Land & Water Planning in the Middle Valley

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Bernalillo County

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Bernalillo County

- 1,166 square miles
  - Third smallest county in NM
- 111,000 residents in unincorporated area (2007 est.)
  - Second largest population of any political jurisdiction in state
- What are the implications of having the state’s largest city in one of it’s smallest counties?
Planning Overview

- City/County Comprehensive Plan
  - General Vision for Community
  - Policy Statements for Subareas
  - Adopted 1988, last amended 2002

- Area Plans
  - North Valley
  - Southwest Area
  - West Side Strategic Plan
  - East Mountains

- Sector/Neighborhood Plans
  - Specific development criteria (Zoning)

- Planned Communities Criteria
  - Applies in Reserve Area of City
Development Standards

- Zoning
- Subdivision
- Grading and Drainage
- Street Design
- Fire Protection
- Water and Wastewater Systems
- Water Conservation
Zoning regulations

- Governs use, layout, buffering
- **Sets Overall Densities**
- Follows Comprehensive Plan
- Most land A-1 or A-2 - one or two acre minimum lot size
- Smaller lots often require zone change or special use permit – four to six month process
- **Water availability is not used as standard for zoning approvals**
Criteria for Approval

- Consistent with the health, safety, and general welfare of the County.
- Cannot consider cost of land or economics of project.
- Cannot be in significant conflict with Comprehensive Plan or other Master Plans.
- Stability of land use is desirable; burden is on the applicant to show why the change should occur.
Justification for Change

- The applicant must demonstrate that the existing zoning is inappropriate because:
  - there was an error when the existing zoning was created; or
  - changed neighborhood or community conditions justify the change; or
  - a different use category is more advantageous to the community, as articulated in the Comprehensive Plan or other Master Plan, even though (1) or (2) above do not apply
Subdivision Process

- Five lots or less – summary review
- Six lots or more – preliminary plat to Planning Commission, final plat to Development Review Authority (process revised in 2005)
- Must identify water supply at this point
- 70-year supply for major subdivisions
County Development Review Authority – Water Analysis

- County geohydrologist
- Environmental Health staff
- Water Utility Authority staff
- Comments from Office of State Engineer
  - positive opinion
  - adverse/revised opinion
  - public hearing
Recent Initiatives

- Annexations
- Impact Fee update
- City/County Utility
- Streamlined Subdivision Process
- Update Zoning Code
- Master Plan Criteria
Master Plan Criteria

- Establish consistent standards for large projects
- At what point is proof of water required?
- Concurrent Master Plan and Zoning applications?
- Concurrent Zoning and Subdivision applications?