<td>588.55</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Commercial/Mixed Use</td>
<td>53.85</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>5050.46</td>
<td>36.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeveloped</td>
<td>364.40</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation/Parking Lots</td>
<td>434.26</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18731.44</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION II/LAND USE

Scenario 3

Scenario 3 (Figure 20) focuses on natural resource protection by restricting any new development in the 100-year floodplain, on irrigated and agricultural lands, and on prime or statewide important agricultural soils. Open House participants overwhelmingly selected Scenario 3 as their scenario of choice.

Commercial Development: Like Scenario 2, Scenario 3 directs commercial development to employment and neighborhood commercial/mixed use centers, and to the higher densities encouraged districts where infrastructure currently exists. This increases commercial density and may direct some activity away from the main corridor and into residential neighborhoods. However, Scenario 3 does not provide enough vacant commercial land at current densities to support employment projections since no new development is allowed in the floodplain, on irrigated and agricultural lands, and on important agricultural soils. While this protects against erosion and the degradation of natural resources, it greatly constrains economic development opportunities by limiting the sites available for such development. Like development patterns in Scenario 2, Scenario 3 may reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled, allow for "park once" opportunities and greater pedestrian access to services closer to neighborhoods.

Residential Development: Scenario 3 accommodates projected residential growth by increasing single-family densities to as much as 8 units per acre in the higher density encouraged district and by increasing the amount of land devoted to higher density attached and multi-family residential development at 14 dwelling units or higher per acre. Increases in density and the number of multi-family units will decrease land consumption, and may forestall increases in land and housing prices. Higher residential density generally decreases the cost of infrastructure, but burdens existing infrastructure designed for lower densities.

Open Space: Scenario 3 optimizes the amount of open spaces, agricultural lands, and greenbelt areas preserved, and enhances the accessibility of parks and other recreation opportunities. It also recognizes the importance of open spaces in the developed areas of Town by preserving individual open spaces and trails identified as important to the community. By restricting new development in environmentally important and sensitive areas, it greatly protects the natural resources of the community.

Figure 20

Scenario 3 focuses on natural resource protection.

Table 5: Scenario 3 Acres and Percent Acreage of Land Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Acreage Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>3408.98</td>
<td>22.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial, Office, Industrial</td>
<td>900.96</td>
<td>6.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing, and Institutional</td>
<td>425.95</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OpenSpace</td>
<td>355.16</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Commercial/Mixed Use</td>
<td>62.97</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenbelt</td>
<td>5471.16</td>
<td>36.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeveloped</td>
<td>1185.82</td>
<td>7.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation/Parking Lots</td>
<td>406.51</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15725.59</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 21
The Preferred Densities Map was developed from Vision 2020 community input that prioritized higher densities in areas with existing infrastructure, and the preservation of the dispersed open spaces and the greenbelt surrounding the Town.

SECTION II/LAND USE

PREFERRED LAND USE FOR THE YEAR 2020

While Open House participants strongly supported the natural resource protection depicted in Scenario 3, they and other Vision 2020 participants also wanted to direct development to areas with existing infrastructure, many of which fall within the 100 year floodplain. Vision 2020 participants also wanted to ensure that economic development and affordable housing needs could be met, which would require setting aside land for these purposes. Town of Tooele Planning and Zoning Department Staff and Dekker/Perich/Sabatini attempted to balance these contradictory needs by strengthening natural resource protection in the goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures of the Master Plan. Sensitive areas such as the 100 year floodplain were given special attention. In exchange, the Plan recognizes the need to increase density in developed areas with existing infrastructure, and to provide land for economic development and housing.

Through the Vision 2020 process, physical components of preferred future land use were identified and will be used to update the Town of Tooele Land Use Development Code (LUDC). The LUDC establishes land use regulations such as zoning, density requirements, and design guidelines, and therefore serves as the cornerstone for planning for, guiding, and managing growth. The Vision 2020 Master Plan presents a long-range vision for the community that can be achieved and implemented through incorporation into the LUDC and other regulations. Throughout the next twenty years, the Vision 2020 Master Plan will be used to incrementally update the LUDC to guide development and growth. While the exact zoning categories, boundaries, and permitted uses will be defined by working with affected neighborhoods and communities to update the LUDC, the Preferred Land Use Acreage (Table 6), the Preferred Densities Map (Figure 21), and the following descriptions of preferred future land use will serve as guidelines for the update.

Table 6: Preferred Land Use Acreage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Acreage Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>4661.37</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial, Office, Industrial, Manufacturing, and Commercial</td>
<td>1234.18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space</td>
<td>389.76</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Commercial/Mixed Use Center</td>
<td>65.64</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenbelt</td>
<td>397.78</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation/Parking Lots</td>
<td>620.01</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12355.64</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Greenbelt in Green Land and Rangeland combined.
SECTION II/LAND USE

Commercial Development

- Continued provision for commercial, office, and institutional development in the Central Business District, and along Paseo del Pueblo Sur/Paseo del Pueblo Norte and major intersecting streets.
- Creation of dispersed mixed use centers that house neighborhood-serving businesses and services in residential areas. Neighborhood commercial/mixed use centers should be located in areas with adequate infrastructure that have or are developing a need for non-residential development.
- Designation of employment centers to promote economic development. Existing employment centers include the Central Business District, government offices along Cruz Alta, the business park on Paseo del Cañon West and Salazar, and the node of medical facilities along Weimer Road. Developing employment centers include the Paseo del Cañon East corridor, and the Chamiza/Paseo del Pueblo Sur area. The Vision 2020 process identified these areas as places where new economic development should be directed.
- Designation of a higher densities encouraged district located in developed areas with existing infrastructure to accommodate high-density commercial uses.

Figure 22
The preservation of open space and agricultural lands is central to Taos’ economy, quality of life, spiritual, and cultural core.

Figure 23
Dispersed employment and neighborhood commercial/mixed-use centers enhance the sense of community, and reduce traffic congestion on the main highway and in the Plaza area.
Residential Development
- Continued provision for low-density residential development in the more rural areas of the Town and ETZ.
- Direction of residential development in the Ranchitos and Cañon Greenbelts to land bordering roads.
- Designation of a higher densities encouraged district located in developed areas with existing infrastructure to accommodate high-density residential uses.

Open Space
- Preservation of the agricultural lands that comprise the Ranchitos and Cañon Greenbelts.
- Preservation of small, public open spaces within the more densely developed areas of Town. Specific properties identified for preservation in the Vision 2020 process include the Mitchell property, the Couse property, the open space north of the Taos County Courthouse, and the wetlands area on the east side of Camino del Medio, just south of Paseo del Cañon West. The meadows near the Overland Sheepskin in El Prado were also identified for preservation, although they lie outside of the Town of Taos and ETZ limits. Park land and open space areas were also identified in the Weimer Foothills area, near the future Youth and Family Center, along natural drainages, and on lands currently zoned as Agriculture Recreation Open Space (ARO) in the LUDC. Parks and open spaces should be dispersed throughout the Town and the ETZ to provide maximum and equitable access to Taos area residents.
- Creation of a network of linked multi-use trails for recreation and non-motorized transportation. The Vision 2020 process identified a trails loop that runs along Paseo del Pueblo Norte, Camino de la Placita, Salazar Road, Paseo del Cañon, and Kit Carson Road. A cross-town rural linkage should run through Cañon along Witt and Los Pandos to La Posta, through Fred Baca Park, and onto Camino del Medio. A linkage from Lower Ranchitos across private lands and onto Camino del Medio and Paseo del Cañon is also recommended. Recreation and non-motorized transportation on the west mesa should be encouraged by a trail running along the base of the mesa, and connecting to Paseo del Pueblo Norte.

Figure 24
A combination of rural low-density housing in more rural areas and high-density attached and multi-family housing in the higher densities encouraged district will meet future housing projections, decrease land consumption, and forestall increased housing prices.
COMMUNITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR LAND USE

Goal One
Denser, higher impact non-residential development is directed to designated employment centers, where public services and infrastructure already exist, or where such development will have the least impact on the current and future inventory of open space and land under cultivation.

Objectives
- Make employment centers of adequate size to accommodate future years of demand for office, manufacturing, warehouse, and industrial sites at current floor area ratios.
- Provide adequate land with appropriate approved densities so that employment centers accommodate the Town’s goals for employment and economic development.
- Disperse employment centers throughout the planning area, within the current municipal service boundaries for water and wastewater utilities.
- Redevelop deteriorated or deteriorating commercial, industrial, and manufacturing properties so that they are attractive to businesses currently looking for space in Taos.
- Patterns and types of employment and services taking place within employment centers complement adjacent or nearby residential and agricultural areas, and are sited to minimize the adverse effects of noise, lighting, pollution, and traffic on residential environments.

Goal Two
Distinct, neighborhood commercial/mixed use centers are established throughout the planning area to better service the daily needs of neighborhood residents, reduce traffic congestion and dependence on the automobile, encourage a distinct identity for individual communities and neighborhoods within the planning area, and increase the inventory of affordable housing.

Objectives
- Establish neighborhood commercial/mixed use centers in traditional neighborhood service areas or where adequate public services and infrastructure already exist.
- In new or developing neighborhoods, plan for neighborhood commercial/mixed use development at the time of subdivision.
- In neighborhood commercial/mixed use centers, encourage developers to provide the desired mix of neighborhood-serving commercial, office, and residential uses.
- Implement adequate transportation planning to reduce vehicle miles traveled by residents and mitigate the impact of the centers on neighborhood traffic patterns, congestion, and parking.
- Allow combined work-live uses and home occupation permits in appropriate areas.
Goal Three
An increased proportion of new development is accommodated through infill on vacant parcels in developed areas, through redevelopment of existing properties where adequate services and infrastructure exist for urban facilities and where increased density is encouraged.

Objective
Create financial incentives for infill development and redevelopment for developers and subdividers.

Goal Four
Higher density development is directed to areas where adequate services and infrastructure exist for urban facilities and where such developments have a minimal impact on existing and future agriculture uses and visual and physical access (where permitted) to open places.

Objectives
- Provide viable economic incentives for agriculturists and large land owners to continue low-density uses, and to cluster improvements in order to provide a variety of building or housing types and larger, shared open spaces and greenbelts.
- Higher density housing outside of planned unit developments will protect existing neighborhoods.
- Higher density development has no adverse affect on traditional plaza developments and the historic district.
- Precede higher density development with adequate infrastructure, service planning, and development.
- In areas where lower density development is preferred, provide financial incentives for developers to cluster improvements in order to provide a variety of building or housing types and larger, shared open spaces and greenbelts.

Goal Five
Industrial, commercial, and residential development protects and enhances the unique landscape and natural resources of Taos.

Objectives
- Inventory and monitor the quality and quantity of the Taos Valley’s natural resources (air, surface and ground water, wetlands, wildlife, vegetation, agricultural lands, open space, and views).
- Allow development at a rate and in a way that sustains existing natural resources so that future generations enjoy the same environment that exists today.
- Identify and mitigate the impacts of new development within the 100 year floodplain.
- Limit the unnecessary clearing and paving of natural vegetation and drainages to prevent runoff and erosion.
- Retain height restrictions to preserve views.
- Ban billboards within the Town of Taos limits.
- Curtail development on sensitive lands including wetlands, steep slope areas (greater than 15%), and ridgelines.
- Require setbacks for new developments along streams and rivers.
- Develop a water conservation program and well-head protection ordinance to protect the quantity and quality of our underground waters.
- Keep Taos clean by expanding recycling services; by providing public trash receptacles in employment, commercial, and mixed use centers; by sponsoring clean-up days; and by developing and enforcing an anti-litter campaign.
SECTION II/LAND USE

LAND USE POLICIES

1. The Town of Taos will expand its infrastructure into locations planned and zoned to accommodate expandable office, manufacturing, warehouse, and industrial development.

2. The Town of Taos will facilitate the formation of Special Assessment Districts to provide required infrastructure for planned employment centers.

3. The Town of Taos will determine where sufficient sewer and water line and traffic capacities exist to accommodate employment centers and will rezone those areas to allow for their development as employment centers.

4. The Town of Taos will identify deteriorating structures in neighborhoods with sufficient infrastructure capacities and accommodate structure renovation to attract new users.

5. The Town of Taos will foster and encourage neighborhood participation at Public Hearings to help minimize adverse effects when a proposed use is inconsistent with existing uses in the neighborhood.

6. Denser, higher impact, non-residential uses will not be facilitated by the Town of Taos where they would have a negative social, cultural, or economic effect on a neighborhood.

7. The Town of Taos will identify areas, centers, and parcels in existing neighborhoods and communities where infrastructure already exists and accommodate through zoning their development as commercial, office, and mixed use, with bonuses for mixed use.

8. The Town of Taos will target potential mixed use centers for annexation.

9. The Town of Taos will identify larger sized parcels which are suitable for mixed use, zone them appropriately, assign percentages based on use, and phase their development, using bonuses to encourage desired densities.

10. The Town of Taos will allow agricultural uses in the open space areas of cluster developments.

11. The Town of Taos will provide incentives such as density bonuses and parking requirement deductions to encourage development along existing transportation routes and in existing centers.

12. The Town of Taos will measure the transportation impacts of land use decisions.

13. The Town of Taos will develop a simple process for special uses for home occupations.

14. The Town of Taos will provide rezoning, density bonuses, and other incentives to developers who build in or redevelop targeted properties.
15. The Town of Taos will connect the goal of infill development and other incentives with economic development policies to encourage tax rebates and other incentives for developers who build in identified infill areas or who take existing buildings and sites and recondition them in keeping with neighborhood character.

16. The Town of Taos will identify target properties for infill development or redevelopment and will provide a list of these properties to local economic development organizations.

17. The Town of Taos will reduce parking requirements for infill locations.

18. The Town of Taos will develop an inventory of and map the Valley’s natural resources.

19. The Town of Taos will develop sustainability indicators to measure the impact of development on natural resource quality and quantity. Sustainability will be measured bi-annually, using studies and statistics from the Town and federal, state, and other local agencies and organizations.

20. The Town of Taos will recalculate the 100 year floodplain. Developers within the floodplain will be restricted from unnecessarily removing vegetation or paving the ground cover, will be required to set aside a greater percentage of useable open space and install special flood control features such as semi-pervious ground coverings for parking lots and streets, swales, retaining walls, and wetlands.

21. The Town of Taos will not clear vegetation from or pave drainage channels.

22. The Town of Taos will retain its existing height restrictions on buildings.

23. The Town of Taos will not permit billboards within the Town limits.

24. The Town of Taos will reevaluate the compatibility of existing zoning districts to the natural resource inventory, and will amend the Land Use Development Code, if necessary, to provide greater protections for sensitive lands.

25. The Town of Taos will research national standards for stream setbacks, and amend its Land Use Development Code to require adequate stream setbacks.

26. The Town of Taos will develop and implement a well-head protection ordinance and water conservation program that includes community education.

27. The Town of Taos will continue to fund and maintain its recycling facility, and will expand it if necessary.

28. The Town of Taos will make its recycling facility more user friendly by providing dispersed recycling bins throughout town, making hours more convenient, cleaning up and erecting self-guided signage at the main facility, and sponsoring educational campaigns.
SECTION II/LAND USE

29. The Town of Taos will provide trash and recycling receptacles at its facilities, within the Central Business District, and at other commercial and employment centers. The Town will facilitate a "Receptacle Campaign" wherein business owners may donate trash receptacles on which they advertise their business.

30. The Town of Taos will provide density bonuses for agriculturists and large land owners in exchange for keeping more of their land as open space.

31. The Town of Taos will purchase easements from farmers and large land owners to be used as agricultural conservation easements.

32. The Town of Taos will continue to enforce height restrictions and require building massing to preserve the unique and historic character in and around the historic district.

33. The Town of Taos will streamline the site development review process and provide incentives for developers who develop infill parcels within existing mixed use, activity, and employment centers.

34. The Town of Taos will develop a transitional use permit system in which permits are awarded to those developments that buffer and preserve existing neighborhoods from the impact of the development.

Figure 25
The designation of employment centers promotes economic development.

