

CONCLUSION – TALE OF TWO FUTURES

In the spring of 2000, the City and County authorized the Regional Planning Authority Joint Powers Agreement that formally initiated joint planning of the extraterritorial zone. Plans existed – even excellent plans – but there was agreement that the urban fringe had special needs and issues that required a different kind of planning. What was not clear at that time was what exactly that “kind of planning” might be.

In the early years of the RPA, one question remained on the table after each meeting – “Why should we do this together? What does it bring to the community that we cannot do ourselves?” One of the difficult hurdles facing the RPA members was in defining an exchange. A plan had to offer something to both the city and county to make it viable and have purpose.

The continuing water crisis of 2001 brought with it new regional challenges. Not only was there a realization that the drought and its effects were now an irrefutable component of the region’s future, but it was challenging the way Santa Fean’s conducted everyday business. The crisis became so serious that the City was forced to enter into Stage 3 water restrictions in order to meet daily peak water demand. Philosophical differences on growth and water entered every discussion at every level – including regional planning.

It was in the summer of 2002 that the RPA found itself responding to those earlier questions and in doing so, the foundation for the plan was laid. The relationship between land use decisions and water supply and demand needed to be recognized. It was at this time that the future land use plan became the Santa Fe Regional Future Land Use and Growth Management Plan. The plan’s expansion implied a broader goal – cooperative growth through more responsible land use decisions and water resource management.

As the RPA continued building the plan, a balanced position had to be maintained. That position was constantly measured in terms of overall community benefit – is there a balance in what is yielded to what is being gained? More importantly, does the plan infer a greater short-term and long-term public benefit to the citizens of Santa Fe? Does the plan impart a greater benefit to some at the cost of burdening others? Again, the implications of the plan needed to create a more balanced community. In basing the plan on regional principles and policies as a measure of community benefit, it is suggested that the plan has achieved that delicate balance.

Developing the plan together has been about building a renewed, cooperative relationship through common interests and needs. The water crisis has provided the catalyst in bringing the city and county together. It has not been an easy or smooth process; nothing worthwhile ever is. Working together in order to find regional solutions to the overwhelming challenges presented by water has been worth the time and effort put forth by so many to create this plan.

What was originally a tale of two futures has been presented here as one future. A future whereby the City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County plan for and manage growth and water cooperatively. Where land use decisions, based on a unified vision, become a measure of

community benefit, and where the fundamentals for water and land use together are laid out so that the City and County can move forward together in building a sustainable future.

Section 7.1. Regional Future Trends

The Santa Fe region has historically enjoyed a modest population growth rate at or near 2%. While many other western communities have seen much higher growth trends during the last several decades, Santa Fe's rate of growth has remained relative consistent. Population growth rates, particularly within the incorporated area, have tended to decline slightly since the mid-1990s. Growth rates in housing, however, have continued at a slightly higher pace. This "growth paradigm" may be attributed to two factors; primarily due to shrinking household size within the city, paired with a possible increase in the second/vacation home market.

The urban fringe, or extraterritorial zone, continues to see growth rates above 5%. Within parts of the EZ, population increases have tended to outstrip housing gains, which imply increasing household sizes. This has been particularly true within the urban area immediately surrounding the city.



