



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE for SIERRA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO 2017



SUBMITTED by:

DRAKER  
CODY   
WHEN VISION NEEDS ACTION

and

**WILSON  
& COMPANY**

July 2017

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Sierra County, 855 Van Patten, Truth or Consequences, NM 87901

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A comprehensive plan is a practical means by which a community plans for future growth and development. In many cases, comprehensive plans are prepared to address several issues: compatibility between various uses of land, management and preservation of natural resources, economic development and adequate planning for infrastructure needs. The 2017 Sierra County Comprehensive Plan Update will provide demographic and economic data, growth scenarios and future plans for housing, land use, economic development and infrastructure needs for the County.

## *Demographics*

- Between 2000 and 2010, Sierra County lost 1,282 people. Seventy percent (70%) of that decrease occurred in the urban area.
- Two population growth scenarios are proposed:
  - The low/moderate growth scenario will see an increase of 3,111 persons by the year 2040.
  - The high growth scenario will result in an additional 8,200 by the year 2040.
  - Seventy percent (70%) of the growth will occur in the urban area.

## *Land Use and Housing*

- Seventy-five percent of the land in Sierra County is publically owned > U.S. Forest service, Bureau of Land management, Bureau of Reclamation, new Mexico State, U.S. Department of Defense, International Boundary and Water Commission.
- Most future residential and commercial development will take place in the urban corridor parallel to the Rio Grande.
- The principal area of growth is that area extending from just north of Elephant Butte to just south of Las Palomas.
- Secondary growth areas are proposed around Caballo and Arrey.
- Sufficient land is available in the form of subdivide lands to accommodate the growth anticipated in the low/moderate growth scenario.
- Sufficient subdivided land is available in the unincorporated area of the County to accommodate population projected in the high growth scenario. However, existing subdivided lands in the incorporated urban area will not be sufficient to accommodate the high growth scenario. New subdivisions will be required or increased residential densities.
- Sufficient lands are available to accommodate commercial development that will occur as a result of the various economic initiatives.
- The principal land use issue raised dealt with the U.S. Forest Service Travel Plan and its impact on the fishing and hunting and tourism economies. Draker-Cody, Inc. recommended the formation of a coalition of interested parties including representatives of the local governments, the fishing and hunting industry, the chambers of commerce, the agricultural community and organizations with a vested interested such as the Sierra Soil and Water Conservation District. The objective is to seek a high level of collaboration with federal agencies. The coalition must also develop a protocol to deal with changes to federal government policy including preparing necessary studies to support positions taken.
- Other recommendations include:
  - Providing for an orderly and efficient land use pattern.
  - Providing opportunities for new and different housing types and densities.

- Explore and take advantage of the various state and federal housing programs available to local communities.
- Through an appropriate marketing strategy to promote Sierra County as a desirable place to live, work and visit.

### *Economic Development*

- Sierra County has great potential for growth based in the resources, facilities, activities, services available.
- Opportunities and initiatives now underway as well as proposed initiatives hold much potential for growth.
- Strengths the County can build on include:
  - Physical environment: lakes, mountains, forests.
  - Museums, galleries, gift shops, ghost towns.
  - Hot Springs.
  - Special Events all year long.
  - Spaceport America.
  - Mining, hunting and fishing activities.
  - Agriculture-farming and ranching.
  - Healthcare.
  - Sufficient land to accommodate growth.
- Growth Initiatives Include:
  - Tourism and recreation holds the greatest potential for continued growth in Sierra County.
    - Marketing of facilities, services and events must be coordinated and aggressive.
    - Promotional packages for visitors, in particular the military, should be a major part of marketing the county.
    - Preparation of a calendar of events in Sierra County as well events in neighboring counties is important. Coat-tailing on neighboring county events ought to be a basic part of promoting Sierra County.
    - Pooling resources- funds, time- to produce a comprehensive first class tourist publication is required and it should be available not only in New Mexico visitor centers but in visitor centers in every state.
    - The permanent pool proposed for Elephant Butte Lake is a key factor in future tourism growth.
    - The Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Advisory Board is to take the lead in promoting and organizing these initiatives.
  - Spaceport America holds considerable potential for economic development in the area of secondary service/support industries. The recommendation is for the County, working with the cities, to construct an industrial park, fully serviced to house secondary industry. The industrial park must be aggressively marketed to tenants of the Spaceport and other industrial sectors.
    - The Spaceport can also increase tourism through new recreation facility development. The prime resource Sierra County has that others do not have is water. The water resources are a prime ingredient in attracting new resort type development.
  - Mining in Sierra County has been around for 140 years.
    - The St. Cloud mine in Chloride employs about 30 people and has been operating since the 1880's, although the ores mined have changed over time.

- The owner, THEMAC Resources, of the Copper Flat mine near Hillsboro is planning on reopening the mine this year. The operation will mine mostly copper, and also some gold and silver. THEMAC Resources hopes to have its permits this year so that construction work can begin at the end of the year or early in 2018. About 1,100 construction jobs, direct and indirect will be created. At full operation between 275 and 300 permanent jobs will be created with annual salaries ranging between \$35,000 and \$60,000. The County will benefit from property and gross receipts tax, as well as employees living and spending money in the county.
- