



Placitas Area Plan

January 2009

DRAFT





Placitas Area Plan

Board of County Commissioners

Orlando Lucero, County Commissioner,
District 1

Don Leonard, County Commissioner,
District 2

David Bency, County Commissioner
District 3

Glenn Walters, County Commissioner
District 4

Darryl Madalena,
County Commissioner, District 5

Juan Vigil County Manager

David Matthews, County Attorney

Planning and Zoning Commission

John Arango, Chairman

Todd Hathorne, Vice-Chair

Ellen R. Smith, Member

Henry Street, Member

Pat Vester, Member

Ralph Martinez, Member

Wayne Sandoval, Member

County Development Staff

Michael Springfield, Development Director

Moises Gonzales, Long Range Planner

Guy Bralley,

Brad Stebleton, Planner III

Kelly Romero, County Development





Table of Contents

Introduction/Plan Objective

Section I

Existing Conditions

- **Historical Background**
- **Population Conditions**
- **Transportation Conditions**
- **Existing Water Resources**
- **Open Space Resources**
- **Storm Drainage and Topography**
- **Waste Water Conditions**
- **Existing Land Use Conditions**

Section 2

- **Plan Goals and Strategies**

Section 3

Implementation Recommendations

- **Land Uses and Community Zoning Districts**
 1. **West Placitas Residential District**
 2. **West Placitas Rural Commercial District**
 3. **Las Placitas Residential District**
 4. **Village of Placitas Rural Commercial District**
 5. **Ideal Acres/San Francisco District**
 6. **Diamond Tail Community District**
- **Plan area wide Recommendations**

Appendix

- **Community Comments**





Introduction

Placitas Area Plan Objective

The purpose of this plan, the Placitas Community Area Plan, is to develop a long range land use plan that reflects the unique characteristics, constraints, and growth pressures of the community. Based on the Sandoval County Comprehensive Plan, the county has considered the diverse and distinctive qualities of communities within the various regions of the County. The Placitas area plan included the greater Placitas region as well as the western portion of the Diamond Tail Ranch (please see Placitas Area Plan Map).

In May of 2008, the Board of County Commissioners authorized the development of a community based area plan for the Placitas area that provides a framework for developing localized land use criteria and regulations that meet the community values and goals of the Placitas community. This document is that plan.





Planning Process

The Plan was developed through a community based, participatory process in which future land use criteria and capital improvements recommendations were developed with and by members of the community.

The Placitas Area Plan Consists of Three Major Sections:

Existing Conditions:

- **Describes the current land use condition and development practice**

Goals and Strategies:

- **Describes strategies for the future in areas of land use, zoning, and future subdivisions**

Plan Implementation:

- **Establishes recommendations for zoning regulations, future infrastructure, road improvements, as well as community facilities; may amend existing land use regulations affecting the plan area**





Placitas Community Area Plan



Legend

- Plan Area Boundary
- Lex Hurdles Land Grant
- Town of Bernalillo
- Lex Hurdles Land Grant Parcel Tracts
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- Reservations
- State
- Diamond Tail Ranch

Exhibit A





Section 1: Existing Conditions

Historical Background

The Placitas Area is located in the unincorporated portion of Sandoval County known as the Placitas Region. The Plan area is generally described as bounded by the west by the Town of Bernalillo and on to the East by the Crest of Montezuma. It is bounded on the north by the San Felipe Pueblo and by the south at the Sandia Pueblo and Cibola National Forest (see plan area map). In 1690, following the Pueblo Revolt, New Mexico was re-settled by the Spanish under Don Diego de Vargas. Shortly thereafter the Town of Bernalillo Land Grant (also known as the Felipe Gutierrez Grant) was established in (1708), as a permanent settlement north of the Villa de Albuquerque. The grant was intended to resettle what had been known prior to the pueblo revolt as the “Estancia de Bernalillo”. This land grant stretched from the fertile agricultural land along the Rio Grande to the llanos (high plains) east of town. Historically, and well into the 20th century, the eastern portions of the Placitas Area were the commonly used for grazing and wood gathering by the families of Bernalillo.

By the mid 1700’s proved difficult in sustaining both Pueblo and Hispanic Settlements along the Rio Grande. This was because of raiding nomadic tribes which migrated into the region. These included the Navajo, Comanche, Utes, Kiowas, and Apache. In response to these threats of attack, in 1767, Governor Tomas Vellez Gachupin issued the San Antonio de Las Huertas Grant. The grant was settled by landless residents of Alameda (Town of Corrales), Bernalillo, and the Elena Gallegos settlements and included “genizaros” who were captive plains Indians or

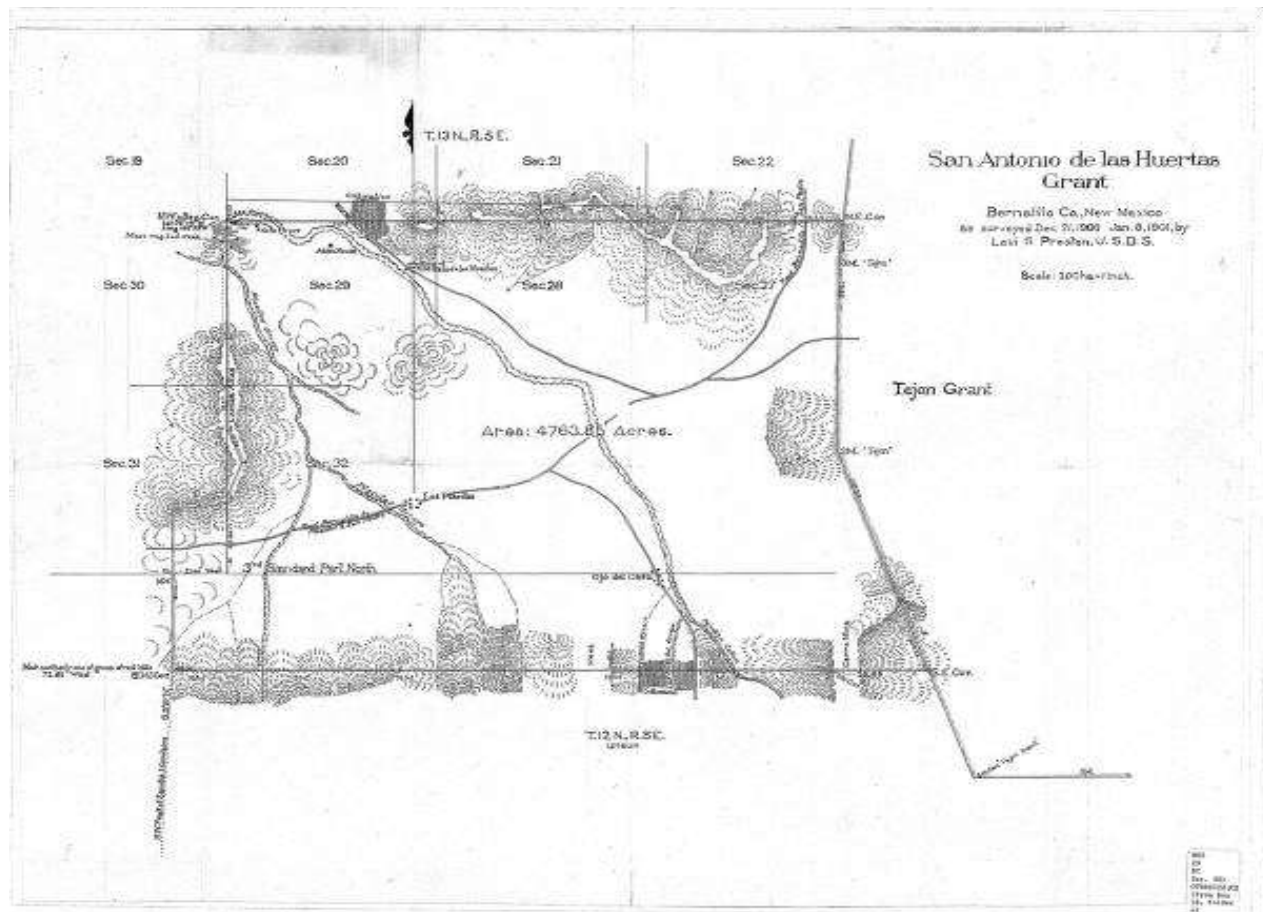




their children being raised by Hispanic families. The San Antonio de Las Huertas town was mandated by Governor Gachupin, according to grant documents, to conform to traditional “law of the indies” design; this included a town plaza, an allocation of farm plots along the “acequia madre”, and the use of common lands for wood gathering, hunting, and grazing. The land grant was bounded to the west by the “ejidos” (common lands) of the Town of Bernalillo Grant, to the east near the eastern boundary of (what is now) Diamond Tail Ranch, to the north by the lands of the San Felipe, and to the south by the northern most peaks of the Sandia Mountains.

In 1848, the territory of New Mexico was ceded by Mexico to the United States at the end of Mexican American war. Many communities began to have their land titles recognized by the United States Congress in the later part of the 19th century. By 1904, The Town of Bernalillo Land Grant was patented 3,404 acres of land which included the western are of the study area. The Las Huertas Land Grant also received its patent by the early 1900s and was patented approximately 4,763 acres.





San Antonio De Las Huertas Land Grant Patent





In the early 1900's most of the plan area was used for grazing and wood-gathering. The Las Huertas Grant maintained the lands irrigated by the acequia near the village of Placitas; remaining lands were utilized to sustain livestock for community members. Residents of the Town of Bernalillo used much of these lands for traditional wood-gathering, hunting and grazing. The land located between Bernalillo Grant and the Western Boundary of the Las Huertas Grant became private land; this was patented as homesteads to private individuals and primarily used for grazing purposes. During the 1900s, some tract in the Las Huertas became private lands owned by both land grant and non land grant members. And, by the late 1900s, some of these tracts exchange hands several times, and by the 1980s many of these privately claimed lands began to develop into subdivisions. The resultant development in the Grant is characterized by a traditional village (of a plaza type) community located along an acequia in the center of the Las Huertas Area, while suburban development patterns (of one dwelling unit on $\frac{3}{4}$ acre of land) are nearly adjacent. Currently in the planning area there are approximately 1,000 acres of undeveloped land in the Las Huertas region and an additional 1,000 acres undeveloped within the area known as Ideal Acres.

Much of land in the planning area west of the Las Huertas Grant has been developed; there remain several tracts of land directly north of the area known as the S-curve and several tracts adjacent to the Town of Bernalillo. Much of the land in this portion of the planning area has been developed as residential subdivision. The pattern is typical of large lot suburban development with one dwelling unit on approximately 1 acre lots. Also in this area are about a half dozen commercially zoned parcels currently supporting the Homestead Mercantile Shopping Center, La Puerta Realty, and additional office locations. Since the 1970s, much of





the lands formerly owned by the Bernalillo “patron”, Abenicio Salazar (within the Bernalillo Grant) were sold and developed into subdivisions such as Anasazi Trails and Placitas Trails. The Homestead lands, which became known as no-mans’ land, by Placitas and Bernalillo residents in the 1900s, had changed hands in the 1980s and was eventually subdivided becoming the subdivision of Homesteads of Placitas. Despite the various development histories in the plan area, today it is referred to as the Placitas Area of Sandoval County.





Population Conditions in the Placitas Area

The Village of Placitas community was primarily a Hispanic community from the time of its foundation in 1765. In recent decades, the Placitas region has experienced significant growth and modernization. In the late 1960's members of the counter culture movement arrived and developed communes in the Placitas area. Dome Valley north of the Village of Placitas still has some structures from the commune founded nearly four decades ago. Initially hippies and villagers viewed each other as different, but over time both communities came to support the same rural lifestyles of Placitas.

The Placitas area remained a subsistence, rural, community supporting less than 500 people until the 1980's. Over the years, artists and others captivated by Placitas' rural landscape moved to the area. Placitas' proximity to Albuquerque-and Santa Fe continues to attract people to the Placitas area.

The population of the Placitas area tripled in the 1980's to a population of about 1,611 in 677 housing units. Development in the 1980's continued in the 1990's in regard to urbanization. By 2000, the Placitas community had a population of about 3,452 and 1,606 homes. Today, Sandoval County estimates current population of the Placitas area at 5,523 people occupying 2,569 housing units.

