



**Existing Commercial Node**

**Proposed Town Node**  
Long Range Planning Conceptual Design

**Transit Oriented Development**  
Pedestrian Program

**Placitas Area Plan**

Image by Melissa Sullivan, County Development





## **Placitas Area Plan**

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of the Placitas Community Area Plan is to develop a long range land use plan that reflects the unique characteristics, constraints, and growth pressures in the community. Based on the Sandoval County Comprehensive Plan, the County must consider the diverse and distinctive qualities of communities within the County. This area plan includes the 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 Placitas that provides a framework for developing localized land use criteria and regulations representing community values and goals. This document is that plan.

## **Jurisdiction:**

The jurisdiction of the Placitas Area Plan is solely over the private land under the authority of Sandoval County and does not apply to any lands under the jurisdiction of a Federal Agency, State Agency, Indian Tribe or Nation, Community Land Grant, or Municipality. The Placitas Area Plan may only guide policy recommendations to entities outside of the Jurisdiction of Sandoval County.

## **Planning Process**

**The Plan was developed through a series of community meetings, and through this process 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.

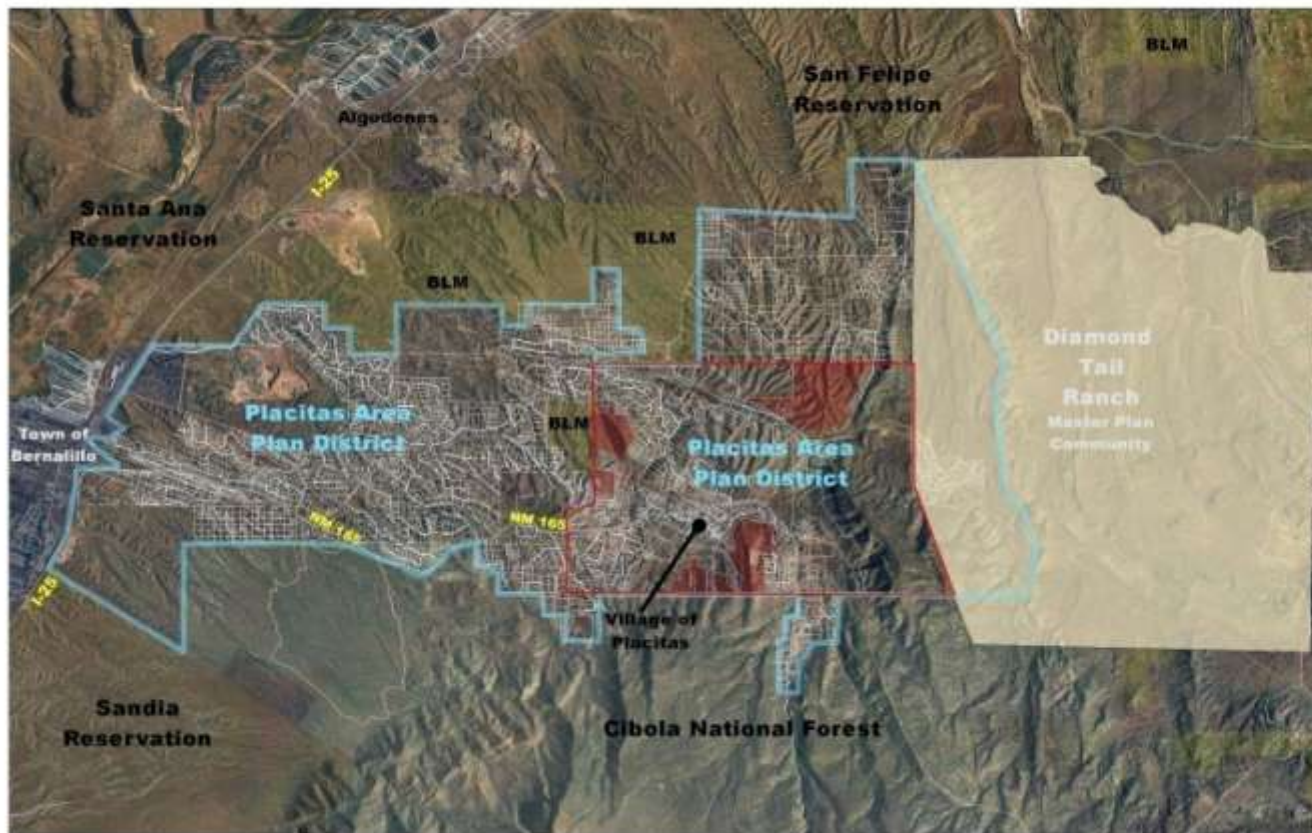
**Plan Implementation:**

- 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 Hedges Land Grant
- Town of Bernalillo
- Lex Hedges Land Grant Parcel Tracts
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- Reservations
- State
- Diamond Tail Ranch

Exhibit A





## **Section 1: Existing Conditions**

### **Historical Background**

Placitas is located in the unincorporated portion of Sandoval County known as the Placitas Region. The Plan area is bounded on 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 on the south by the Sandia Pueblo and Cibola National Forest (see plan area map).

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 19<sup>th</sup> century. By 1904, the Town of Bernalillo Land Grant was patented 3,404 acres of land which included the western part of the study area. The Las Huertas Land Grant also received its patent by the early 1900's and was patented approximately 4,763 acres.

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 1900's, some tracts in Las Huertas became





private lands owned by both land grant and non land grant members. By the late 1900's, some of these tracts exchanged hands several times; by the 1980's many of these privately claimed lands were developing 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. 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 the 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. Other land in this portion of the planning area has been developed as residential subdivisions. 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.







**Placitas Area Plan  
Population Conditions**

Year	Population	Housing Units	Family Size
1990	1,611	677	2.38
2000	3,452	1,606	2.14
2008 Estimate	5,523	2,569	2.15

<b>Building Permits by Year Since 2002</b>	
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 Build out by Community Area**

### **West Placitas Area**

The western portion of the plan area has experienced the most development; this includes the Overlook, Indian Flats, Anazasi Trails, Homesteads, and Placitas West (see map below). The West Placitas area is approximately 70% developed; it is primarily large lot residential development. Undeveloped tracts are the Liberman Grevey Tract, Liberman-Grevey by the Overlook, and the Cashwell Tract. In addition, there is potential for future land division in the Indian Flats and, to a lesser degree, in the Placitas West areas. This area accounts for approximately 1,200 potential housing units. Mining activities at the Liberman-Grevey Gravel Pit will transition into residential development at a density of 1 dwelling unit per acre in approximately 10 years.

### **Undeveloped Tracts:**

Liberman-Grevey (Gravel Pit): 833.33 acres

Cashwell Tract: 97 acres more or less

Liberman-Grevey near Overlook: 104 acres

### **Las Placitas Area**

The Las Placitas area includes the Village of Placitas, Tecolote, Cañon de San Antonio and Dome Valley. This area is made up of the older established communities in the Plan area. This portion of the Plan area is approximately 70% developed. The Las Huertas Land Grant owns





the last large remaining tracts in this area. However, there is still the potential for division of small tracts in this sub community area.

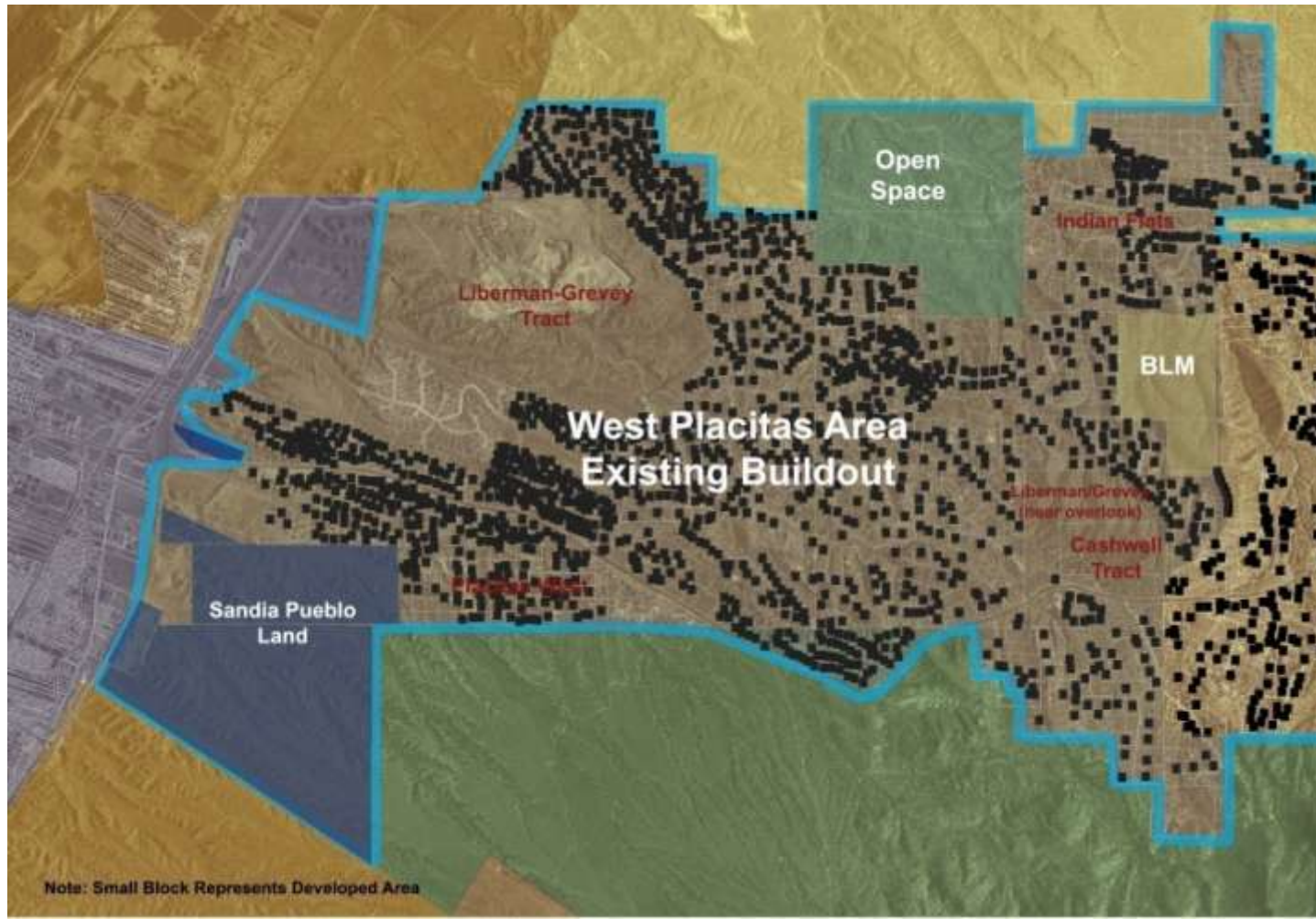
### **Ideal Acres/San Francisco Area**

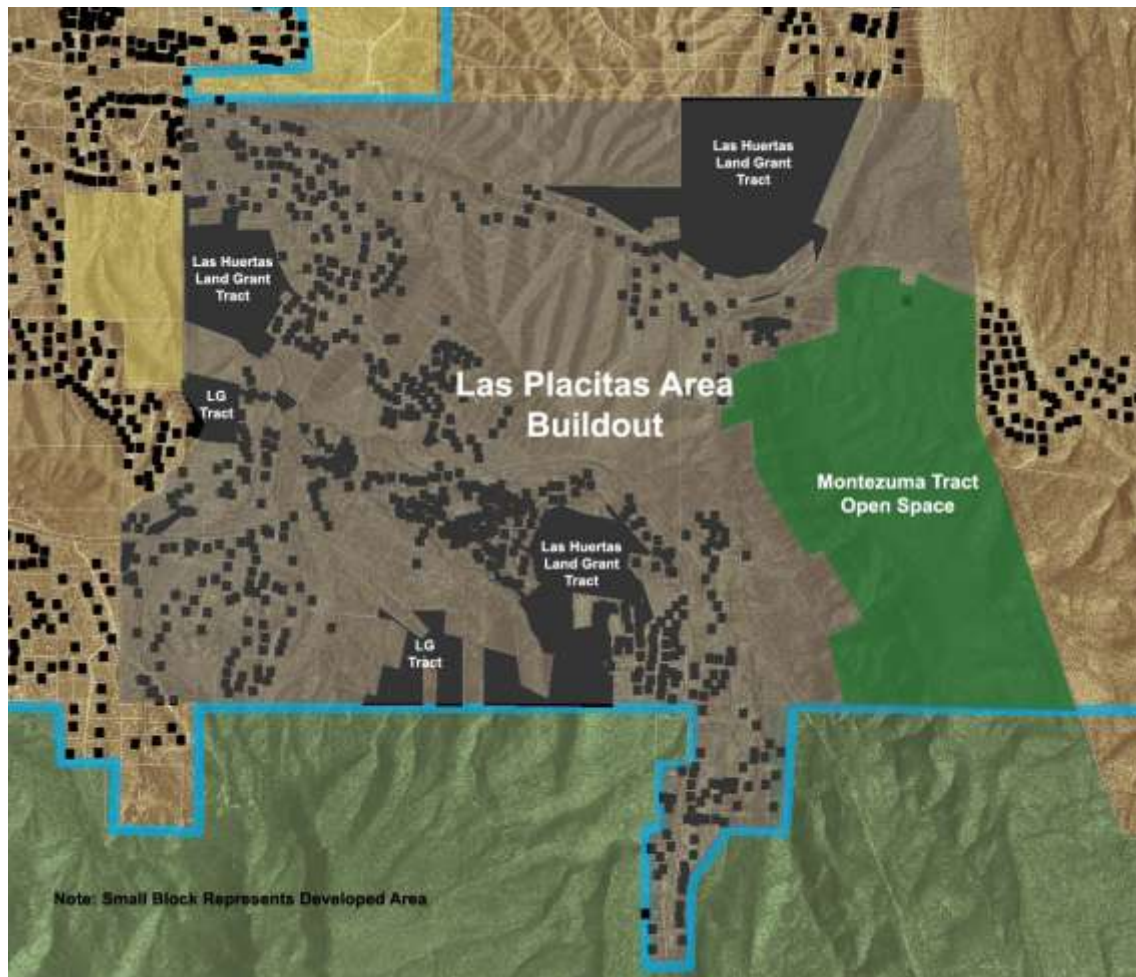
The Ideal Acres region of the Placitas area lies north of the San Antonio de Las Huertas Land Grant. This area consists of approximately 1,200 acres and it is approximately 25% developed. This undeveloped area has the most growth potential in the Placitas Area.

### **Diamond Tail Area**

The 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the Diamond Tail Master Planned Community consists of approximately 60 lots. The total build out of the Diamond Tail area (in the master plan) is less than 300 units. The Diamond Tail community area is approximately 30% developed.

