

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TEMPLATE

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1. Introduction

This report is intended to assist local governments to prepare or update comprehensive plans. Contained in this report is information useful for preparing a comprehensive plan, including a review of relevant State Statutes, definitions of key terms, and tips on comprehensive planning. It should provide a starting point for determining how to approach comprehensive planning, what subjects need to be addressed, and what methods and techniques might be used.

The template is presented in Section 7 of this document. This is a recommended outline for a complete comprehensive plan. However, it is not intended to be a cookbook with a single recipe that works for all communities. Planning is not mandated in the State of New Mexico. No single definition of a comprehensive plan exists for New Mexico, nor are there substantive standards for what key issues must be addressed in a plan. A workable approach for each community must be figured out locally. Nonetheless, a comprehensive planning should include certain minimum components in order to serve the purposes of a

comprehensive plan.

The template may serve as a checklist for local governments to assess whether the requisite pieces are addressed. For example, a comprehensive plan is not merely a vision statement, a strategic plan, a policy plan or a single element addressing only land use or public facilities. Additionally, a comprehensive plan is distinctly different from a zoning regulation or other land use regulations, although there should be a strong bond between the two tools.

2. What is involved in a comprehensive planning process?

Comprehensive planning is a serious endeavor requiring resources, time, and involvement of many participants. Resources include either professional planning staff or consultants. Usually a comprehensive plan requires a concerted effort over approximately a two-year period. When it comes to involvement, typically a comprehensive plan is based on a degree of competition among stakeholders, managers and participants. Many people need to take part in different facets of the discussion. The dynamics of the process require information and facilitation to result in a product that is satisfactory to the community, while truly setting out a vision which can inspire and motivate efforts for the plan's realization.

Comprehensive planning by nature affects the development market through giving policy guidance to how the supply of developable land can be used. It identifies land available for development. It addresses limitations to the type, location, density and, sometimes, timing of development. Zoning, subdivision regulations and other regulatory tools actually implement these land market features. Supporting infrastructure, which should be planned in accordance with the comprehensive plan, makes basic services available to private property, and thereby enhances the property's value and developability.

The comprehensive plan process is an on-going process. A plan should be re-evaluated no longer than five years after its adoption. In some cases, a plan should be updated only a few years after adoption to ensure it remains current and relevant.

3. What is a comprehensive plan?

A comprehensive plan is an official public document adopted by a local government as a policy guide to decisions about the physical development of the community.

It indicates in a general way how the leaders of the government want the community to develop in the next 20 - 30 years.

Comments below elaborate on key words and phrases in this definition:

comprehensive: The plan encompasses all functional elements (e.g., land use, environment, transportation and public facilities) which bear on physical development in an internally consistent manner. The data, policies and regulations considered in various elements should all be internally consistent. The plan also encompasses all geographic parts of the community. A study area might extend outside the jurisdictions if such areas affect and are affected by the policies of the jurisdictions. In some cases to be truly comprehensive in geographic coverage, multiple local governments must cooperate in developing a multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plan.

official public document adopted by a local government: The plan is usually approved or adopted by the governing body of the country or municipality, such as the Board of County Commissioners, City Council, Town Council, Board of Village Trustees, and so on. As discussed below, the plan is usually developed by an appointed advisory planning commission or a comprehensive plan steering committee

policy guide to decisions: The plan lays out the government's general approach and particular policies to be considered when making decisions at the various levels of government (e.g., body of elected officials, appointed boards such as the Planning Commission, and staff).

physical development of the community: Comprehensive plans deal fundamentally with the physical characteristics of the community. Hence, land use is typically the core element of a comprehensive plan. However, in order to arrive at an appropriate plan for the use of land, other physical aspects must be addressed, such as environmental features, transportation, water and wastewater facilities, and other public facilities.

indicates in a general way: The comprehensive plan contains general policies and recommendations which usually do not indicate specific locations nor detailed regulations.

how the leaders of the government want the community to develop: The comprehensive plan expresses the vision and policy directions agreed to

by the community's governing body. Usually the plan is developed by an advisory body – a planning commission or steering committee – encompassing a broadly representative membership. In developing the plan, substantial public involvement is obtained to assure the leaders of the government that the plan is properly considered and has broad support.

next 20 - 30 years: The typical horizon of a comprehensive plan is 20 to 30 years into the future. The comprehensive plan time frame is beyond the foreground of pressing current issues and opens up a perspective of future possibilities and problems.

Comprehensive planning is a form of long range planning. Such endeavors usually engage participants to think about community change and problem-solving in a manner that is different from the way they are accustomed to. This kind of planning can be defined in the following ways:

Long range planning

-is an organized way of determining community needs and setting goals and objectives to address the needs.
- ... is the art and science of anticipatory problem solving.
- ...bridges the gap from where we are to where we want to go.
- ...is defending the common interest against the onslaught of parochial interests.

4. Why prepare or update a comprehensive plan?

There are general and specific reasons why a comprehensive plan should be prepared. At the general end of the spectrum, a community or area may need to articulate a vision for its future, reaching agreement on the overall type of place it wants to be. To this means, the plan should contain the vision and the goals and objectives, and also contain enough specificity in methods and techniques or indicators to help measure the progress in reaching that vision. At the specific end of the spectrum, there may be particular concerns in changes threatening one neighborhood or sub-area; however, the big picture needs to be established in order to properly focus on how those neighborhood or sub-area changes should be guided. The planning process is often useful for

getting people to think about the longer-range consequences of current decisions to result in wiser, more sustainable actions.

T.J. Kent states in his seminal book The Urban General Plan (1964) the following fundamental purposes which the comprehensive plan is intended to achieve:

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

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

- Zoning ordinance,
- Official zoning map,
- Subdivision regulations, and
- Growth management tools*.

* Growth management tools are a set of regulatory provisions designed to address in a consistent, cohesive way the rate, extent and/or character of growth and development in a community. The approach implied by growth management is to integrate with zoning and subdivision regulations additional provisions to guide development. Such provisions in the set of tools might include performance incentives, design guidelines, differential impact fees, growth quotas, and adequate public facilities ordinances. Growth management might also include developing an integrated set of non-regulatory approaches such as incentives-based packaging of public/private partnerships, working with land trusts, economic development initiatives, and housing programs.

Internal consistency between the comprehensive plan and land use regulations is an important part of implementing the vision of the plan. The quality of general direction should provide a range of ways in which a matter can be handled on the regulatory side.

5. New Mexico Enabling Legislation

The statutes of the State of New Mexico enable and do not mandate the preparation of a comprehensive plan by local governments. In the New Mexico Statutes, both comprehensive plan and master plan are used and appear to be synonymous. In this document, the term comprehensive plan is used to mean both master plan and comprehensive plan.

Much of the terminology of the New Mexico Statutes comes from the Standard City Planning Enabling Act, drafted by an advisory committee of the U.S. Department of Commerce in the 1920s. Following is a brief description of the main statutory provisions with comments from a practical planning perspective (note that this is not a legal opinion):

- Section 3-19-9 NMSA 1978 addresses the purpose of a master plan. Subsection (A) states that “a municipal planning commission shall prepare and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality and the area within the planning and platting jurisdiction of the municipality which in the planning commission’s judgement bears a relationship to the planning of the municipality...”
- Section 3-19-9(B) allows that in addition to recommendations for the physical development of the municipality and its planning jurisdiction, the master plan may also address:
 - o streets, bridges, viaducts and parkways; parks and playgrounds; floodways, waterways and waterfront development, airports and other ways, grounds, places and spaces;
 - o public schools, public buildings and other public property;
 - o public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned
 - o community centers and neighborhood units and the replanning of blighted districts and slum areas; and
 - o public ways, grounds, places, spaces, building properties , utilities or terminals.

Comment: There is no description of what elements should be in a comprehensive plan, nor what should be contained in each element in

order to address the subject in a professionally adequate manner. This remains the purview of the planning commissions. There is no direction from the Statute on whether the various pieces of a master plan should be internally consistent with one another.

- Section 3-19-1(c) allows for the municipality as a planning authority to “retain to the governing body as much of this power, authority, jurisdiction and duty as it desires.” This must be established by ordinance.

Comment: This provision is important because it allows for the planning commission to function as an advisory board in developing a plan and recommending its adoption, then for the actual adoption of the plan to occur as an action of the governing body. Planning practice and theory favor this approach since the plan carries significant influence and should be used as a set of policies and recommendations used by the body of elected officials rather than only by the body of appointed representatives serving on the planning commission.

- Section 3-19-10 addresses the adoption of a master plan by a municipality, stating it is through an action of resolution after at least one (1) public hearing.
- Section 3-19-11 addresses the legal status of a municipality’s master plan including, among other features :
 - (A) “After a master plan...has been approved and within the area of the master plan... the approval of the planning commission is necessary to construct, authorize, accept, widen, narrow, remove, extend, relocate, vacate, abandon, acquire or change the use of any:
 - (1) park, street or their public way, ground, place or space;
 - (2) public building or structure; or
 - (3) utility, whether publicly or privately owned.
 - (B) “The failure of the planning commission to act within sixty-five days after the submission of a proposal to it constitutes approval of the proposal unless the proponent agrees to an extension of time. If the planning commission disapproves a proposal, it must state its reasons to the governing body. The governing body may overrule the planning commission and approve the proposal by a two-thirds vote of all its members.
 - (C) “...After the adoption of the master plan or any part thereof affecting the property, all extensions, betterments or additions to buildings, structures, plants or other equipment of any public utility

shall be made in conformity with the master plan or any part thereof affecting the property and upon approval of the planning commission...”

Comment: These provisions establish the intended role of the planning commission in approving public improvements or utility improvements whether public or private. Subsection (C) requires conformity of those improvements with an adopted master plan. The Statute supports a strong tie between the physical development (i.e., land use) and the extension of utilities, which can produce a very powerful planning framework and is often missed in master plans. Typically, planning commissions do not have a strong role in the approval or disapproval of public utility improvements. This is one of only two sections in the Statutes (see Section 3-21-5 for the other.) that speaks to internal conformity or consistency. Subsection (B) allows for automatic planning commission approval if the planning commission does not act within 65 days. This provides the option for the planning commission to not be involved.

- Section 3-19-12 states “Every plat approved by the planning authority is an amendment, addition or a detail of the master plan or any part thereof adopted by the planning commission.”

Comment: The required inclusion of subdivision plats in a master plan is highly unusual. Plats are typically much more specific than the general land use designations in a plan. Plats contain detailed information, such as lot lines, surveyed rights-of-way, site plan showing buildings, and landscape plans, that arguably do not belong in a master plan and would tend to clutter up the plan. On the other hand, this provision could provide a higher degree of confidence in land developers’ expectations that once a plat is approved, it supercedes any prior comprehensive plan designations that might have not fully supported the development conceived of in the plat. The provision appears to be commonly ignored by municipalities.

- Section 3-21-5 is entitled Zoning: conformance to comprehensive plan. Subsection (A) states “The regulations and restrictions of the county or municipal zoning authority are to be in accordance with a comprehensive plan...”

Comment: Conformance of the zoning code with the comprehensive plan is required through this section. It should be noted that the plan is referred to as a master plan throughout Section 3-19, but here it is called a comprehensive plan. This appears to be a minor inconsistency in

terminology that does not have substantive effect on the provision. Additionally, it is noteworthy that this provision applies to both municipal and county plans.

- Section 4-57 enables the creation of county planning commissions and describes the power and duties of the commission. Subsection 4-57-2(B) allows that a county planning commission may: (1) make reports and recommendations for the planning and development of the county to any other individual, partnership, firm, public or private corporation, association, trust estate, political subdivision or agency of the state or any other legal entity or their legal representatives, agents or assigns; (2) recommend to the administrative and governing officials of the county, programs for public improvements and their financing.