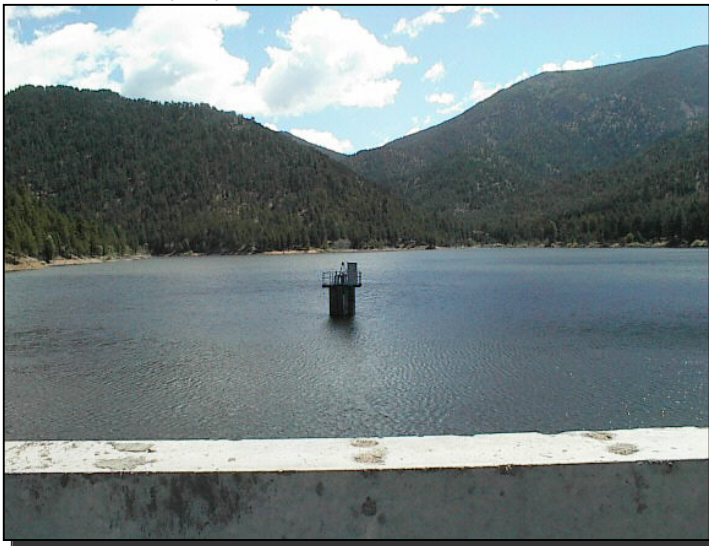
Santa Fe Region as seen from La Bajada

Where more rapid growth occurred during the late 1980s through the mid-90s within the urban area, that level of growth is expected to slow and possibly shift southward to the Community College District. As population and housing continues to move outside of the urban area, it is expected that employment and the demand for non-residential floor area will increase and begin to slowly move from the incorporated area of the city to areas within the urban fringe. The city will continue to hold the lion's share of the total commercial area (e.g., 27.8 million square feet by 2020); however, the urban area will continue to capture an incremental higher percentage of the market growth. By 2020, the city is projected to add nearly 5 million square feet of non-residential floor area, while the extraterritorial zone is projected to add nearly 4 million square feet. Of that four million, nearly 2.4 million square feet of commercial area is projected to locate within the Community College District.

The demand for water is a direct function of population. Increases in water demand are also affected by the rate at which it is conserved (e.g., offsets, gray water reuse), population gains and additional water use for non-residential development. With the drought of 2001, it has

become evident that the demand for water within the Santa Fe region is outstripping current supply, particularly in drought years where surface water may be limited or unavailable. In response to potential water shortages, the City and County have recently adopted near- and/or longer-term conservation measures, which essentially shifts the water demand curve downward. This may create some protection in meeting demand requirements during dry periods as well as allowing development to continue with marginal increases in new demand associated with growth.

The County water utility system has fully committed its 500-acre feet of “wheeled” water that it receives through the City system in accordance with the 1994 agreement. The County is seeking to secure or develop a future reliable water supply in order to reduce the overall reliance on groundwater and shift towards a public water supply system that utilizes surface water. Currently, both the City and County utility systems rely on surface water supplied from the McClure and Nichols Reservoirs and groundwater sources from the City wellfield (including the Osage and NW Wells) and the Buckman Wellfield #1-13. The City and County are in the process of undertaking a major capital venture which will secure future surface water from the Rio Grande River via a \$100+ million Buckman Direct Diversion Project expected to be completed in 2008. The diversion project will allow for a more sustainable and manageable water supply system in that it will add a third primary water source, making long-term



McClure Reservoir

conjunctive management more feasible. Access to Rio Grande River water will remain somewhat constrained according to the limitations of water rights and offset requirements and the overall health of the river. The Buckman Direct Diversion is viewed as an intermediate water supply source. Long-term future water supply for the Santa Fe region will have to incorporate creative methods and/or new, innovative sources in order to meet the increasing demand for water beyond the year 2010.

Future EZ development capacity (as measured according to non-rural, developable lands) is expected to meet projected needs to 2020 provided that overall development occurs at moderate intensities within each land use classification. Expected (2020) needs include 9,100 of additional housing units and 4.2 million square feet of non-residential floor area. In contrast, there are an estimated 9,500 housing units and 7.1 million square feet of non-residential floor area that have been approved or are pending, but not yet built. Generally, total pending development exceeds projected need for both housing and commercial floor area.

Section 7.2. Regional Planning through Principles and Policies, Future Land Uses and Growth Management

The framework for future development is set forth in the three policy elements of this plan. The regional principles, policies, preferred development patterns and their related allocation percentages establish measures for determining community benefit as it relates to future growth and development. The future land use designations and corresponding map present regional land use descriptions and their appropriate locations in accordance with the principles and policies. These future land use policies are to then serve as the basis for subsequent zoning. The growth management strategy provides the foundation for prioritizing growth in accordance with “best practices” principles and for development phasing according to anticipated water resources. The strategy is to serve as a basis for future water utility extension policies, for implementation of future water supply agreements, and for revisions to platting and subdivision requirements.