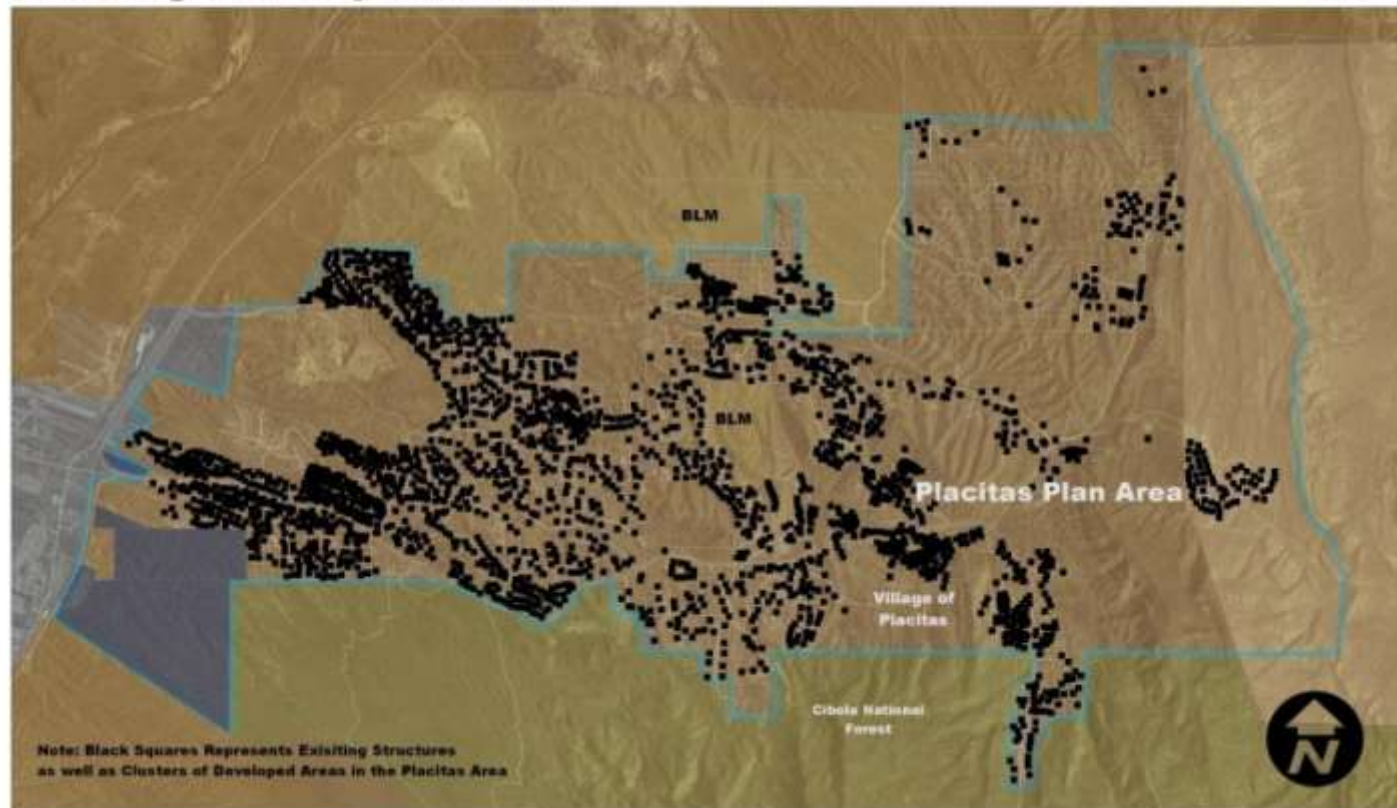








## Placitas Area Plan Existing Developed Areas





### **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 with a localized volume of 3,900 at the Placitas Village center. Overall, the existing capacity of NM 165 meets the current and future build-out of the Placitas region. On a conservative estimate, the build out of the area would add an additional 1,200 homes; 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, 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 area's internal roadway system consists of un-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. Numerous unpaved private drives in the community are maintained by property owners. Some of these private roadways are located along steep slopes contributing to both drainage and soil erosion problems and can negatively impact 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) at that location and, as a result, the Placitas community is congested at NM 165 and US 550 during peak traffic periods. NM DOT has listed the redesign and construction of I-25/US 550 Interchange as a priority; it will go to bid in 2009 with construction following within approximately 2 years.



NM 165 Looking West Near the County Fire Station









## **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 problems 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 are developers which are required to investigate water supplies suitable for 100 years before sub-division permits are approved. This requirement is in accordance with Appendix A of the Sandoval County Subdivision 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, (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 individual development areas to which developers limit 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 other studies are 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 efforts. This





study was delivered in August 2008, and briefed at the Placitas community planning meeting held in September. (See map)

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. 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.

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 solution 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.

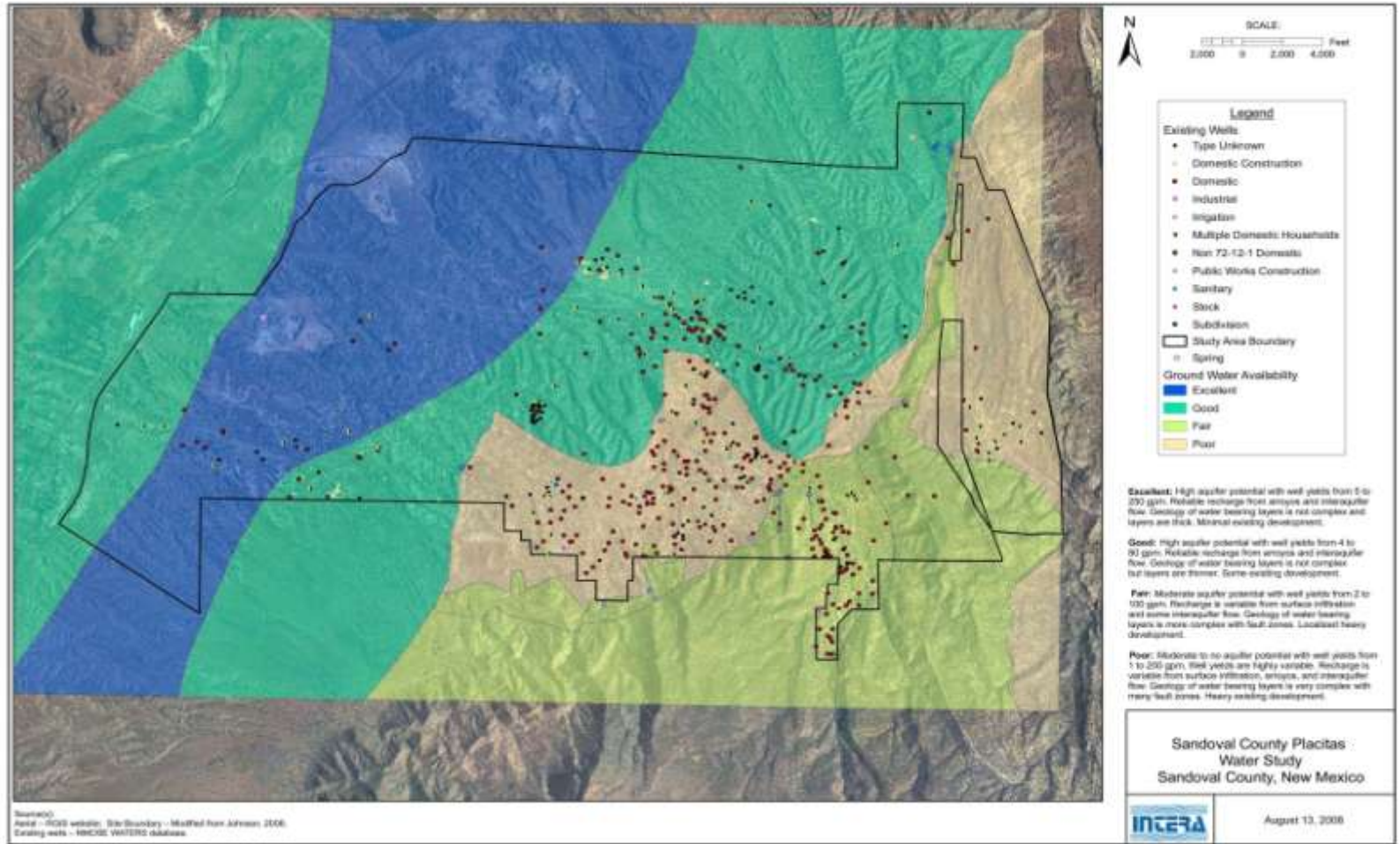
There are about 14 area water systems plus Las Acequias de Placitas. Further, there are numerous old, single lot domestic wells, shared wells, springs and streams in the area used as water sources in the community. As such, there is not a simple definition of the water situation from a demand point of 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 desires to 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 metering on existing, installed infrastructure is not currently funded. Installation of meters on future individual domestic wells 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. (Shared domestic wells and system wells are required to be metered and usage reported to the Office of the State Engineer under current statutes.)





