

I. BACKGROUND

The Tijeras Canyon/Carnuel Plan serves as a community scale plan providing Bernalillo County with guidance in the planning of this area. The plan is consistent with the East Mountain Area Plan (EMAP) and examines this particular community's concerns regarding future residential and commercial development, specifically focusing on the need for water and wastewater infrastructure.

Plan Area

The Tijeras Canyon/Carnuel Plan area encompasses the greater Carnuel community, Echo Canyon Estates, North Echo Canyon, Monticello, the Coyote Springs Master Plan area, Coyote Springs Neighborhood (developed), and Western Tijeras Canyon (West Tijeras Canyon Estates and Office Park, Four Hills Partnership et. al. properties, Caballo de Fuerza Neighborhood, Rabadi property, Herrera Road Neighborhood, Silver Hills Neighborhood) area including the undeveloped tracts of land in the western portion of Carnuel and just east of the municipal limits of Albuquerque (See Appendix B, p. 30). The plan area is bounded on the west by the east boundary of the City of Albuquerque, to the east by the underpass of Highway 333 at I-40 (colloquially known as Dead Man's Curve), to the south by the U.S. Forest Service lands near Coyote Springs and to the north by the Sandia Wilderness (See Map on page 7).

According to the 2000 US Census Bureau, the Tijeras Canyon/Carnuel Plan area consists of approximately 1,210 residents. There are an estimated 518 occupied and 37 vacant houses. The population in households is 1,197. Among the households, 1,031 people live in owner-occupied housing while 166 are renters. Since 2000, there was very little new construction in the plan area. The median age in the plan area is 42.5. The Hispanic population within the plan area makes up approximately 53% of the total population of the study area. (*Source:* U.S. Census Bureau 2000 estimates for Carnuel CDP; Block Group 38.07, Group 1, Blocks 1024-1027; and Block Group 7.10, Group 2, Blocks 2000-2013, 2031-2032, 2050.)



Community Planning Session, January 7, 2006.
Photo by James M. Aranda

Since the early 1990s, new development has taken place in the southwest portions of the plan area. Subdivisions have also been platted and developed on the western portion of the plan boundary referred to as Western Tijeras Canyon. The plan area also has a few large tracts of undeveloped land south of the Interstate 40 frontage and Carnuel and in the Western Tijeras Canyon area. Small-scale commercial uses are sparsely spread along Historic Route 66. Today, the neighborhoods within the plan area continue to enjoy a rural atmosphere despite encroachment of urban development.

Plan Process

The Tijeras Canyon/Carnuel Plan process began in October 2005 and included several community meetings. These two meetings were held on October 26 and December 6 at Los Vecinos Community Center. The purpose and intent of the plan was presented to community members and existing conditions of the plan area were discussed.

The basis of the plan was developed in an all day planning session on January 7, 2006. This session included participation from approximately forty residents and County staff from the Planning, Environmental Health and Public Works Offices who identified the development issues, goals and recommendations used to draft this plan. Additional public meetings were held on November 13, 2006 and January 23, 2007 to offer neighbors the opportunity to comment on the plan draft.

Area History

In 1763, Spanish colonial governor of New Mexico Tomás Velez Gachupín ordered that a permanent settlement be established in the Sandia Mountains east of the Villa de Albuquerque for the purpose of developing a defensive buffer between the Spanish settlement and nomadic tribes. In the early 1700s, the Pueblo and Hispanic settlements of the valley had experienced frequent attacks by nomadic bands of Native Americans. A plan was developed to move landless *genizaros* (Hispanicized Indians) and mestizos (Spanish and Native parentage) to the canyon in the mountains for land distribution and defense. Due to continued attacks, the settlement was difficult to sustain and experienced periods of abandonment and resettlement. The communities in the Carnue Land Grant are the oldest continually inhabited communities in the Sandia Mountain range. In 1817, the children and grandchildren of the area's original settlers, and other landless mestizos and mixed-castes (social order) were allowed to return to the Cañon de Carnue to build permanent settlements and reorganize farm plots and communal land holdings. In 1819, the Cañon de Carnue was re-issued as a community land grant known as San Miguel de Laredo de Carnue. The village included a defensible plaza and various acequias throughout the study area (U.S. Forest Ranger District, Heritage Report No.2002-03-008).

After the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed between the United States and Mexico, ending the U.S. - Mexican War, the United States was obligated to establish courts in which to adjudicate the lands held by Mexican citizens. After a 40-year court proceeding, the U.S. court issued an order reducing the 90,000 acre claim of the Carnue Land Grant to 2,000 acres which excluded the historical communal lands and reduced the community's size to only the private tracts allotted to individual families.

For much of the early 1900s, the built environment was primarily typified by rock and adobe single family housing structures with high-density family compounds surrounded by corrals and small gardens. The dominant land use within the land grant's common lands was goat herding. This land use pattern continued until the 1940s when the increase in commercial use along Historic Route 66 led to the development of a number of roadside hotels and gas stations. In this same decade, new residential developments were built, known as Echo Canyon Estates and the Monticello neighborhood, further transforming the historic community. The construction of I-40 in the 1970s significantly fragmented the community. The interstate's presence increased traffic through Tijeras Canyon and split the north side of Carnuel, Monticello, and Echo Canyon from the south side of Carnuel and from Coyote Springs.