Figure 26
Designating infill districts in developed areas with existing infrastructure accommodates higher density commercial uses.
IMPLEMENTATION

Land Use Development Code Update and Rezoning
Since December 1996, members of the Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Commission have been working with Planning and Zoning Department Staff to update the Land Use Development Code (LUDC). Beginning in January 1999, Planning and Zoning Department Staff will incorporate the Vision 2020 Master Plan into the LUDC, either as part of the current revision or as a separate revision. These changes will include rezoning in partnership with the affected communities and neighborhoods and should be completed by December 1999. Subsequent reviews and revisions of the LUDC will occur every two years thereafter. Current and future versions of the LUDC will work in conjunction with the 1999 Vision 2020 Master Plan. Priorities for updating the LUDC to reflect the Vision 2020 Master Plan include:

Infill Development
- Identify vacant land, underutilized and underdeveloped properties (including parking areas) in commercial zones; deteriorating commercial buildings; and areas where adequate infrastructure for industrial, commercial, and institutional development exists.
- Zone these areas for infill by allowing higher-impact uses and higher densities.
- Encourage development in these infill areas by decreasing parking requirements, providing density bonuses, possible tax rebates, and other incentives.
- Give high priority to infill areas when expanding or improving infrastructure.
- Create disincentives for developing outside of infill areas.
- Require new developments that do not plan to connect up to the Town of Taos wastewater treatment system to have secondary wastewater treatment on all installed wastewater treatment facilities.

Mixed Use
- Identify neighborhood nodes and larger sized parcels that are suitable for mixed use.
- Establish mixed-use zones, assigning percentages based on use.
- Encourage development in mixed-use zones through density bonuses and by allowing phased development.
- Work with neighborhoods to identify preferred uses for mixed-use neighborhood nodes.
- Give high priority to mixed-use zones when expanding or improving infrastructure.

Zoning
- Rezone the Town of Taos and Extra Territorial Zone to reflect Vision 2020 Preferred Land Use.
- Amend the home occupation definition to allow small value-added agricultural businesses in specified residential areas.

Affordable Housing
- Provide density bonuses for the inclusion of affordable housing units.
- Encourage street, curb, and other infrastructure design that would lower land costs to developers.
- Develop a process and/or identify and zone land to accommodate well-planned manufactured and mobile home parks.
Section II/Land Use

Parking/Transportation
- Change parking requirements for commercial and institutional developments to accommodate only the average number of customers.
- Require that parking be dispersed and located to the sides and rear of buildings and shielded from view.
- Encourage parking lot access to occur through secondary streets.
- Encourage the creation of traffic thorats in parking lots.
- Require that parking be accessible for pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit.
- Require all proposed major developments to prepare traffic studies.
- Require all proposed major developments to make provisions for mass transit and pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Design Issues
- Modify setback requirements to be in relation to building massing and scale in proximity to road frontage.
- Encourage the use of conservation subdivision design.
- Provide incentives for plaza model design.
- Retain height restrictions.

Open Space/Natural Resource Protection
- Require that new developments plan for preservation and enhancement of natural resources through the use of conservation easements, environmental corridors, greenbelts, landscape easements, or open space purchases.
- Require all subdivisions and mobile home parks to include an increased percentage of usable open space, such as small private areas for each family, common play areas, pocket parks, bike and walking trails.
- Allow agricultural use of open space areas in developments.
- Require maintenance provisions for open spaces and trails in developments, through the developer or a home owner’s association.
- Require developers to link up to the Town of Taos open space network.
- Encourage cluster housing through density bonuses (15-50%) that range according to open space provisions.
- Restrict the destruction or paving of wetlands, natural drainage channels, and acequias, and encourage the use of swales to protect them.
- Restrict developers in the 100 year floodplain from removing vegetation and paving ground cover, and require them to set aside a greater percentage of usable open space and install special flood control features (swales, semi-pervious ground covers for parking lots and streets, retaining walls, wetlands, etc.).
- Research and establish a stream setback.
- Make necessary amendments to restrictions/permitted uses in each zoning district to protect sensitive lands identified through the natural resource inventory.

Permitting Process Initiative
Between January 1999 and December 2000, the Town of Taos will centralize the location of building permits through capital expenditures to expand the Town Hall. The Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Staff will develop a simplified, over-the-counter building permit process based upon community input and internal review and analysis. Incentives may be provided for uses identified as priorities in the Vision 2020 Master Plan, such as economic development, affordable housing, home occupations, local vendors, and infill developments. Other improvements, such as case managers that follow a particular project from beginning to end, and a transitional permit system for developments that buffer and preserve existing neighborhoods from the impact of development, will be considered.
SECTION III
AGRICULTURAL
LANDS AND OPEN
SPACE PRESERVATION

TAOS’ QUALITY OF LIFE IS
MAINTAINED BY PRESERVING AND
ENHANCING OUR CHERISHED OPEN
SPACES AND AGRICULTURAL LANDS.
EXISTING AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND OPEN SPACE

The Town of Taos is surrounded by some of the most spectacular open places in the American West. These include the Rio Grande Gorge; Embudo Canyon; the mountains, forests, and alpine meadows of the neighboring Carson National Forest; and the Rio Grande River. In both private and public settings, the region around Taos affords some of the nation's premier outdoor recreational sites for camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, mountain biking, alpine and nordic skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, and ice skating.

Within the Town and surrounding areas, residents and tourists alike cherish the agricultural fields, wildlife, and scenic views of the Taos Valley. Farming, the center of the Valley's economy until the early twentieth century, continues to keep many fields open and green. The Taos Valley takes pride in the spectacular greenbelt that surrounds the Town of Taos and the smaller agricultural fields tended by families throughout the years. But agriculture's declining economic viability has resulted in the conversion of much land to residential and commercial uses. Local Taosños continue to farm less for economic reasons, and more to retain their traditions and history.

The development of farmland and sensitive areas such as floodplains and ridgelines has sparked concern that more must be done to preserve agricultural land and open space in the Taos Valley. Town of Taos land use regulations require large lot sizes for buildings in its R-A zone, which corresponds to much of the Taos "greenbelt" (Figure 27). The Taos Land Trust, a local non-profit organization, plays an important role in regional open space and agricultural land preservation by working with land owners to preserve their lands in conservation easements. Through conservation easements, the Taos Land Trust has secured some privately-owned lands within the Town of Taos as permanent, non-public open space (please see maps in the Land Use Section).

Figure 27
Ranchitos Road is in a greenbelt area outside of the Town's boundary.
COMMUNITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

Goal One
The tradition of agriculture in Taos is maintained and enhanced by preserving irrigated agricultural lands and areas containing good agricultural soils.

Objectives
- Limit the conversion of land under cultivation or appropriate for cultivation to other uses.
- Give agriculturists the opportunity to receive adequate and just compensation for selling development entitlements for agricultural land to the Town or for transferring them to non-agricultural areas.
- Enhance the economic viability of farming operations through economic development programs focused on revitalizing agriculture in Taos.
- Support and recognize the ditch associations that preserve and maintain the acequia system.
- Recognize acequia right-of-way and historic access.
- Discourage non-agricultural uses on properties adjacent to acequias.
- Zone areas currently under cultivation or containing good agricultural soils for agriculture and low-density agricultural use. Provide flexibility to these landowners through the variance process.

Goal Two
The Town of Taos preserves significant permanent open space in areas designated as low density, and small permanent open spaces in more developed areas. These open spaces provide residents with permanent visual or physical access to significant natural resources and remove from the more urban parts of town.

Objectives
- Site public open space to provide equitable visual and physical access to residents in all parts of town.
- Site public open space to preserve and protect lands valued by the community, unique natural landscapes, environmentally sensitive areas (waterways, ridgelines, wetlands, steep-slope areas), far vistas, wildlife corridors, varied or scenic terrain, and vegetation in its natural state or in agricultural use.
- Through the cooperation of local government, non-profit agencies and land owners, purchase large tracts of open space at the periphery of high-density areas.
- Coordinate use and acquisition policies for open space in the Town of Taos with other political subdivisions of the Taos Valley; non-profit agencies; state, federal, county, and tribal governments.
- Allow a range of recreational uses on Town owned open space. Low impact uses should be encouraged on open spaces not designated as parks or recreational fields.

Goal Three
The Town of Taos takes a proactive role in preserving water resources and ensuring access to water for the present and the future.
SECTION III/AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

AGRICULTURAL LAND AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION POLICIES

1. The Town of Taos will create and implement a Master Plan for open space and sensitive lands that protects natural resources including wetlands, wildlife habitat, scenic views, and ecologically important areas.

2. The Town of Taos will preserve and encourage sustained agriculture primarily through incentives and secondarily through regulations. The Town of Taos will strongly pursue private-public programs for developing a compatible set of incentives and regulations that result in the economic viability of preservation.

3. The Town of Taos will pursue preservation of parks and open space for the community to maintain cultural and traditional activities and observances.

4. The Town of Taos will sponsor a workshop between the Taos Valley Acequia Association and Planning Staff to discuss the practical and legal issues of preserving historic water rights and irrigation systems.

5. The Town of Taos will inform the community and support efforts to put water rights that may not be in use into a water bank for future agricultural or target business needs.

Figure 28
Agricultural field off Camino del Medio
IMPLEMENTATION

Agricultural Land, Open Space, and Natural Resource Preservation Initiative

Between March 1999 and December 2000, Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department Staff will coordinate a citizen committee to develop a Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Natural Resource Protection. The citizen committee should consist of representatives from local governments, federal and state agencies, community organizations, individuals knowledgeable about the topic, and other concerned citizens. The Plan will:

- Inventory existing natural resources including wetlands, wildlife habitat, scenic views, prime agricultural soils, floodplains, steep slopes, ecologically sensitive areas, watersheds, riparian zones, acequias, water quality and quantity, air quality, open space, agricultural lands, and trails.
- From each natural resource category, identify the areas most endangered by development, sensitive to development, and valuable to the community.
- Develop sustainability indicators to monitor the quality and quantity of natural resources in the inventory.
- Plan and map an open space network around natural resource constraints and opportunities. The network will include multi-use trails, community parks of varying sizes, open spaces, campgrounds, and fishing areas that are equally accessible to all areas of Taos, and provide for both active and passive recreation.
- Plan linkages among the trails, parks, open spaces, campgrounds, fishing areas, and educational, cultural, and scenic resources within the open space system.
- Plan linkages between the open space network and mixed use, employment, commercial, and institutional centers; community facilities such as the hospital and library; residential areas; roadways; and transit routes.
- Make recommendations for phased land and right of way acquisition.
- Identify incentives and regulations for preservation including transfer and purchase of development rights, clustering, greenbelt designation, and zoning regulations that may be inserted into the Land Use Development Code during an update, or incorporated into it as an ordinance.
- Identify funding for the open space network, including federal and state grants (TEA-21),

![Image of open space area](image)

Figure 29
The Couse property is an open area in the Central Businesses District that the community would like to see preserved.
Section III/Agricultural Lands and Open Space Preservation

increases of lodgers or gross receipts tax, bond issues, mill levies, public donations and dedications, local option taxation such as a real estate transfer tax and other public funding mechanisms.

During and immediately following the completion of the Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Natural Resources Protection, the Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department Staff and citizen committee will implement the Plan. Implementation will include:

- Working with the Mayor and Council to implement preservation incentives, regulations, and fund the open space network.
- Updating and developing ordinances such as well-head protection and water conservation.
- Developing mechanisms for the construction and maintenance of the open space network, such as a volunteer trail-building program, and educational programs to encourage safe and courteous use of the system.
- Developing strategies to retain and maintain Town owned open space, recreational fields, and parks.
- Monitoring natural resources bi-annually through the use of sustainability indicators.
- Sponsoring educational functions, such as relevant workshops and public relations campaigns to inform the community about the Town's water bank and other preservation initiatives.
- Sponsoring a workshop between the Taos Valley Acequia Association (TVAA) and the Town of Taos to discuss mutual concerns for retaining the total allocated water rights within the Taos Valley drainage system. The Town and TVAA will report to the community on the feasibility of water rights donated to water banks for future distribution.
- Coordinating collaborative preservation efforts with other local governments, non-profit organizations, federal and state agencies, neighborhoods, and community members.
SECTION IV
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

THE TAOS ECONOMY IS DIVERSE,
SELF-SUSTAINING, AND PROVIDES
REWARDING JOBS THAT PAY WELL.
SECTION IV/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC TRENDS AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

Community Economics
Labor markets continue to demand higher levels of education from workers. In 1990 New Mexico ranked 33 out of the 50 states in terms of residents completing high school and 22 for residents with a bachelors degree or higher. The Town of Taos largely mirrors the state's performance, but educational opportunities in Taos may expand with increased enrollment at UNM Taos.

Despite difficulties in the mining and agriculture sectors of the economy, Taos continues to grow. New permanent residents contribute to this growth and are changing Taos, increasing the number of older, smaller households that increasingly bring a high percentage of non-wage income into the community. Self-employment is also a strong trend in Taos; currently 30% of all Taos County residents are self-employed. The fastest growing employment sector in the Town of Taos is service jobs, which are often part-time and significantly more skill intensive than manufacturing jobs.

Figure 30
Projected Employment Sector Growth
Note: TCU includes transportation, communication, and utility employment. FIRE includes employment in finance, insurance, and real estate.
### Peer Community Comparison for Key Economic Factors

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Jackson Hole, WY</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Park City, UT</td>
<td>6,107</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>$39,981</td>
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<td>Ruidoso, NM</td>
<td>4,968</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>$21,224</td>
<td>$11,351</td>
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<td>Steamboat, CO</td>
<td>8,100</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>$29,363</td>
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<td>Taos, NM</td>
<td>5,186</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>$16,144</td>
<td>$10,080</td>
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<td>Whitefish, MT</td>
<td>5,800</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>$34,529</td>
<td>$15,292</td>
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</table>

* County data

Source: Dekker/Perich/Sahatini telephone interviews, NM Advocates for Families and Children, BBER

---

### Table 7

| Peer Community Comparison for Key Economic Factors |

---

### Population and Employment Growth Town of Taos, 1996-2020

![Graph showing population and employment growth from 1996 to 2020](image)

- **Population**
- **Employment**

![Figure 31: Employment Growth versus Population Growth in the Town of Taos](image)
Family Economics

Low incomes, higher than average unemployment, and the provision of affordable housing may remain important challenges to Town of Taos families between 1999 and 2020. At 27.5%, the percentage of residents supporting themselves with incomes below federal poverty guidelines is 66% higher than it is for all of New Mexico. Anecdotal information suggests that seasonal work, the informal economy, and individuals choosing lives of intentional simplicity play an important part in suppressing reported income levels. As a result, some of the expected correlation between the rates of poverty and quality of life may not apply to the Town of Taos. Nevertheless, opportunities do exist for increasing family incomes, the availability of higher wage employment, and the variety and affordability of housing.

Between 1969 and 1994, wages, salaries, and agricultural income for Town of Taos residents decreased while transfer payments, particularly retirement funds, dividends, interest, and rents, increased as a percentage of all income, as shown in Table 8. The difference reflects a shift in the demographics of the Town. As older residents in-migrate and the youth of Taos leave to pursue employment opportunities elsewhere, personal income is derived less from wage-based employment and more from transfer payments and other non-earned income. Transfer payments consist of social security payments and Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

In 1993, median household income in the Town of Taos lagged behind the median income of most neighboring communities in Colfax and Taos Counties. Only Questa reported median household income lower than the Town of Taos. This is despite the fact that the Town remains the commercial center of north central New Mexico, collecting gross receipts ten to twenty five times those collected in other Colfax and Taos County communities. All north central New Mexican counties, with the exception of Santa Fe, exceed the state percentage of persons receiving food stamps and living below federal poverty guidelines. Taos County finds itself mid-range among these communities, as shown in Figure 32.
Sources of Per Capita Personal Income in Taos County

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Income source</th>
<th>1989</th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer Payments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Income Maintenance</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Insurance</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>Retirement and Other</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dividends, Interest and Rents</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal Transfer payments</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages, Salaries, Agricultural Income</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>

Source: Town of Taos

Table 8
Town of Taos Income

Income 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td>Per capita Income</td>
<td>$7,509</td>
<td>$8,359</td>
<td>$11,653</td>
<td>$6,205</td>
<td>$15,278</td>
<td>$10,080</td>
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<td>Med. Household Income</td>
<td>$18,330</td>
<td>$17,404</td>
<td>$23,520</td>
<td>$16,549</td>
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</table>

Source: Bureau of Business and Economic Research

Gross Receipts 1993

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<th></th>
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</thead>
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<td>Total gross receipts (000)</td>
<td>$27,627</td>
<td>$15,087</td>
<td>$4,516</td>
<td>$8,355</td>
<td>$24,821</td>
<td>$23,629</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail gross receipts (000)</td>
<td>$9,263</td>
<td>$3,713</td>
<td>$2,163</td>
<td>$3,097</td>
<td>$12,957</td>
<td>$10,955</td>
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</table>

Source: EDD

Table 9
Sources of Per Capita Income

Figure 33
Persons in the Labor Force who are Unemployed/Persons Living in Poverty (1995)
Source: State of New Mexico, Bureau of Vital Statistics

Section IV/Economic Development
EXISTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FACILITIES

The Taos County Economic Development Corporation (TCEDC) was established in 1986 as an organization that aims to alleviate the structural poverty and chronic unemployment of Taos County and northern New Mexico through sustainable economic development that is consistent with the history, traditions, and talent in the Taos area. The Town of Taos supports TCEDC by providing some administrative funding and by acting as the fund-through agent for some grant funding. To date, TCEDC has created over 380 local jobs.