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## Placitas Area Plan



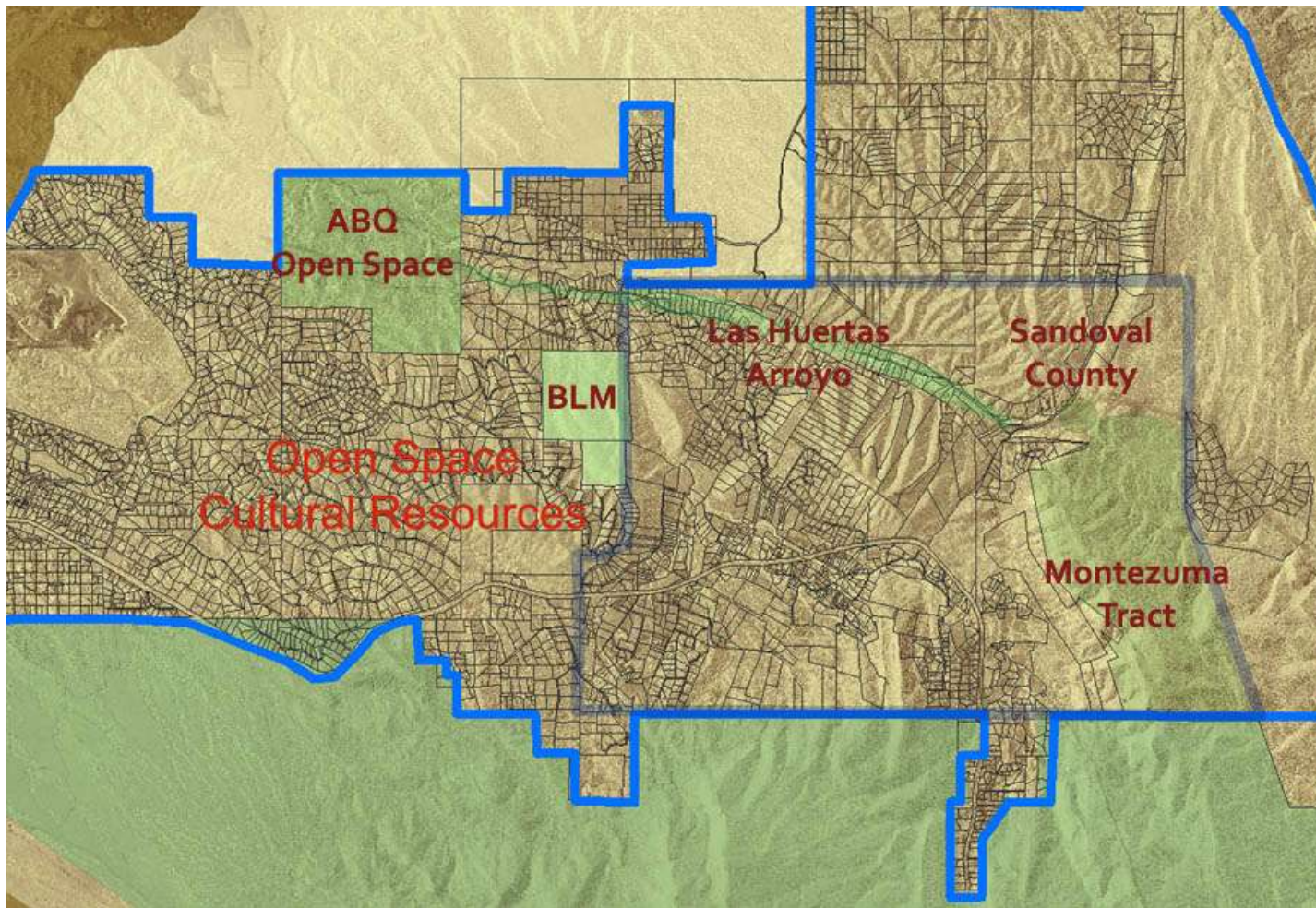


Separate from the issues of domestic water is the acequia system used in the State of New Mexico, and also common to the Village sections of Placitas. Acequias are governed by State Statute and managed by the Acequia Commission, a division of the Interstate Stream Commission. As such, they are not under the control of Sandoval County and not directly addressed in this study. It is acknowledged that the impacts on the lifestyles and traditions in the Village area which come from the acequias are significant and to make any attempt to separate the two would be a dis-service to the community and the residents.

### **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 important to the community as an open space landscape feature, is the 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 two 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 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.





### **Storm Drainage and Topography**

The upper and lower Las Huertas watershed areas 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. 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.



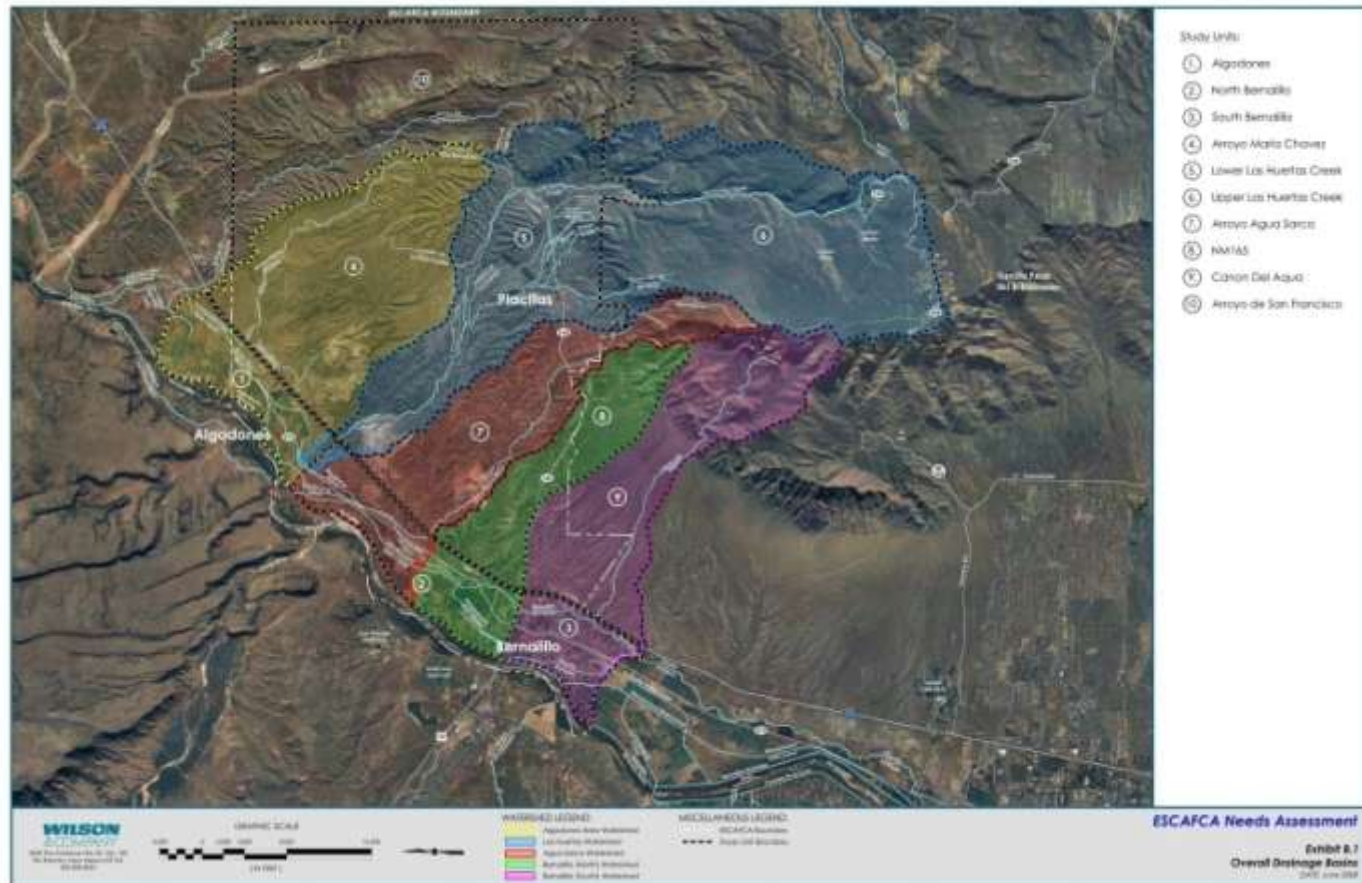


In November 2007, a local election formally created the East Sandoval County Flood Control Authority (ESCAFCA) responsible for improving flood control and mitigating these issues in the Placitas area. Based on the creation of the ESCAFCA, and the County will need to collaborate in development of processes 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 usage of septic tanks and drainfields in Placitas Area Plan has not proven to be a significant environmental concern. 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 gardens, 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 of antiquated platting or lot splits”*





### **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 Real Estate Area**

The La Puerta Real Estate area, located in the western portion of the plan area on NM 165, 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 and is located in the center of the plan area along NM165. 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 Cedar Company located near the Camino de las Huertas junction are several non residential/small scale commercially zoned lots. These businesses include Rio Sierra Realty office, the Mini-Mart, and the Post Office; there exist several parcels of land zoned rural commercial that 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 with design guidelines which were formally planned as a unit of development, these commercial uses near the village do not have design guidelines. 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 subdivisions 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, development can typically be described as a traditional New Mexico pattern with clusters of housing, smaller lot sizes, and 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, 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 pattern is 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 (adobe homes, mobile homes, dome structures, and yurts)**
- **Gardens and orchards are common (including accessory structures such as sheds and barns)**
- **A sense of “live and let live” value system in regard to development patterns**
- **Informal layout of lots and roadways**





### **Town of Bernalillo Land Use Interface**

Along the east side of the I-25 corridor in the study area is not only the interchange between NM 550 and I-25, but also the intersection of several jurisdictions such as the Town of Bernalillo, Non-trust Sandia Pueblo Land and parcels of land that fall within the jurisdiction of Sandoval County. Approximately 50% of the land on the I-25 frontage road is already in the Town of Bernalillo's jurisdiction or owned by Sandia Pueblo. Due to the proximity of the Bernalillo/Placitas interface area along the frontage on I-25, as well as this area being located near the Rail runner 550/Sandoval County Station, a rational alternative for future land use development in this area would be higher density housing/mixed use commercial. This area serves as a land use transitional zone from the Town of Bernalillo to the single family large lot zoning characteristic of the land use development pattern in the Placitas Plan area.

