Community Meetings
December 7, 2021
AGENDA

• Introductions
• Scope/Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan
• Summary of Public Input
• Key Issues and Priorities
• Recommendations
• Discussion
INTRO QUESTIONS

Tell us (actually, type to us!) about yourself:

• Which community do you live in?
• How long have you lived in Valencia County?
• What is your favorite restaurant in Valencia County?
WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

• Vision document for the future of Valencia County; established through a community-driven process

• Policy guide that informs decisions about capital investments and land use (in contrast to a regulatory document such as the Zoning Code)

• Outlines existing conditions, challenges, and opportunities

• Considers needs 20+ years into the future

• Strategies to achieve County goals and policy priorities
WHY IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPORTANT?

- Understand and anticipate changing demographics and economic conditions
- Reference document for staff, residents, and policy-makers when developing infrastructure projects and making land use decisions
- Qualify for grant funding; state recommends that a Comp Plan be updated every 5 years
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Focus is on **unincorporated areas**
- Incorporated communities (e.g. Belen and Los Lunas) have Comprehensive Plans that identify their own priorities
- Valencia County Comprehensive Plan documents services in incorporated areas that are available for all residents
- Many issues transcend boundaries – housing needs, economic development, recreational opportunities, transportation needs
CHAPTERS / COMPONENTS

- Community Profile / Demographics
- Community Engagement
- Land Use
- Housing
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Community Services & Utilities
- Natural Resources / Environment

Structure of Individual Chapters

- Existing Conditions
- Community Priorities
- Goals and Action Items
HOW IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UTILIZED?

• How will staff reference the Comprehensive Plan?

• What were the challenges with using the existing Comp Plan (approved in 2005)?

• Allows Valencia County to qualify for a range of grant funding
COMMUNITY SURVEY

- 449 respondents
- Residents believe quality of life is generally high, but only a quarter say conditions are improving
- Top reasons respondents choose to live in Valencia County:
  - Rural character/small town feel
  - Sense of community

How would you rate the quality of life in Valencia County?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Do you believe the quality of life in Valencia County is improving, declining, or remaining the same?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declining</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remaining the same</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
COMMUNITY SURVEY

Primary Concerns

- Crime and Safety: 84%
- Increased Cost of Living: 60%
- Employment Opportunities: 55%
- Loss of Rural Character: 52%
- Excessive Urban Development: 46%
- Pop. Loss/Youth Moving Away: 38%
- Adequate Supply of Housing: 27%

Means of Improving Quality of Life

- More Local Stores Nearby: 38%
- More Recreational Opportunities: 36%
- Improved Access to Services: 32%
- Greater Range of Job Opportunities: 24%
- More Transportation Options: 13%
- More Housing Options: 11%
WHAT ELSE DID WE HEAR?

- High value placed on the combination of rural lifestyle and proximity to urban amenities
- Tension: urban growth versus rural identity
- Concerns over long-term water resource availability
- Declining viability of agriculture; younger generations are less interested in farming
- Previous Comp Plan (2005) does not provide sufficient guidance on land use decisions
COMMUNITY ASSETS

- Cultural/historical landmarks
- Rural heritage/atmosphere
- Farming greenbelt along the Rio Grande
- Railroad – BNSF and Rail Runner
- UNM Valencia
GENERAL COMMUNITY NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

• Greater range of job opportunities (3/4 of employed residents commute outside the County for work)
• Access to medical services
• Community programs and recreational opportunities
• Roadway improvements
• Improved broadband/internet access

OnTheMap, 2018
WHAT DO WE KNOW?
GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

• Spillover effects from activity in Albuquerque and Los Lunas
• Potential drivers of economic activity in unincorporated areas
  o I-25 interchange and river crossing
  o Future regional medical center
  o Land development proposals west of I-25, along Meadowlake Rd
WHAT DO WE KNOW?

POPULATION DYNAMICS

- Modest growth at County level in last 5-10 years
- Recent increase in housing demand, especially in Los Lunas
- County forecast (MRCOG): 2016-2040
  - 4% total population growth
  - 5% total employment growth
  - Majority of growth is likely to occur in incorporated areas
  - Effects of pandemic still being determined
WHAT DO WE KNOW?

POPULATION DYNAMICS

- Increasing share of the population will be over age 65
- Decreasing share of population will be under 18
- Fewer individuals to participate in the workforce (i.e. ages 18-64)
- Implications for housing needs, senior services, school enrollment, travel patterns, etc.
KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

• Tension between urban/economic development and historical land use patterns

• How do we manage growth while preserving community character?

• Address service and housing needs associated with changing demographics
PRIORITIZE GROWTH AREAS

- Activity centers and corridors where future growth can be concentrated
- Alleviate pressure for new development in rural and agricultural areas
- Encourage additional retail and services in these areas
- Update Zoning Code to allow for more flexibility and (somewhat) higher density
PRIORITY GROWTH AREAS

• **Corridors**
  - Meadowlake Rd
  - Morris Rd
  - North Manzano Expressway

• **Centers**
  - West Mesa
  - Belen Railway/Industrial Area
  - Las Maravillas (south)
  - Manzano Center (El Cerro Mission Rd)
RECOMMENDATIONS: LAND USE & HOUSING

• Capture **regional growth in Priority Growth Areas** to preserve the rural character of the County.

• Coordinate **land use and infrastructure decisions** and ensure that Valencia County residents have convenient **access to goods and services**.

• **Update the Zoning Code** to allow more flexibility in land use, particularly in Priority Growth Areas.

• Promote a **variety of housing** types within the County, including accessory dwelling units.

• Allow for **higher density housing**, including mixed-use development, **within Priority Growth Areas** to increase housing availability and affordability.
RECOMMENDATIONS: TRANSPORTATION

• Prioritize maintenance of the Valencia County transportation system.

• Pursue targeted roadway improvements to improve regional connections and support economic development initiatives, including the I-25 interchange and Morris Rd river crossing.

• Invest in recreational facilities and multi-modal transportation infrastructure that expand opportunities for Valencia County residents and visitors to travel without a vehicle.
RECOMMENDATIONS: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Coordinate with Los Lunas and Belen on business recruitment efforts and participate in regional economic development initiatives.

- Continue to partner with UNM Valencia and the Small Business Development Center on workforce training initiatives.

- Expand access to high-speed internet and support investments in broadband infrastructure.

- Support the expansion of healthcare services in Valencia County, including the development of a Valencia County Regional Medical Facility.

- Encourage new business development in Priority Growth Areas by updating the Zoning Code to create greater flexibility and proactively investing in transportation and utilities infrastructure.
OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Natural Resources

- **Conserve the open space** and natural habitats of Valencia County.
- Promote **water conservation** through programs for County residents and regional surface water supply management.

Community Services

- Create a formal **Parks and Recreation Department** that administers facilities and programs; pursue a Parks, Open Space, & Trails Plan.
- Invest in **community facilities** such as senior centers, community centers, waste pick-up sites, etc.
- Expand **broadband infrastructure** and improve access to high-speed internet.
NEXT STEPS

• Presentation to County Commission – December 15

• Facebook Live Events
  o Thursday, December 16 – 12-1 PM
  o Thursday, December 16 – 6-7 PM

• Comments can be made by email or via project website through January 15, 2022: [https://bhinc.com/valencia-county-comp-plan/](https://bhinc.com/valencia-county-comp-plan/)
QUESTIONS

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