In addition to business incubator facilities established in the late 1980's, TCEDC completed a 24,000 square foot Business Park located along Salazar Road in 1996 that provides enough space for ten local businesses. 80% of these are minority owned and operated and have generated over 100 jobs to date. The Business Park also houses a 5,000 square foot commercial kitchen and distribution center facility that provides start-up and expanding food processing businesses with an inspected facility, commercial equipment, and technical assistance at a low hourly rate. Since its opening, over 30 small food businesses have used the kitchen.

TCEDC also sponsors a community garden project that aims to demonstrate the viability of farming and agriculture and that serves as a welfare to work project. Consumers purchase shares in the garden, then work alongside volunteers, welfare to work participants, and local ancianos (elders) to cultivate and harvest the garden. The produce left over after distribution to shareholders is sold at the local farmer's market, local restaurants, and food processing centers. The community garden works to provide community members with income and experience in marketing and distributing fresh produce. Future plans include the construction of a greenhouse for year-round farming opportunities and continued education on income-generating, sustainable farming models in the Taos area.

TCEDC also provides technical assistance for an average of 100 start-up and expanding small businesses per year. Most assistance comes in providing loan packages for small businesses in the area. In 1997, TCEDC prepared 34 loan packages for small businesses, and created or retained 146 jobs through this service.
COMMUNITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal One
Taos targets and grows small, sustainable industries that do not negatively impact the environment or the rural character of the area.

Objectives
- Provide incentives for small sustainable industries, telecommunications and information-based businesses that pay premium wages and hire with local preference.
- Encourage the increase of education-related jobs by supporting the UNM Taos Campus and other post-secondary institutions that may locate in Taos.
- Improve and create new infrastructure such as phone lines and access to water, wastewater systems, and streets.
- Streamline the building permitting process to be timely, consistent, clear, and enforced.

Goal Two
The Taos economy combines a mixture of thriving tourist and local-serving businesses, cottage industries and home businesses.

Objectives
- Encourage local use of the Plaza and Central Business District by providing incentives for local-serving businesses and services to locate in the area.
- Promote small business ownership by allowing combined work-live uses and home occupation permits in appropriate areas.
- Encourage new small business owners to do market research on the demand and supply of their product or service in Taos.
- Pursue state and federal funds to upgrade and expand public transportation, utilities, and infrastructure.
SECTION IV/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal Three
Agriculture and value-added agricultural products are a viable part of Taos' formal economy.

Objectives
• Secure funding to revitalize agricultural lands and create markets for agricultural products.
• Secure technical assistance for local agriculturists through means such as agricultural extension services.
• Provide economic incentives that encourage farmers to keep their land in agricultural use.
• Facilitate the sale of local agricultural and value-added products to grocery stores, restaurants, and other local businesses.
• Permit road-side vending of local agricultural products on private lands in agriculturally-zoned areas.

Goal Four
Taos' local population buys locally and produces goods and services for internal and external consumption.

Objectives
• Develop incentives and programs that encourage consumers to buy products and utilize services provided by small, locally-owned businesses.
• Encourage new, locally-owned businesses to develop products and services currently imported from the outside.
• Develop funding mechanisms as well as local training, education and mentoring programs to get small businesses off the ground.
• Provide infrastructure for the central business district and other commercial nodes.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

1. The Town of Taos will coordinate its economic development efforts with non-profits, institutions, and surrounding communities pursuing economic development. The Town will initiate meetings at least twice a year among these various economic development entities for the purpose of discussing and coordinating the various economic development initiatives and proposed policies.

2. The Town of Taos will pursue the Economic Development local option tax and other funding sources to finance Vision 2020 Master Plan objectives and policies and ongoing economic development activities for the Taos community.

3. The Town of Taos will lead a collaborative effort to develop and implement an Economic Development Plan and Ordinances, based upon the goals and objectives from the Vision 2020 Master Plan. The Economic Plan and Ordinances will identify existing human and capital resources in order to direct any new economic development initiatives.

4. The Town of Taos will evaluate, assess, and implement a targeted industry study for business retention, expansion, and recruitment, both locally and from the outside.

5. The Town of Taos will continue to support the growth and development of the UNM Branch Campus and other vocational training programs as vital community resources that provide training and workforce development, especially for identified target industries.

6. The Town of Taos will aggressively pursue and promote identified state, federal, and private mechanisms to fund improvements to the local infrastructure including revisiting the implementation of impact fees.

7. The Town of Taos will support a study of the current business startup and expansion sites and other relevant trends to determine the future needs for additional incubator space, industrial park development, or other target business sector infrastructure and facility needs.

8. The Town of Taos will review state and federal funding sources such as Main Street funds, enterprise zones, and parking facilities that will provide incentives and improvements to the Plaza area to attract local-serving businesses.

9. The Town of Taos will lead the formation of a centralized business resource and information center or clearinghouse which coordinates economic development activities, acts as a referral service for all small business providers, assists businesses in streamlining permitting processes, and provides statistical and descriptive information on economic facts and trends. These services will be available to both existing enterprises and new or expanded enterprises (both external and internal). The endeavors will at all times continue to be consistent with the community’s expressed overall goals of maintaining the culture, quality of life, and environment for its citizens.

10. The Town of Taos will facilitate the funding for a market study and potential development of a "Town Market" facility in the Central Business District for retail sales of local agricultural, value-added agricultural products, and other local arts and crafts.
Section IV/Economic Development

11. The Town of Taos will assist in evaluating and selecting a local funding source that targets the start-up and expansion of small business activities, including innovative agriculture and value-added agricultural businesses. Funding sources may include a venture capital fund, a revolving loan fund, linked deposit incentives, and peer lending groups.

12. The Town of Taos will support a "Buy Local" campaign and assist in educating the public on the benefits of buying local products and services. The Town will also adopt a buy-local preference in its own purchasing policy.

13. The Town of Taos will encourage produce stands and small value-added agricultural businesses through its zoning regulations.

14. The Town of Taos, in collaboration with other local economic development entities, will adopt policies that provide incentives for local vendor preference, assist in advertising local goods on the internet, and promote a buy local program.

15. The Town of Taos will support business networking and mentoring programs to facilitate sharing of information between new and potential business owners and current or retired business professionals.

16. The Town of Taos will develop infrastructure and incentives to encourage and support business sector clusters at designated locations, including employment and mixed-use centers.

17. The Town of Taos will aggressively pursue and promote identified state, federal, and private mechanisms to fund improvements to the local infrastructure, especially in employment and mixed-use centers.

18. The Town of Taos will pursue state and federal funding and improvement districts to upgrade and expand aging infrastructure, especially in employment, commercial, and mixed use centers.
IMPLEMENTATION

Economic Development Plan & Ordinances
Between January 1999 and December 2000, the Town Manager and Economic Development Subcommittee will lead a collaborative effort to develop and implement an Economic Development Plan and Ordinances, based upon the goals and objectives from the Vision 2020 Master Plan. This initiative will combine the existing efforts of local governments, non-profits, and other economic development entities. The initiative will:

Identify existing conditions, including:

- Human and capital resources.
- Inventory of current business startup and expansion sites.
- Trends in the local economy.
- Local spending profile.
- Survey of existing businesses.
- Survey of food and agricultural sectors to identify local assets and current imports.

Identify economic development needs and opportunities, including:

- Future needs for additional incubator space, industrial park development, or other target business sector infrastructure and facility needs.
- Potential markets and necessary support sectors or services for the food and agricultural sector.
- The feasibility of using impact fees as an economic development funding source.

Identify and implement projects and initiatives to meet the needs and to take advantage of the opportunities for economic development in the Taos area, including:

- Target industries for business retention, expansion, and recruitment.
- Potential development of a "Town Market" facility by the Central Business District for retail sales of local agricultural, value-added agricultural products, and other local arts and crafts.
- Establishment of a local communications platform for buyers and sellers.
- A "Buy Local" campaign that assists in educating the public on the benefits of buying local products and services.
- Incentives for local vendors in the Town’s purchasing policy.
- Formation of a centralized business resource and information center or clearinghouse which coordinates economic development activities, acts as a referral service for all small business providers, assists businesses in streamlining permitting processes, and provides statistical and descriptive information on economic facts and trends.
- Consideration and securing of funding sources for economic development projects. Potential funding mechanisms include impact fees, a venture capital fund, a revolving loan fund, linked deposit incentives, peer lending groups for start-up and expansion of small business activities, Main Street funds, enterprise zone designation, funds for parking facilities to attract local-serving businesses to the Plaza area, and a local option economic development tax.
Education & Support

Beginning in January 1999, and on-going thereafter, the Town Manager and Economic Development Subcommittee will provide the following ongoing education and support functions:

- Coordination of economic development efforts and initiation of bi-annual meetings with non-profits, institutions, and surrounding communities pursuing economic development.
- Support of agriculture and food processing outreach and education services that focus on high-return products and intensive and sustainable agricultural practices.
- Facilitation of information sharing between new and potential business owners and current or retired business professionals through business networking and mentoring programs.
- Continued support of the growth and development of the UNM Branch Campus and other vocational training programs as vital community resources that provide training and workforce development, especially for identified target industries.
SECTION V
COMMUNITY DESIGN

TAOS RETAINS ITS
SMALL TOWN CHARACTER
AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY,
RESPECTS AND MAINTAINS
CULTURAL DIVERSITY, AND BUILDS
UPON HISTORY AND TRADITIONS
WHILE UTILIZING APPROPRIATE
TECHNOLOGIES.
EXISTING COMMUNITY DESIGN

Taos' unique community design reflects the confluence of the built forms and settlement patterns of three New Mexican cultures: American Indians who settled the area in the centuries preceding the arrival of Europeans, Spanish settlers whose urban patterns were derived from the Laws of the Indies, and Anglo-Americans who arrived in the area to trade following Mexican Independence. The Town of Taos encourages the preservation of these local architectural traditions through historic preservation ordinances, sign ordinances, and limitations on building heights. Its efforts have proven successful in providing the historic areas of Taos with a unique and unified appearance that reflects local building cultures.

Outside the historic areas of the Town, however, Taos' traditional urban and rural character are threatened by the conversion of open and agricultural areas to residential and commercial uses, blurring the distinction between the Town and its surrounding farms and ranches. This pattern of development was explicitly encouraged by the 1963 Comprehensive Plan, which predicted that growth would occur in the open areas between communities. Later plans and ordinances attempted to reverse this trend. Nevertheless, the main road into Taos has evolved into a commercial strip whose architecture offers residents and visitors a typical suburban experience, far removed from the historic traditions of Taos. Residences are strung along the highways in much of the planning area and in some places occupy ridgelines obscuring views and disturbing the appearance of the natural landscape.

As part of the Vision 2020 Planning Process, area residents participated in a Community Image Survey to identify the open spaces, streetscapes, and commercial and residential developments they would most like to see in Taos. Residents highly favored the use of traditional Pueblo and Spanish colonial architecture for new residential and commercial development. They also supported higher-density developments in the more urban areas of town. Everyone agreed that views to Taos landmarks, such as Taos Mountain and the Rio Grande Gorge, are extremely important to the community. Open space, including everything from private agricultural land to public parks, were also highly valued, but opinions varied on how much access people should have to these lands. In terms of roads, residents generally preferred tree-lined, wide roads with sidewalks in the more developed areas of town, and wanted to preserve non-paved and curving roads in rural areas. Comments from other phases of the Vision 2020 Planning Process showed that residents preferred the narrow streets in the Historic District, and wanted to see new roads built similarly in order to slow down traffic and to enhance community character.
COMMUNITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR COMMUNITY DESIGN

Goal One
Taos retains its small town character and sense of community.

Objectives
- Accommodate new development through infill on vacant parcels in developed areas, through redevelopment of existing properties where adequate services and infrastructure exist for urban facilities and where increased density is encouraged.
- Preserve large tracts of open space at the periphery of designated high-density areas and smaller open spaces within high-density areas to enhance the natural environment and small town character.
- Protect and allow for the flexible development of historic plazas and traditional communities throughout the planning area.
- Develop a network of activity centers where people congregate for a variety of activities including work, shopping, education, and recreation.
- Design pedestrian friendly streets and outdoor public places to sit, eat, and visit in activity centers.
- Design linkages that encourage the use of non-motorized transportation and public transit.
- Encourage human-scale developments and roadways that are conducive to human interaction and harmonize with the natural environment.

Goal Two
Taos encourages the use of community design that is traditional, sustainable, has little impact on the natural environment, and enhances the quality of life for residents.

Objectives
- Encourage traditional community design, including Pueblo-style, Spanish colonial and territorial architecture, especially within the historic district.
- Encourage energy efficient design and retrofits for all buildings, infrastructure, and urban design.
- Protect the dark nighttime sky through the regulation of sky glow, generalized undirected light, glare, and light trespass, without compromising public safety.
- Provide open space and play areas for all residents, including those of mobile home parks and affordable housing subdivisions.
- Encourage landscaping and limit the unnecessary clearing and paving of natural vegetation and drainages to prevent runoff and erosion.
- Minimize noise that spills beyond the property where the noise originated.

Goal Three
Taos building design and development patterns reflect the historic character of the Taos area.

Objectives
- Preserve the human scale and architectural character of the Town’s historic neighborhoods, plazas, and the Pueblo in new development.
- Encourage the rehabilitation and preservation of historic buildings.
- Disperse adequate parking throughout commercial developments and shield parking from view with landscaping.
SECTION V/COMMUNITY DESIGN

- Make commercial developments more accessible and attractive to pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit.
- Limit apparent mass of commercial and institutional buildings by encouraging traditional modular building envelopes.
- Encourage attractive, low water landscaping for all types of development.
- Protect the dark nighttime sky by regulating sky glow, generalized undirected light, glare, and light trespass without compromising public safety.

Goal Four
New commercial strip development is limited and the negative affects of existing strip commercial development are mitigated.

Objectives
- Identify major entry ways into Taos and plan enhancements for them.
- Encourage commercial development to emphasize and preserve the natural setting and traditional appearance of the community.
- Require that landscaping provide a significant proportion of the site improvements where developments have the greatest visual impact on the public, adjacent to rights-of-way.
- Minimize commercial lighting by regulating sky glow, generalized undirected light, glare, and light trespass without compromising public safety.

Goal Five
Street design and use reflects the historic character of the Taos area and enhances neighborhood intimacy and sense of community.

Objectives
- Encourage narrower street design that results in slower-moving traffic flows and includes sidewalks and bike paths.
- Design roadways in all areas that are more intimate, tree-lined or landscaped, and friendly to non-motorized transportation.
- Require landscaping or open space provisions along public rights-of-way.
- Limit large truck traffic through town.
- Retain the existing community design of the historic overlay zone, and the pattern of dirt roads and lanes in the more rural areas of town.
- Encourage the redesign of major streets and roads that serve as entry ways to the Town to enhance the sense of community and character of Taos.

Goal Six
Neighborhoods are the building blocks for creating a town fabric unique to Taos and its region.

Objectives
- Support and encourage neighborhood self-identification in order to develop self-determination for the broader community.
- Protect the character and livability of neighborhoods from the negative impacts of adjacent uses and allow for sharing the positive impacts of adjacent uses.
- Strengthen controls that protect neighborhoods by favoring appropriate density and building scale, compatible character, shared open space, and sensitively designed rights-of-way.
- Enforce zoning and other land use regulations to protect existing neighborhoods.
Make newly developing land uses compatible with the context and character of existing neighborhoods.

Create linkages that encourage the use of non-motorized transportation between neighborhoods.

**Goal Seven**

*Signage in Taos is informative, reflects the historic character of the Taos area, and does not obstruct the natural environment.*

**Objectives**

- Make all signage small in scale, limited in its number of graphical elements, and integrated into the buildings’ architecture.
- Minimize lighted signage.
- Limit and make uniform all street, directional, and way-finding signs.
- Design informative interpretive signage that is uniform within distinct Taos neighborhoods or traditional communities.
- Encourage the consolidation and discourage the proliferation of signage.
- Require that signage not obstruct the natural environment.
- Ensure that businesses and residences can be easily located.