In the Spring of 2009, the NMDOT is scheduled to begin the re-design process for the interchange of NM 165 and I-25. If pedestrian trails and trail underpasses can be designed to connect development to the Rail runner station, then mixed use transit oriented development would be an excellent land use alternative. Transit oriented development would provide the Town of Bernalillo with the ability to transition commercial development off of NM 550 due to traffic constraints as well as provide a housing strategy that would encourage the use of transit. Therefore, the Placitas Area Plan should encourage the Town of Bernalillo to annex the Bernalillo/Placitas Interface Area and develop opportunities for mixed use transit oriented development at this location. Due to grade separations in this area, development could be designed not to impact the views from west Placitas neighborhoods.









**Transit Oriented Development Goals should be:**

- Transition land uses from retail, higher density housing to single family housing
- Connect pedestrian facilities such as bike paths at trails to the Rail runner Station
- Provide for Park n Ride Opportunities at development along the I-25 frontage
- Construct appropriate pedestrian facilities across I-25









## **Section 2: Plan Goals**

### **Placitas Area Plan Goals**

The goals for the Placitas Plan area were consistent with the underlying “community value” of maintaining 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 supporting expanded commercial uses in the Plan area that were not consistent with a more rural community fabric. The following section is an attempt to capture some of the goals developed during the Placitas Area Plan Process. These goals were submitted by various community groups in the Plan Area through many community meetings from September through December of 2008.

### **Generalized Plan Goals**

- **The Placitas Plan should protect the existing semi-rural character of the Placitas region and the character and the identity of specific neighborhoods**
- **The community supports limited commercial and non-residential amenities and commercial development should be limited to existing areas**
- **Large big-box retail and franchise businesses are not appropriate for the Plan area**
- **The Placitas plan should support the efforts and development of a wildlife corridor**
- **Placitas plan residents support the protection of “dark skies”**
- **Home based business should continue to be allowed in the Placitas Area**
- **Preserve the current lifestyle and historic nature and character of the Plan area**





- **Establish protection of ridge-top development for some areas in the Placitas plan**
- **The community does not support a “by-pass” road facility through the Placitas Plan area that connects I-25 to NM14.**
- **Respect the acequia culture of the Placitas Area and the agricultural lifestyle**
- **Preserve independence and property rights of Placitas property owners**
- **Support the “Live and Let Live” attitude of the Placitas community**
- **Restrict existing covenants and architectural control in Placitas, Ideal Acres, and Dome Valley**
- **Control development through architectural control in the western portion of Placitas**
- **Keep the existing overall development pattern in the Placitas area**
- **Improve the traffic conditions associated with the I-25/NM 55 Interchange**
- **Develop policy that ensures water sustainability in Placitas region**
- **Develop bike paths and pedestrian trails in the Placitas area**
- **Provide for public transportation in the Placitas area to connect with the Rail runner Sandoval County/NM 550 station.**
- **Find ways to preserve and enhance open space areas in the Placitas Plan area**
- **The residents of the Historic Village of Placitas envision an area that preserves and protects the cultural heritage and historic legacy of the community.**
- **The plan should support small scale agriculture.**
- **Develop new ways to integrate non-residential uses into a residential fabric**
- **Develop land use definitions that promote varied building types and land uses that conform to the appropriate development pattern in the Placitas area.**
- **Preserve the right to family transfers in the Placitas Area**





- **Respect the diversity of the various communities in the Placitas area**

### **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. After goals for plan implementation are adopted into the plan, then 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 districts to meet the needs of the diverse neighborhoods in the Placitas area plan.**
- **Develop general land use regulations across the Placitas Plan Area that mitigate 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, protecting 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.**

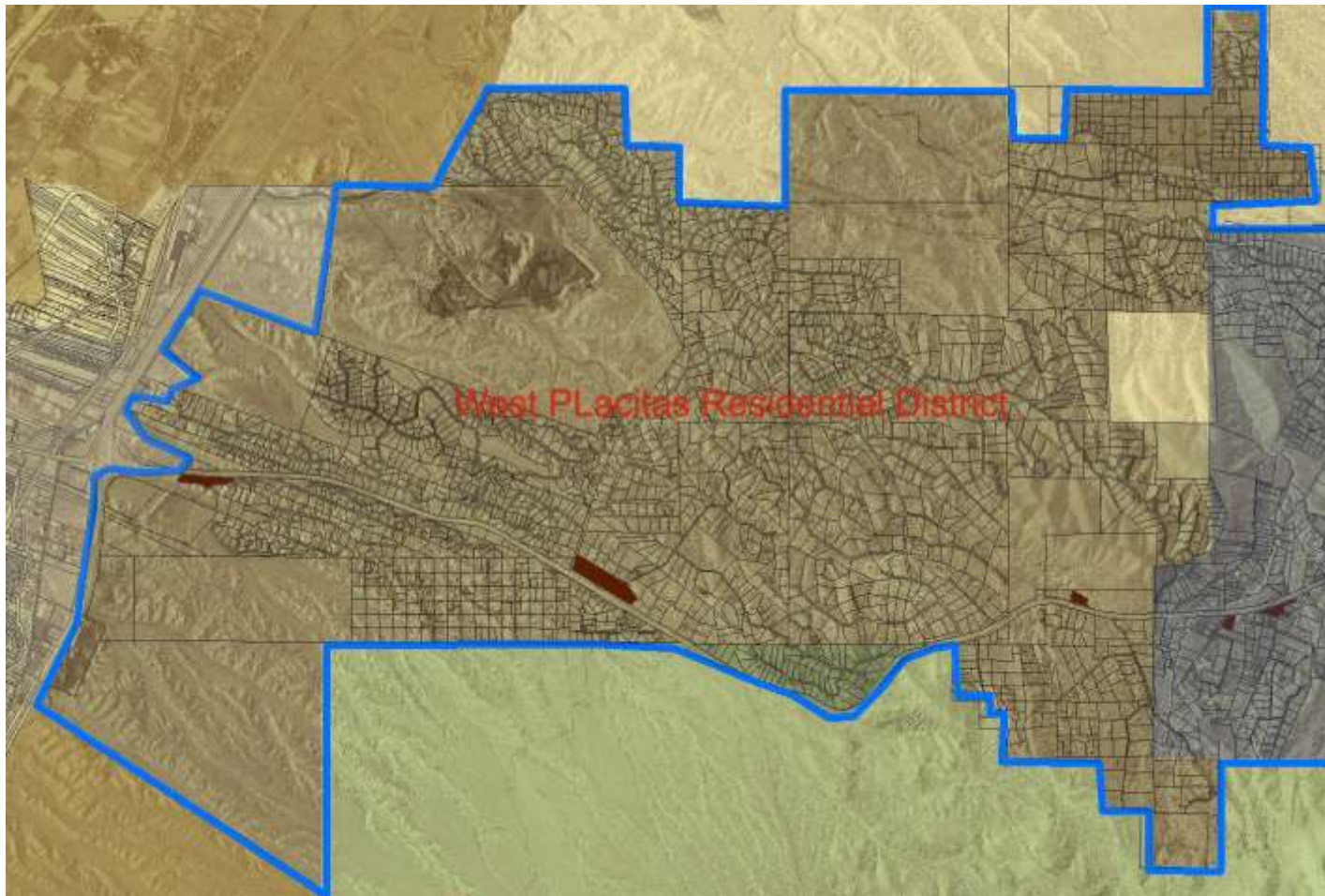
### **Proposed Land Use Policies for the Placitas Area Plan**