Placitas has several notable characteristics that differ from other communities in Sandoval County. According to the 2000 census, the area has one of the highest (household median) income levels in the County at about \$60,597 dollars a year; overall the county was





approximately \$48,000 a year. Secondly, Placitas has a median home value estimated at \$267,000 (compared to the county median of \$115,000). Not surprisingly, the percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher was 51%, significantly above the normal for the County.

Overall, some the current trends associated with the plan area are that the community is becoming a retiree / senior community with the median age increasing over the past two decades. The Hispanic component of the population continues to decline, now representing about 20% in the Placitas area





**Placitas Area Plan
Population Conditions**

Year	Population	Housing Units	Family Size
1990	1,611	677	2.38
2000	3,452	1606	2.14
2008 Estimate	5523	2,569	2.15

2000 Census	Placitas	Sandoval County
Median Income	\$60,597	\$47,745
Median Home Value	\$267,700	\$115,400
Mean Travel Time to Work(min)	31.5	28.1
Hispanic Population	20%	32.3%
Bachelors Degree or Higher	51%	24.8%



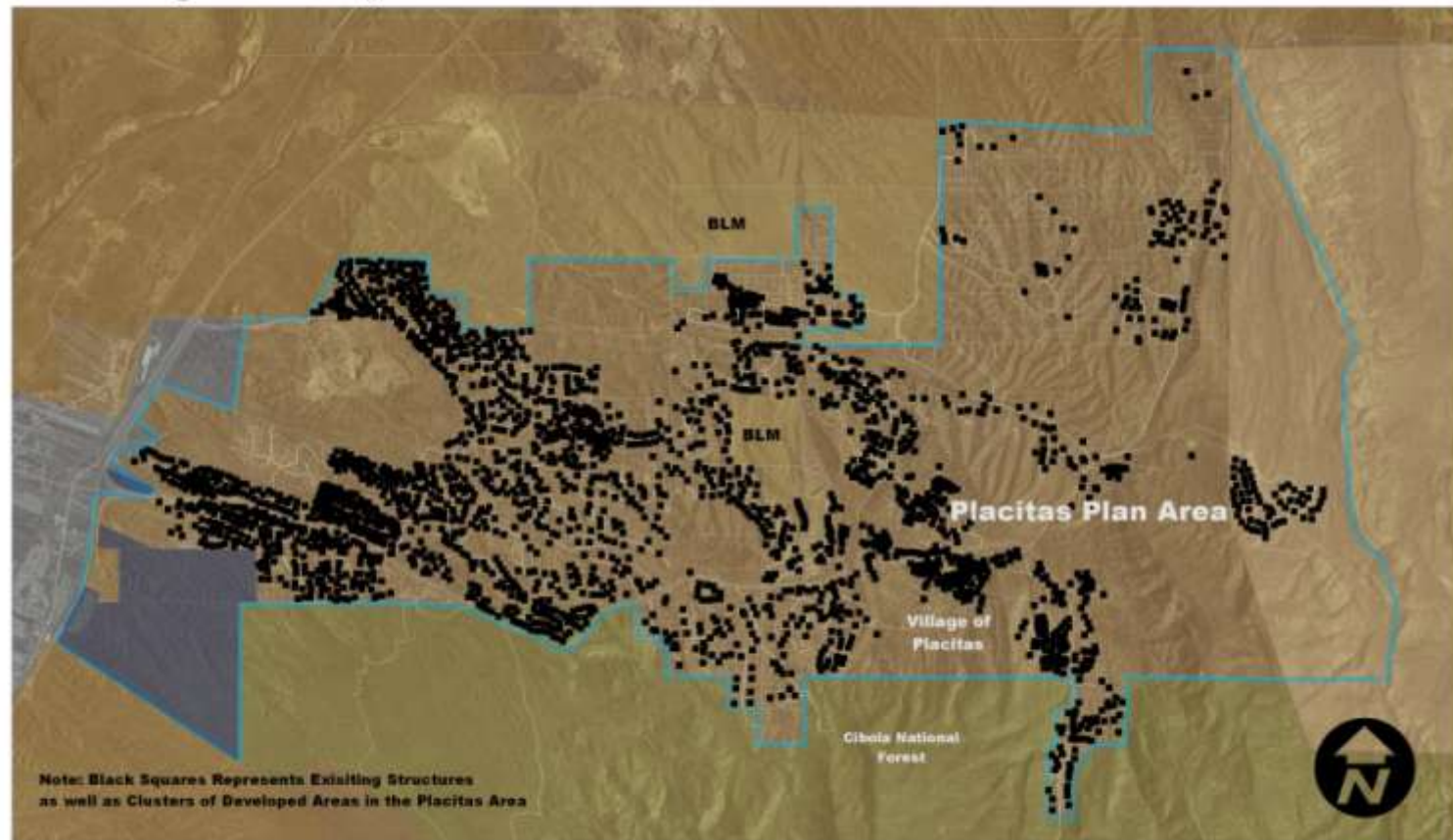


Building Permits by Year Since 2002	
Year	Number of Permits
2000	87
2001	83
2002	109
2003	107
2004	173
2005	137
2006	134
2007	101
2008	32
Total	963





Placitas Area Plan Existing Developed Areas





Existing Transportation Conditions

The transportation backbone of the Placitas Planning Area is NM 165; it begins at Interstate 25 and ends 9 miles eastward where the roadway enters the Cibola National Forest. According to NMDOT traffic monitoring, average weekday traffic volumes along NM 165 are highest at the western portion of the plan area, accounting for a volume of 7,500 movements per day. The overall volume east of the S-curve is approximately 3,100 and increases to a volume of 3,900 at the Placitas Village center which is an increase of an additional 900 cars per day (this sentence is a bit confusing to me). Overall, the existing capacity of NM 165 meets the current and future potential build-out of the Placitas region. On a conservative estimate (at this point in the plan study), the build out of the plan area would add an additional 1,200 homes to the Placitas area; this is estimated by accounting for undeveloped tracts in the eastern portion of the area and two additional phases of Diamond Tail. Given future build out of the plan area, the total traffic volume on NM 165 could be as high as 12,000. It is anticipated NM 165 will be adequate to accommodate build-out of the plan area without any major redesign. Additional modification of turning bays, acceleration and deceleration lanes may be needed based on specific future development scenarios. The assumption that NM 165 can support build-out of the Plan area without major roadway redesign is based on another assumption: that a regional roadway arterial would not be an interconnection into the Placitas roadway system.

The area's internal roadway system consists of improved and paved county roads, such as Camino de Las Huertas and Paseo De San Antonio in the Village, and paved subdivision roads, such as Homesteads Road, which serves as the collector road for the Homesteads Subdivision. There are a number of unpaved private drives in the community which are maintained by the





property owners. Some of these private roadways are located along steep slopes they often contribute to drainage and soil erosion problems and are negatively impacting air quality. Overall, the biggest transportation issue in the plan area is the traffic congestion at I-25 and NM 165 and US 550. The existing interchange exceeds its traffic carrying capacity (see 2007 Traffic Flows, MRCOG) for the location and, as a result, the Placitas community is impacted by congestion on US 550 during peak traffic periods. NM DOT has listed the redesign and construction of I-25/US 550 Interchange as a priority and it will be out to bid by early 2009 with construction following within approximately 2 years.





Existing Water Resources

Placitas Water Issues

Water in the Placitas Planning area presents a complex problem. Geology in the area, both surface and subsurface, aggravates the problem of sparse rainfall and the random nature of snowmelt as renewable / sustainable sources of water for the area.

Over recent decades several studies have been completed for numerous reasons. Chief among them (the reasons) are the meeting, by developers, of the County's requirement for showing water supplies suitable for 100 years before sub-division permits are approved. This requirement is in accordance with Appendix A of the Sandoval County Sub-Division Ordinance; areas of the County not under Appendix A are not required to show 100 year supplies and are only required to meet a lesser standard. In August 2002, and updated in January 2008, Peggy Johnson and Andrew Campbell co-authored "Hydrogeology and Water Resources of the Placitas Area, Sandoval County, New Mexico." This study covered an extended area and was less constrained by the individual development areas to which developers limit themselves (and their studies). In addition, the fact that Johnson and Campbell are from New Mexico Tech, a State University, lends an element of disinterest and objectivity. This is not to cast aspersions or suggestions that the studies done for commercial development are less rigorous or not prepared with the highest ethical conduct or professionalism; they are just constrained to smaller areas of interest.





In view of the different areas covered by the various studies, and the fact that they were conducted for different reasons, the County contracted with Intera, Incorporated, to collect and evaluate these studies and deliver a report based on the collective findings of these past efforts. This study was delivered in August 2008, and briefed at the Placitas community planning meeting held in September at El Zocalo. The presentation is available on the County's website (Intera Presentation, September 17, 2008), under the Placitas Area Plan Information). Sections of the 5 studies extracted as reference for the Intera study are also available on line (see Water Studies, Placitas Area Plan, Sandovalcounty.com). A hard copy of the study, including the map, has been delivered to the Placitas library for community reference purposes.

The conclusions of the study are that water availability in the Placitas area varies. There are sections where water is relatively abundant, areas where water availability is challenged, and areas between these extremes (so to speak). In Placitas, like most areas, water is greatly influenced by geology. Local structure is complex; it is characterized by faulting associated with the Rio Grande Rift zone. Water cannot be understood separate from this geological foundation.

Over time numerous solutions to the water issues in Placitas have been developed. In the territorial and colonial periods, surface water from springs and streams was largely the solutions of choice. Over time, additional demands were met through the development of wells. Today, the increasing populations have caused a move toward community systems using shared wells to meet the water needs of the area. While there are still individual domestic wells, the needs of water resource management are driving away from that option as the preferred method.