**Goal Eight**

*All members of the Taos community take great pride in the appearance of their property, their neighborhoods, and their community as a whole.*

**Objectives**

- Mitigate the negative affects of unsightly properties in order to protect the environment, and the health, safety, and welfare of residents.
- Encourage land owners to make needed repairs to deteriorating or damaged properties.
- Encourage residents to keep publicly used areas (including commercial centers, parks, schools, and institutions) clean.
- Clean up existing graffiti and discourage its proliferation.
- Regulate the size and density of weeds.
SECTION V/COMMUNITY DESIGN

COMMUNITY DESIGN POLICIES

1. The Town of Taos will review and update existing ordinances and codes, including the sign, noise, and landscaping ordinances, to ensure compliance with the Vision 2020 Master Plan.

2. The Town of Taos will enforce its existing ordinances and codes to protect and improve the quality of life of its residents and the appearance and character of the Town.

3. The Town of Taos will develop and implement a Dark Skies Ordinance and will promote a compatible Taos County ordinance.

4. The Town of Taos will develop an aggressive retrofit program, including education and coordination with utility companies, to bring into compliance lighting that does not conform to the Dark Skies Ordinance. As part of this program, the Town will retrofit all non-complying Town owned lighting through its Capital Improvements Program and will establish standards for high efficiency lighting in its own facilities and for public outdoor lighting.

Figures 38 and 39
The Community Image Survey results showed that Vision 2020 participants generally preferred tree-lined, wide roads with sidewalks in the more developed areas of town. However, Vision 2020 participants also valued the narrow streets in the historic district and wanted to encourage similar design for new roads.
5. The Town of Taos will promote and support a state-wide law prohibiting billboards.

6. The Town of Taos will establish performance-oriented community design overlay zones with illustrated design guidelines to comprehensively address issues of signage; lighting; landscaping; and the design and scale of buildings, roads, trails, paths, sidewalks, linkages, parking, and open spaces.

7. The Town of Taos will consider the re-design of the street pattern around Taos Plaza to improve traffic flow, increase pedestrian safety, and create enhanced visual amenity.

8. The Town of Taos will protect federal, state, and Town-designated historic buildings and structures by reviewing all proposed demolitions, limiting modifications without discouraging energy efficient improvements, and by collaborating with community members to periodically update the list of Town-designated historic buildings and structures.

9. Through its land use regulations, the Town of Taos will encourage conservation subdivision, plaza model, and cluster design; and setback requirements that correspond to building massing and proximity to road frontage.

10. The Town of Taos will establish mixed-use zones and encourage commercial and institutional developments to locate in underutilized or available properties (including parking lots and vacant lands) within designated infill areas, mixed use, and neighborhood commercial nodes. This will reduce automobile use, create an ambiance of activity, and protect existing open space from franchise and strip development.

11. The Town of Taos will provide disincentives for urban sprawl and incentives for planned unit developments that incorporate cluster development and open space design.

12. The Town of Taos will coordinate its planning initiatives with Taos County, to ensure a more comprehensive approach to land use; commercial, institutional, and industrial development; open space preservation; and community design.

13. The Town of Taos will encourage and coordinate the formation of citizen and/or neighborhood groups to work with Planning and Zoning Department Staff on implementing the Vision 2020 Master Plan.

14. The Vision 2020 Community Design Subcommittee will initiate the formation of an independent citizen’s advisory group or citizen’s league that will meet with and advise Town of Taos officials on design issues.

15. The Town of Taos will require all proposed major projects to prepare traffic studies and to make provisions for mass transit and pedestrian and bicycle traffic accessibility.

16. The Town of Taos will comprehensively plan to protect wetlands, wildlife habitat, scenic views, and ecologically important areas; and to preserve and create walking paths, bike trails, linkages, and neighborhood parks that are accessible and include opportunities for both active and passive recreation.
SECTION V/COMMUNITY DESIGN

17. Through its land use regulations, the Town of Taos will require developers to devote an increased percentage of usable open space (narrowly defined to exclude setbacks) to the residents or users of the development or to the general public.

18. The Town of Taos will preserve open space through outright purchase, mil levies, collaborative efforts with land trust organizations, the use of purchase and transfer of development rights, and other techniques. The Town will not reduce its open space inventory without careful analysis and consideration for replacement open space elsewhere of an equal value and amenity level.

19. The Town of Taos will include generous sidewalks (4 feet or wider), pedestrian ways, and designated bike paths in all new road design, and will buffer them from the road with landscaped sidewalk medians, greenspace, arroyos, parked cars or other buffers whose size increases as traffic speed increases. Sidewalks, pedestrian ways, and bike paths along existing roads will be designed similarly and will be constructed within existing rights-of-way, whenever possible.

20. The Town of Taos will not remove mature trees along existing streets, will sponsor a tree-planting program for the streets and roads that serve as entry ways to the Town, and will require developers to plant and landscape sidewalk medians which front their developments.

21. The Town of Taos will replace continuous middle turn lanes with landscaped medians that include designated turning lanes at intersections and points of entry to major commercial or institutional developments.

22. The Town of Taos will not widen existing street rights of way for new street design, whenever possible, nor alter the existing dirt/gravel surfacing, and narrow/curvilinear character of roads that run through residential neighborhoods or the historic overlay zone. Any alterations to these roads will require notification and consultation of affected residents prior to the public hearing.

23. The Town of Taos will reduce the width of and create a texture change at new intersections to address pedestrian safety and accentuate pedestrian crossings. Existing intersections should be redesigned accordingly, when funds are available.

24. The Town of Taos will encourage the creation of new and retention of existing wetlands, swales, and acequias adjacent to streets, especially in the urban core and in semi-rural areas.

25. The Town of Taos will construct or support the construction of off-road bike and pedestrian paths.

26. The Town of Taos will reassess its parking requirements for commercial and institutional zones to accommodate only the average number of customers. Overflow parking should be accommodated through semi-impervious paving materials that can also be landscaped.

27. Through its land use regulations and through the site development review process, the Town of Taos will require that parking areas be landscaped, dispersed, and shielded from view and located to the sides and rears of buildings. Parking areas should contain traffic throats, facilitate accessibility for all modes of transportation, and be accessed through secondary streets.
28. The Town of Taos will pursue its unique opportunities to become a leader in solar design, "green" architecture, waste management, and sustainable planning.

29. The Town of Taos will update its codes and regulations to reflect or exceed the Model Energy Code and provide incentives for water and energy saving devices and retrofits, energy efficient design, and passive and active solar design.

30. The Town of Taos, in coordination with other local governments, will develop a brochure on solar energy, including the solar rights act of 1977, to be displayed in Planning Departments and distributed with building permit applications.

31. The Town of Taos will require all businesses, residents, and workers to keep their properties clean and in good condition, and will coordinate with residents and neighborhood groups to implement an educational campaign that encourages citizens to maintain the beauty of the Taos Valley.

32. The Town of Taos will facilitate the creation of and provide resources for neighborhood associations within the Town Limits and Extra Territorial Zone.

33. The Town of Taos will redevelop Paseo del Pueblo Sur through means such as tax abatements, or through a redevelopment corporation.

34. The Town of Taos, in concert with the Taos County Comprehensive Plan, will support the development of commercial nodes in already existing communities surrounding Taos, including Arroyo Seco, the Blinking Light, Ranchos, Talpa, Arroyo Hondo, and Questa.

35. The Town of Taos will preserve the human scale and architectural character of the historic Taos Plaza, other historic plazas, and new developments by regulating design and scale. Every attempt will be made to not falsely represent antiquity in these areas.

36. The Town of Taos will pass an ordinance prohibiting or limiting off-loading hours for large truck traffic in historic portions of the Town. The Town of Taos and Taos County will determine low-impact off-loading or warehousing sites where large trucks may unload their deliveries and have them carried into Town by smaller, approved trucks.

37. The Town of Taos will establish a system of civic indicators to monitor the quality of life in the Town.
SECTION V/COMMUNITY DESIGN

IMPLEMENTATION

Landscape Ordinance
Between September 1998 and December 1999, Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department Staff will coordinate a citizen committee to revise its existing landscape ordinance. The revision will:

- Address issues of water availability and conservation.
- Identify and promote plant and tree species that use little water, are low maintenance and appropriate for the Taos area.
- Support principles of permaculture and xeriscaping.
- Include traditional, historic, native, and edible gardens as a form of landscaping.
- Promote the efficiency of water devices and systems.
- Ensure that landscaping needs are met through the use of greywater, stormwater runoff, and rainwater harvesting and storage.
- Encourage the creation of new and retention of existing wetlands, swales, and acequias adjacent to streets, especially in the urban core and in semi-rural areas.
- Consider drainage issues and establish guidelines for zero-based runoff.
- Address issues of buffering, screening, and aesthetics in conjunction with development impacts.
- Establish standards to require extensive landscaping, including trees, for all new commercial developments, parking lots, road frontage and road medians. Overflow parking can be accommodated through semi-impervious paving materials that can also be landscaped.
- Establish guidelines to bring existing developments into compliance, including using existing parking areas for landscaping.
- Require landscape designs to be submitted with a building construction permit.
- Require that permitted landscaping be maintained.
- Consider a tree-planting program along the streets and roads that serve as entry ways to the Town.

Dark Skies Ordinance
By June 1999, the Town of Taos will have a Dark Skies Ordinance in place that will:

- Establish external lighting standards to guide the light downward and shield light from adjacent properties.
- Severely restrict lights ten feet and over above the ground.
- Restrict mercury vapor and high pressure sodium vapor floodlights.
- Encourage high efficient lighting and reduced brightness of lights.
- Encourage the use of new halide lights or other future comparable technology.
- Make sure that lighting is adequate to ensure public safety in the Central Business District and for business owners and residents throughout the Town.
Between July 1999 and June 2002, Town of Taos Planning Department Staff will coordinate with Town Departments and Taos area citizens to implement the Dark Skies Ordinance by:

- Introducing the Dark Skies Ordinance to Taos County for approval.
- Setting standards for high efficiency lighting in its own facilities and public outdoor lighting.
- Retrofitting all non-conforming Town-owned lighting.
- Establishing an aggressive retrofit program with an educational component for non-conforming lighting. Compliance from utility companies may be reached through franchise agreements.
- Achieving compliance from utility companies through franchise agreements.

**Signage Ordinance**

Between October 1998 and December 1999, Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department Staff will revise its existing sign ordinance. The following recommendations should be used as a starting point for this revision:

- Clarify contradictions between Section 16-2 #70, p. 11 and Section 16-56D2, p. 26 regarding sign area with the following wording: "The area of a wall sign shall consist of the smallest rectangle that will wholly contain the letters and any background colors."
- Rerord Section 16-6 #3, p. 18 to state: "Historic, public, civic and religious off-premises name, directional and informational signs, as long as said signs are no more than 3 square feet and not more than 5 feet in height, and provided such destinations are not private, for-profit enterprises. Historic and public signs must be brown in color. Every effort must be taken to avoid excessive or duplicate signage; such signs must be within fifty feet of the destination, and no more than one sign for each such destination may be erected on each major road approaching it."
- Prohibit internally lit signs throughout the entire Town.
- Promote hand-crafted, especially hand-carved wooden, signs.
- Require uniform wall signs for multi-tenant shopping centers.
- Clarify that advertisements on trucks larger than a development’s door panel and parked on the property will count as one of the two signs allowed for each business.
- Require visible address numbers for all commercial, institutional, and residential buildings.
- Require Town owned signs that are uniform in size, lettering, and coloring at all intersections.
- Continue to restrict billboards in the Town of Taos.

**Community Design Overlay Zones**

Beginning in 1999, Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department Staff will coordinate a citizen committee to establish performance-oriented community design overlay zones to comprehensively address issues of signage; lighting; landscaping; and the design and scale of buildings, roads, trails, paths, sidewalks, linkages, parking, and open spaces. Illustrated design guidelines will be developed by the committee, led by a consultant experienced in design guidelines and signage. The community design overlay zones and illustrated design guidelines will then be adopted into the Town of Taos Land Use Development Code. The community design overlay zones will:

- Preserve human scale and traditional plaza design through clustering; building massing; the size of commercial buildings; the provision of courtyards and sitting/gathering areas; brick, flagstone or unit pavers in pedestrian walks; the use of portales, zero-setback building facades, stuccoed walls, and latilla fences.
SECTION V/COMMUNITY DESIGN

- be developed in cooperation with Taos County and the NM State Highway and Transportation Department (NMSHTD).
- Be based upon discrete areas of the Town and ETZ, defined on an official map, that are identified by their character, not by land use or zoning codes. Suggested areas include:
  - Central Historic Core including the Central Business District and Historic Overlay Zone.
  - Pedestrian Gateway (Furr’s to Paseo del Pueblo Norte/Placitas intersection).
  - Boulevard Entryways (Paseo del Pueblo Sur south of Furr’s and north of Paseo del Pueblo Norte/Placitas intersection, Kit Carson Road, and the Cañon Bypass).
  - Major Intersections (Paseo del Pueblo and Kit Carson Road, Cañon and Paseo del Pueblo Sur, Paseo del Pueblo Norte and Placitas, the Blinking Light, Paseo del Pueblo Sur and Highway 240 (in Ranchitos), SR 518 and Paseo del Pueblo Sur, etc.).
  - Neighborhood Zones.

Neighborhood Planning
On an ongoing basis, Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Staff will facilitate the formation of neighborhood associations within the Town limits and Extra Territorial Zone, upon request of the neighborhood. The Town will develop a process for neighborhood association formation and will provide the resources and support necessary to address the needs of these groups. Neighborhood associations will be encouraged to tailor land use regulations to meet their needs, either by creating neighborhood overlay zones or by coordinating with Town staff during updates of the Land Use Development Code. For areas of the Town and ETZ that do not have neighborhood associations, Town of Taos Planning Department Staff will collaborate with community members on planning initiatives. Vision 2020 Implementation will occur through the work of Town residents, working in conjunction with Planning Staff.

Community Indicators
In conjunction with each implementation initiative, the Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department Staff will establish a system of indicators to measure the implementation of the Vision 2020 Master Plan. Elements of the Plan whose implementation should be measured include:

- The amount, quality, and accessibility of open space, agricultural lands, and environmentally sensitive areas.
- The amount and accessibility of land for economic development.
- The mix of businesses, housing, and jobs within neighborhood areas.
- The amount and accessibility of community services.
- The distance of retail, employment, and services to housing.
- The preservation of historical character.
- Traffic circulation and access to roads.
- The availability and accessibility of public transit and non-motorized transportation.
- Sustainability.
- Housing affordability.
- Job availability, workforce participation, and unemployment.
- Vehicle miles traveled and the cost of transportation borne by individuals.
Historic Preservation
Beginning in January 2000 and every two years thereafter, Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department Staff will collaborate with community members to periodically review the buildings in the Town and update the list of Historic Buildings and/or Structures. The Town will continue to designate its own Historic Buildings and Structures as well as to protect those considered historic at the state and federal levels.

Building Code Update
Between January 2001 and December 2002, Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Staff will update the Town’s Building Code to protect historic structures and to incorporate the Model Energy Code. The update will:

- Require the review of proposed demolition of any building or structure.
- Permit limited modifications to historic buildings.
- Provide incentives (such as fee reductions) for building design that forwards water conservation, energy efficiency, and waste reduction. Incentives will focus on:
  - Water and energy saving devices and retrofits
  - Passive and active solar design
  - Recycling and composting
  - Innovative building and construction systems (IBACOS)
  - R-18 insulation in walls and R-30 in ceilings
  - Reclaimed or catchment water for irrigation and landscaping.
- Require minimum amounts of natural light.
- Call for reductions in the amount of solid waste and wastewater produced.

Keep Taos Clean & Beautiful Initiative
Between January and December 2002, Town of Taos Planning Department Staff will coordinate with residents and neighborhood groups to implement an educational campaign, encouraging citizens to maintain the beauty of the Taos Valley. This educational campaign will include:

- Adopt a Highway Program.
- School Poster Contests.
- Neighborhood Trash Pick-Up Days.
- Town-sponsored Clean-Up Days.
- Town-sponsored Anti-Litter Campaign, including a program whereby business owners can provide trash receptacles advertising their business in designated areas of the town.
- Recycling Promotion Campaign, including Town funding, maintenance, and improvement of the recycling facility.
- Media and Newspaper reminders.
Section V/Community Design

Noise Ordinance
Between December 2000 and December 2001, the Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department will coordinate a citizen committee to review the existing noise ordinance and will make needed changes to restrict noise trespass onto adjacent properties.
SECTION VI
INFRASTRUCTURE

Community infrastructure is of high quality and accessible to all.
SECTION VI/INFRASTRUCTURE

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

The Town of Taos plans for infrastructure through a yearly Capital Improvements Plan and a five-year Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan that is requested annually by the State of New Mexico. Various road, drainage, water, and sewer line extensions and improvements are planned within this time frame. Long-range projects for the next ten years include a by-pass relief route around Taos and a valley-wide effort to extend, rehabilitate, and improve water and sewer infrastructure. The following pages show existing and planned infrastructure projects for water, wastewater, roads, solid waste, public transit, and the Taos airport.