The five regional principles are based on strong beliefs about the future—they address critical issues and concerns regarding future water, affordable housing, economic diversification and employment opportunity, infrastructure and services, and regional character. Related to each principle are support policies that express necessary actions in order to affect a desired result. In addition to the principles and policies, a set of preferred EZ development patterns and their recommended percentage allocations are determined according to their perceived ability to meet each of the policies and principles.

Generally, patterns that promote clustered, compact development with a mixing of housing types and compatible land uses, and that provides for public open space areas are considered “encouraged” future patterns. Development that promotes sprawl, encourages non-centralized utilities and infrastructure and/or uniform housing types are considered “discouraged” patterns. Traditional development patterns typical of the historical communities are said to be “protected”. Roughly three quarters of all new development is to be directed towards “encouraged” development types. Discouraged and protected patterns may occur within the remaining one-quarter allocation; however, they should continue to meet the regional principles and policies where applicable.

The thirteen future land use designations describe the types of future uses that are considered desirable and appropriate for the Santa Fe region. They are also described in terms of their compatibility with the regional principles and policies. The future land use map applies these designations to appropriate locations using such criteria as existing land use patterns, prior planning efforts and desired and compatible future uses. Although there are already several community/district plans approved or underway within the planning area, one map with one common set of land use descriptions was needed to establish a common land use dialogue between the city and county. The future land use map meets that requirement.

The future land use designations and mapping were designed as overarching classifications—they tend to be regional in scope and consolidate some 33+ land use categories from the various

plans, including the Santa Fe County 1999 Growth Management Plan and the City of Santa Fe 1999 General Plan. Several of the designations imply two or more sub-classifications, which are to become the basis for the [land use-based] zoning districts that are to be developed and applied throughout the five-mile EZ following adoption of this plan. As part of the first phase of implementation, “concept” zoning districts, or the zoning district profiles, are to developed and recommended by the RPA.

The growth management strategy, delineated in *Chapter 6: Choices for Future Growth*, provides the framework for linking water and land use together. This is done through development phasing according to growth priority areas. These areas are created by mapping a series of overlapping themes based on regional principles – areas of frequent overlap suggest priority growth areas. These areas are where the principles and policies may fittingly apply, where the encouraged, preferred patterns are most likely to occur. Growth priority areas represent the three quarters allocation for preferred growth. The growth areas may also serve as the basis for cooperative water delivery areas where future water supply is to be allocated according to future city and county water agreements.

Future water, within some explicit time frame, is allocated to the cooperative water delivery areas according to external or internal water sources. In either case, the plan recommends that these areas be served through public, centralized utility systems. External sources imply water from an outside source – this “class” of water would be defined according to the separate water delivery agreements, or through a utility master plan that identifies future water availability. Internal sources come from within or reasonably near the project – these sources may be considered interim and would eventually convert to external sources as supply systems become linked. The overarching goal is to move towards a public, central delivery and collection system within the County, reducing the dependence on well and septic for development.

Upon plan adoption, the immediate, first phase of implementation is developing the *Growth Prioritization Program*. The program would create the necessary linkages between potential water delivery agreements and the allocation of water for development. It would include other related water demand and supply functions. The Growth Prioritization Program would be developed within the context of a utility master plan. It would also recommend further implementation measures including utility extension policies and revisions to the platting and subdivision process.

Section 7.3. In Closing

All Santa Fean’s have, in some form or fashion, been affected by the changing reality of water. There has become universal acceptance that water can no longer be taken for granted – that it is a precious, natural resource and that it must be used wisely now and in the future. The region can no longer afford to squander water aimlessly and without intent. What water there is must be put to its most useful purpose and provide the highest possible benefit to the community.

There are ongoing discussions, particularly within the West, if land use and water can effectively be linked together. Should land use decisions be based on water availability and/or should water be used as an incentive to encourage better development? The Regional Planning Authority, in developing this plan, has suggested that land use and water can be effectively tied to encourage better development that provides greater public benefit in accordance with regional measures. Utilizing water as the incentive can encourage orderly and timely development.

Adoption of this plan sets in motion the foundations for change. The plan lays the framework for future order and uniformity within the land decision-making process within the EZ; it lays the cornerstones for future regional cooperation on water and it blurs the jurisdictional lines between what is city and what is county. It builds on a principle of one vision; one region; one community.