Comment: Enabling preparation of a comprehensive or master plan for a County is not specifically stated in this Statute. Subsection (1) refers to recommendations without specifying what the recommendations about, but which might include the content of a comprehensive or master plan.

- Section 3-19-5 establishes the planning and platting jurisdictions for municipalities. Section A states A... the planning and platting jurisdiction of a municipality
(1) having a population of twenty-five thousand or more persons includes all territory within five miles of its boundary and not within the boundary of another municipality; or

(2) having a population of less than twenty-five thousand persons includes all territory within three miles of its boundary and not within the boundary of another municipality.

Comment: The municipality is enabled to prepare a comprehensive plan addressing a planning area that extends outside its corporate boundary in the area within the distances established by this statute. It is not clear whether, for advisory purposes rather than through jurisdictional authority, a municipality can determine a larger plan area.

6. Hierarchy of policy direction in a comprehensive plan

Goals, objectives and policies are the typical framework for the overall policy direction established in a plan.

“Goals” are overarching statements describing the direction that a community

wants to go.

“Objectives” are statements describing how those goals should be reached.

“Policies” are statements of actions and specific directions or approaches that should be taken to achieve the objectives.

Some plans do not have policies for a variety of reasons including the level of detail, the intent for using the plan, or the assignment of implementation actions is occurring elsewhere.

“Strategies” are statements of specific actions that should be taken, identifying the responsible party or parties, the time frame within which the action should occur and other details considered necessary to prepare for implementation to occur. Strategies are often statements providing the same level of direction as policies. However, sometimes strategies are more specific than policies, in effect, filling a lower level in the hierarchy. In such cases strategies may be implementation actions. Strategic planning, as distinct from comprehensive planning, is focused on arriving at concrete actions that responsible parties commit to carry-out. Additionally, a hybrid of strategic planning might be included as a element of a comprehensive plan.

And in some cases strategies describe a general direction for actions to reach a goal, in which case they are equivalent to objectives in the hierarchy.

Goals and objectives make up the policy framework that guides the Regional Water Plan.

Desired Qualities of Goals and Objectives

- ✓ Goals are general and should reflect the values of the community.
- ✓ Goals are visionary into the desired future.
- ✓ Objectives should be measurable and achievable.
- ✓ Objectives are not so specific as alternative strategies or policies, nor so broad as goals.
- ✓ Goals and objectives must relate to their subject matters (e.g., if a land use element is being prepared, then subjects of transportation, water, housing and economic development should only be addressed as they relate to land use)

Example 1 of Goal, Objective and Policies

Goal	The City shall seek to achieve high quality residential environments providing a level of stability, safety, tranquility and balanced mix of supporting uses.
Objective:	To protect viable residential neighborhoods from intrusions by incompatible uses
Policies:	a. The City shall seek to abate existing incompatible uses in residential neighborhoods. b. Spot zoning shall be prohibited in low density residential neighborhoods. c. The conditional use procedure shall be used to ensure that new potentially higher intensity non-residential uses are no more disruptive to existing residential uses than is reasonably necessary through evaluation of performance standards for design and site treatment.

Example 2 of Goal, Objective and Policies

Goal:	Existing irrigated agricultural activities should be encouraged and supported to remain in active agricultural production.
Objective:	To create and support the development of opportunities for continued farming operations.
Policies:	a. The County shall encourage and provide for the marketing of local agricultural products through such avenues as the farmers market and roadside stands. b. The County shall consider creating a transfer of density provision in the zoning code that may be voluntarily used to cluster residential development away from agricultural areas to preserve meaningful land area utilized for agricultural production. c. A right-to-farm ordinance shall be devised to ensure that agricultural lands are treated sensitively to the location of and pressures from surrounding urban development. The ordinance may include: (1) a declaration that normal farming operations do not constitute a “nuisance” if begun before residential development occurs; (2) title or plat notification for nearby properties explaining that the parcel is identified as agricultural and there may be activities that are inconvenient or cause discomfort to area residencies, and (3) establishment of a grievance or arbitration committee to mediate disputes between farmers and non-farmers.