Water

Growth and development in Taos are currently constrained by our most precious natural resource, water. The Town’s water policy is unique in that it requires anyone wanting to hook up to the Town’s system to purchase or transfer water rights. The policy is based on the fact that the Town itself has limited water rights with which to provide potable water for residents. Each developer must purchase or transfer water rights based on the square footage of their structure.

The Town of Taos maintains a water bank that allows owners of surface water rights to lease their water to the Town for periods in which it is not being used. This is extremely beneficial to farmers in the Taos Valley, because it keeps irrigation water in continuous use and outside of forfeiture claims by the State Engineer’s Office. The Town of Taos is also a member of the Regional Water Board that plans for water resources in the Taos Valley.

Through capital improvement planning, the Town of Taos continuously monitors and improves its water infrastructure, including lines, valves, manholes, tanks, and wells. The facilities which transport the Town’s water were evaluated in the 1990 Water Facilities Report, which found some water wells and tanks were operating at maximum capacity and were located in the wrong locations to properly serve certain areas of the Town. To alleviate these problems, the Report recommends drilling new wells and replacing and renovating existing water tanks. Today, the Town of Taos is addressing these issues and those associated with providing water to rapidly growing areas through its Capital Improvements Program. Figure 40 shows existing and proposed water lines for the Town.

Wastewater

Sewer

The Town of Taos provides municipal sewer service to Town of Taos residents. Because individual septic tanks and leach fields can contaminate nearby wells and endanger health and safety, the Town of Taos invests heavily in upgrading the capacity of its wastewater treatment facilities and in extending sewer lines to rapidly developing areas. In 1997, the Town conducted the Sewer Interceptor Master Plan, which recommended locations for new sewer interceptor lines to meet growing demand. The Plan used natural drainage contours as guides, since the system runs by the flow of gravity to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Many of the Plan’s recommendations, as well as other line extensions and improvements are planned for the next five years. Figure 41 shows existing and proposed sewer lines.

Wastewater Treatment

In 1974, the Town of Taos opened its Wastewater Treatment Plant in Los Cordovas and recently expanded the facility in the Fall of 1984 and in June 1996. Expansion increased the Plant’s capacity by 70%, from 1.2 million gallons per day to 2.0 million gallons per day. The Plant can now serve up to
**Section VI/Infrastructure**

The following water infrastructure projects are planned for the next five years:

**Water Line Extensions:**
- Morgan and Gusdorf Roads (1998/99)
- Paseo del Cañon West (1998/99)
- Este Es/Gusdorf, Intersection to NM 585 (1999/2000)
- Midwifery to Blumenshine (1999/2000)
- Las Haciendas Subdivision (2000/01)

**Water Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Replacement:**
- Scheurich, Juan Largo, and Teresina Streets (1998/99)
- Steel and Undersized Lines in the Historic District, Kit Carson Road Area, and La Posta Road Area (1998/99)

**Water Supply:**
- Exploratory Drilling at San Juan Chama Well (1998/1999)
SECTION VI/INFRASTRUCTURE

Sewer Line Extensions:
- Cunningham Property along Roy Road (1998/99)
- Paseo del Cañon West (1998/99)
- Salazar to LULAC (1998/2000)
- Camino del Medio to NM 68 (1999/2000)
- Este Es Area (2000/01)
- Las Haciendas Subdivision (2000/01)
- Weimer Foothills (2000/01)

Sewer Line Rehabilitation/Expansion:
- Camino de la Placita (1998/99)
- Frontier Road (1998/99)
- Valverde, Plaza area, Kit Carson Road, Los Cruces Road (1999-2003)

Figure 41
Existing and proposed sewer lines
13,000 people and allows people with septic tanks to connect to the Town’s collection system, preventing groundwater contamination. The expansion also added equipment designed to allow the Plant to run more efficiently. The new equipment includes a second aeration basin, secondary clarifiers, a sludge thickener, and a disinfection system that utilizes natural ultraviolet radiation to kill bacteria instead of chlorine.

Planned improvements to the Wastewater Treatment Plant include a bio-solids fertilizer plant that will allow the Plant to treat the sludge and turn it into marketable fertilizer (1998/99), a bar screen that removes particles to improve water quality and protect equipment, (1999/2000) and an advanced denitrification system that will allow the plant to use effluent as recharge without the chance of algae growing in the water (2000/02). Other improvements will be made in the next five years, as the Town of Taos master plans the 111 acres it owns around the Plant for additional wastewater treatment capacity and potential recreational facilities.

Transportation

Roads

Two planning efforts, the 1990 Town of Taos Traffic Master Plan and the 1997 Taos Traffic Network Improvement Study form the basis for road improvement and extensions within the Town of Taos. The goal of the Taos Traffic Master Plan was to determine a relief route to decrease downtown traffic congestion. Using a computer model, the Plan focused on a six-mile radius from the center of the Town of Taos, including the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the east and Taos Pueblo to the north. The Plan considered traffic improvements, construction costs, environmental concerns, and right of way.

Figure 42
Bike Lane Along Salazar Road

Figure 43
The goal of the Taos Traffic Master Plan was to determine a relief route to decrease downtown traffic.
SECTION VI/INFRASTRUCTURE

Road Improvements (continued):

- Gusdorf Road Paving (1999/2000)
- NM 240 East traffic signals, lane widening, shoulders for bicycle traffic, and realignment of SR 240/Camino de la Placita and Camino de la Placita/NM 68 intersections (1999-2001)
- US 64/Taos Pueblo entrance intersection improvements, sidewalks, and crosswalks along US 64 (1999-2001)
- Carabajar safety improvements, utility relocation, and realignment of SR 240 intersection (2000/01)
- NM 240 West drainage, sidewalks, realignment of Carabajar intersection (2000/01)
- Chamisa Road Improvements (2001/02)
- Este Es Network and Enhancements (2001/02)
acquisition. It recommended Salazar Road/Ranchitos Road (NM 240)/Camino de la Placita as the best alternative to alleviating traffic congestion in downtown Taos. Completed in 1995, this route is used extensively as a by-pass around the downtown area.

The Taos Traffic Network Improvement Study evaluates several roadway improvement and extension projects in order to determine how to move traffic smoothly along various routes such as Ranchitos Road, Paseo del Pueblo Sur, and Salazar Road. Through the results of extensive public meetings, the Study ranks Town of Taos road improvement projects according to their importance to the community. The Study also considers roadway alignments, accident analyses, bike paths and trails, drainage, and safety enhancements along with traffic flow. Capital improvement planning for roads is based upon these two studies. Figure 44 shows existing and proposed roads.

Public Transit
The Town of Taos operates and maintains a public transit system called the Chile Line, which began operation in 1996. The system received its name from a contest in which community members and groups participated. Taos area residents and tourists alike utilize the Chile Line whose round-trip route length measures approximately 24 miles, running from the Ranchos de Taos Post Office on the south to Taos Pueblo Governor's Office on the north. There are 18 southbound and northbound stops located along the route, primarily at various activity centers on Paseo del Pueblo Sur and Paseo del Pueblo Norte. Two buses, a northbound and southbound, begin running simultaneously at 7:00 am and repeat the route every half-hour through 9:00 pm.

The Chile Line fleet currently consists of three 1996 Metrottran (Ford Powerstroke) buses. All Chile Line buses are handicap accessible, adhering to current American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Additionally, the Chile Line operates an ADA Van with its service that delivers door to door service to individuals with disabilities. The Chile Line anticipates future route expansion to possibly include UNM campus, Holy Cross Hospital, and the El Prado area. Capital improvements to the system during 1998/99 include the addition of two new buses and a 4 bay storage garage next to the Recycling Center to house the buses. Benches, lighting, displays, and shelters at bus stops are also planned for the future.

Taos Municipal Airport
Completed in the mid 1960's, the Taos Municipal Airport is located along US 64 east of the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge. With a log of over 10,000 operations (take-offs and landings) and a 5,800 foot runway, the Airport's parking spaces are filled to capacity. In striving to become the best small airport in the State of New Mexico, the Taos Airport is working to enhance the overall appearance of the facility's buildings and grounds and to expand upon its current services. In 1991, the Airport created a layout plan showing future expansions and improvements to the terminal, hangars, runways, and aprons. Many of these improvements are budgeted in the Town of Taos' Five Year Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan. Capital projects for the Airport in 1998/99 include seal of runway cracks, the reconstruction of the north and south aprons, and completion of an Environmental Impact Statement that is required prior to the proposed expansion of the airport's facilities and new runway. In 1999/2000, the Town of Taos plans to reconstruct the airport runway, create a tie-down lot on the north side of the facility, pave the access road to the hangars, and construct a new runway and terminal.
SECTION VI/INFRASTRUCTURE

Solid Waste
Trash Collection
The Town of Taos currently has a franchise agreement with Sanco for the purpose of collecting solid waste from residences and businesses within the Town limits. The agreement with Sanco, passed as Ordinance 82-14, runs until November 30, 1999.

Town of Taos Recycling Center
The Town of Taos operates a recycling center that works in conjunction with a county-wide solid waste collection system to provide recycling facilities for the entire Taos Valley. The Recycling Center accepts paper/paperboard, glass, and metals, and estimates that it recycles approximately 599,000, 420,000, and 24,000 pounds of each material per year, respectively. Located on Bertha Street east of Salazar Road, the Recycling Center is slated for significant improvements during 1998/99. These include lot paving, yard improvements, a loading ramp, bailer and conveyor, and jersey walls.

Taos Landfill
To comply with State regulations, the Taos landfill, located along US 64 east of the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge, is slated for closure in 1999. The Town of Taos will work through the Taos County Intergovernmental Council in collaboration with Taos County neighborhood associations to plan, develop, design, and construct a new regional solid waste disposal facility adjacent to the present site. The Town of Taos and Taos County Intergovernmental Council will implement a solid waste management program in conjunction with this project.

Transfer Station
In conjunction with Taos County, the Town of Taos is planning various solid waste transfer stations that will be located at Arroyo Hondo, Cerro/Questa, Costilla/Amalia, Peñasco, Tres Piedras, Pilar, and Ojo Caliente.

Other Utilities
The Town of Taos maintains franchise agreements with private firms that provide basic utility services for the general public. In providing these services, these firms usually utilize existing public right of way including streets, easements, and other public spaces. Franchise agreements cover the Town of Taos corporate limits, while many residents within the ETZ also subscribe to or purchase services from other firms. Electric facilities and services are provided through a franchise agreement with Kit Carson Electric Cooperative, passed as Ordinance 96-4, which runs until 2006. Cable television is provided by Mickelson Media (d.b.a. Century Communications), which maintains and installs cable television facilities and services for customers within the Town and ETZ. The franchise agreement with Mickelson Media was passed as Ordinance 97-12, and runs until 2007. US West maintains and installs telephone facilities and services within the Town of Taos and ETZ through a franchise agreement (Ordinance 96-3) that lasts until 2001 with the possibility of an additional five years. The Public Service Company of New Mexico provides gas facilities and services to Town of Taos and ETZ customers through a franchise agreement passed as Ordinance 89-3 that runs until 2014.
COMMUNITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal One
Town of Taos residents have access to the full range of municipal infrastructure and services.

Goal Two
Subdividers and developers pay for the increased demand for services created by their developments.

Goal Three
Infrastructure development for roads, parking, and utilities preserve and enhance Taos’ visual and natural resources.

Objectives
- Site infrastructure to preserve key natural resources.
- Develop adequate parking at densities, locations, and in a manner that minimizes the amount of land dedicated to parking and the visual impact of parking lots.
- Landscape municipal and public parking lots to make them aesthetically pleasing.
- Bury new overhead utilities, and make efforts to bury existing overhead utilities.
- Require that landscaping provide for a significant proportion of the site improvements where developments have the greatest visual impact on the public, adjacent to rights of way.

Goal Four
The Town of Taos ensures the concurrent availability of adequate public facilities, services, and infrastructure prior to approving new developments.
SECTION VI/INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal Five
The Town of Taos identifies gaps in existing infrastructure, and brings existing development up to the standards required for new development. The Town expands its infrastructure, as it requires new developments to access that infrastructure.

Goal Six
The Town of Taos will expand and maintain its existing water and wastewater systems to protect the quality of groundwater.

Goal Seven
Traffic congestion is reduced through the development of new transportation infrastructure, including new roads, improved public transit, and non-motorized transportation.

Objectives
- Require the provision of bike lanes and sidewalks on new arterials.
- Add sidewalks and bike lanes to existing major streets and arterials, whenever possible given existing road widths.
- Develop a by-pass route around the Town of Taos that has the least impact on the environment and existing residential neighborhoods.
- Improve existing public transportation.

Goal Eight
Safety is enhanced for all modes of transportation.

Objectives
- Make new streets safer for pedestrian and bike traffic by encouraging narrower, slower moving street design with sidewalks and bike paths.
- Design narrow, more intimate roadways in residential neighborhoods that correspond to the scale and impact of development.
INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES

1. The Town of Taos will initiate a regional planning effort to deal with matters of regional concern such as land use, transportation, watershed management, solid waste management, recycling, and economic and recreational development.

2. The Town of Taos will develop strategies to promote water conservation and wellhead protection within the Town’s jurisdiction.

3. The Town of Taos will review and develop methods to maintain groundwater quality, and will work in conjunction with the State Engineer to protect the quality of the groundwater in the Taos Valley.

4. The Town of Taos will review and conduct a cost/benefit analysis for wastewater treatment and disposal, evaluating alternative, centralized, and distributed plants.

5. The Town of Taos will require all new developments that do not plan to connect up to the Town of Taos wastewater treatment system to provide secondary wastewater treatment.

6. The Town of Taos will develop an Infrastructure Plan that identifies the short and long-term needs based on the Vision 2020 Master Plan.

7. The Town of Taos will require utility companies to use franchise agreements to bury new and existing utilities in the historic district and urban core over a period of time.

8. The Town of Taos will review and define all alternatives for the reduction of traffic congestion using cost/benefit analysis. The factors to be considered in the selection of the final alternatives will include natural resources, community impact, existing land use patterns, street design, traffic calming, and any other automobile traffic reduction techniques.

9. The Town of Taos will comprehensively plan for public transit.

10. The Town of Taos will evaluate new and improved transportation infrastructure (roads, trails, sidewalks, public transit) not only in terms of traffic data, construction costs, and engineering factors, but also in terms of their impact on existing businesses and residences, sense of community and historic character. The Town will work to coordinate the physical requirements of its transportation infrastructure with the social, economic, and aesthetic enhancement of the community.
SECTION VI/INFRASTRUCTURE
IMPLEMENTATION

Regional Planning Initiative
On an on-going basis, the Town of Taos will initiate and participate in regional planning through task forces formed by the Taos County Intergovernmental Council (IGC). Task forces will include representatives from local governments, state and federal agencies, Taos County and Town of Taos neighborhood associations, neighboring counties, and organizations or individuals affected by a certain issue or with regional interests and concerns, including Taos County and Town of Taos neighborhood associations. Regional issues that will be addressed by IGC task forces include the Taos Landfill and By-Pass Relief Route. Other topics such as a Regional Jail, Enchanted Circle Economic Development, Welfare Reform/Welfare to Work, and the localization of Taos County phone rates may also be addressed by IGC task forces. Citizens are invited to express their concerns about these issues to the task forces by attending monthly IGC meetings.

Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department Staff will also participate in other regional planning efforts, and will make recommendations to the Mayor and Council regarding regional planning.

Infrastructure Planning Initiative
Between January 2002 and December 2003, Town of Taos Planning Department Staff will coordinate with Town and County Infrastructure Departments, mutual domestic water associations, water and sanitation districts, and federal and state governments to develop a regional infrastructure plan. The Plan will:

Identify existing conditions, including:

- Water availability.
- Wastewater treatment capacity.
- Landfill capacity.
- Population for the Town of Taos, Taos County, and all areas using the regional landfill.

Determine projected needs for additional and/or improved infrastructure by comparing existing infrastructure to growth projections and annexation plans.

Determine the percentage of projected needs for additional and/or improved infrastructure that could be met through recycling, composting, alternative wastewater treatment and disposal, and decentralized wastewater treatment plants and utilities.

Reassess the 1995 Impact Fees Study to ascertain how much funding for infrastructure could be derived from impact fees.

Conduct a cost-benefit analysis to identify the best way to provide infrastructure for the growing population.
Transportation Initiative
Between March 1999 and December 2000, Town of Taos Planning Department Staff will coordinate a citizen committee, working closely with the Public Works Department, to develop a Comprehensive Transportation Plan. The citizen committee should include representatives from local governments, state and federal transportation agencies, neighboring counties, people knowledgeable about transportation, and other interested citizens. The plan will:

Identify existing conditions, including:

- Public transit accessibility, capacity, and ridership.
- Use of and access to pedestrian and bike ways and multi-use trails.
- Road capacities, traffic counts, and accident reports.
- Traffic analyses.
- Existing transportation studies and plans.