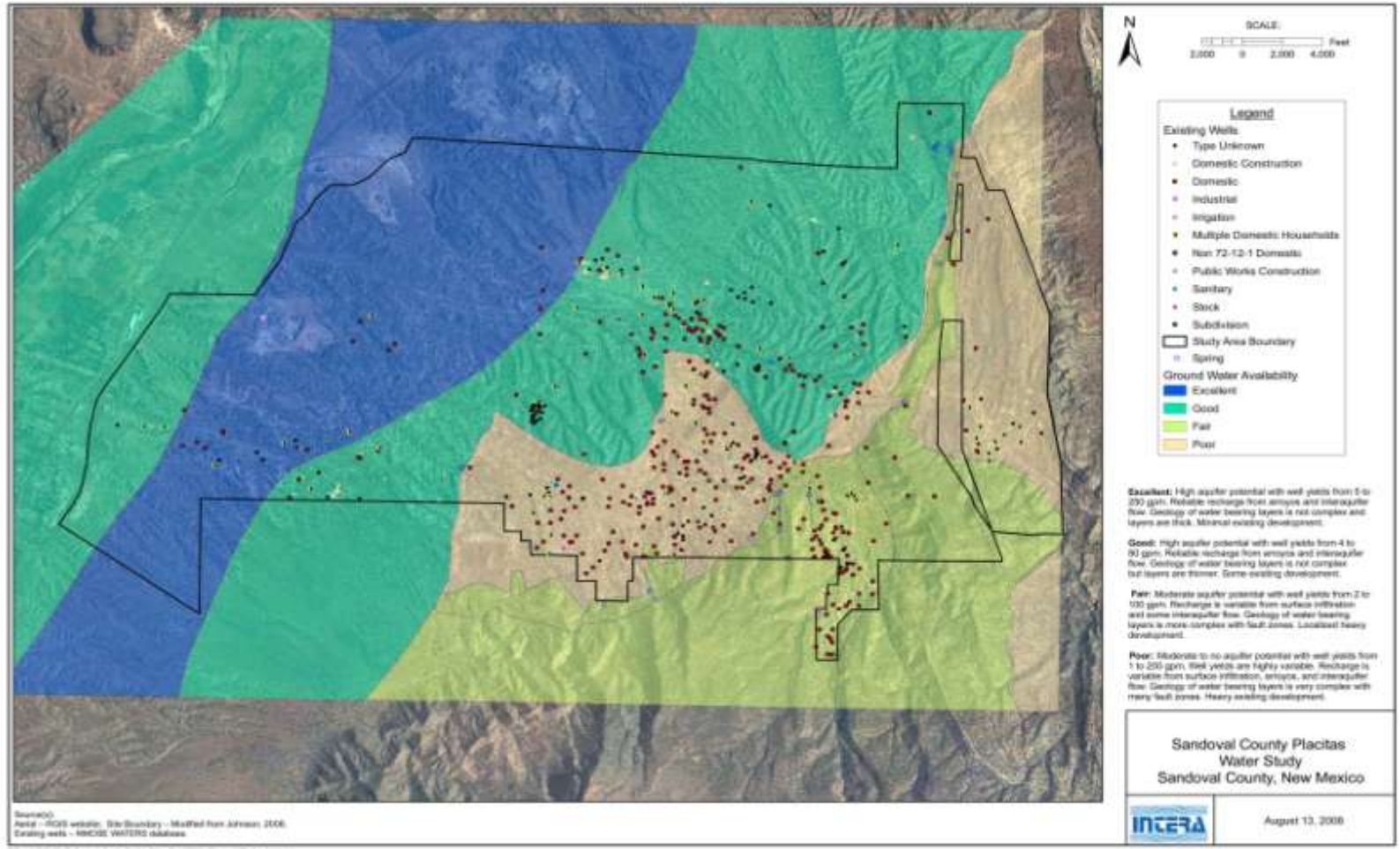




There are 14 water systems plus las Acequias de Placitas. Further, there are numerous old, single lot domestic wells, shared wells, springs and streams in the area used as water sources in the community. As such, there is not a simple definition of the water situation from a demand point of view any more than there is an easy way to characterize the supply side of the equation. Given continuing growth of the area and a desire to maximize the utility of the available water and encourage conservation practices, the County will to incentivize and otherwise encourage shared wells and community water systems.

By the nature of the current permitting processes (NMSA 72-12-1) for individual domestic wells, there exists no requirement for meters to be installed, read, or that “readings” be reported to the Office of the State Engineer at any interval. This abdicates management of the finite resource in and for the community. The practices associated with domestic wells currently do not provide a credible way to track usage from the greater systems / aquifer. While it would be beneficial to know what these usages might be, there is no vehicle for getting meters installed, and no one designated to read, record and / or report those values to anyone. To enable this on existing, installed infrastructure is not currently funded. Installation on future installations might be provided for if it were part of the permitting process, but that would be up to the OSE and probably require changes to the existing governing statutes.







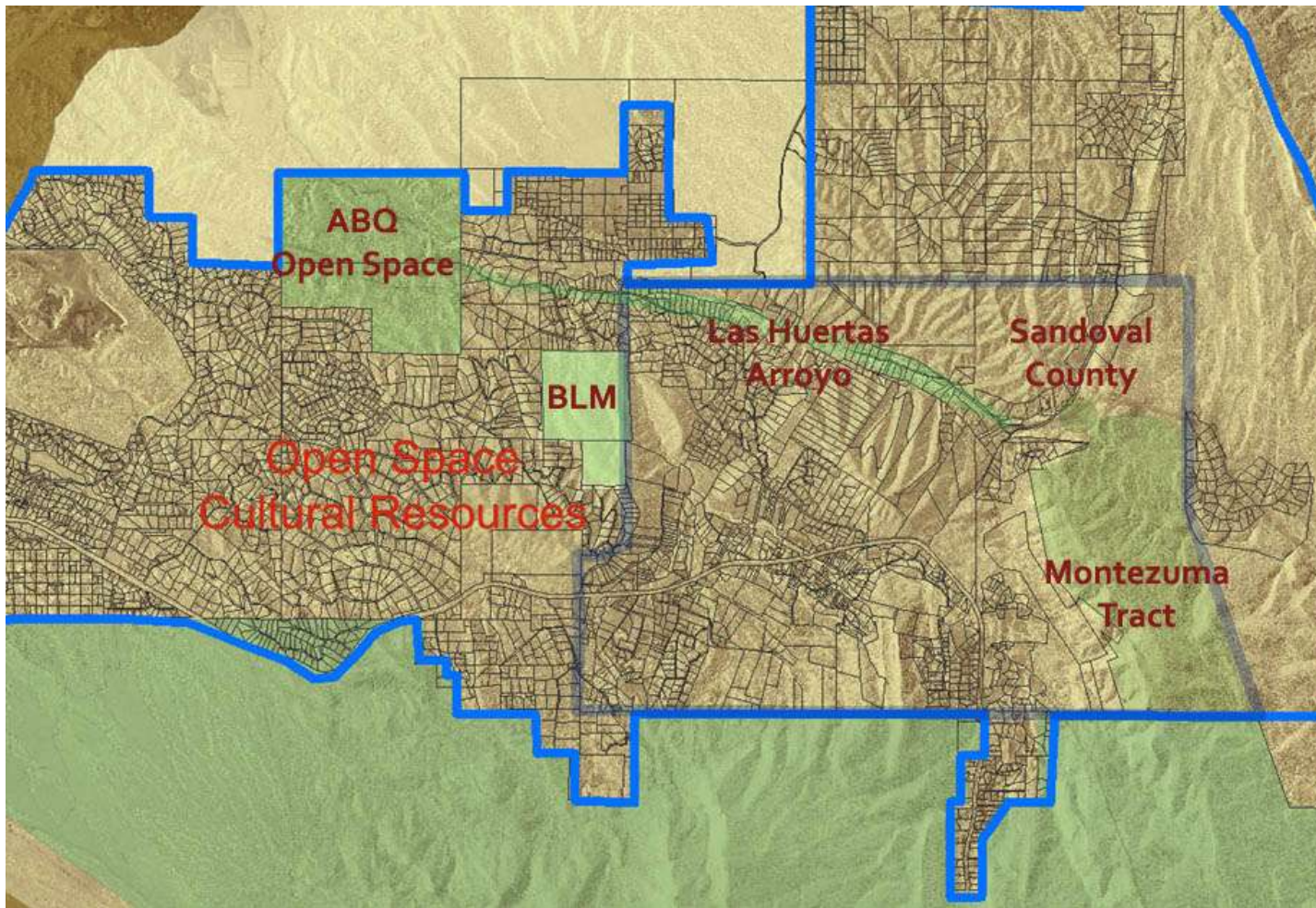
Existing Open Space Conditions

The Placitas Area is comprised of several major open spaces. The most significant of these is the Sandia Wilderness area which forms the south boundary of the planning area. Next is the Placitas Open Space Area which is managed by City of Albuquerque. While not designated as open space, the BLM controls two parcels of land within the planning area. One, approximately 200 acres in size, is located in the middle of the planning area and borders the Overlook Subdivision and the western boundary of the San Antonio de Las Huertas Land Grant. The other tract, which is known as the crest of Montezuma tract, contains approximately 917 acres and has recently been acquired as part of a land trade between Diamond Tail, Santo Domingo Pueblo, and the BLM. A major landscape feature that is not in public ownership, but is an important to the community as an open space landscape feature, is the Las Huertas Arroyo.

Major Open Space Landscape Features

- **Placitas Open Space Area**
- **Sandia Wilderness**
- **BLM**
- **Sandoval County**
- **Las Huertas Arroyo**







Placitas Open Space Area

The 560 acre property known as the Placitas Open Space was acquired by the City of Albuquerque in 1966 from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) with a patent issued under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act: it is “for reservation type park and recreation purposes only.” The property covers the S ½ of Section 24 and the N ½ of the NW ¼ and all of the NE ¼ of Section 25, Township 13 N, Range 4 E, NMPM and is bordered by several Placitas neighborhoods as well as BLM property. The Las Huertas Creek, a major hydrologic feature of the Placitas area, crosses the Open Space.

In the 1990’s a proposal was placed before the City of Albuquerque to use the property as a shooting range. This proposal, which was denied by the City, was vigorously opposed by Placitas residents and led to the beginnings of the Master Plan for the Open Space. The effort, begun in 1999, was completed in 2002 with the generous support and involvement from Placitas residents, in particular the Las Placitas Association.

In summary, the Master Plan, which was approved by the Albuquerque City Council and the Sandoval County Board of County Commissioners, calls for the property to be used for low impact recreation including hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking and for the restoration of the Las Huertas Creek. The Las Placitas Association sponsors a series of free hikes and activities on the Open Space each year that help to educate residents about the property.





In 1998, cultural resources inventories were conducted on the Open Space. A total of 72 archaeological sites were identified, 16 of which were recommended as eligible, and 5 as potentially eligible, for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The property is now listed on the State's Register of Cultural Properties as a Cultural Landscape District of Historical Significance. Due to the significance of the archaeological sites, the Master Plan calls for their locations to not be made public in order to prevent damage.

In 2004, the Sandoval County Board of County Commissioners adopted a Management Ordinance, in cooperation with the City of Albuquerque, to address management, maintenance, and law enforcement for the Open Space.

Sandia Wilderness

In 1978 the United States Congress designated approximately 37,877 acres of the Northern portion of the Sandia Mountains within the Cibola National Forest as a wilderness area. The vegetation is primarily juniper and piñon woodland vegetation at the lower elevations rising into spruce, fir, and mixed conifer forest stands at the higher elevations. A recreation destination for many residents of the Middle Rio Grande Valley population is the Las Huertas Picnic Area which is located at the northern boundary of the wilderness area in the Placitas community. A major concern for Placitas residents is the ability for wildlife to move through the Sandia Wilderness to other open space areas given the amount of development that has occurred in the area. During the preparation of this plan, many residents urged the county to further support studies and future possibilities to mitigate development and enhance natural movements of wildlife through the Placitas Area Planning area.





BLM Land Ownership

The BLM manages (2) tracts of land within the planning area. One tract consists of a parcel of land approximately 200 acres located within the center of the study area adjacent to the Overlook subdivision and the western boundary of the San Antonio de Las Huertas Land Grant. The tract has been preserved as open space with limited development due to the steep slopes and rough terrain. The BLM has one additional tract of land approximately 917 acres in size that was acquired in a land exchange; it is known as the Crest of Montezuma. The parcel is located at the far eastern boundary of the Las Huertas Land Grant. According to the BLM, the agency will need to conduct a resource inventory for the tract in order to plan any future use.

In the course of the planning process many residents expressed concerned about the Rio Puerco Resource Management Plan currently being developed by the BLM which will re-evaluate existing uses for BLM land and recommend what type of uses should be considered on BLM land in the future. In the course of public comment into the planning process, many residents felt that the BLM land should be maintained as open space and be considered as part of the a proposed wildlife corridor for the area.

Sandoval County

Sandoval County owns approximately 8 acres of land which was also acquired by the County as part of the BLM/San Felipe land exchange. The tract is located on the north side of BLM's Crest of Montezuma tract on Diamond Trail Rd. and was purchased to serve as parking and a trail head facility into the BLM land.





Las Huertas Arroyo/Creek

The Las Huertas arroyo is also a major landscape feature in the Placitas Area Plan; it stretches approximately 15 miles from its origin in the Sandia Wilderness to its out flow at the Rio Grande in Algodones. The Las Huertas drainage is considered a perennial stream at the upper stretches of the watershed and supports riparian vegetation and wildlife habitat. However, the creek, because it is a spring feed system, supports less standing water as it meanders to the lower elevation. The creek becomes more of an arroyo landscape feature west of the Tecolote community through the Albuquerque Open Space tract to its convergence with the Rio Grande. Currently the stretch of the Las Huertas Arroyo is predominantly private land but does represent open space potential.