7. Template of a Comprehensive Plan

The template for a comprehensive plan was designed to provide an outline for

developing an adequate and balanced local long range planning document.

1. Introduction

The introduction should provide the reader with the following:

- Purpose of the plan
- Plan principles
- Legal foundations for the plan
- Planning process

2. Community Vision (optional)

Process for developing the vision statement, covering:

- Community Interviews
- Wants and needs community survey
- Meetings and workshops
- Compilation of information
- Report preparation
- Vision statement

III. Community Background and Existing Conditions

- Demographic profile of the community and plan study area
 - Historic population trends
 - Population projections in five year increments
- Economic profile of the community and plan study area, including map
- Physical features of the community and plan study area, including map
- Settlement history

IV. Environment Element

- Supporting studies
 - Identification of natural hazards and community natural resources, including maps
 - Significance of features, including maps
 - Management of resources
- Goals, objectives and policies

V. Land Use Element

- Supporting studies
 - Existing land use inventory and map (categories; amount, type and intensities of land use (use of GIS)
 - Analysis of land use patterns (typically by sub-areas)

- Issues and opportunities analysis reviewing key factors and driving forces supporting trends, expected changes from past trends and desired changes in land use patterns
- Alternative land use scenarios
- Special studies. Possibilities include:
 1. Community character - urban design and rural character
 2. Visual preference analysis
 3. Land use compatibility
 4. Annexation criteria
 5. Development agreements and impact fees
 6. Community festivals
 7. Main Street
 8. Agricultural heritage and open space
- Narrative description of desired future land use pattern, themes and/or strategies
- Goals, objectives and policies
- Future land use map

The inclusion of maps, tables, photographs, and graphics that provide insights into desired land use practices is strongly recommended in the Land Use Element.

VI. Transportation Element

- Supporting Studies
 - Existing Conditions
 - Inventory of Transportation Facilities and Services (all modes)
 - Functional Classification System
 - Existing Arterial Road Network
 - Issues and Needs
 - Levels of Service
 - Vehicle Miles Traveled
 - Other Indicators
- Alternative transportation network analysis (traffic forecast modeling may be used with current and projected land use and socio-economic assumptions)
- Special Studies that Guide High Priority Strategies in the Plan. Possibilities include such subjects as:
 1. Bridge crossings
 2. Choke points
 3. Traffic calming
 4. Private roads: standards, connectivity of system, accessibility to public

5. Non-motorized transportation facilities
 6. Demand management strategies
 7. Transit services (bus, express bus, bus rapid transit, commuter rail, streetcar, light rail)
 8. Scenic drives
 9. Environmental Impact Assessments
- Future Transportation Network
 - Future Transportation Network Map (Preferred Alternative)
 - Roads
 - Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities
 - Transit Facilities and Services
 - Transportation Improvements

List each project and its key characteristics, including segments by location, type of improvement, and estimated cost. Projects funded through the State Transportation Improvement Program of the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Program (STIP) should be identified in the Transportation Element. Additionally, projects funded primarily by the local government which are not listed in the STIP should be listed in the Transportation Element, providing supporting rationale for capital facilities funding, including impact fee assessments.
 - Finance strategy
 - Available revenue
 - Potential additional revenue sources/strategies
 - Unmet needs
 - Goals, objectives and policies

VII. Capital Facilities Element

- Subjects of the Capital Facilities Element, typically including:
 - Utilities
 - Roads, streets, sidewalks
 - Public buildings
 - Public parks
 - Public irrigation and drainage facilities
 - Telecommunications infrastructure (special component)
- Rationale for planning for capital facilities: good management, growth management and eligibility for grants and loans.
- Scenario-driven approach using different assumptions about needs (levels of service) and revenues to identify the best combination of level of service and financing plan.
- Description of levels of service

- Capital projects
- Operating impact of capital projects
- Financing plan
- Implementation plan
- Goals, objectives and policies

Additional Elements that might be prepared include, but are not limited to:

- Action Plan, Strategic Plan or Implementation
- Housing
- Urban Design/Community Character
- Parks and Open Space
- Utilities
- Economic Development
- Downtown Revitalization
- Telecommunications
- Historic Preservation
- Agriculture Preservation
- Cultural
- Social Services
- Fiscal
- Growth Management

