

## Introduction

*A plan, much like a community, is made by bringing together diverse levels of thoughts and actions.*

Land use plans guide the development of a particular area. Plans generally include: (1) the assessment of an area's resources and the needs of its population, (2) formation of goals and policies addressing these goals, and (3) a timeframe or schedule for implementation. The process of creating a land use plan brings together the area's governmental entities and local community members who work together to help guide the community into the future. The process allows those involved to visualize potential changes and analyze the associated impacts. Together, the government and the community can work to anticipate and avoid future problems.

In 1988, the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan) was adopted to guide land use for the entire Bernalillo County. Since the initial adoption, subsequent updates have been published. The last update came out in 2002. The Comprehensive Plan maps the areas suitable for development at various levels of rural and urban services for the entire Bernalillo County. Within the Comprehensive Plan, six development density categories and a set of Urban Centers policies are adopted as a guide for zoning, utility and public services planning, and for subsequent area sector plans. Each category has distinct allowances and restrictions on development. The entire East Mountain Area falls within the Rural Comprehensive Plan designation. The Rural category is identified as having severe soil or water limitations and having agricultural or recreational potential important enough to significantly limit developments to an overall density of one unit per two acres, in the A-2 zone, which is the predominant zoning in the East Mountain Area.

While a plan contains general policies, in itself it cannot be used for enforcement. Ordinances are established to carry out the policies from these plans. The legal nature of planning requires that all plans must be compatible with other plans for the same area. The Comprehensive Plan refers to area and facility plans, such as the East Mountain Area Plan, for greater detail. In turn, these plans refer to sector development, neighborhood and corridor plans for even more detail. For example, the Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department has prepared the *Bernalillo County Parks, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan (2003)* and the *East Mountain Trails and Bikenways Master Plan (2005)* that outline specific

actions for the East Mountain Area. The final stage of planning can include detailed site and facility planning that results in construction of new or improvements to existing facilities.

## Policy Preamble

The East Mountain Area Plan (EMAP) makes general recommendations for land use, development, and community service activities in the East Mountain Area. As a greater level of specificity is needed in the planning of a particular area of the East Mountains, a more detailed plan (or sector plan) is the appropriate tool.

The County Commission adopts Area Plans, such as the EMAP, by Resolution. Resolutions and other actions that can be taken by the County Commission are defined below.

**Ordinance** – This is the most powerful action the County Commission can take. It is law enacted through formal procedures. An ordinance usually requires publication in the newspaper and a certain period of time (normally 30 days) before it becomes effective. An ordinance supersedes any motion or resolution in conflict with it no matter when the motion or resolution was made. In the case of zoning ordinance, it must almost always be preceded by at least one advertised public hearing. Zoning has precedence over all planning documents.

**Resolution** - Certain actions that a County Commission may take are called “resolutions.” Such actions are recorded on a separate piece of paper clearly identified as a “resolution” with a certain number assigned to it. Resolutions are more formal than motions and equally binding. In the case of a conflict between a motion and a resolution, the most recent action prevails, regardless of the form of its adoption.

**Motion** –County Commissions can accomplish certain items by a simple motion approved by a majority vote of the body. Actions by motion are recorded by council or commission minutes. Motions are the weakest action a council can take. Approving an appointment to a city committee is an example of an action taken by motion approved by a majority vote of the body.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF EMAP STUDIES, SURVEYS AND GUIDELINES

Many policies in this plan call for feasibility studies, surveys, assessments, design guidelines, and performance criteria. The Bernalillo County Planning Commission shall not inherit or act on policy language regarding these aforementioned studies until such time that the appropriate criteria and committees have been established and these studies are completed and formally adopted by the appropriate body.

Studies, surveys, assessments, design guidelines, and performance criteria mentioned in EMAP's policy section shall be prioritized and initiated within two years of the plan's adoption. A checklist will be created in order to track progress on initiating these actions and the County Planning Manager will delegate and direct the work through the appropriate agency. These respective County agencies are responsible for developing criteria and an evaluation process for measuring impacts. As these actions are completed, a two-year review process will be established.