Critical Open Space Areas

- **City of Albuquerque, Placitas Open Space Area**
- **Sandia Wilderness**
- **BLM**
- **Sandoval County**
- **Las Huertas Arroyo and Creek**





Storm Drainage and Topography

The upper and lower Las Huertas watershed area are the primary drainage basins within the Placitas Area Plan. The upper stretches of this Las Huertas watershed are on the north face of the Sandia mountains near Poniente de Capulin (choke cherry peak) at about 9000 feet in elevation; they stretch approximately 15 miles to the boundary of the study area. The entire Las Huertas basin encompasses nearly 30 square miles of land. Generally, the basin receives up to 20 inches of precipitation at the upper reaches of the basin to an average of 12 inches a year at the lower reaches near the Albuquerque Open Space tract. Much of the natural landscape and topography in the Placitas region can be described as rolling hills with cuts of drainage ways supporting woodland vegetation such as juniper, piñon, various chamizos, and buffalo grass. Along the Las Huertas creek/arroyo there are segments of riparian vegetation such as cottonwood trees, willows, and other plant type's characteristic of a riparian zone.

In recent years, drainage concerns have become an increasing issue for both Bernalillo and Placitas because of the rapid rate of development. Since 1980, much of the natural landscape has been impacted by the development of roads and homes. The Placitas plan area is already approximately 75% built out. In fact, a large segment of Placitas, especially subdivisions located in the western part, was developed before Sandoval County had formal zoning and subdivision regulations. The result is a large number of private drives and roadways that do not provide for adequate soil retention for dealing with heavy rain event as well as sufficient design to prevent soil erosion. Therefore, after some intense flooding in 2006, the State Legislature passed a bill to begin the process of creating a flood control authority for the Bernalillo, Algodones, and Placitas Community.



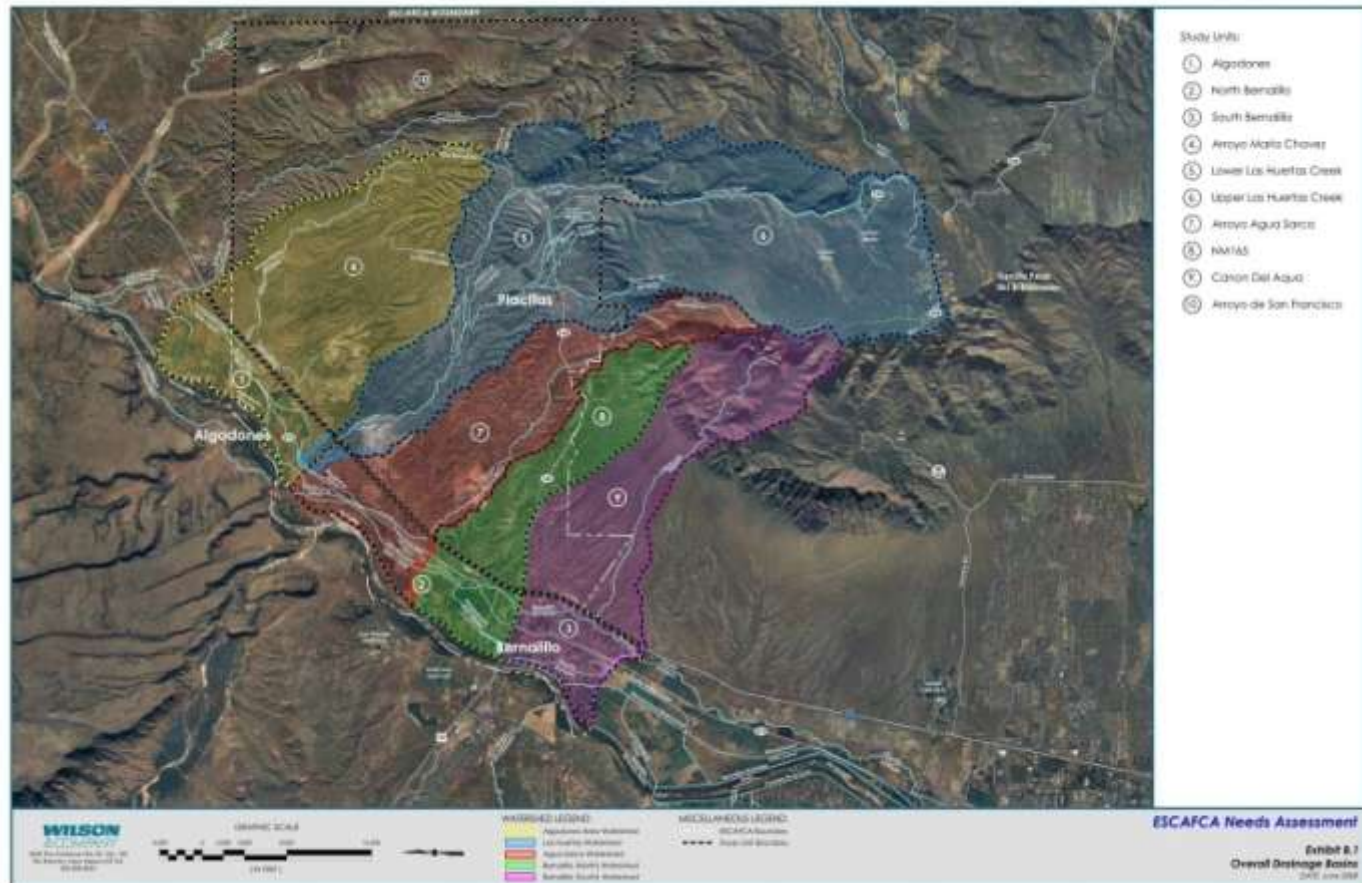


In November 2007, a local election formally created the East Sandoval County Flood Control Authority (ESCAFCA) responsible for improving flood control and mitigating these issues in the Placitas area. Based on the creation of the ESCAFCA, Sandoval County Development Department will need to collaborate in development of processes to review future development proposals in the Placitas area.





Drainage Sub Basin of the Placitas Area





Waste Water Conditions

The overwhelming majority of homes utilize conventional septic systems to treat waste water. The Placitas area is relatively well suited for conventional septic systems because of larger lots, relatively good soils to support leach fields, and the ability to meet requirements for setback distances from domestic well heads and other nearby septic systems. There are, however, some areas that may be problematic for supporting traditional septic systems for many years. For example, there are areas with smaller lots, lots located on steep slopes, and septic tanks located near a creek or in area with a high water table. Since the NMED has not found significant problems utilizing conventional systems on lots that are $\frac{3}{4}$ acre and larger, the State will continue to allow these systems for waste water treatment in the plan area.

New regulations for septic systems for lots smaller than $\frac{1}{2}$ acre will impact areas such as the village of Placitas where the majority of lots are much smaller. Only advanced treatment systems will be allowed for new construction as well as replacements for older systems.

Overall, the Placitas Area Plan does not presently have major septic issues to be concerned. Eventually, there will need to be a coordinated effort to deal with potential waste water issues; this may not exclude the possibility of a central waste water system for the village.





Existing Land Use Conditions

Land use in the Placitas area is dominated by single family residential with scattered rural commercial and several public facilities areas. While the Village of Placitas and the Tecolote communities support some limited kitchen gardens and small orchards, the plan area on the larger scale has a very little agricultural uses. In observing residential land use characteristics one notes two distinct areas:

1. Within the historic “Las Placitas” portion of study area and the communities such as Ideal Acres and Dome Valley, there is a random and non-formal “development pattern” described by the residents as a “live and let live” pattern which is quite tolerant of non-conformity and celebrates individuality in lifestyles and architecturally diverse structures. Whereas,
2. in the more recently platted and formally planned developments, there is a practice of controlled architectural standards; these areas are largely in the western portions of placitas commercial development pattern is similarly more formal in the western portion of the study area and more informal, characterized by small commercial development patterns near the Village of Placitas.

Note: The term “formal” development in this section refers to development in planned Type I, II, or III subdivision. “In-formal” development pattern refers to development typical of historic neighborhoods in the study area.





Non Residential Development Uses

Currently there are several small scale office and commercial locations in the Placitas plan area along NM 165. The following areas are among the non-residential locations in the plan area:

La Puerta Realty Area

The first is the La Puerta Realty area; it consists of approximately 6 acres but is less than 30% built-out. Currently, there are two structures on this site. First is the La Puerta office building which is about 8,000 square feet; it is used as office space. Also nearby is the Comcast Cable office; this small structure is about 3,000 square feet. This location was approved under the Bernalillo (Town) Extra Territorial Zoning Authority in the late 1980s for use as a small scale commercial. Today, much of the commercially zoned land at this site remains vacant but has vested zoning rights for future commercial use. The building sites here are typical of a strip commercial layout with building structures reflective of a pueblo architectural motif.

The Placitas Homestead Retail Development

The Placitas Homestead Retail Development site consists of approximately 10 acres. This development was also approved by the Bernalillo Extra-Territorial Zoning Authority and has vested development interest. The full build-out of the plan allows for approximately 14 building structures that range from approximately 4,000 to 12,000 square feet in size. The Placitas Homestead development is currently less than 20% built out; current occupants include the Homestead Mercantile (store), a bank, as well as Placitas Realty's office space consisting of two buildings less than 4,000 square feet in size. Overall, over 60,000 square feet of zoned





office and retail space remains undeveloped at this location which is adequate available commercial space.

Village of Placitas

Along NM 165 through the “Village of Placitas” there are about a dozen parcels zoned for non-residential uses along a stretch of 1.5 miles. From the Old Windmill Mercantile/Drive-up coffee shop on the west side of the village along NM 165 up to the Clear Light Candle Business located near the Camino de las Huertas junction are several non residential/small scale commercially zoned lots. These businesses include La Sierra realty office, the Mini-Mart, and the Post Office; there exist several parcels of land zoned rural commercial and are currently vacant. These commercial structures range from less than 1,000 square feet in size, such as the drive-up coffee stand, to buildings with larger foot prints such as the post office which is about 10,000 square feet.

Unlike the La Puerta and Homestead commercial nodes which were formally planned as a unit of development, these commercial uses near the village are much less formal. While almost all structures conform to a southwestern design vernacular, sites are spatially distributed in an informal pattern along NM 165.





Residential Land Uses:

Residential Uses in Formal Developments

The typical residential unit in the plan area is single family home on a 1 acre lot guided by the current zoning regulations for residential development.

Most residential development after the 1980s has been in formally planned subdivisions with architectural standards. The typical development pattern in a formal subdivision is a 1 acre lot which allows residence, a guest home, and the ability to operate a home based business. Also, homes in formal subdivision are guided by design covenants that only allow construction that follows a southwestern or pueblo vernacular with an earth toned color pallet. This land use type is typical of Diamond Tail, Anasazi Trails, The Overlook, Tierra Madre and Placitas Trails.

Typical Development in Formal Subdivisions

- **1 acre lots size or larger**
- **Large Single Family Residential Homes**
- **Allows a Single Home, A Guest House, and a Home Based Business**
- **Architectural Design Controls on Structures**





Residential Development in Informal developments

In the area generally referred to as “Las Placitas”, which includes the historic village, Tecolote, Cañon de las Huertas, and Dome Valley, can typically be described as a traditional New Mexico development pattern with clusters of housing, smaller lot sizes, and small farm plots situated along an acequia system. The residential development pattern is often (and more typical in the village of Placitas) based on a smaller lot size, with variations in housing types including adobe, mobile homes, and dome structures, small plot agricultural uses, and many accessory structures such as sheds, cellars, and barns. The style of home construction is so diverse in this area that no single architectural style can be identified as dominant. Many residents recognize a shared community attitude of “live and let live;” residents in this area express concern that further development of formal subdivisions (or regulations) would negatively impact their more established, “non-planned” communities. This type of development patterns are also shared in areas such as Indian Flats, Linda Placitas, San Francisco, and Ideal Acres.

Typical Development in Traditional Community Areas

- **Many lots less than $\frac{3}{4}$ acre in size**
- **Diversity in housing types such as adobe homes, mobile homes, dome structures, and yurts**
- **Small plot kitchen gardens and orchards are common**
- **Diversity of Accessory structures such as sheds, studios, cellars, and barns**
- **A sense of “live and let live” value system in regard to development patterns**





- **Informal layout of lots and roadways**

Section 2: Plan Goals

Placitas Area Plan Goals

The goals for the Placitas Plan area were consistent with the underlying “community value” of maintain the semi-rural landscape and the existing development in the study area. Overall there was general support for similar positions on policy recommendations as well as on plan goals. For example, many residents were consistent in not have commercial uses expanded in the plan area that was not consistent with a more rural community fabric. The following section is an attempt to capture some of the goals and recommendation of various community interests into the Placitas Area Plan. The following goals were submitted by various community groups in the plan area established through many community meeting from September or 2008 through December of 2002

**NOTE: STAFF IS STILL SUMMARIZING GOALS BASED ON PUBLIC COMMENT
SEE APPENDIX**





Section 3: Plan Implementation and Recommendations

The following section is the implementation and plan recommendation strategies developed for the purpose of guiding future development and growth in the Placitas planning area based on community input and evaluation of existing conditions. The purpose of the following recommendations is to establish land use policy and regulations that meet the plan goals set by community members in Placitas and extensive study by the County Development Department. If these goals for plan implementation are adopted into the plan, than future zoning regulations will be amended to best meet these recommendations.