8. Best Practices in Comprehensive Planning

A. Broad Public Involvement

The comprehensive planning process should have broad buy-in from the public, stakeholders and elected officials. The “bare bones” minimum is to hold a public hearing before governing or appointed advisory bodies vote on a plan. Visioning is one process that might be added, as discussed below. There usually is a need to supplement a planning process with one or more of the following events: focus groups, leadership forums, town halls, and community surveys. Additionally, convening a steering committee, consisting of members of a planning commission and perhaps other members of the public representing more sectors of the community, can provide useful advise on the plan development throughout the planning process. Public involvement is typically a time-consuming and challenging component of comprehensive planning, requiring the planners to try very hard to get participants to engage in long range thinking.

B. Visioning

Visioning is becoming an increasingly accepted planning tool that is especially useful when integrated into a comprehensive planning process as an "up-front" public involvement activity. The technique in preparing a local comprehensive plan seems to work rather well to do visioning to arrive at a vision statement, then prepare the plan analysis, analyze alternative land use scenarios according to the vision, then develop the goals and objectives at the same time as arriving at the preferred land use scenario (which becomes the "Future Land Use Map").

Following are the steps of a sample visioning process:

- ✓ Design the entire process,
- ✓ Develop an introductory slide show to stimulate discussion of place,
- ✓ Develop a series of vignettes to illustrate possibilities for how a community might grow (oblique aerials, ground photographs, computer generated visualizations, and some hand drawn vignettes) visualizing possible future urban and rural character,
- ✓ Prepare a background paper with population and employment projections and other gathered factual information for the review of the participants.
- ✓ Conduct two or three rounds of public workshops in several locations throughout the community. The first round can develop a list of what's valued, what should be kept and what should be changed in their specific community. The second round can be designed to prioritize, refine, and cluster the most important issues and value statements to the community. The third round can gather participants from the entire community to prioritize the top topics and top issues (attributes), conduct an individual and group writing exercise designed to combine the top attributes, create an edited product from each group, then the whole group of participants vote on their favorite vision statement. Interim adoption of the vision statement and goals early in the process before the scenarios were developed.

C. Alternative Land Use Scenarios and Quantitative Analysis of Alternatives

Scenario-building allow the technical and non-technical participants in the comprehensive planning process to consider the

impacts of various ways in which the community can grow. The purpose of scenario-building is to analyze various land use strategies, transportation alternatives and perhaps alternatives in other major community or regional systems as a means to evaluating impacts and making decisions. Assumptions, rather than presented as certain, might be placed in the form of alternatives for several uncertain futures. Scenarios present different stories, each of which integrates internally consistent interpretations of future events. This approach can be built into a comprehensive planning practice to strengthen and crystalize the analysis.

T.J. Kent articulated the importance of the scenario-building approach in The Urban General Plan, while it did not become part of the conventional comprehensive planning process at that time. He stated: "Since there can be no plan without decisions rejecting certain alternatives and adopting other, and since the understanding and support necessary to implement the plan require constant explanation of the reasoning expressed in the final plan, the major alternatives that were considered and rejected by the legislative body should be described in the plan document."

At a minimum, there may be a comparison of the trend land use pattern - reflecting no policy-change - to the preferred land use alternative that is proposed as the future land use pattern. Preferably, several viable alternatives would be developed based on differing driving forces and story lines.

Various quantitative analyses should be used to evaluate the pros and cons of the alternatives. How much land area is required for the different urban uses is one key comparison. This is particularly important for understanding in-fill and redevelopment. An assessment of disturbance of environmentally sensitive lands - such as steep hills, highly erosive soils, wetlands, riparian areas and prime agricultural lands is important. Transportation performance is another important area for comparative analyses. Water use is another area of particular concern in this arid country.