Due to the uniqueness of the various neighborhoods within the Placitas plan area as well as environmental and cultural considerations, the County should develop 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**
- **East Placitas Residential Community District**
- **Non-Residential Districts**
- **Diamond Tail Community District**







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

Specific sub-planning areas need to be created for this area to deal with the unique characteristics of the community (see map of proposed district on page 45). 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:**

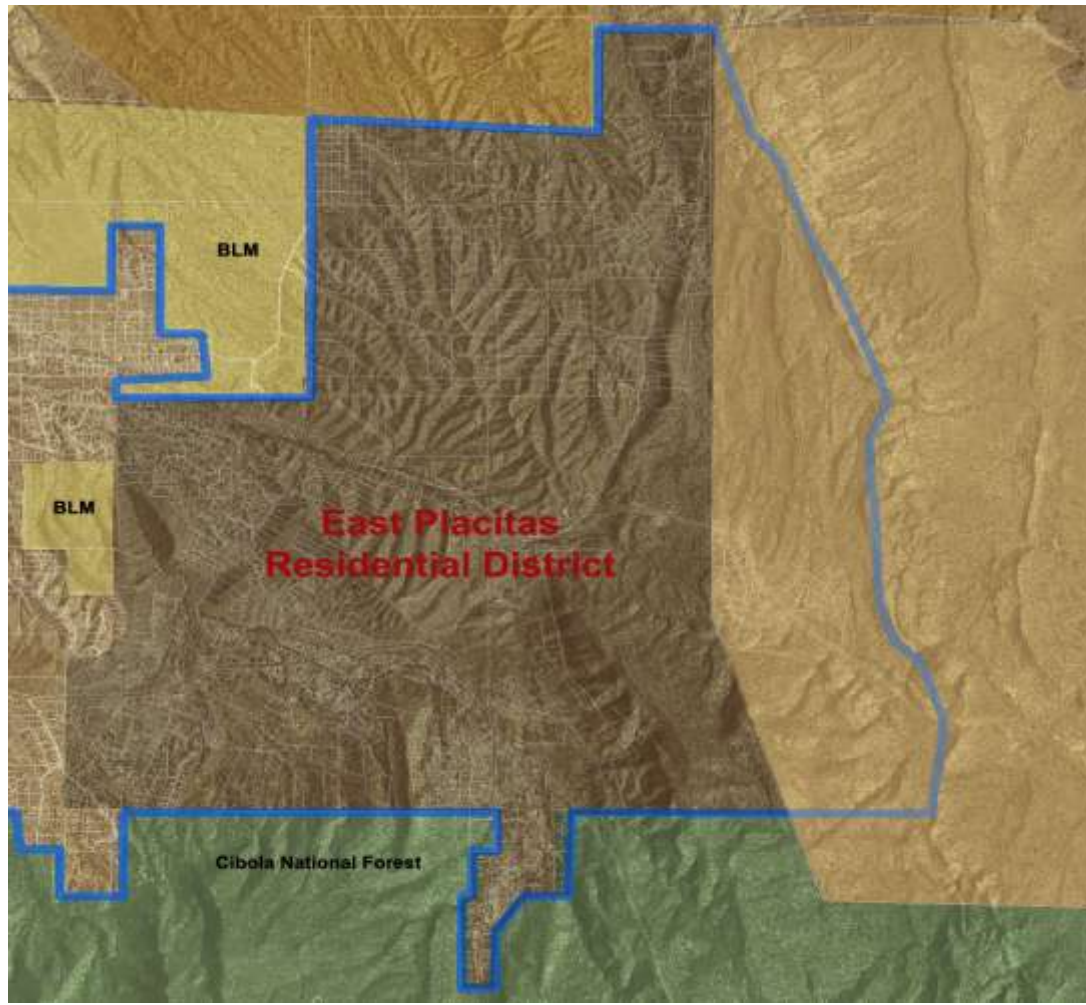
- Develop a minimum lot size of 1 acre for any new platting in the WPRD
- Continue with the similar permissive and conditional uses as allowed in the existing RRA Zoning District
- Continue to allow home based business as allowed in the current RRA district
- Develop guidelines in the area to encourage 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.
- 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. Zoning code should be amended to provide adequate setbacks and building height standards to preserve view-sheds when possible.









### **East Placitas 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 as well as the Ideal Acres/San Francisco neighborhood. The sub-area plan will recognize this unique community, featuring the small orchards and 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 that is inclusive of Tecolote, the historic Village, Ojo de San Antonio, Ideal Acres, San Francisco and Dome Valley. The following are recommended for the East Placitas district:

### **EPRD 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 EPRD to continue to allow diversity in housing types.
- Continue to allow home based business in the district.
- Allow for the permissive and conditional uses in the EPRD as allowed in the existing RRA district





- Continue to respect and allow for family transfers of land because of its cultural significance in New Mexico.

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.







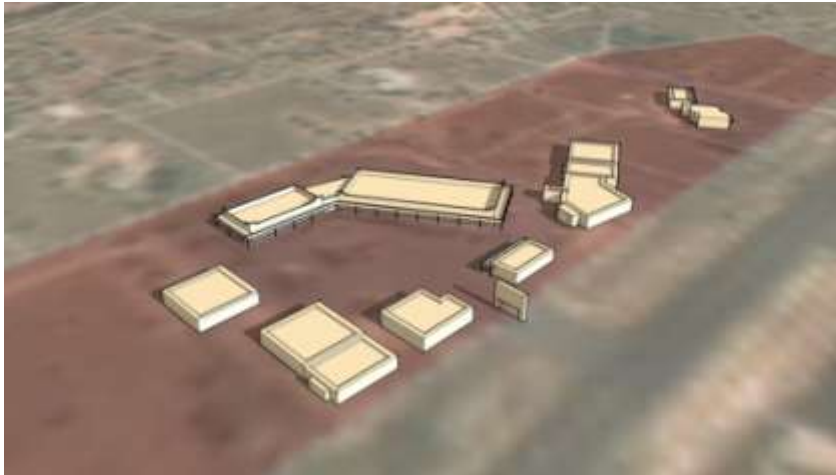
### **Non-Residential Districts**

- **West Placitas Non Residential District**
- **East Placitas Non Residential District**

### **West Placitas Non Residential District**

The purpose of the West Placitas Non Residential 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), the area plan recommends 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 Real Estate Node and the Homestead Mercantile Node. The La Puerta Real Estate site consists of approximately 6 acres and the Homestead node is approximately 12 acres. 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 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.





**Idealized Center at Homestead Mercantile**

### **Village of Placitas Non Residential District**

The purpose of the Village of Placitas Non Residential District is to formalize and recognize a commercial node within the Placitas Area Plan. The designation would establish 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 Clear Light Cedar Company (see map). Designation of this node will formalize the district and the town center of the Placitas plan area. The County proposes the following strategy to create a rural commercial district reflective of a rural main street design in the village:

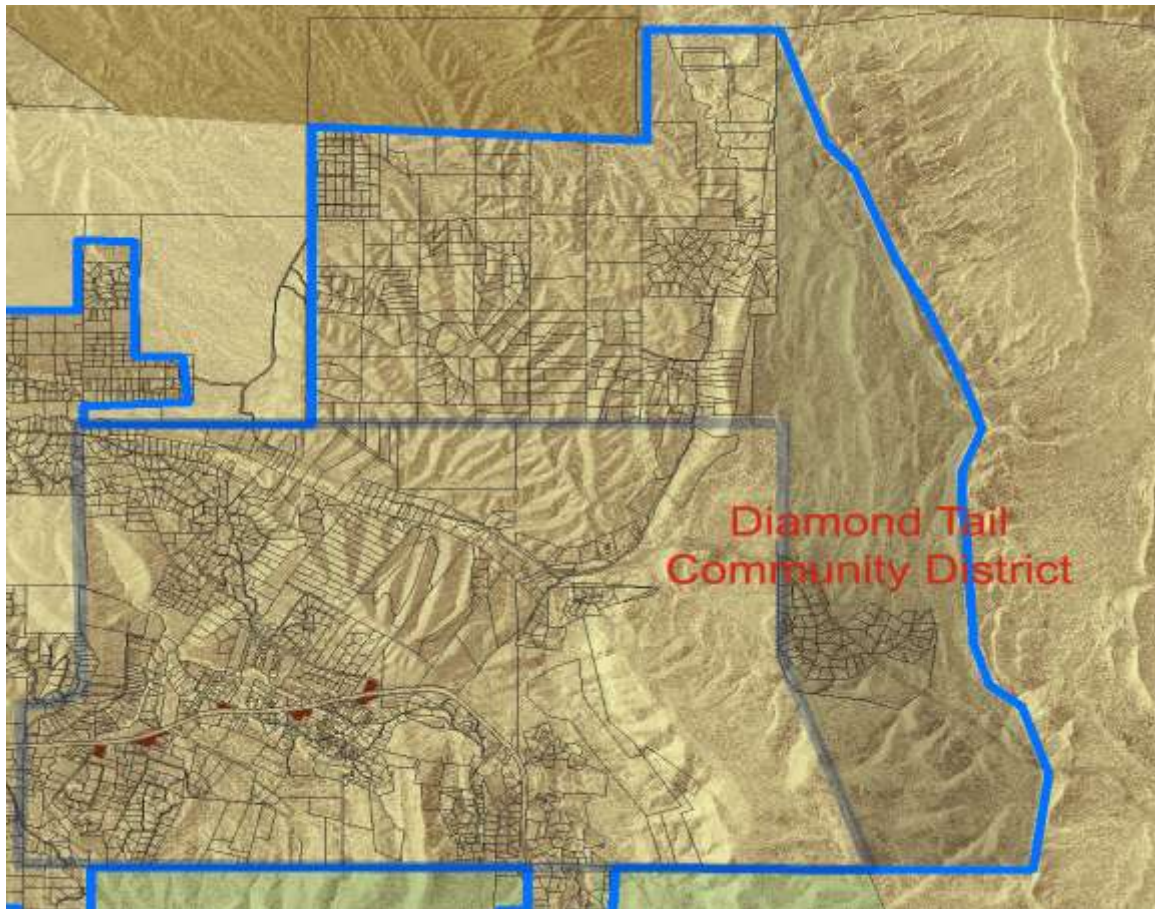




### **Non-Residential District Zoning Recommendations:**

- To ensure compatibility with a rural community fabric, designate a maximum floor area for rural non-residential structures.
- A maximum lot build out of 50% of lot area.
- Adopt general design standards that promote consistency with existing architectural style as the existing development.
- 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.







### **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 standards 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**

- **Night Sky Protection**

The area plan recommends that County establish an enforceable night sky protection policy for the Placitas area. The County recommends language addressing night sky protection for Placitas 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.





- **Town of Bernalillo/Placitas Interface**

Encourage Master Planned mixed use type development on the I-25 frontage that support transit oriented development related to the NM 550/Sandoval County Railrunner Station. The Placitas Area Plan supports the transitional land use from mixed use/high density residential development down to single family housing.

- **Revise the Criteria for Home based Business**

Due to the amount of Home Based business in the Placitas Area, the code should continue and possibly expand the criteria for Home Based Business to allow and support live work spaces in the plan area.

- **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 to serve as the backbone trail of the Placitas Area

### **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 as the back bone 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**

The County should encourage the connection of housing units in subdivisions to shared systems or community water systems using system wells for water supply. Where there are not options to connect to existing systems, the use of shared wells for clusters of houses is recommended. 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 provide for identification of water losses.

### **Storm Water Recommendations**

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





### **Public Facilities Recommendations**

Develop the Placitas Library and fire station as a governmental facilities node for the Placitas Plan Area. 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. 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.





## **Appendix:**

### **Common Land Use Definitions in Sandoval County Code**

“*Accessory Structure*” means a structure that is incidental and subordinate to the principal use of a lot or structure. The term “accessory structure” does not include any structure that is within the definition of a “dwelling unit.”

“*Accessory use*” means use of a structure or lot that is incidental and subordinate to the principal use of a lot or a structure.

“*Boarding, Rooming, or Lodging House*” means a building other than a hotel or restaurant where lodging, with or without meals, is provided for compensation. This definition includes a “Bed and Breakfast” enterprise.

“*Cluster Development*” means a grouping of singular dwelling units on a single lot that, at the time of application for Conditional Use and thereafter, must meet the following criteria:

“*Conditional Use*” means a use that may be or become a nuisance or hazard to neighboring properties if proper safeguards are not taken. Such uses require individual review and approval by the Zoning Commission.

“*Dwelling Unit*” means a structure, part of a structure, mobile home, modular home, or manufactured home that is designed for residential occupancy by one family that contains one or more connected rooms and a single kitchen. The term dwelling unit does not include recreational vehicles. A dwelling unit must meet the requirements for habitability.

“*Dwelling Unit, Singular*” means a dwelling unit that is not physically connected to any other dwelling unit as part of a single structure.

“*Dwelling Unit, Multiple*” means a structure containing two or more dwelling units.





*“Family”* means one or more persons residing together in a dwelling unit, provided that unless all members are related by blood, marriage, adoption, or legal assignment, no such family shall include or contain more than five (5) unrelated persons.

*“Guest House”* means a structure which is on the same lot with and is accessory to; a primary singular dwelling unit and which is available on a complimentary basis for temporary and occasional occupancy by either family or non-family members, and shall not be rented or leased separate from the main residence.

*“A Home Occupation”* shall have (a) no more than one non-resident employee on the premises at any given time, (b) no business traffic, vehicular or pedestrian, to the premises that exceeds traffic customary for a single family residence, (c) no business equipment and/or supplies visible from outside the lot lines of the residence, (d) no noise or other forms of trespass associated with the business that exceeds that normally associated with a residence, and (e) no more than one non-illuminated sign of not more than four (4) square feet in face area.

*“Immediate Family Members”* means husband, wife, father, stepfather, mother, stepmother, brother, stepbrother, sister, stepsister, son, stepson, daughter, stepdaughter, grandson, step grandson, granddaughter, step granddaughter, nephew and niece, related by natural birth or adoption.

*“In-Laws Quarters”* means a structure used to house family members for any length of time, and requiring kitchen facilities similar to the primary dwelling unit, may not be rented separate from primary dwelling.

*“Liquid Waste Disposal Regulations”* means the Liquid Waste Disposal Regulations adopted by the Environmental Improvement Board of New Mexico and administered by the New Mexico Environment Department.

*“Livestock”* means all domestic or domesticated animals that by custom and practice in New Mexico have been used or raised on a farm or ranch for agricultural purposes, including horses, asses, mules, cattle, sheep, goats, swine, bison, poultry, ostriches, emus, and similar animals. “Livestock” does not include canine or feline animals, or any animals not actually used for agricultural purposes.







“*Lot*” means a parcel or tract of land, platted and/or placed on the County Clerk's record in compliance with applicable statutes and ordinances, and with frontage or legally approved access to public right-of-way. Whenever a parcel or tract of land is traversed by a public right-of-way it will be considered as two lots for purposes of this Ordinance.

“*Manufactured Housing*” means a manufactured home or modular home that is a single-family dwelling with a heated area of at least thirty-six by twenty-four feet, constructed in a factory to the standards of the United States department of housing and urban development, the National Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5401 et seq.) and the Housing and Urban Development Zone Code II or the Uniform Building Code, as amended to the date of the unit's construction, and installed consistent with Manufactured Housing Act (Chapter 60, Article 14, NMSA 1978), or the International Building Code of 2003 as amended and adopted by the State of New Mexico, and with the regulations made pursuant thereto relating to ground level installation and ground anchors.

“*Mobile Home*” means a moveable or portable dwelling unit. “*Mobile Home*” does not include Manufactured Housing or Recreational Vehicles. Mobile homes by definition, were manufactured after 1985, or meet the current Housing and Urban Development Zone Code, or the Uniform Building Code, or the International Building Code as defined above in paragraph 31.

“*Mobile Home Park*” means any lot on which two or more mobile / manufactured homes are used for human habitation for 30 days or more, except as otherwise provided for in this Ordinance.

“*Nonconformities*” are any structures or portions thereof, or uses of any land or structures, or lots, which do not conform to the regulations of this Ordinance but that lawfully, existed on and prior to the effective date of the regulations to which it does not conform. The term “nonconformities” does not include any lot, structure, or use of any structure or lot that, at the relevant time, did not conform to or was not exempt from then effective zoning regulations.

“*Overlay Zone*” means a zone district placed over another zone district or districts for the purpose of imposing special requirements in addition to those of the underlying zone. Development within the overlay zone must conform to the requirements of both zone districts or to the more restrictive of the two zone districts.





*“Permissive Use”* means a use that is allowed in a particular zone district.

*“Setback”* means the minimum allowable horizontal distance between a structure and every road or lot boundary line as measured perpendicularly from the edge of the road right-of-way or lot boundary line to the structure. Setbacks are intended to ensure that fire and rescue and other emergency personnel have full access to all sides of all buildings and structures, and to ensure that vehicles associated with the use are not parked in the road or street. The Zoning Officer shall exercise reasonable discretion in determining any setback issue, as in situations with irregularly shaped or corner lots. The Zoning Officer’s decision regarding any setback issue may be appealed to the County Board.

*“Structure”* means a building or anything else constructed or erected above ground, which requires location on the ground or is attached to something having a location on the ground. For purposes of this Ordinance, the term structure does not include a vehicle, vegetation, public utility poles, walls and fences.

*“Variance”* means a relaxation of the terms of this Ordinance where such relaxation will not be contrary to the public interest and where, owing to conditions peculiar to the property and not the results of actions of the applicant, a literal enforcement of this Ordinance would result in unnecessary hardship. As used in this Ordinance, a variance may be authorized only for area, dimension, distance, setback, off-street parking, and off-street loading requirements. Financial gain or loss shall not be the determining factor in deciding a variance.





## **Additional Proposed Definitions for Allowable Uses**

**professional office (1)**

**live/work**

**office**

***Freestanding office structure with design attributes that are residential in scale (2).***

**home**

**occupation**

**office**

***home with attached, lofted, or detached office component w/o limitation to employee relationship***

***family office enterprise housed within the confines of a single family residence***

**creative**

**studio/gallery**

**live/work**

**creative studio**

***freestanding studio structure with design attributes that are residential in scale \****

**home**

**occupation**

**creative studio**

***home with attached, lofted, or detached office component w/o limitation to employee relationship***





**neighborhood**

**café**

*family office enterprise housed within the confines of a single family residence*

**hospitality**

*freestanding food service structure with design attributes that are residential in scale (2)*

**neighborhood**

**retail services**

*freestanding lodging and associated food service in small footprint structure with design attributes that are residential in scale (2)*

*freestanding retail sales in small footprint structure with design attributes that are residential in scale.*

*Locally produced products and organics encouraged*

*Police Substation*

*Fire station*

*Community Center*

*Youth park*





## **Summary of Submitted Comments**

Note: Summary of Public Comments were collected and cataloged by Cliff Spirock of Community Science Corporation.

### **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.
- Sandoval County will continue to require Traffic Impact Analysis and review development impacts on roadways by the NMDOT during subdivision review to determine appropriate road improvements.

#### 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 detention 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

### **Knight Seavey Plan Recommendations**

**Insite Works** has presented planning inputs to the Sandoval County P+Z pertaining to broad *policy concerns* in the development of the Placitas Area Plan. A condensed version of this is presented below.

## **Promote Large Scale Planning in the Placitas Area Plan**

### **Sandoval County Zoning Code**

- *The purpose of this zone district is to permit and encourage the unified planning of large areas or mixed use developments in order to achieve the mixture and variety of land uses that such large scale planning makes possible.* (Section 11(A) **MP – Master Planned District**)
- Create the new Placitas Area Plan in such a fashion that flexibility in land use innovation is preserved

## **Expanded County Services**

### **Identify Potential Nodes of Existing County Services**

### **Expand Vital County Services**

- Police Substation site to be strategically located east of I-25
- Improved PVFB facilities to include adequate parking facilities





- Improved EMS dispatch
- Links to public transportation

## **Define New Land Uses**

**Rural Commercial Designations require departure from the standard zone classifications; such as...**

- Rural professional office
- Rural retail
- County support services

## **Non-Residential Visualization**

### **Community Elements**

- Organic solutions/Site contouring
- Residential scale and feel with Pedestrian Connectivity
- Orientation – no “back of building,” particularly when abutting 165
- Open space that works through the clustering mechanism and the preservation of collective open space
- Establishing a building vocabulary that is derived from Placitas
- Development controls established at time or plat





### **Housing Diversity**

An important theme is providing CHOICE in physical lot/housing options in the context of a fair socio-economic balance. Existing housing development patterns in Placitas are generally monolithic and are available to limited economic strata. The pattern is exclusionary and not in keeping with prudent planning principals.

### **Site Features**

- Group structures Lot depth/proportion appropriate to site geometry and topography
- Auto storage not concentrated in large lots, Hardscapes (asphalt/concrete) reduced, Porous Paving encouraged, preventing runoff
- Landscape pockets with berming/screening. Provide noise control walls where residential abuts 165
- Buffer land uses/setbacks and consolidation of access points
- Site lighting and the night sky considerations





- Signage hierarchy established; no neon, limited night lighting of signage

### **Bldg Envelope & Details**

- Define how roof elements, overhangs, portals, doors and windows are to work in a style suggestive of residential scale
- Building lighting coordinated with night sky policies
- Architectural schemes defined at time of plat
- Patio/trellis/courtyard extensions encouraged
- Establish subdivision framework for architectural controls and restrictions (examples below)



*Otoño Plaza (Alameda/Jefferson-ABQ)*





*Caminto Algodón (North 4<sup>th</sup> Street ABQ)*

An example of architectural controls might address sloped roofing, both pitch and composition. In the case of the latter, weathering low-alloy steel roof deck depicted in the image above from *Otoño Plaza*, with its inherent matte/non-glare finish – appropriate where residents are looking down of rooftops and glare could be a problem.

Another control that concerns site work would be porous paving of neighborhood business parking areas. Crusher fines of a certain color gradation might be specified as was done at the *Caminto Algodón* project shown above (*USGBC LEED* Gold registered.) Runoff is all but eliminated, the aquifer is recharged, and the look and feel is appropriate for the rural setting.

### **Energy & Resource Policy**

- Transportation nodes > Policy: reduce trip reduction. Designate nodes for residents in the Placitas corridor. Shelters for scheduled service via shuttle service to the ***Rail Runner*** or Bernalillo Center.
- Aquifer recharge via porous paving solutions as discussed above.
- Water reuse and conservation
  - Rainwater - Roof water can be captured in an underground storage tank and can be used for 'gray water' purposes or to irrigate the project's landscape





- Wastewater - Effluent will be treated in mini-treatment units for ultimate reuse in irrigated landscape areas. This treated waste water will remain beneath the surface at all times
- Low flow fixtures -Covenants will specify the use of plumbing fixtures and fittings that are designed to sensibly reduce water consumption through use of dual flush and motion sensor technologies
- Sustainable Buildings that achieve synergy... the bringing together of disparate pieces to create a whole that leaves the user with a solution exceeding the sum of the parts.
  - Load shedding, Photovoltaic solar systems, and Net Metering – Power and lighting systems with reduced watt/sf budgets when coupled with PNM’s connection to the grid creates an economic and sustainable solution
  - Green Power – Encourage the purchase of green power certificates from PNM to assure that further usage of renewable energy sources is employed in the project
  - Reuse- Recycle – Use Regional Products Wherever possible or practical, materials found in a project should include recycled product, were produced regionally, or in some instances have been reused from other building projects.







### Permissive Non-Residential Use Template

- Encourage 'Live, Work & Play'



*a prototype residence with retail art studio attached to home*

- Uses with community appeal such as Arts and Crafts Cooperative
- Horse related activities; example: Wild Horse Museum and Info Center
- Neighborhood retail services 1000-4000 SF footprint limitation
- Professional office 1500-4000 SF footprint limitation
- Hospitality uses such as B&B
- No franchise operations
- Food service – neighborhood scale only





### **Forms of Ownership**

- Recognize the limitations of the traditional “in-line” lease model that has been largely rejected by area residents. Open new areas to innovative developments.
- Encourage **non-residential ownership** opportunities.
  - Fee simple ownership in lieu of leasehold development
  - Shared ownership structure of ownership with an undivided common interest in site