The Placitas area plan should adopt the following policy changes in the following areas:

- **Amend the current zoning classification of RRA in the Placitas area and create several land use zoning district to meet the needs of the diverse neighborhoods in the Placitas area plan.**
- **Develop general land use regulations across the Placitas Plan Area that mitigates potential negative development impacts in the plan area.**
- **Develop a transportation policy for the Placitas community that promotes transit alternatives, improves traffic issues along NM 165, and creates park and ride alternatives for the Placitas community.**
- **Develop an open space strategy to improve and provide connectivity between open space areas, protect natural and cultural resources, and wildlife corridors.**
- **Establish guidelines to ensure a sustainable water supply in the plan area for future generations.**





- **Develop a plan to improve existing storm drainage problems in the Placitas area.**
- **Develop recommendations for future public facilities needed in the future to service the community planning area.**

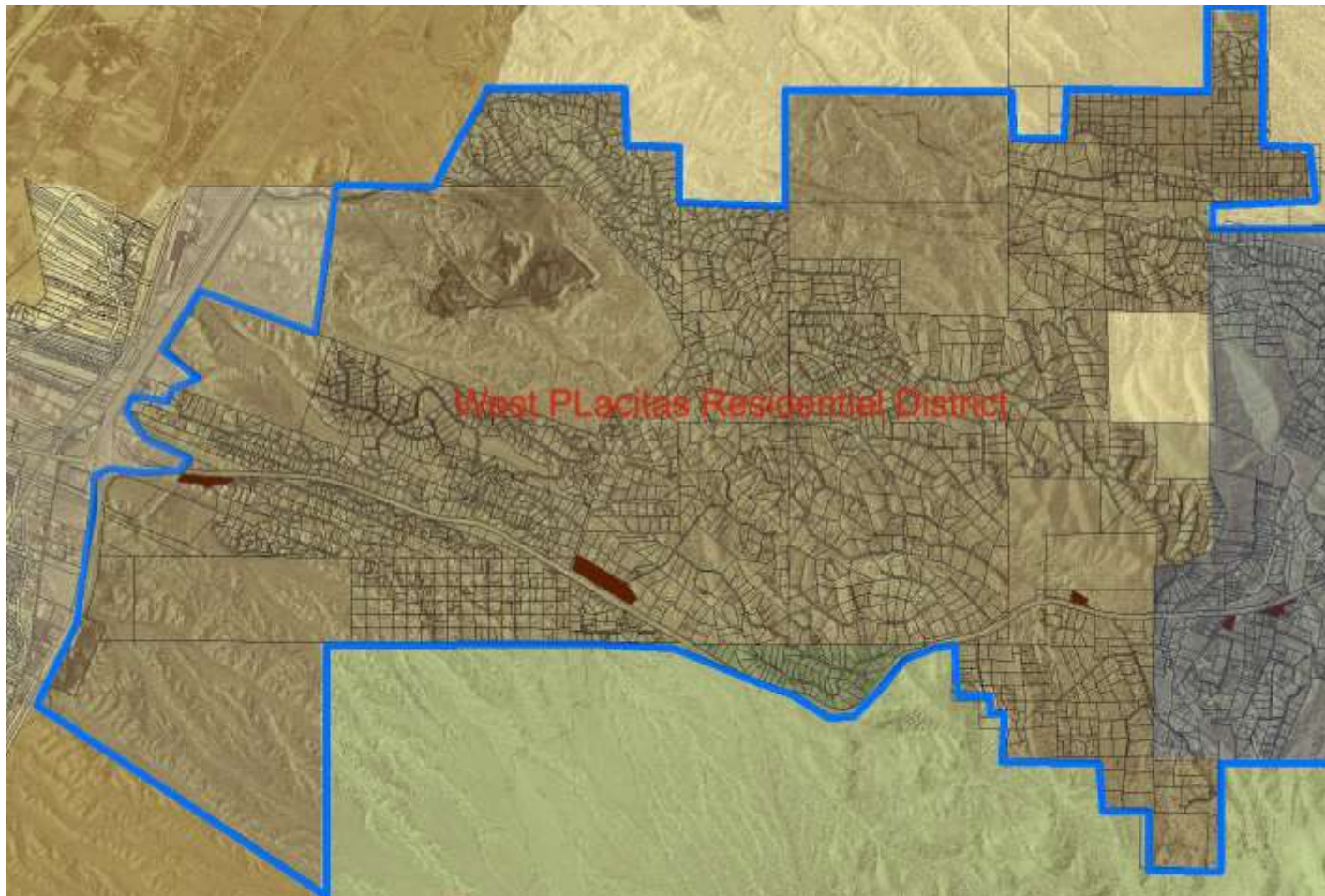
Proposed Land Use Policies for the Placitas Area Plan

Due to the uniqueness of the various neighborhoods within the Placitas area plan as well as environmental and cultural considerations, the County Development Department recommend the creation of several community zoning districts within the plan area. The purpose of these community districts is to facilitate harmonious development appropriate for each unique community in the plan district.

Proposed Community Districts

- **West Placitas Residential District**
- **West Placitas Rural Commercial District**
- **Las Placitas Residential Community District**
- **Village of Placitas Rural Commercial District**
- **Ideal Acres/San Francisco Community District**
- **Diamond Tail Community District**







Purpose of West Placitas Residential District (sub-Area) Plan

The development department recommends that a specific planning sub-district be created for this area to deal with the unique characteristics of the community. Creation of the West Placitas Residential District (WPRD) will allow crafting land use regulations and policies to support the long term goals of the area residents. The following recommendations were based on evaluation of existing conditions of the area and public input from area residents. The desire of the district is to retain residential development typical of the formal development and subdivision style currently in place in the west Placitas area. As an example, development is currently characterized by uniformly residential, site-built homes representative of southwest architecture on lots of $\frac{3}{4}$ acre or larger. Many residents participating in the Placitas Area Plan expressed a desire to maintain consistency with the housing type and lot size typical in subdivisions such as The Overlook, Anasazi Trails, and Placitas. Therefore, it is recommended that zoning criteria should be amended to reflect the following criteria in the WPRD:

WPRD Zoning Recommendations:

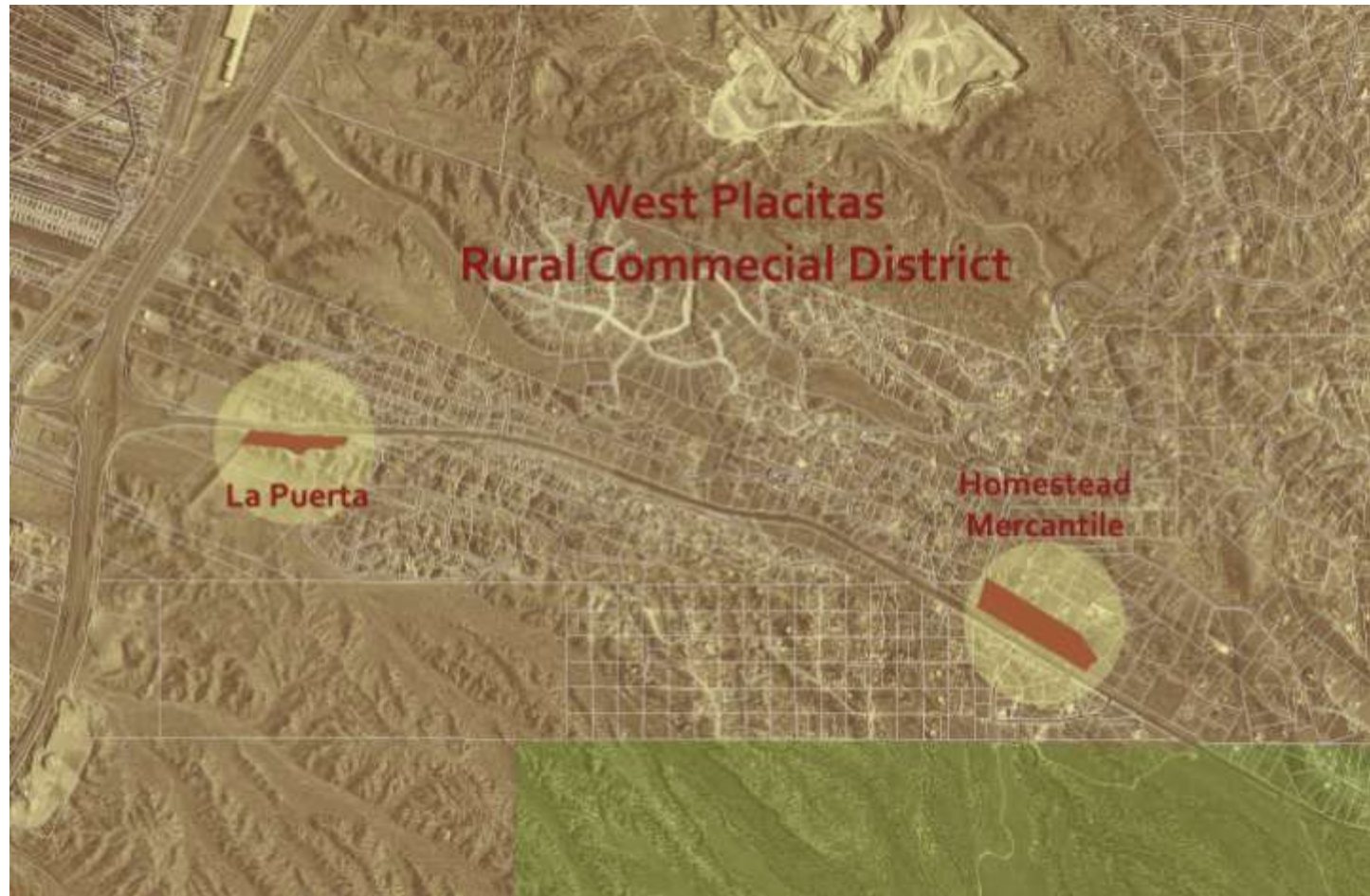
- Develop a minimum lot size of 1 acre for any new platting in the WPRD
- Continue with the similar permissive and conditional uses as allowed in the existing RRA Zoning District
- Continue to allow home based business as allowed in the current RRA district
- Develop guidelines in the area to encourage consistency of the existing architectural vernacular





- Develop design criteria requiring the placement of any manufactured housing to be compliant with established design standards (similar to design standards for the Rio Rancho Estates Community District)
- Develop zoning district standards that promote housing types consistent with existing development pattern and subdivisions in the western Placitas area.
- Amend the maximum height of a structure to 28 feet from floor grade to highest point of a structure.