## Planning Concepts For Rural Areas

Generally, planning involves the analysis of physical, economic, and social/psychological elements that impact a specified geographical area. At the beginning of the planning process, planners and residents identify a wide variety of factors such as the identity of an area, natural resources, land use designations and property ownership, development densities, community amenities and infrastructure standards. Then they undertake more detailed research of some of the following issues:

- What constitutes rural character?
- How do Comprehensive Plan policies affect the area?
- How does the rate of population growth affect the area?
- What other plans or studies affect the area?
- How much does water availability affect land use activities?
- What are the historic and archeological properties existing in the area?
- What role do rural lands play in natural resource use or production in the county?
- What rural economic development opportunities exist?

Further along in the process, the planning group formulates goals from this analysis and finally, establishes measures by which to achieve these goals.

From the residents' point of view, planning is driven by a vision of what they want their community to be, and to some extent, what they do not want it to be. During the 1992 East Mountain Area Plan process, a formal visioning session took place. The information that resulted was incorporated into that plan and remains in the updated plan. The voice of the community has reaffirmed the desire to maintain the rural character of the area. In the Community Voices section of this plan, residents confirm the value of living in a rural area, what they want to keep about it, the role of natural resources, existence of significant sites/special places, and establishment of appropriate development.

From a governmental entity's position, planning is driven by the need to provide opportunities for housing and employment and related amenities for the entire jurisdiction's population while ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of all.

The creation of an area plan is a collaboration of the wants and requirements of both the residents and the governmental entities. Rural area planning involves a great degree of sensitivity to natural resources. Land use decisions that impact natural resources in rural areas, are more immediately felt by its inhabitants. This was apparent in the EMA residents' current recommendations on goals and policies, which were subsequently incorporated into this EMAP's goals and policies.

## Purpose of the East Mountain Area Plan

### ORIGINAL PLAN

The first East Mountain Area Plan was adopted by the Bernalillo County Commission on May 6, 1975 and amended June 19, 1979. It was updated again in 1992.

The East Mountain Area encompasses approximately 321 square miles (210,000 acres) of eastern Bernalillo County. Two perpendicular routes bisect the study area. I-40 extends east-west across the area, providing the primary connection from the East Mountain Area to the city of Albuquerque through Tijeras Canyon, and the area's major north-south roadway, State Highway 14 north of I-40 and State Highway 337 (formerly South 14) south of I-40.

The area has developed around the Sandia, Manzanita, and Manzano mountain ranges, owned and managed by the National Forest Service. The mountains provide the area with scenic beauty, wildlife habitat areas, and diverse recreational opportunities.

The purpose of the original plan was to establish guidelines by which to carry out the land use goals for the East Mountain Area. As in the original plan, the updated plan presents the existing physical and environmental conditions; historical and projected population trends; and industrial, commercial, and residential development trends. The historical and existing conditions for the area provide a framework for the plan's evaluation of existing County policies and regulations relative to the community's goals and vision. The East Mountain Area Plan is developed as a statement of policy that will encourage involvement from Bernalillo County elected officials. The plan provides guidance to the Bernalillo County Commission and County Planning Commission on decisions regarding land use controls and development in the East Mountain Area. The plan also recommends policies and specific actions that should be pursued by the County in order to implement the desired policies.

The entire study area was included for data collection and analysis purposes. The area contains sub-areas that have distinct and different characteristics from one another. Based upon these data and analyses, it is recognized that those areas west of the crest of the Sandia Mountains and north of I-40, including Sandia Heights, are excluded from all implementation recommendations and policies contained in this

plan. The areas west of the crest are included in planning efforts for the foothills adjacent to Albuquerque. Although Cañon de Carnué grant, La Merced del Pueblo de Chilili land grant and San Pedro land grant fall within the East Mountain geographic planning area, implementation, recommendations and policies of this plan do not apply to these grants. In addition, the Isleta and Sandia Indian Reservations have been included in this plan's boundaries, but the policies of this plan do not apply there. All policies proposed in this plan do apply to all other areas east of the Sandia Crest, Manzanita Mountains and Manzano Mountains within Bernalillo County.

## PLAN UPDATE and ORGANIZATION

This 2005 document serves as an update to the 1992 East Mountain Area Plan. The goals presented in this updated plan incorporate the current physical, social, and environmental factors of the East Mountain Area as well as a community survey.

In this updated version, the community has identified the following issues that have become more increasingly critical since the last plan.