Identify transportation needs and opportunities, including:

- By-pass routes.
- Trails and paths for non-motorized transportation.
- Public transit.
- Street and intersection design and redesign.
- Alternatives for traffic congestion reduction using cost/benefit analysis. Considerations should include natural resources, community impact, land use patterns, alternative street design, traffic calming, and other automobile traffic reduction techniques.

Identify and implement projects and initiatives to meet the needs and to take advantage of the opportunities for transportation in the Taos area, including:

- Development of a long-range major street plan.
- Re-design of the street pattern around Taos Plaza including reduced right of way width, a landscaped median between the sidewalk and parking, and parallel in-line parking.
- Integration of existing and planned roadways with land use and transit.
- Use of and access to pedestrian and bike ways and multi-use trails.
- Restriction of vehicular traffic in congested areas by use of one way streets, pedestrian zones, and zones closed to vehicles with more than two axles.
- Width-reduction and texture change at intersections for pedestrian crossings.
- Preservation of existing and creation of new narrow, curvilinear, and gravel roads in residential areas and the historic overlay zone.
- Restriction on widening street rights of way.
- Restriction on removing mature trees from roadsides.
- Redevelopment of continuous middle lanes into landscaped boulevards with designated turning lanes.
Section VI/Infrastructure

- Installation of speed humps where requested by residents.
- Restriction of off-loading downtown to certain hours and locations.
- Creation of Town and County off-loading warehouses and small-truck delivery services.
- Expansion of parallel and off-street parking.
- Creation of small, gravel, landscaped parking areas scattered throughout the downtown area.
- Creation of park-and-ride lots that are designed to minimize environmental and visual impact, and are developed in coordination with Taos County.
- Improvements to public transit, including creation of additional bus bays; development of aesthetically pleasing, safe and convenient bus facilities; improved ADA compliance; and the expansion of routes to link with community facilities, the Central Business District, commercial centers, park and ride lots, trailheads, and other designated areas.

Capital Improvements Planning Initiative

On an on-going basis, Town of Taos Planning Department Staff will continue to develop annual and five-year Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plans and therein identify federal, state, local, and private funding mechanisms. Capital Improvements Plans will prioritize projects on a multi-year schedule, based on fiscal resources available, and will comply with the Vision 2020 Master Plan.

Special Assessment District Initiative

The Town of Taos will develop a detailed Special Assessment Study in the near future. Based on the results of the study, the Town of Taos Executive and Public Works Departments may use the formation of Special Assessment Districts to provide required infrastructure to newly developing or infill areas.

Franchise Agreement Initiative

On an on-going basis, the Town of Taos Executive Department and Public Works Departments will continue to use franchise agreements with utility companies to require new and existing utilities in the historic district and urban core to be buried over a period of time. Burying of utilities should be timed to coincide with other infrastructure projects so that efforts are not duplicated.

Annexation

Cities and towns need to acquire new territory in order to accommodate growth, especially if they are already densely populated or if there is little vacant land within their limits. While infill is one way to accomplish this, it is limited. In the Taos area, residents would strongly oppose infill that would promote the development of greenbelt areas or that would increase building heights. In other larger cities, infill has not gained the acceptance of most middle and working class homeowners. In fact, in the period following World War II, most urban growth has been at low densities and suburban in form. As David Rusk, former mayor of Albuquerque, points out in his book, Cities Without Suburbs, population density declined by 50% between 1950 and 1990 in America’s 522 central cities. Municipalities that are unable to expand their boundaries contribute to rather than capture suburban growth.

In the next few years, the Town of Taos and Taos County can expect increases in commercial and residential development that accompany projected population growth. On average, the Town of Taos is growing at a rate of 2% per year, reaching 6% in some fringe areas. Areas of Taos County are growing at faster rates. One problem associated with this growth is the tendency for new development to occur where land prices are low, at great distances from existing roads, water, and sewer services, and employment and retail centers. As more people commute from these outlying areas, air
quality is diminished and roads deteriorate. Groundwater contamination often results, since outlying developments typically rely on individual wells and septic systems that are in close proximity to one another. Local governments eventually must extend infrastructure to protect the public safety and welfare of the people. This results in a tax burden for residents who live in more developed areas and who are not contributing to sprawl and its associated costs. Other problems associated with the growth of self-governing suburbs and outlying communities include higher degrees of economic, racial, and ethnic segregation as a result of fragmented local government. On the other hand, municipalities allowed to expand through annexation adjust better to economic change and have better bond ratings than do municipalities where annexation is limited.

Annexation is one tool which municipalities can use to gain greater control over a larger area. Annexation allows a municipality to uniformly and effectively provide services, and control growth and land use to protect the public safety and welfare of the people. In Taos County, the Town of Taos is the central municipality and provides infrastructure and services necessary to support a regional commercial center. The residents of the Town are the principal source of revenues to support those services even though the residents of all of Taos County and parts of Colfax County benefit from the goods and services provided in the Town.

Other costs and benefits result from annexation, depending on the use of the land being annexed. From the municipality’s point of view, the local government may realize increases in its collection of gross receipts taxes in annexed areas where there is a high degree of commercial or service activity, and will collect a small additional amount of property taxes from newly annexed areas. However, these revenues usually do not meet or exceed the cost of providing water and sewer infrastructure, and police, fire, and solid waste services to new residents. On average, it costs the Town a total of $3,796 ($2,236 for water and $1,560 for sewer) to extend water and sewer infrastructure to a single home. These costs may increase significantly in low-density developments.

Residents of annexed areas, on the other hand, will notice a small change in property taxes. As shown in Table 10, property taxes would increase no more than $60 for Taos County communities adjacent to the Town of Taos, and in some cases, would decrease. Gross receipt taxes are largely passed on to consumers, so property owners who probably already access most of their goods and services within the Town are unlikely to perceive any increase in the costs of those goods and services. Once water and sewer infrastructure and service is extended to an area, residents must pay connection fees of $1,000 for sewer and $500 for water, plus monthly utility bills. These fees are substantial for those who have invested heavily in individual wells and septic systems. However, centralized water and sewer greatly reduce the possibility of groundwater contamination.

Benefits received by residents in newly annexed areas include municipal fire and police protection that will result in lower response times from those public safety agencies. They will receive road maintenance and water and sewer utilities. Annexation may also reduce some costs to residents. Centralized water and sewer are much less expensive to fund and maintain than are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>1998 Tax Rate (Mils)</th>
<th>Tax Cost on $100,000 Value</th>
<th>Tax Cost Change under Annexation</th>
<th>Percent Difference</th>
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<td>16.915</td>
<td>$247.37</td>
<td>[value]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taos County: Arroyo Hondo, Arroyo Seco, Canias, Los Colonias, Los Conturios, Consolacion, Dea Montes, El Picacho, Ruidoso, Ranchitos, Tiptop, Rimflats, Valles</td>
<td>14.609</td>
<td>$388.97</td>
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<td>75.90%</td>
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<td>22.009</td>
<td>$455.69</td>
<td>$298.47</td>
<td>53.59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Property taxes are assessed on one-third of 80-95% of market value. A $100,000 value would correspond to a house that would sell in the $30,000 to $40,000 range.*
SECTION VI/INFRASTRUCTURE

individual wells and septic systems and small water and sanitation districts. Furthermore, additional residents increase a municipality’s chances of receiving federal and state grants to fund regional infrastructure. Property owners may also experience reduced fire insurance rates depending on the level of fire protection available from the water system and the closer proximity of fire stations.

Residents in newly annexed areas of the Town will also gain the right to participate in the Town’s decision making through the election process and will thereby be able to help direct the future of the central municipality. Nevertheless, residents sometimes perceive annexation as a loss of community autonomy rather than a gain in government representation. Under a municipality, residents will have no more or less representation than in the County. Residents who live within the ETZ are already subject to the Town’s land use authority without having a voice in municipal affairs. The Town of Taos, like Taos County, encourages the formation of neighborhood associations, and therefore would adopt existing neighborhood plans for areas within the County that may be annexed. Annexation agreements can also be developed to ensure that the annexation provides win-win results for all parties involved.

Municipalities in the State of New Mexico receive the authority to annex territory from Section 3, Article 7 of the New Mexico State Statutes. Pursuant to section 3-7-1, NMSA 1978, there are three methods available to municipalities wishing to annex territory. Each method is attuned to distinct goals and illustrates different degrees of legislative delegation of power to municipalities in the state. They are:

- The Arbitration Method, Sections 3-7-5 through 3-7-10 NMSA 1978, allows the municipality 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 if a majority of the landowners of a territory petition the commission to annex the territory into the municipality.

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

The following are different areas that will be considered for annexation within the next few years. The Town of Taos wishes to work in a win-win partnership with Taos County and community members in these areas toward annexation, using the Municipal Boundary Commission Method (NMSA 1978, S 3-7-11 through 16). These areas are adjacent to the Town’s current limits, and some are among the fastest growing in the area.

Weimer Foothills

The majority of the Weimer Foothills is already part of the Town of Taos. The area that would be considered for annexation is the uppermost eastern portion of the area directly east of Weimer Road, which is receiving a great deal of growth, typically at low densities. While a few households within the Weimer area are served by Town water, the majority of Weimer residents rely on their own wells and septic systems. Proliferation of septic tanks in the area will only increase with continued growth. Water quality data from the New Mexico Environment Department has shown sporadic levels of nitrates, which may indicate groundwater contamination by septic tanks. The Town of Taos may establish a Special Assessment District to fund the extension of municipal water and sewer service to the area, and thereby protect the groundwater. Some Foothills Neighborhood Association members participated in a preliminary vote, which indicated they would prefer to wait on the Special Assessment District until the need for it is clear, since they
have already invested in their individual wells and septic tanks. They also requested more information on the subject.

**Este Es**

The area under consideration for annexation in Este Es is directly southwest of Este Es Road. This area is a prime candidate for annexation since the Town of Taos Public Works Department will be extending water and sewer lines and improving roads in the area. Near-term projects include installing a 6" water loop line by the year 2000, and extending wastewater lines from Camino del Medio by 2001. Road network, safety, efficiency, and enhancement improvements will be completed by 2002. The Este Es area has experienced some residential growth and is densely developed relative to other potential annexation territories. The tax base of the Este Es area is relatively small, meaning that the area will not provide significant property and gross receipts tax revenues to offset the costs of providing infrastructure.

**Chamisa**

The Town of Taos is considering annexing the area northwest of Chamisa Road. This area already receives town water services, through lines located along Camino del Medio, and sewer service, through lines that follow Chamisa Road to Camino del Medio. New sewer lines are planned along Roy Road, to eventually link up with lines on Camino del Medio.

**El Prado**

The El Prado area is experiencing significant development, especially along the north Paseo del Pueblo Norte commercial corridor.
SECTION VII/INFRASTRUCTURE

Currently, El Prado possesses its own water and sewer utilities through the El Prado Water and Sanitation District, and utilizes Town facilities for wastewater treatment. Annexation of the area would result in lower utility rates for El Prado residents, since the Town would be able to fund and maintain the water and sewer system at lower costs. Improvements to the system and to roads would be significantly offset by the gross receipts revenue provided by El Prado’s commercial corridor.

Mabel Dodge Luhan Retreat Center
The Mabel Dodge Luhan Retreat Center is located at the end of Morada Lane, just off the Historic District, directly between Town of Taos boundary limit lines. The area is served by Town water lines.

Las Haciendas Subdivision
The Las Haciendas Subdivision, located off Cruz Alta Road, is completely surrounded by the Town limits and services. The Town’s Public Works Department has plans to provide sewer service to lots within Las Haciendas by the year 2000. The area is currently zoned residential-agricultural and contains antiquated plats with individual septic tanks that may threaten groundwater quality.

Ranchitos
The Lower Ranchitos area will receive extended sewer service to complement the sewer lines already in place in Upper Ranchitos. The proposed extension will include a sewer relief line along Lower Ranchitos Road that will increase the capacity of the transmission lines to accommodate growth demand. This project is planned for 1999/2000. Given the extent of the service, the Town may want to consider all or part of the Ranchitos area for annexation. The Ranchitos area will not provide significant property and gross receipts tax revenues to offset the costs of providing infrastructure.

Cañon
Cañon is a largely residential area that is experiencing an increase in the number of new residential building permits. The area is zoned primarily residential agricultural; however, there is also some single family residential and neighborhood commercial zoning within the area. While many Cañon residents would like to see the Town extend sewer service to the area in order to protect groundwater quality, the Town has no immediate plans to extend municipal services or utilities. Annexation of any territory within Cañon may present a tax burden to the Town, since there is really no significant commercial development that can provide gross receipts tax monies. Annexation of any Cañon areas may be more of a long-range goal for the Town.
SECTION VII
HOUSING

All Taos families and households have the opportunity to own quality, affordable housing.
SECTION VII/HOUSING

EXISTING CONDITIONS AFFECTING HOUSING

Housing affordability remains a concern for many Taos residents. According to local real estate appraiser and consultant Mark Cowan and Associates, the median price of a single family home in the first six months of 1996 was $162,000, down from $173,000 in 1995. In the same period in 1997, the median price was $145,000, as seen in Table 12. Even though mortgage interest rates and prices have dropped, single family homes remain beyond the reach of most Town of Taos families, whose median household income in 1997 ($20,500) was only 38% of the qualifying income for the median priced home. A family of four living on the median annual income of $20,500, assuming a 5% down payment and a 6.875% conventional mortgage, can afford a $60,000 home or, put another way, a home that costs almost 60% less than a median priced home in Taos. Some relief is provided by the Town’s relatively low property tax rates. As shown in Figure 48, 66% of all dwelling units in the Town of Taos are single family homes, 26% are units in multifamily dwellings, and 8% are manufactured or mobile homes. Other communities in the region, notably Angel Fire, Red River, and the Taos Ski Valley, have higher percentages of multi-family dwelling units resulting from their resort and visitor orientations.

Some suggest manufactured housing as the answer to affordable, owner occupied housing for Town of Taos residents. More than half of all new single family dwellings created in New Mexico in the past year were manufactured homes. The statewide trend is reflected in the Town of Taos. Although it is true that manufactured housing is an affordable option for many in terms of monthly payments, the prevailing financing terms and the slower appreciation (and, in some cases, depreciation) of mobile homes and manufactured housing make it a poor long-term investment option if affordable site built housing is available. The Town of Taos also has the opportunity to regulate the location of manufactured homes in order to provide the best environments possible for families that do not choose or cannot afford site built housing.

Housing policy in general is greatly impacted by the decrease in the number of persons per household. Reflecting Taos’ aging population, the decrease in household size poses a challenge to increasing overall residential densities given Taos’ traditional development pattern. Affordability is also hampered by this demographic shift, since the housing costs to individuals may be reduced if they are shared by a larger household.

The Town of Taos and Taos County own and manage affordable housing sites and sponsor programs to increase affordable housing opportunities in the Taos area. These sites and programs are as follows:

**Town of Taos Affordable Housing**

The Town of Taos currently owns and manages four affordable housing sites on Linda Vista Lane (30 units), Gusdorf Place (25 units), Cervantes (19 units), and Zia Circle (10 units). Linda Vista, Gusdorf Place, and Cervantes contain varying mixes of one, two, three, and four bedroom units. Linda Vista also provides some efficiency units, and Zia Circle contains only one-bedroom units. Tenants at these affordable housing sites must earn 80% or less of Taos’ median income, according to US Housing and Urban Development standards. Tenant rent varies according to the number of bedrooms each unit contains, and is based on one-third of the total household income. Average rates are $87 per month for one bedroom, $130 a month for two bedrooms, $98 a month for three bedrooms and $45 a month for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons Per Household</th>
<th>Historical and Projected Persons per Household</th>
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<td><strong>Year</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Bureau of Business and Economic Research, UNM, projections by Dighetti/Persich/Sabalini*

Table 11

**Historical and Projected Persons Per Household**

98
four bedrooms. Tenants also receive utility allowances for gas, electricity, water, sewer and sanitation based on bedrooms per unit. The majority of affordable housing tenants are elderly and Hispanic. Some moved into Town from surrounding communities like Amalia, Costilla, and Valdez to be closer to food stores and medical facilities. All Town of Taos affordable housing sites are slated for maintenance and renovation this year, including re-roofing, curb, gutter, and sidewalk improvements. Twenty additional units will also be built throughout these sites. Currently, the Town is developing a new affordable housing site, Chamisa Verde, on Paseo del Cañon East next to the Youth and Family Center.

Habitat for Humanity
Habitat for Humanity of Taos is a volunteer organization that builds homes in partnership with families who wouldn’t normally be able to afford a home or who do not qualify for any type of home ownership program. When the organization completes the home, it is then sold to a family at cost. The family pays a no interest mortgage and contributes 500 hours of “sweat equity,” which means that they assist in building the home. The organization has completed four homes throughout the Town and plans on completing four more by the end of the year.

Youth Build
In association with Habitat for Humanity, Youth Build constructs homes for the community and provides hands-on construction experience for Taos youth. Youth Build employs youth ages 16 to 24, primarily high school dropouts, in a ten-month program that trains them in the construction industry. Half of students’ time is spent in the classroom while the remainder is spent on site.

Neighborhood Housing Services
Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) is a non-profit Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) that develops the new construction of moderately priced homes. In addition, the organization assists home buyers with short and long term counseling about home purchases. Home buyers can receive assistance through every step of the process. NHS also offers below market rate mortgage loans. The organization is based out of Santa Fe and is active in Taos. Recently, NHS has purchased eight homes within the Arroyo Park subdivision, located on the south end of Blueberry Hill Road. NHS will also develop phase one of the Town’s Chamisa Verde project and is working on a 44 unit multi-family rental project.

Taos County Housing
Taos County currently owns and manages three different affordable housing sites that include 86 housing units.
SECTION VII/Housing

Community Goals and Objectives for Housing

Goal One
A Taos family of median income can afford an average priced home.

Objectives
- Develop and finance an inventory of affordable owner-occupied and rental housing.
- Intervene in the housing market to ensure the availability of affordable housing for the majority of Taos residents.

Goal Two
Taos neighborhoods contain a mix of housing types affordable to all Taos residents.

Objective
Require a mix of housing units by size and price within larger subdivisions.

Goal Three
Taos housing meets current health and safety standards.

Objective
Ensure that housing protects the health, safety, and welfare of the occupants.

Goal Four
All housing exists in safe, beautiful neighborhoods that enhance residents' quality of life.

Objectives
- Provide landscaping, greenspace, and recreational amenities for all residents, including those of mobile home parks and affordable housing subdivisions.
- Design pedestrian friendly streets and outdoor public places to sit, eat, and visit in subdivisions and mobile home parks.
- Design linkages that encourage the use of non-motorized transportation and public transit among neighborhoods and from neighborhoods to community facilities, employment and commercial centers.
HOUSING POLICIES

1. The Town of Taos will adopt a definition of "affordable housing" and subsequently adopt an inclusionary zoning ordinance with density bonuses for developers who build affordable housing.

2. The Town of Taos will not allow a cash payment in lieu of providing affordable housing in order to integrate a variety of housing types, lot sizes, and price ranges within developments.

3. The Town of Taos will create public-private partnerships and leverage Town resources to create incentives for private sector investment in affordable housing. The Town will provide reduced cost or at-cost land and reduced fees and costs for infrastructure, where appropriate. These leveraged resources will be offered only with the guarantee from for-profit or not-for-profit developers that they will develop affordable housing as defined by the Town of Taos.

4. The Town of Taos will explore ways to streamline and simplify the development review process for affordable housing projects.

5. The Town of Taos will consider supporting legislation to adopt a state Real Estate Transfer Tax. Pending State Legislature approval, the Town of Taos may enact a local option Real Estate Transfer Tax ordinance that will allow the Town to levy a tax on the purchase of property.

6. The Town of Taos will explicitly encourage cluster housing in its Land Use Development Code provided that adequate open space is retained for benefit and use of residents for such things as walk and bicycle paths, pocket parks, play areas, and greenbelts.

7. The Town will plan a network of multi-use trails connecting residential, recreational, and commercial areas, and each developer will coordinate its development to link up with and enhance the network.

8. The Town of Taos shall amend its Land Use Development and Building Codes to reward developers and builders who build energy and resource efficient homes, thereby making them more affordable.

9. The Town of Taos will send its planning staff to visit and study sustainable communities, and consult with the persons responsible for such developments.

10. The Town of Taos will encourage, support, and participate in sustainable design for the community, developments, and homes.

11. The Town of Taos will mandate the harvesting and reclamation of water for irrigation of plantings and reduction of water consumption and sewage, and will promote the use of permaculture in public spaces while permitting the growth of fruit trees, vegetable and flower gardens in private spaces.

12. The Town of Taos will promote development that includes improved solid waste collection and disposal methods intended to enhance recycling and composting.
SECTION VII/HOUSING

13. The Town of Taos will encourage innovative building and construction systems (IBACOS) which promote energy efficient home construction and design of development.

14. The Town of Taos will seek to purchase land to be placed in a land bank. The land bank will be made available at below market cost to build housing that is affordable to families with incomes below 80% of the area median income.

15. The Town of Taos will consider recycling the income it receives from the sale of affordable housing lots for the purchase of additional lands on which to build affordable housing.

16. The Town of Taos will seek to purchase land for acquisition and holding at today’s prices, using bond revenues if necessary, in order to have land available for future public/private design and development of sustainable, affordable homes and communities.

17. The Town of Taos will encourage and support the work of Community Based Housing Organizations (CHODO) which have demonstrated the ability to increase the inventory of affordable, attractive, owner-occupied and rental housing, particularly Habitat for Humanity of Taos and Neighborhood Housing Services of Santa Fe. The Town will consider encouraging the formation of and participation in a greater Taos area CHODO eligible for HUD development funding and with substantial representation from the above Community Based Organizations.

18. The Town of Taos will consider making available land and infrastructure to Community Based Housing Organizations on a no up-front cost basis.

19. The Town of Taos will institute accountability measures for its own affordable housing projects to ensure successful, timely completion and efficient resource management.

20. The Town shall amend its Land Use Development Code to require bike paths and walking trails, pocket parks, play areas, green space, and a minimum lot size allowing some private outdoor space in all developments, including mobile home parks and road projects.

21. The Town of Taos will require mobile home and manufactured home parks to be well-planned and to include open space, landscaping, play areas, and other amenities.
IMPLEMENTATION

Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance
Between December 1999 and December 2000, Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department Staff will coordinate a citizen committee to develop an inclusionary zoning ordinance with density bonuses for developers who build affordable housing.

Land Purchase Program
Between January 2001 and June 2002, Town of Taos Planning Department Staff will prepare a report detailing ways to purchase land dedicated to affordable housing. Planning Staff will present the report to, make recommendations to, and work with the Mayor and Town Council in implementing an affordable housing land purchase program. Mechanisms to be considered include:

- Public-private partnerships and leverage through which the Town will provide discounted or at-cost land and reduce infrastructure costs and other fees for affordable housing developers.
- Land banking.
- Bond revenues.
- A graduated scale real estate transfer tax that is appropriate for Taos.
- Recycling of lot sale income from Chamisa Verde or other Town owned affordable subdivisions to purchase additional land for affordable housing.
- Town provision of land and infrastructure to community based housing organizations on a no up-front cost basis, taking as payment a silent, soft-second mortgage from the purchaser of the home upon its completion.

Community Housing Development Organization (CHODO)
Between July 2002 and December 2003, Town of Taos Planning Department Staff will research past efforts to form a CHODO in Taos County, and will make recommendations to the Mayor and Council regarding Town leadership and/or participation in such an effort.

Sustainable Building Initiative
Between July and December 2000, the Town of Taos Planning and Zoning Department Staff, in coordination with other local governments, will develop and publish a brochure showing how developers can design and build energy and resource efficient homes. The brochure will be distributed with building permit applications and will address:

- The use of solar heating, including orienting homes on an east/west axis, the use of trombe walls, and sun spaces.
- Innovative building and construction systems (IBACOS).
- R-18 insulation in walls and R-30 in ceilings.
- Natural light.
- Energy and water saving fixtures, devices, and retrofits.
- Street, curb, and other infrastructure design that would lower land costs to developers.
- Reduction of solid waste and wastewater.
- Recycling and composting.
- Reclaimed or catchment water for irrigation and landscaping.
SECTION VII/HOUSING
SECTION VIII
COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities are of high quality and are available to all, allowing residents to enjoy life-long quality education and recreation.
Section VIII/Community Facilities

Existing Community Facilities

Community facilities are very important elements for any community since they provide important gathering spaces and also contribute to the health, educational, and recreational needs of the Town. Community facilities can be anything from physical buildings to open recreational areas. The following inventory provides a brief summary of community facilities and services available to Town of Taos residents. Most of the facilities and services are operated or supported by the Town of Taos, however, a few are private establishments that offer services to the general public.

Convention Facilities

The Town of Taos Civic Plaza and Convention Center contains over 23,000 square feet of meeting space that is available to residents for community meetings, recreation and social events as well as to business and convention groups. The facility most recently hosted the annual New Mexico Municipal League Conference that included delegates from all over the State. The facility has ten different meeting spaces and a full service kitchen. The largest meeting space, Rio Grande Hall, is comprised of 7,536 square feet. In 1996, kitchen improvements including a new range hood and ventilation fire suppression were added to the Convention Center. Future proposed improvements for Town of Taos Convention Facilities include an electronic sign to display events; a multi-media presentation system for Bataan Hall; an elevator to access storage in Rio Grande Hall; a new roof for the Bataan Hall kitchen; new heating and air conditioning systems for Coronado Hall; and new furniture, water-saving bathroom fixtures, kitchen equipment, and carpet throughout the facilities.

In addition to the Town owned Civic Plaza and Convention Center, there are additional conference and meeting centers located at the Best Western Kachina Lodge and the Sagebrush Inn. The Kachina Lodge's Meeting Center is comprised of 6,900 square feet and contains four breakout rooms. The Sagebrush Inn Conference Center is slightly larger, with 18,000 square feet and five large breakout rooms.

Hospital/Medical Facilities

Holy Cross Hospital serves the Town of Taos and surrounding areas. The 115,000 square foot facility contains 45 acute care beds and employs approximately 49 medical staff, consultants, and associates. According to Holy Cross Hospital officials, the size of the facility is appropriate for a town the size of Taos. Holy Cross is equipped to handle most medical needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Publicly Owned Convention Facility Size (Square Feet)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taos, NM</td>
<td>6,213</td>
<td>23,000 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Fe, NM</td>
<td>66,552</td>
<td>22,000 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raton, NM</td>
<td>7,372</td>
<td>19,500 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlsbad, NM</td>
<td>24,952</td>
<td>37,330 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruidoso, NM</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>33,000 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telluride, CO</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>11,000 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13

Convention Facilities

Taos’ convention facilities are competitive with other cities in the region. Taos is only one of a handful of New Mexico communities its size that owns its own facilities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Medical Facility</th>
<th>Acute Care Beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taos, NM</td>
<td>6,213</td>
<td>Holy Cross Hospital</td>
<td>45 Beds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raton, NM</td>
<td>7,372</td>
<td>Miner's Colfax Medical Center</td>
<td>87 Beds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruidoso, NM</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>Lincoln County Medical Center</td>
<td>42 Beds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vail, CO</td>
<td>3,716</td>
<td>Vail Valley Medical Center</td>
<td>49 Beds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(An additional 80 beds are available within 30 miles)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las Vegas, NM</td>
<td>16,500</td>
<td>Northeastern Regional Hospital</td>
<td>62 Beds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deming, NM</td>
<td>14,400</td>
<td>Mimbres Memorial Hospital</td>
<td>49 Beds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durango, CO</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Central Health Mercy Medical Ctr.</td>
<td>94 Beds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14
Hospital Beds

In addition to the Holy Cross Hospital, there are two assisted care facilities that serve the Taos area. Plaza De Retiro is a lifetime care facility/retirement home. The Taos Living Center is a 100 bed facility that offers outpatient rehabilitation services and a specialized Alzheimer's program.

Educational Facilities

Taos Public Library
The Taos Public Library’s 14,400 square foot building was dedicated on July 10, 1996 and has become a major community asset by providing Taos area residents with educational, personal, and professional development opportunities. With 17,000 registered borrowers, the Taos Public Library is in wide use throughout the Taos County area. Other nearby communities, such as Red River, Eagle Nest, and Angel Fire also have libraries with much smaller collections.

Currently, the Library’s collection numbers 49,000 total volumes, which is equitable with the collections of larger municipalities and generally larger than those of similar sized communities (Table 15). Much of the collection came from the community, indicating that Taos is a highly literate community. The Library’s Periodicals Room houses over 80 current magazine subscriptions and back issues for three to five years. The Library’s newspapers include the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal,
### Section VIII/Community Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Total Volumes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taos, NM</td>
<td>4,274</td>
<td>45,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruidoso, NM</td>
<td>4,885</td>
<td>46,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aztec, NM</td>
<td>5,964</td>
<td>28,559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Rancho, NM</td>
<td>36,370</td>
<td>45,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver City, NM</td>
<td>11,213</td>
<td>43,874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tucumcari, NM</td>
<td>6,694</td>
<td>35,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deming, NM</td>
<td>12,051</td>
<td>47,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las Vegas, NM</td>
<td>15,064</td>
<td>56,211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socorro, NM</td>
<td>8,227</td>
<td>33,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants, NM</td>
<td>8,509</td>
<td>18,348</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15

**Public Library Facilities**

The Taos Public Library provides an array of educational services. The Children’s Library sponsors a year-round Reading Assistance Program that matches tutors with children in need of tutoring in reading. Regular features of the program include educational computer programs, a summer reading program, and class visits from local schools. The Children’s Library includes a collection of 6,500 books. Literacy services are also available to all citizens of the Taos area through the Library’s Literacy Program, which includes Adult Basic Reading, English as a Second Language, and Family Literacy Programs. The Taos Public Library plans to add a literacy classroom in the next few years.

**Schools**

The Taos Public School System is comprised of six elementary schools (enrollment of 1,681), one middle school (enrollment of 828), and one High School (enrollment of approximately 1,000). In addition to the Taos Public School System, the University of New Mexico operates a local Taos campus. UNM employs a staff of over 100 educators and administrators that offer over 150 classes.

**Parks/Recreational Facilities**

**Kit Carson Park**

Kit Carson Park, located on Paseo del Pueblo Norte, contains twenty-five of the Town’s fifty acres of parkland. The Park contains playground equipment, picnic facilities, tennis courts, little league fields, and an ice rink that will be replaced at the Youth and Family Center. Future planned improvements include sand volleyball pits and a three-quarter mile jogging and walking trail around the perimeter of the Park. Kit Carson Park is unique in that it is a State Historic Park that houses the Kit Carson Cemetery. In the next year, the Town of Taos will recondition the historic cemetery by making repairs to the fence, constructing an ADA accessible trail, upgrading the irrigation system, and working with the families of those buried in the cemetery to refurbish deteriorating gravesites. The Town will utilize the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps to assist in leveling and laying new sod around sinking gravesites.
Fred Baca Park

Located on the Town’s west side along Camino del Medio, Fred Baca Park contains twenty acres that house a soccer field, picnic facilities, tennis courts and playground equipment. The Town of Taos Buildings and Grounds Department won a “Facility Design Award” for this highly-utilized park from the New Mexico Recreation and Parks Association. Currently, the Town of Taos is planting trees and working on a wetlands project at Fred Baca Park. The wetlands project aims to protect the Park’s valuable natural resources, including the Rio Fernando and a five-acre wetlands, and to provide educational opportunities for Taos area residents. The Town plans to install a bridge over the Rio Fernando and a nature trail through the wetlands. This will reduce uncontrolled access, while allowing residents to experience the wetlands and its variety of animal and plant species including cattail, willow, beaver, and leopard frogs. The nature trail will include a hard surface walkway, boardwalk, hand railing, observation platform, ADA and plant/wildlife identification signs.

In 1996, the Town of Taos replaced playground equipment to meet ADA compliance and federal safety guidelines at both Fred Baca and Kit Carson Parks. ADA compliance has been achieved at both parks through sidewalk improvements, construction of new fall zones, improved landscaping, and better picnic areas. Future improvements for both parks include ADA restrooms; park landscaping; irrigation system upgrades; resurfacing of paved areas, including tennis courts; and master planning for future parks.

Filemon Sanchez Park

In addition to the parks maintained by the Town, Taos County operates and maintains Filemon Sanchez Park which houses a rodeo ground, softball fields, and basketball courts. The Park is located along Salazar Road within the Town of Taos limits.