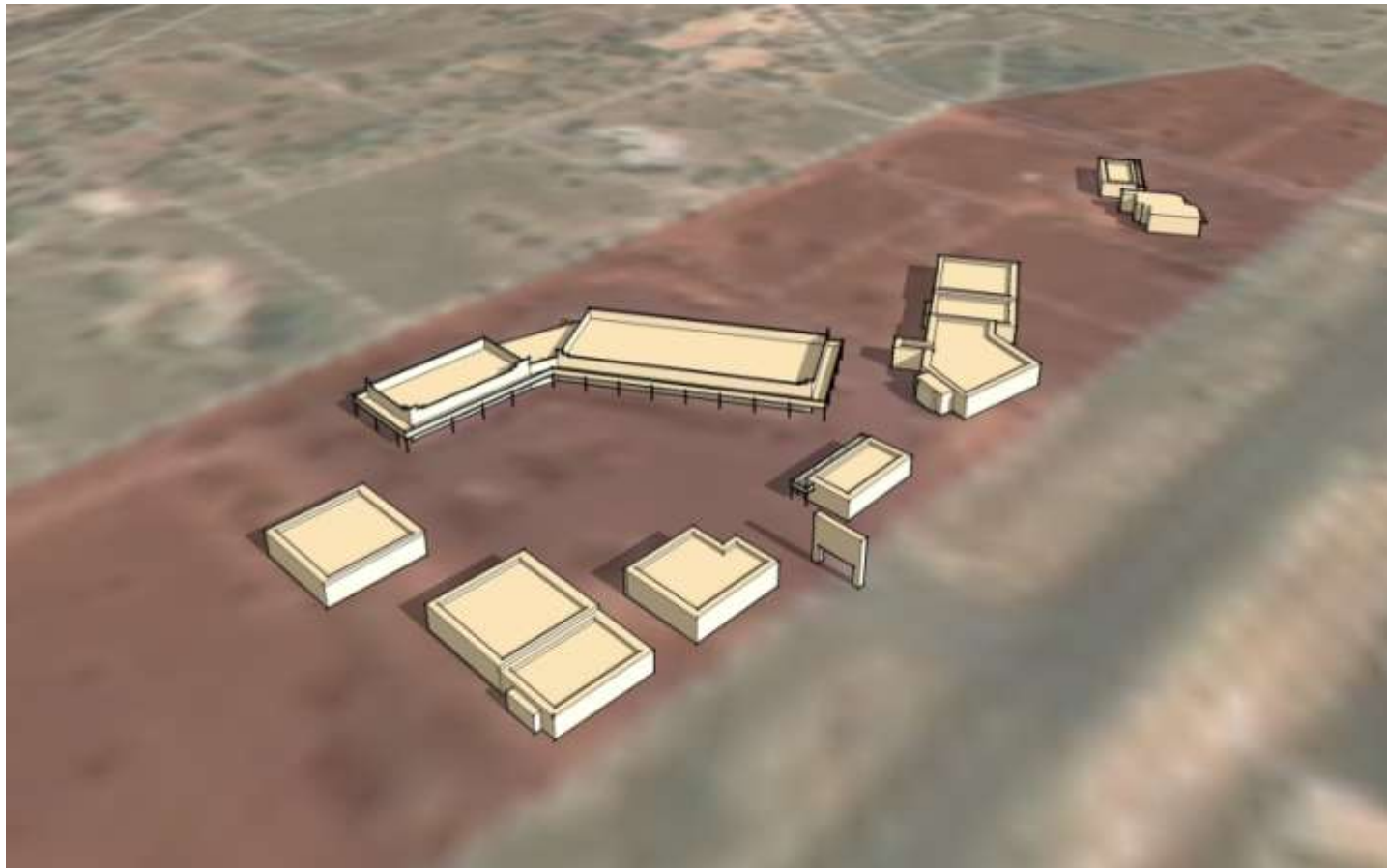


West Placitas Rural Commercial District

The purpose of the West Placitas Rural Commercial District is to develop land use policy that ensures the appropriate type of commercial development in the West Placitas area. Based on the review of existing rural commercial development areas (during the existing conditions evaluation as well as public comment meetings), staff is recommending the establishment of two commercial locations and development criteria for these nodes. The nodes recommended already exist in West Placitas. They are referred to here as the La Puerta Realty Node and the Homestead Mercantile Node. The La Puerta Realty site consists of approximately 6 acres and the Homestead node is approximately 12 acres. Commercial development has been restricted to these two existing sites for several reasons. The major reason is that the two nodes are less than 20 percent built out and, therefore, the need to further expand rural commercial zoning in the area is not driven by current or near-term future demand. In this type of rural community, Sandoval County does not support extended linear commercial land uses because of the negative impact on rural community aesthetics as well as the associated highway safety problems. Finally, rural community commercial nodes should be focal community locations, not just supporting retail services, but act as centers in the community.

The County Development Department has developed design criteria recommendations associated with Rural Commercial uses in the West Placitas Commercial District. These recommendations will meet goals of maintaining the West Placitas commercial areas area in the prevailing rural community fabric. These recommendations will establish the WPRCD and the criteria to ensure that rural commercial development is in keeping with overall plan goals:





Idealized Center at Homestead Mercantile





WPRCD Zoning Recommendations:

- To ensure compatibility with a rural community fabric, designate a maximum floor area not larger than 8000 Square feet for any rural commercial structure.
- A maximum lot build out of 50% of the commercial lot area
- Adopt design criteria reflecting southwestern vernacular, to include the use of steel seamed steel roofing material or flat roofs as well as the design incorporation of “portales”.
- Adopt requirements for the screening of mechanical equipment and waste collection facilities.
- Develop requirements for landscape buffering between rural commercial uses and residential uses which might incorporate such features as berms, walls, and landscaping.
- Restrict commercial structures from frontage access and entrances to NM 165 at the Homestead Mercantile site to deter strip mall style development and encourage a town center plaza design concept for West Placitas.
- Adopt height restrictions of 28 feet from floor grade to the highest point of the structure.







Purpose of Las Placitas Traditional Community Residential District

The creation of the Las Placitas Community District sub-area is to recognize the informal development patterns of neighborhoods in the historic Villages of Placitas and San Antonio de Las Huertas. The sub-area plan will recognize this unique community, featuring the small orchards and kitchen garden tracts connected to the multiple acequias ubiquitous to the Traditional Placitas area. Further, it will recognize and continue the informal development patterns and the diversity of development and housing styles in the plan area. The boundaries of the proposed district are described as the historic boundary of the San Antonio de Las Huertas Land Grant for the purpose having a defined survey boundary that is inclusive of Tecolote, the historic village, Ojo de San Antonio, and Dome Valley. The following are recommended for the traditional communities of Placitas:

LPTCRD Zoning Recommendation:

- Recognize the district as a “right to farm” community
- Allow flexibility in setback requirements of non-conforming lots (less than $\frac{3}{4}$ acres in size) to accommodate home remodels that might have difficulty meeting current set back requirement in traditional lots in the historic village.
- Keep the existing development criteria associated with the RRA zoning district and apply it to the LPTCRD to continue to allow diversity in housing types.
- Continue to allow home based business in the district.
- Amend the maximum height of a structure to 28 feet from floor grade to highest point of a structure.





- Allow for the permissive and conditional uses in the LTTCRD as allowed in the existing RRA district

Example of Right to Farm Language in State Statutes

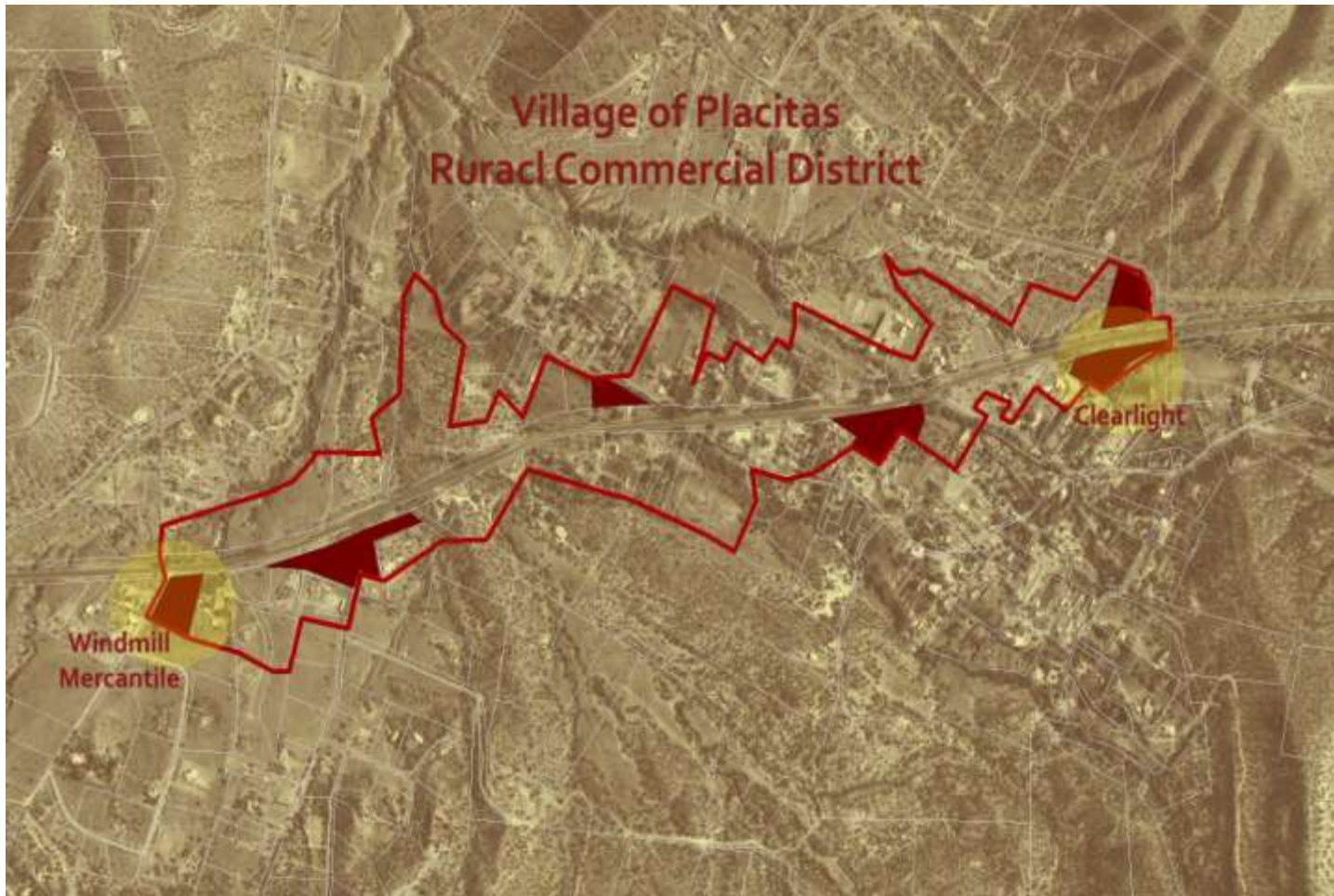
47-9-3. Agricultural operations deemed not a nuisance.

A. Any agricultural operation or agricultural facility is not, nor shall it become, a private or public nuisance by any changed condition in or about the locality of the agricultural operation or agricultural facility if the operation was not a nuisance at the time the operation began and has been in existence for more than one year; except that the provisions of this section shall not apply whenever an agricultural operation or agricultural facility is operated negligently, improperly or illegally such that the operation or facility is a nuisance.

B. Any ordinance or resolution of any unit of local government that makes the operation of any agricultural operation or agricultural facility a nuisance or provides for abatement of it as a nuisance under the circumstances set forth in this section shall not apply when an agricultural operation is located within the corporate limits of any municipality as of the effective date of the Right to Farm Act [[47-9-1](#) to [47-9-7](#) NMSA 1978].

C. The established date of operation is the date on which an agricultural operation commenced or an agricultural facility was originally constructed. If an agricultural operation or agricultural facility is subsequently expanded or a new technology is adopted, the established date of operation does not change.