- Rural Character – defining and maintaining the integrity of the natural resources
- Water Availability – increased number of large subdivisions
- Residential/Commercial Development – number and size of residential development and businesses, land use changes

These issues are incorporated in this 2005 Plan. Section I contains a summary of the Plan and process. Section II is an introduction to the purpose of planning and presents the Goals as updated and revised for the East Mountain Area. Section III provides history and current data on the area. Equally significant is the Community Voices section that expresses the main goals of the community. Finally, Section IV provides policies for land use, natural environment, and community development.

Updated maps and tables are made possible by the improved technology and accessibility to digital data. The discrepancy in numbers between land use tables is due to the reliance on two different sources, the Bernalillo County Assessor's office and the City of Albuquerque Geographic Information System (AGIS), which maintains Bernalillo County data. AGIS enters information into its system based on each lot of record belonging to any given owner. The County Assessor's office collects information based on property ownership for tax purposes. Conceivably, one lot of record could contain more than one parcel.

## General Goals

The following information summarizes the foundation for the Area Plan:

- The rural character of the area is defined by open spaces, natural ecosystems, beautiful views, quietness, low-population density, limited vehicle traffic, neighborhood-scale businesses.
- Responsible development must be properly planned for and regulated to prevent it from destroying the area’s rural character and environment.
- Natural resources are the area’s most important assets and as such should be protected.

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<b>LAND USE</b>	<p>Promote development that retains the unique rural character of the East Mountain Area.</p> <p>Protect the property rights of property owners while ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all inhabitants.</p> <p>Preserve agricultural uses that are compatible with the environmental conditions of the area.</p> <p>Prevent future degradation of the natural environment as a result of new subdivisions.</p>
<b>BERNALILLO COUNTY OPEN SPACE</b>	<p>Work with private and non-profit entities to establish and maintain a network of educational and recreational facilities, parks, trails and open spaces that promotes recreation, tourism, cultural activities, trail corridors, protection from natural and manmade hazards, and conservation of natural and visual resources.</p> <p>Secure long-term funding (20+ years) source for Bernalillo County Open Space (BCOS).</p> <p>Develop resource management plans for BCOS properties that conserve and enhance natural and cultural resources while providing opportunities for public education and recreation.</p> <p>Preserve and enhance water resources on BCOS properties.</p> <p>Form partnerships with agencies and community organizations to build BCOS capacity for land management by BCOS and other land conservation partners.</p>

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<b>NATURAL ENVIRONMENT</b>	Promote preservation of the natural environment to maintain rural character, protect the watershed, control erosion, facilitate drainage, reduce air pollution, and conserve the viewshed.
WATER &	Maintain a dependable, quality water supply for the area.
WASTEWATER	Minimize the potential for ground water pollution.
VISUAL RESOURCES	Maintain and improve the existing visual quality of the East Mountain Area
AIR, LIGHT, NOISE POLLUTION	Safeguard public health and enhance the quality of life by enforcing lighting, noise, and air pollution ordinances.  Improve air quality to safeguard public health and enhance the quality of life.  In accordance with Bernalillo County regulations, prevent noise conflicts between new land use and existing development.  Maintain and improve the existing visual quality of the East Mountain Area.
WILDLIFE	Strive to maintain wildlife habitats and create new habitats where wildlife would otherwise be displaced.
SOILS, VEGETATION, AND TOPOGRAPHY	Protect slopes. Preserve native vegetation. Control non-native invasive plants.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT	<p>Allow for residential development while protecting the rural character of the area.</p> <p>Ensure that zoning meets residential and housing needs.</p> <p>Ensure that infrastructure keeps pace with residential development.</p>
ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT	<p>Achieve diversified economic development balanced with other important social, cultural, and environmental goals.</p>
CULTURAL RESOURCES	<p>Identify and, if appropriate and feasible, manage or acquire significant archeological and paleontological sites for research, education, economic, or recreational use.</p>
FACILITIES	<p>Provide and promote diversified and quality recreational programs and facilities for the citizens of Bernalillo County.</p> <p>Develop and manage public services and facilities in an efficient, equitable manner.</p> <p>Maintain an accessible solid waste station and promote recycling.</p>
TRANSPORTA- TION	<p>Plan transportation infrastructure to facilitate a balanced circulation/transportation system including automobile, bicycle, pedestrian, equestrian, and public transportation modes that respect the existing rural characteristics of the East Mountain Area.</p>
PUBLIC SAFETY	<p>Improve fire protection, law enforcement, and emergency evacuation.</p>