D. Physical planning description and targets

The land use element is the core portion of the plan describing the community's strategy of growth. The essential role of the plan is to influence land use decisions. Land use categories should be

selected that are most meaningful to the community. According to these categories, maps of existing land use and future land use should be prepared. Densities and intensities of land use should be sufficiently fine-grade to allow calculations of land areas - and these should be indicated in the plan document. The map should show if and where mixes of land uses and centers are desirable. The relationship between land use and transportation (another physical planning component) should be explored.

E. Clarity in policy statements

Goals, objectives and policies should be as clear, succinct and relevant to the subject matter as possible. The hierarchy moves from more general to more specific in developing the statements. The statements should be readable, reasonably simple, and deal with a single subject matter. Policy statements should not be overly vague or ambiguous. Statements should provide guidance for the body of work addressed in the relevant element (for instance, transportation policies should generally not be included in a land use element). The statements should be reasonably short and simple, while not stripped bare of meaningful elaborations that express the purpose of the goal, objective or policy. Finally, policy statements should adhere to the public input or policy guidance arrived at through the processes used to develop the plan.

F. Internal consistency within the Comprehensive Plan

All of the components of a comprehensive plan should be well-coordinated and complimentary. Typically the land use element establishes the core set of growth strategies with which other elements should be supporting. The transportation element should substantively contribute to the urban form developed in the land use plan. The capital facilities plan should be in sync with the projected needs for new land development. Land use/transportation planning expert Robert Cervero has articulated the principle that land use plans should shape transportation decisions as well as other elements of a comprehensive plan. Conversely, if water, transportation, open space and other critical community and regional systems cannot practically support a desired land use pattern, then the land use plan must be changed.

G. Tie-in of the Comprehensive Plan to current planning and capital

budgeting

The comprehensive plan should be used to guide the zoning code and official zoning map, zoning discretionary decisions such as re-zoning, special use permits and conditional use permits, and subdivision approvals. The plan should give guidance on various growth management tools. Annexations, historic districts and landmarks designations, extraterritorial planning and plating, local economic development, impact and development fees, and transfers of development rights are among the planning actions that should be supported by the comprehensive plan.

Implementation measures should be established in or tied to the comprehensive plan. Actions of responsible parties, time frames for actions, sequencing and indicators of performance might be addressed in the plan or a companion strategic plan.

Capital facilities planning should be integrated into comprehensive planning. An element of the plan dedicated to capital facilities is recommended, as shown in the comprehensive plan template.

H. Phasing of growth

Phasing provides guidance that land development activities are proceeding in locations where they can be supported in a timely and efficient way with capital facilities and other regional and community systems. The functional plan elements for transportation and capital facilities must be coordinated with any phasing plan. Often those plans have a shorter horizon year than the long range land use plan, indicating when identified improvements are anticipated.

9. Strategies for Consideration in Comprehensive Plans

Following is a list of general land use approaches and strategies supported in the Middle Rio Grande's Focus 2050 Regional Plan that might be considered appropriate in local comprehensive plans. This is only a partial list; and the Regional Plan should be consulted for a full set of the concepts.

- Jobs/housing balance improved, including basic employment in identified centers.
- Urban development directed within existing urban areas (mainly in

- municipalities), on adjacent mesas and away from the Valley floor
- Encourage retention of irrigated agriculture in the Valley
- Encourage new towns in identified areas
- Limited clustered development located in traditional valley communities
- Encourage in-fill and redevelopment in current urban community areas
- Encourage emphasis on centers and corridors and transit-oriented development
- Support extra-territorial planning and zoning
- Assure that there are adequate public facilities for development
- Assure that there are adequate long range water supplies to support development
- Delineate community edges to retain distinct, separate communities
- Consider “green linkages” between the outer edges of communities to discourage creeping commercial or residential growth outside the designated urban or urbanizing areas
- Develop any new towns with minimum urban densities, with attention to appropriate location and character
- Discourage the creation of additional large lot subdivisions
- Determine means to discourage development and reassemble pre-platted bulk land subdivisions
- Encourage mixed use centers of an appropriate size to serve community
- Encourage each neighborhood to contain local shopping, public and recreational facilities
- Discourage linear commercial development following arterials

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