Village of Placitas Rural Commercial District

The purpose of the village of Placitas Rural Commercial District is to formalize and recognize a commercial node within the Placitas Area Plan. Staff is recommending that a designation be established for a separate rural commercial district in the historic Village of Placitas. This district is proposed to be the properties accessing NM 165 beginning west of the village to the Windmill Mercantile and extending to the Clearlight Candle Facility (see map). Designation of this node will formalize the district and the town center of the Placitas plan area. The County development proposes the following strategy to create a rural commercial district reflective of a rural main street design in the village:

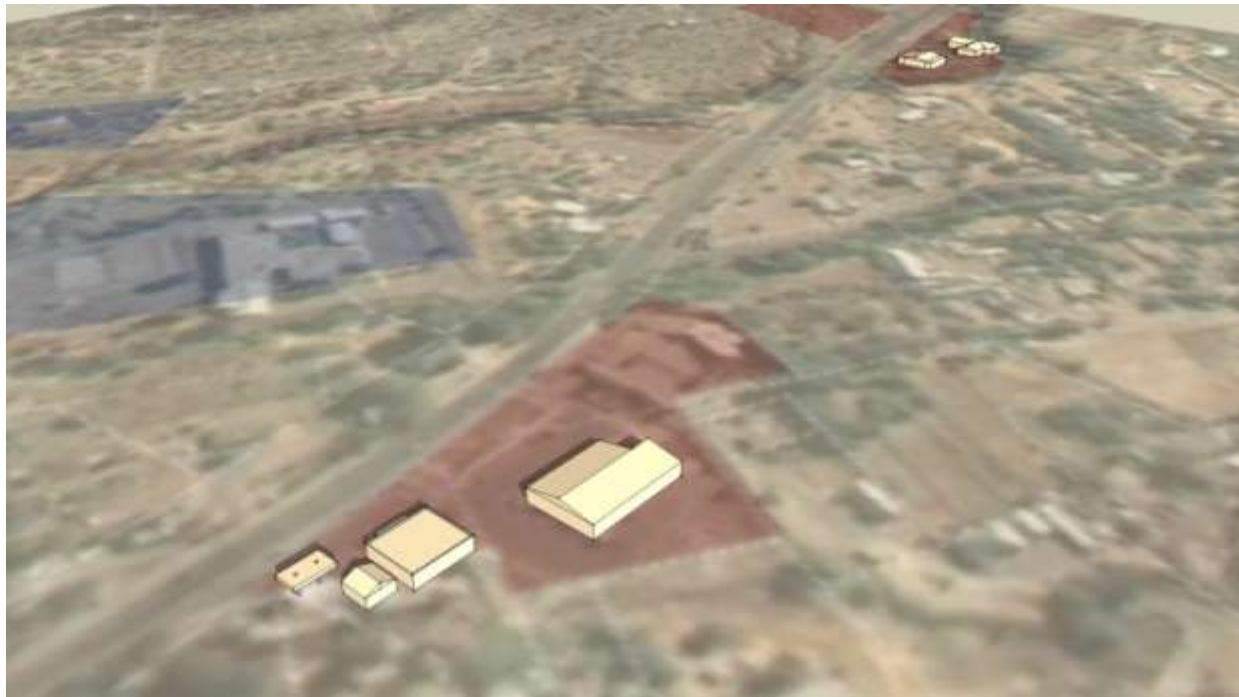
VPRCD Zoning Recommendation:

- Establish a district as the village of Placitas Rural Commercial District (see proposed map of district)
- To ensure compatibility with a rural community fabric, designate a maximum floor area not larger than 8000 Square feet for rural commercial structures.
- A maximum lot build out of 50% of the commercial lot area
- Adopt design criteria reflecting southwestern vernacular, to include the use of steel seamed steel roofing material or flat roofs as well as the design incorporation of “portales”, color pallet, as well as stuccos facades.
- Adopt requirements for the screening of mechanical equipment and waste collection facilities.





- Develop requirements for landscape buffering between rural commercial uses and residential uses which might incorporate such features as berms, walls, and landscaping.
- Adopt height restrictions of 28 feet from floor grade to the highest point of the structure.



Existing Non Residential Development Pattern in the Village





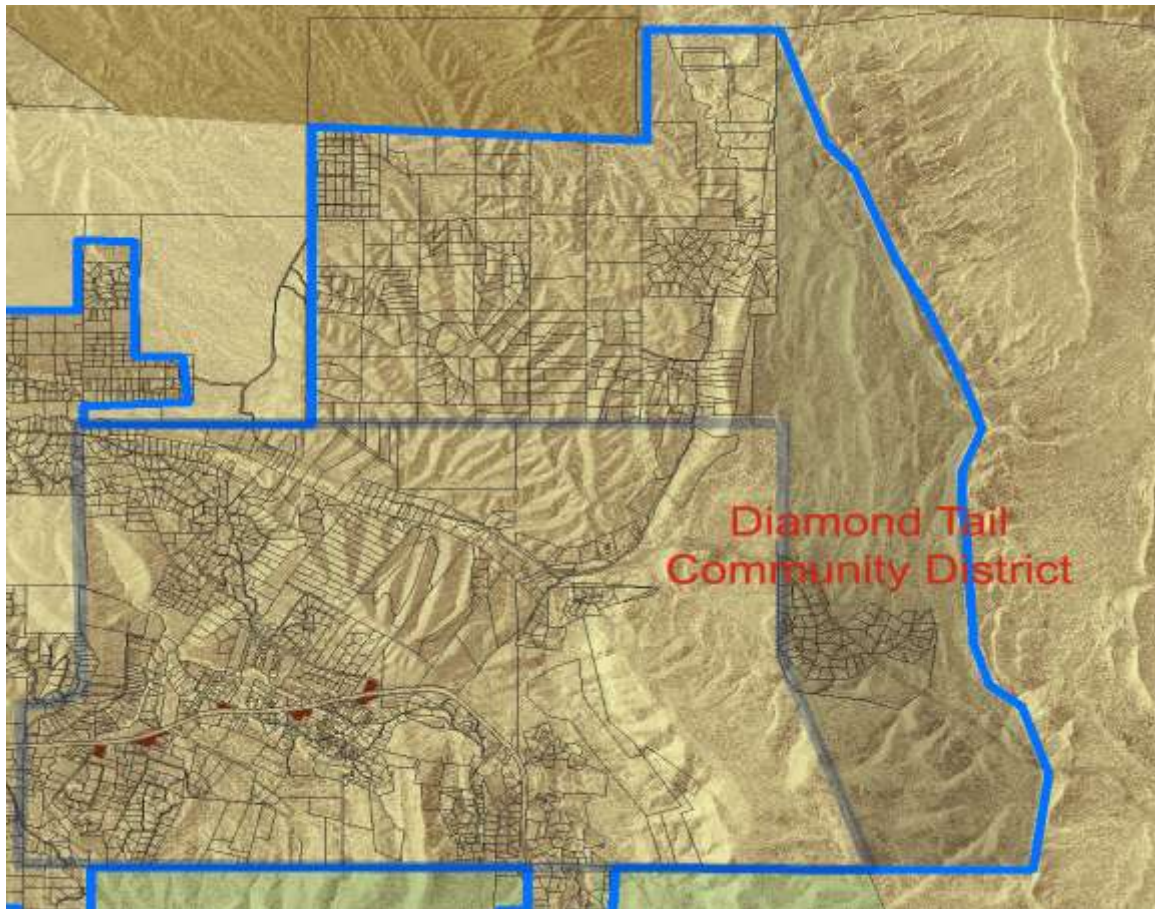
Ideal Acres/San Francisco Residential District

The purpose of the Ideal Acres/San Francisco Residential District is to recognize the unique landscape qualities and development patterns of this community of the Placitas Plan area. The boundaries of the district, as depicted in the proposed district map, are north from the boundary of the Las Huertas Land Grant and bounded by primarily land under the ownership of San Felipe Pueblo. Due to the topography and terrain features in this area, which are characterized by rolling hills with steep slopes and arroyos, staff recommends this area be zoned with slightly different standards. These standards are intended to deal with the impact of this difficult terrain and acknowledge the informal development patterns and the diversity of housing types in the area. The following are recommended in this proposed zoning district:

IA/SFRD Zoning Recommendation:

- Increase the minimum lot size from $\frac{3}{4}$ acre as (allowed in the existing RRA) due to the excessive slopes and drainage ways in the Ideal Acres and San Francisco areas to a lot size of 2 acres.
- Keep the existing development criteria associated with the RRR zoning district and apply it to the Ideal Acres and San Francisco district to accommodate the existing diversity of housing types.
- Continue to allow the use of home based business in the district.
- Amend the maximum height of a structure to 28 feet from floor grade to highest point of a structure.
- Allow for the permissive and conditional uses as allowed in the existing RRA district.







Diamond Tail Residential Community District

The designation of the Diamond Tail Community District is to recognize this single unit planned community neighborhood in the Placitas Area Plan. Diamond Tail is consistent with many of the formal architectural design controls commonly found in the West Placitas subdivisions. As the community has a master plan approved by Sandoval County, the criteria established by that master plan shall guide development of this area. Designation of Diamond Tail as a community is appropriate due to the unique development patterns making it distinct from less formally planned communities, such as Las Huertas and Tecolote. The following criteria are proposed to guide apply to the Diamond Tail Community District:

DTCRD Zoning Recommendation:

- Adopt standard for the district as established in the Diamond Tail Master Plan
- The RRA zoning designation will be the district default zoning criteria.





General Plan Recommendations

- **Slope and Ridge Top Development**

A major area of concern to many Placitas residents was the protection and preservation of natural views and the cultural landscape qualities of the area. Therefore, staff recommends the zoning code be amended to provide adequate setbacks and building height standards to preserve view-sheds. County development proposes that on slopes greater than 30%, structures be set back 25 feet from any natural slope. In addition, structures located on ridges should have a height restriction of 18 feet above natural un-disturbed grade.

- **Night Sky Protection**

Staff recommends that County establish an enforceable night sky protection policy for the Placitas area. We recommend language addressing night sky protection for Placitas be based on the text in the Jemez Valley Area Plan . The standard applied in the Jemez Valley area is more enforceable than the New Mexico Night Sky Protection Act.

State law regarding night sky protection:

From Night Sky Protection Act: 74-12-4. Shielding of outdoor light fixtures.

All outdoor lighting fixtures installed after January 1, 2000 shall be shielded, except incandescent fixtures of one hundred fifty watts or less and other sources of seventy watts or less.





- **Wildlife Corridor**

The residents of the Placitas area are interested in the county supporting, in its policies and operations, a wildlife corridor in the Placitas area. Therefore, Sandoval County should support the Placitas community in their request that New Mexico Game and Fish as well as the United States Fish and Wildlife conduct an official wildlife corridor study which can make specific recommendations to improve interconnections of wildlife crossings.

- **Incentive for Cluster Development to Improve Open Space**

Based on the concern for the protection of open space, view sheds, and wildlife corridors in the plan area, a cluster development incentive should be allowed to provide developers with an incentive to protect open space. Developers should be allowed to cluster housing units on a smaller single family lot size. A cluster development should be allowed to cluster on 50% of the total predevelopment parcel. However, undevelopable area such as slopes greater than 40% as well as arroyos should not be considered as part of the gross parcel.

- **Recommendations for Transportation Policy**

Roads and transportation were among elements considered in the Placitas plan study. Based on present conditions and the anticipated build out of the area, there is no compelling need to redesign or expand the current Placitas road system. There are, however, other issues affecting transportation policy which were identified and developed during the public meeting process. The following transportation policy recommendations are set forth in the plan.





- Virtually all participants from the area were overwhelmingly in opposition to a loop road through Placitas. Although the county understands the concerns of area residents, Sandoval County cannot forever close the opportunity to study transportation issues based on future needs or growth driven conditions in other parts of the county.
- County should expand transit service into the Placitas with connectivity to the new Sandoval Transit Center and the 550/Sandoval County Rail Runner station.
- Sandoval County should support the development of future park and ride locations at the village of Placitas and also at the Homestead mercantile.
- The County should work with the NMDOT to develop a pedestrian/equestrian trail system along NM 165.

Open Space Recommendations

The Placitas area has many high value landscape features; many residents are passionate about the protection and conservation of open space. The following policy recommendations are related to the improvement of open spaces in the plan area:

- Work with the City of Albuquerque to ensure the permanent protection of the Placitas Open Space Tract. Also, support community residents' desire to ensure the proper use and appropriate functions of the tract in keeping with the interest of Sandoval County.





- Encourage the development of NM 165 and the lower Las Huertas arroyo as a backbone of a trail network system for the Placitas Plan Area that can enhance critical open space and provide connections within the community.
- Encourage the set aside of open space in future subdivisions to further protect the cultural landscape of the Placitas area.
- Support cluster development incentives to preserve view sheds and wildlife habitat.
- Implement future findings by the New Mexico Game and Fish regarding wildlife habitat improvement.