Don Fernando Pool

The Town’s only public swimming pool is the Don Fernando Pool located in Coronado Hall on Civic Plaza Drive. The pool is 35 by 75 feet in width and length, and ranges from 3 to 9 feet deep. Despite its age, the pool is in relatively good condition. The pool closes in winter but is widely utilized during the open months. The Don Fernando Pool will be replaced with a new pool at the Youth and Family Center.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Gym

The Town of Taos has an agreement with the Parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe that allows the Town’s Recreation Department to lease the facility for adult and youth recreational sports leagues. In exchange for $20,000 worth of repairs and improvements to the facility, the Town is able to lease the building for five years.
SECTION VIII/Community Facilities

Youth and Family Center

The Taos Youth and Family Center is currently being planned and will be completed within the next few years. Groundbreaking for the Center occurred on October 2, 1998, at its location on Paseo del Cañon East. The Center will consolidate all of the Town’s recreational services, replacing the Our Lady of Guadalupe Gym, Don Fernando Pool, and Kit Carson Ice Rink. The Youth and Family Center Project represents a major grass roots effort. Funding for the project has come from the Town of Taos, Community Block Grant Development funds, NM Legislative Appropriations, fund-raising efforts by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and donations of land and money from Taos citizens and businesses. Upon completion of its various phases, the Center will feature an ice arena, swimming pool, skate park, and two twin gymnasiums. Parking areas, lighting, landscaping, and equipment are also being planned.

Public Safety

Police

The Town of Taos Police Department is putting an increased emphasis on becoming more active in the community. Recently, the Department has added equipment that will allow it to better protect the Town’s residents. Upgrades of the Central Communication equipment will allow the Department to communicate more effectively both internally and with other police agencies within Taos County. The Department has also purchased sobriety roadblock equipment including a DWI trailer in order to establish checkpoints. The Department’s new metal holding cell will provide the Department with additional space to house several incarcerated individuals. The Town of Taos Police Department employs approximately 18 officers. In the next few years, the Police Department will add an Enhanced 911 console and equipment; networking and records systems; a new police and communications headquarters; and fencing, embankments, and safety upgrades to its existing firearms range.

Incarcerated individuals usually spend time in the Taos County Adult Detention Center. The Center is capable of housing only 24 prisoners at a time, its primary limitation. As a result of the limited space available at the Center, the jail functions as a "holding cell" since many Taos prisoners must be transported to other facilities in San Miguel County. A new plan is in the works for future Taos prisoners to be housed at the new Santa Fe County facility. (Jonathan McDonald, Taos News, Thursday, September 17, 1998, Vol. XL, No. 9)

Fire Protection

The Town of Taos’ Fire Department is also committed to protecting the lives of Taos residents. The Department employs five full-time employees and relies on 25 volunteers to provide around the clock fire protection and rescue operations. During the past year, the Department responded to over 300 calls. The Department also provides a great deal of fire safety and education to children and adults, averaging 40 public safety presentations within the past year. As a way of maintaining full readiness, the Town’s Fire Department regularly attends training sessions that emphasize the latest fire fighting technologies and have received a brand new 2500-gallon pumper/tanker to replace an aging fire fighting vehicle. In the next few years, the Fire Department plans to purchase new bunker gear and a "class A" foam truck, construct a northside Fire Substation, and map building hazards to increase response time and protect firefighters.

Community Against Violence

Another important Town public safety asset is the Community Against Sexual and Domestic Violence Shelter that opened at the beginning of 1997. The facility is capable of sheltering up to seven families in eight bedrooms and 30 beds. The shelter is open to all victims of sexual and domestic violence and abuse. In the near future, the Shelter plans to add landscaping, security elements, a children’s play area, and a day care center.
Additional Town Facilities and Assets

Ancianos/Phil Lovato Senior Center
The Ancianos Center provides recreational services for senior citizens within the Taos area. Some of the recreational services include exercise programs, pool tables, television, and sewing/knitting instruction. The center also provides breakfast and serves approximately 160 homebound and in-house lunches.

Taos Animal Shelter/Taos Humane Association
The Taos animal shelter is a 2,400 square foot facility with space for 30 dogs and 20 cats.

Taos County Association of Retarded Citizens (ARC)
The Taos County ARC is a 7,300 square foot complex that offers comprehensive early childhood evaluations as well as adult services for individuals with mental retardation. ARC will be expanding its northside parking this year.

Taos Community Auditorium (TCA)
The TCA is located adjacent to Kit Carson Park and hosts live theater and stage productions and also shows alternative films.
SECTION VIII/COMMUNITY FACILITIES

COMMUNITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Goal One
The Town of Taos provides a diversity of parks and open places for its residents from large open spaces, parks and recreational areas to smaller pocket parks and open areas, linked by a trail system generally separated from Town streets.

Objectives
- The Town of Taos provides adequate acreage of parklands, at locations that provide equitable accessibility at or above the national average for park acres per resident.
- Enhance outdoor recreational opportunities by improving existing and developing new campgrounds and public fishing areas, large open space parks, and easily accessible recreational playing fields linked by a trail system.

Goal Two
A network of multi-use trails is developed as an independent infrastructure system for recreation and as an alternative to existing transportation systems.

Objectives
- Acquire trail rights of way through the cooperation of local government, non-profit agencies, and land owners.
- Establish standards that ensure the provision of an adequate number of trails in relation to population and Town area.
- Develop trailheads at the same time as trails to ensure that adequate access and automobile parking is available.
- Site the major trail network to connect existing and planned parks, public open spaces, state and federal park facilities, public locations (schools, major streets, and parking areas), employment centers, mixed-use centers, and high density residential areas.
- Design the trail network to minimize any impact on natural features and to preserve existing vegetation.
- Incorporate existing or planned drainage right of way and easements into the trail system.
- Site trails to take advantage of natural amenities and vistas, and develop them to provide a sense of seclusion and open space to users, while minimizing any impact on adjacent property owners.

Goal Three
The Town of Taos provides adequate facilities to all residents for passive and active educational and recreational opportunities.

Objectives
- Develop and maintain facilities for all community members' recreational and educational needs.
- Follow through on youth priorities for recreational development. These include a skate park, multi-use recreational center, and under age dance club.
- Plan for increased operational and capital costs of existing and new Town facilities.
COMMUNITY FACILITIES POLICIES

1. The Town of Taos will continue to dialogue and collaborate with youth and the community through meetings, surveys, and invitations to Council meetings.

2. The Town of Taos will complete and be responsible for all phases of the Taos Youth and Family Center including, but not limited to, a skate park and a multi-use recreation center, within five years. The Town of Taos will develop and implement a strategic plan for funding all phases of the Center, which will be open to all members of the community.

3. The Town of Taos will support departments, recreation boards, and youth organizations to explore and implement recreational opportunities for Taos residents.

4. The Town of Taos will provide the necessary resources to maintain, expand, and create new community facilities by prioritizing community facilities in capital improvement budgets, and allocating a percentage of the Town budget toward community facilities.

5. The Town of Taos will research, seek, and secure funding to finance expansion, improvements, and new construction of community facilities and programs through grants (especially TEA-21 funds), lodgers and gross receipts taxes, bond issues, donations from the public, matching funds, and in-kind commitments.

6. The Town of Taos will designate a department or departments to review the implementation of Vision 2020 Community Facility goals, maintain existing facilities, and plan for new facilities. This department/s will set time lines for commencing and completing projects; will require accountability; and will communicate with organizations working with youth, families, education, and recreation to effectively utilize local talent and resources, reduce expenses, and avoid duplication of services.

7. The Town of Taos will maintain the public library, plan for its growth, and make it accessible to all members of the community.

8. The Town of Taos will employ a grant writer, with strong consideration of a professional who works on commission.

9. The Town of Taos will consider annexing more of the immediate surrounding areas to produce more revenue.

10. The Town of Taos will formulate a master plan for a network of multi-use trails by the year 2000 that will link existing and planned roadways; trailheads; parks; transit routes; commercial, residential, and employment centers and nodes. The Plan will be based on a mapped inventory of existing publicly owned sites and trails, and will consider issues of aesthetics, logistics, and recreation in design. The Plan will identify sites for new trails, preferably on utility easements that would be negotiated with local utility providers. The Town will secure funding to acquire the new trails through the use of bonds, federal and state grants, and dedications, and will complete trail construction by 2004.
SECTION VIII/COMMUNITY FACILITIES

11. The Town of Taos will implement an educational program to encourage safe and courteous use of its multi-use trail system.

12. By the year 2000, the Town of Taos will formulate a master plan for campgrounds, public fishing areas, large open space parks, outdoor recreation areas, small pocket parks and open spaces linked by multi-use trails. The Plan will be based on a mapped inventory of existing publicly owned sites and trails, and will identify new facilities.
IMPLEMENTATION

Youth and Family Center

The Town of Taos will complete the Youth and Family Center and other recreational and educational facilities, and on an on-going basis will plan for continued funding and maintenance of these facilities.

Community Facilities Report

Between January and December 2001, Town of Taos Planning Department Staff, in conjunction with the Vision 2020 Community Facilities Subcommittee, will prepare a report evaluating existing Town resources for community facilities, and will make recommendations to the Mayor and Council about meeting the community facility needs of the Taos community. The report will:

Identify existing and projected conditions, including:

- Existing community facilities.
- Existing community organizations who work with community facilities.
- The number of Town positions in the areas of grant writing and community facilities.
- Current and projected population of the Town of Taos and Taos County.
- The amount of funding and funding sources used for community facilities over the past ten years.

Identify community facility needs and opportunities, including:

- Gaps in funding for community facilities.
- Legality and feasibility of using various funding mechanisms such as percentages of gross receipts and lodgers tax for community facilities.

Make recommendations to the Mayor and Council for community facilities, including:

- Potential creation of new position/s focused specifically on grant research and writing.
- Accountability measures for the completion of community facility projects.
- Town coordination and activity planning with organizations who work with youth, families, education, and recreation, such as the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Youth Council.
- Ways to maintain existing facilities and plan for growth of additional facilities.
- Potential funding mechanisms.
- Phased priority list of community facility projects.

Please see Section III, Agricultural Lands and Open Space Preservation for trails and open space initiatives.
CONCLUSION

Through its history, the Taos Valley has changed dramatically while retaining the essential qualities of its earliest habitation. During the next generation it will continue to change. This change occurs in the context of a changing region within a changing New Mexico. The challenges we face today are more pressing and more complex than many of those in the past. In the 21st century, Taos will need to have meaningful responses to new economic, social, and environmental demands.

This Plan presents a very ambitious agenda, but one that is well within the capacity of the community to achieve. What is the alternative to the vision presented here? We can leave things the way they are and to continue to urbanize the far edges of Town at a very rapid rate, continuing to convert agricultural land to residential and commercial uses. This pattern of development addresses few of the Town's economic and social needs and compounds the possibility of cultural and environmental damage. Taos could continue to develop in a manner that has become conventional for northern New Mexico communities but in the process may end up aggravating current problems and creating new ones.

The community has chosen to pursue a significantly different future. This choice has required a commitment of time and energy, but many Taoseños have answered the challenge of planning for the community's future. This planning process has brought citizens from all walks of life together, and unified them in the idea that Taos is a special place and proper planning must be done to ensure that the area's unique way of life is preserved. In order to do this, the community must have the proper tools and the perseverance to pursue its goals over time. It is the intent of the Vision 2020 Master Plan to provide these tools and perseverance.
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following is a list of frequently used planning terms.

Activity Centers - Areas where people congregate due to a concentration of employment, retail, and/or office activities.

Affordable Housing - As usually defined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, rental or ownership housing whose monthly cost burden represents no more than 30% of the gross income of a low to moderate income of an individual or a family (no more than 80% of median income of an individual or a family).

Annexation - The process by which land bordering the limits of an existing municipality is incorporated into that municipality.

Base Economic Jobs - Jobs that create goods and services that are exported outside the local economy and bring in new dollars to the local economy.

Civic Identity - The package of design elements and images through which a community distinguishes itself from its neighbors.

Civic Space - Public buildings, government headquarters, public libraries, and parks that provide opportunities for both the formal and informal interaction of community members.

Density - For commercial, industrial, and institutional uses, the ratio of the total floor area of the building to the area of its site. For residential uses, the number of dwelling units per acre.

Developer - The legal or beneficial owner or owners of a lot or of any land included in a proposed development. Also, the holder of an option or contract to purchase, or any other person having enforceable proprietary interest in such land.

Development - Substantial property improvement and, usually, a change of land use character within site; the act of using land for building, extractive, or agricultural purposes.

Greenbelts - Integrated system of open land that surrounds and supports a community or metropolitan region and is protected from urban and incompatible rural development, sometimes by an urban boundary. Used to guarantee open space, preserve areas for future acquisition, or prevent premature development on land too expensive to service.

Groundwater - The water contained in interconnected pores located below the water table, in either an unconfined aquifer or as interstitial water which occurs in saturated earth material and which is capable of entering a well in sufficient amounts to be utilized as a water supply.

Historic Preservation - Identification and preservation of buildings which are considered to have some significant historic character.
SECTION IX/CONCLUSION

Home Occupation - A commercial activity carried out by a resident that is conducted as an accessory use within the primary dwelling unit or in an accessory building.

Incorporate - To provide a geographic area the legal status of a political subdivision of the state. Residents of an incorporated area may elect representatives and tax themselves to provide services.

Impact Fees - A one-time charge to developers to pay for the costs of infrastructure improvements required to accommodate new development.

Inclusionary Zoning - A technique to require developers to include a percentage of affordable housing units for low and moderate income residents.

Infill - Directing new development to built-up areas by creating new parcels through lot splits, filling vacant lots, and/or increasing allowed densities. Used to direct growth to existing infrastructure and encourage compact development.

Infrastructure Capital Improvements Program (ICIP) - A method of planning new and improved physical facilities: streets, public utilities, flood control, municipal buildings, and other structures. It also provides for budgeting and scheduling of these improvements.

Joint Powers Agreements - Agreements between governmental entities that permit them to act on each other's behalf for previously agreed to purposes.

Land Development Regulation Ordinance - Government passed rules and regulations which apply to public and private lands and intend to make the use of lands and natural resources conform to policy standards.

Land Subdivision Regulations Ordinance - Government passed rules and regulations to apply to tracts of land divided into lots suitable for home-building purposes.

Land Use - Definitions of what current uses are in place, analyzing land developability and assessing future requirements for various uses. Definitions of what activities are permitted on a parcel of land.

Lot - A parcel or tract of land, described by metes and bounds and platted and placed on the County Clerk's record in accordance with appropriate laws, and access to public right of way.

Manufactured Housing - A manufactured home or modular home that is a single family dwelling with a heated area of at least 36 by 24 feet and at least 864 square feet.

Mobile Home - A vehicle without motive power, designated to be drawn by a motor vehicle and to be used as a temporary or permanent human habitation.
Mobile Home Park - Any lot on which two or more mobile homes are used for human habitation.

Neighborhood Commercial/Mixed Use Centers - Land use characterized by a mix of small-scale commercial activities and medium density residential uses. Such uses are often focused on traditional plazas and maintain a mix of stores, offices, and services and some residential uses on upper stories or on adjacent properties. Commercial activity generally serves an area no more than one square mile and contains neighborhood commercial uses serving the daily needs of neighborhood residents, often in a pedestrian-oriented environment where shared and on-street parking occurs as opposed to large parking lots.

Open Space - Land used for recreation and/or the preservation of natural resources, views, scenery, and recreational opportunities. Open space may include parks, outdoor recreation areas, agricultural fields, scenic views or wetlands.

Parcel - A piece of usable property, a tract or plot of land, or adjoining group of tracts in single ownership. A parcel used for development will also be referred to as a "site." Parcels are divided into lots. A parcel is usually considered a unit for the purpose of development.

Plat - A plan or map of a specific land area.

Planned Unit Development - Subdivision regulations for projects containing a mix of residential multi-family and non-residential uses that protect critical areas through requirements specific to that area.

Real Estate Transfer Tax - A tax levied on the sale of real estate and used to fund community priorities, such as open space acquisition and affordable housing development. Real Estate Transfer Taxes can be graduated, allowing the local government to tax higher-priced homes and businesses more than or instead of lower-priced or affordable units. Voters must approve the tax as a local option before it is applied.

Right Of Way - The right to use a particular path for access to passage; a type of easement. Areas dedicated to government for use for streets, roads, and other public access to lots.

Setbacks - The required minimum horizontal distance between the building line and the related front, side, or rear property line.

Slope - The average inclination of a surface, measured from the horizontal, generally expressed as the ratio of a unit of vertical distance to a given number of units of horizontal distance. It may also be expressed as a percent or in degrees.

Trail Easements - The right or privilege to cross property for recreational purposes or to reach recreational sites.

Wetlands - An area at least periodically wet or flooded, where the water table stands at or above the land surface (bogs and marshes). Also, those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.
SECTION IX/CONCLUSION

Xeriscaping - Landscaping that utilizes vegetation or soils that require only a small amount of moisture.

Zoning Map [Official Zoning Map] - The map and/or detailed maps showing the location and boundaries of the development districts established by ordinance.