Waste Water Recommendations

Due to the prevailing soil types and large parcel sizes which are common to the study area (outside the historic Village area), the use of traditional septic systems is not presently providing undue negative impacts on water quality. However, replacement of systems in the village of Placitas (with the associated small lot sizes and dense, traditional development patterns) will continue to challenge residents due to the high cost of secondary systems that will be required in the village. Therefore, Sandoval County may need to collaborate in the future regarding options available to provide community scale treatment systems. Costs of compliant (advanced septic) systems in the high density areas (traditional village) will likely tax the ability of individual home owners pay for these improvements.





Water Recommendations

County encourages the connection of housing units in subdivisions to be connected to shared or community water systems using system wells for water supply. Where there are not options to connect to existing system, the use of shared wells for clusters of houses is supported. Any option which reduces the number of wells in the aquifer is preferable to the practice of individual domestic wells, and required for all new subdivisions. An additional advantage of the community systems or the shared wells is the management of the water supply that is inherent in the metering of wells of this type, allowing system management and the user / customer to see their usage, be part of realistic conservation programs, and provider for identification of water losses.

Storm Water Recommendations

In November of 2008, the East Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority was formalized by election to become a governing flood control authority. Flood control and storm water mitigation will become under the authority of this body. Therefore, any new regulation, as well as review of large subdivisions, will require ESCAFCA approval. Sandoval County Development Department will support and work with ESCAFCA to develop a comprehensive approach to dealing with drainage issues in the Placitas Plan Area.

Public Facilities Recommendations

Currently, Sandoval County has services facilities located at the Placitas Senior Center as well as the site on NM 165 where the Placitas Fire Department and Library are located. Staff recommends that future County facilities be located in a central location in Placitas. Therefore,





the 6 acre site of the Placitas Library and Fire Station should be recognized as a Sandoval County public facility campus. County should encourage consolidation at this location for appropriate public facilities in the future. Also, Sandoval County should collaborate with the school district in examining the any possibilities of joint / shared use of space (playgrounds, athletic fields, etc.) by the Placitas Elementary for the support of overall community.





Appendix:
Summary of Submitted Comments

Las Placitas Values and Goals

Submitted by community members from the communities of Las Placitas

Value 1: Water/three incorporated acequia systems

Acequias are defining elements of the Las Placitas Communities. Cooperation, respect for the land and water, stewardship, and a sense of continuity through time and legacy lend a sense of value and identity. Acequias are political subdivisions of the State of New Mexico and are a part of local governance essential to the preservation of water resources and cultural elements. They provide a means of sustenance and security to the people. We are adamant in our belief that the watersheds, acequias and the agricultural lands fed by the acequias be protected.

Water/acequia use in the greater area of the village of Placitas is integrally tied to land use, as evidenced by the orchards, flower and vegetable gardens and verdant valleys. Our springs and surface water are the foundation of these acequias and the community at large. The senior water rights, jurisdictions, and easements of acequias must be honored and incorporated into any ordinances.

Value 2: Varied architecture

Rural character and the respect of neighbors for each person's expression of architecture and way of life are an important value within Las Placitas Communities District. This respect should be reflected in any ordinances. Due to the diverse housing types, we wish to keep





existing residential standards and design criteria for the district, to include clotheslines, cuartitos, animal pens and corrals, etc. with a height restriction of 28 feet for both individual housing and commercial development, provided that new construction does not adversely impact existing gardens, orchards and sun sheds. Reduce the setback requirement to 10 feet from all property boundaries on existing lots that are smaller than $\frac{3}{4}$ acre and allow for an administrative variance procedure for property owners that cannot meet a 10 foot setback.

We do not intend to inhibit land owners within this zoning district from imposing more stringent conditions, covenants or restrictions upon their own property if they so wish.

Value 3: Agriculture/land use

Local agriculture has been the sustenance and economic basis of these communities for centuries. Small scale agricultural use must be not only preserved but encouraged. Agriculture must be a right to practice and no ordinance should constrict these activities. The residents wish to leave these practices and the resources that support them to future generations. Las Placitas Communities District must be designated as a “Right to Farm” area including the keeping of farm animals.

Value 4: Commercial development

Allow for a commercial node within the Village of Placitas only on properties adjacent to NM 165 from Camino de Las Huertas westward and terminating at the Windmill Mercantile.





Commercial buildings should be no larger than 4,000 square feet with maximum lot build out of 50%. Low water use landscaping, fences and berm buffers adjacent to residential uses should be incorporated. Continue to allow home based business and other small entrepreneurial endeavors as currently permitted by Sandoval County.

Area Wide Conditions:

Area Wide Land Use

- We support: night sky protection; incentives for protection of arroyos, agriculture, wildlife corridors and other open space; and water conservation strategies.
- We oppose unreasonable restrictions on residential building citing including those proposed for slope and ridge development.

Area Wide Transportation

- Any future roadway development plans needs to be transparent and open to community input.
- We support: adding a Placitas bus line to the Sandoval Easy Express along NM 165 with connectivity to the Rail runner; adding a Park and Ride Location at Homestead Mercantile and the Village of Placitas; developing NM 165 as a pedestrian/equestrian/bike trail from Bernalillo to the National Forest boundary and the redesign of the 550/I-25 interchange to include connectivity for pedestrian access.





Area Wide Open Space/Cultural Resources

- We believe the preservation of Placitas' cultural resources, open space and wildlife corridors are essential to our quality of life and support the initiatives that recognize this.
- We oppose the development of a trail system on private land along Las Huertas Creek.

Area Wide Water/Waste Water

- We support the protection of both the quality and quantity of water throughout Placitas.
- We believe it is not feasible using current technology for the Village of Placitas to plan and develop a community scale waste water system. Such systems are water-intensive.

Area Wide Storm Water/Drainage

- More community input is needed in order to: support ESCAFCA in the development of policy and regulations that improve drainage and storm runoff; in the implementation of the Wilson Report; requiring an engineered storm water detainment plan approved by ESCAFCA for residential permits; and establishing set back requirements for banks of drainage ways
- We are opposed to ESCAFCA developing multi-purpose areas for drainage and trails on private land along Las Huertas Creek.





One Placitas Area Plan Recommendations Summary

Submitted by community members of the One Placitas Community Group

Commercial:

- Limited to the three existing commercially zoned areas of Historic Village, Homestead Shopping Center, and La Puerta Realty – plus, allow moderate and appropriate commercial development along the I-25 frontage road
- Above I-25 frontage properties maximum structure footprint shall be 8000 square feet and 25 feet maximum height to natural grade; and, at I-25 frontage properties, maximum height shall be allowed to increase to 35 feet. I-25 frontage properties are those within 1/10 mile of the frontage road.
- Architectural styles and signage appropriate to preserving residential character and scale including exterior materials and color, and as viewed from each side of the structure including the rear.
- Restrictions to preserve night sky.
- Require appropriate setbacks and buffers to adjoining residential areas.
- Home based businesses allowed as per residential recommendations.

Residential:

- Preserve rural density by restricting subdivision to 1) levels sustainable by ground water, 2) disallowing subdivision below four acres without agreement of all abutting neighbors,





and those who have a close view of the subdivision, and, 3) terrain management requirements.

- Protect character and rural feel of Placitas by requiring 1) architectural controls appropriate to certain areas, 2) limit “buildable areas” to those that preserve vistas and landscapes, 3) require water course setbacks and rainwater capture to lessen erosion and preserve aquifers, and, 4) night sky preservation requirements, public access to Community Value Lands, preservation of Wild Life Corridors, and preservation of all unique community valued environmental features.
- Manage enforcement through 1) creation of an Placitas Architectural Review Committee to work jointly with the Planning and Zoning Commission, 2) enhancing subdivision and building permit submittal requirements to clearly define existing conditions and intended roadways and “buildable areas” congruent with the intent of zoning overlays, and, 3) continued monitoring of mined water and refinement of density restrictions appropriate to sustainability.

Transportation:

- The goal of a transportation plan in Placitas to maintain the rural character of NM 165.
- The Placitas Area Plan should remain in the rural transportation plan.
- Interchange 242 capacity, including frontage road access, must be planned, funded, and construction completed prior to any additional commercial or residential development along frontage roads and NM 165.
- A Northeast loop road is strongly opposed by the community.





- Requirement that for any road extension to provide access to additional or new subdivisions, the entire road from the main transportation route be brought up to current county subdivision road standards.
- Provision for multi-modal and inter-modal transfers to existing bicycle/railroad planned facilities.
- Signals on NM 165 to be considered only based upon applicable warrants.
- Roads and road repairs should be permitted and inspected for acceptable quality and storm water management.

Water/Drainage/Wastewater:

- Proof of adequate water/drainage/wastewater planning should be part of the approval process for zoning, subdivision, building permitting and roads.
- Strict enforcement of the New Mexico Environment Department regulations for septic systems.
- Sandoval County should continue regular monitoring/reporting of levels and consumptive use of wells in Placitas. Sandoval County should regularly monitor Placitas area springs, seeps and streams for impacts due to ground water pumping and climatic influences.
- Data on wells, springs, seeps and streams should be interpreted as to short and long term sustainability of water resources in Placitas, and this analysis should inform planning and development policy, with public reports made available on a biannual basis.
- Support a government agency, such as the Coronado Water and Soil District, for Storm Water Management and Drainage Control, requiring their approval and inspection of development applications and building permits with services paid for by the applicant.





Open Space/BLM:

- Protect the natural beauty and enjoyment of all Open Spaces of the Area and public access to those Open Spaces including lands under BLM control and their allowed use.
- Offer incentives for creation of Open Space and ensure public access.
- Ensure protection of all historic wildlife corridors including the nationally recognized North American Wildlife Corridor through Open Spaces and including BLM lands.
- Ensure that Open Space considerations for BLM lands are included in the Area Plan.
- Assure fulfillment of the Placitas Open Space Master Plan (2002).
- Sandoval County should develop and contingency plan to purchase the Placitas Open Space for county Open Space if Albuquerque should ever choose to opt out of their current ownership-management.

Public Services and Facilities:

- Develop enhanced bike and pedestrian paths.
- Develop access to Community Value Lands and Recreational Open Spaces.
- Develop community recreational services plan based upon current community input that is consistent with the rural character of Placitas.
- Develop and support community use spaces such as the Placitas Community Center and the Placitas Community Library and encourage multi-use and sustainability.
- Establish that medium and large subdivisions provide hydrants, water storage & sprinkler systems.
- Establish Fire Station at Diamond Tail and a Fire Station near I-25





Comments Submitted By Knight Seavey on on Behalf of the Cashwell Property Owners

Comprehensive plan should be flexible tool... reasonable future uses (ie: hospitality) cannot always be conceived when the plan is drafted. Allow mechanisms to update and improve the plan.

- A guideline for development
- Avoid hard and fast rules
- Assignment of special land use areas

- East-West divide is divisive. Mid 165 needs node designation or own plan sub-area. It is a seam between the two primary areas and it's unique nature was completely lacking in the presentation.
- The Gudelj/Ash/Cashwell properties, representing over 200 acres was not mentioned. There is a major opportunity here. Moises has ignored this critical area for fear of a handful of vocal persons.

- Commercial designations - not functional or usable as presented. A divisive term in Placitas. These uses are to be hidden in areas where such uses could never flourish and provide actual support for community.

- Moises actually showed us a Menaul Blvd type solution by the Mercantile site.





- Non-residential themes were dismissed entirely. This should be incorporated into plan with some of the innovations we presented on October 15th.
- Arbitrary node designation. A node is clearly established at B/B, firestation/library, and future county services promoted by Moises. To ignore this node is entirely negligent. The Village node is not and will never actually be a node, due to the fractured nature of the existing land use pattern. To use that language is deceiving.

Non-Res differentiation

- Retail Uses
- Office and related Uses
- Office Variations
 - Live/work
 - Fee simple
 - Condo
- None focused on lease model, which is arguably not generally appropriate for Placitas
- Live/work concept different from home occupation, as it must allow for non-family employees. Area limitations should be established (ie: 8000 sf)





- Design guidelines are necessary to have any sway over design paradigms
- Highway impacted sites require special land use consideration. There is not much land left with any manageable frontage.

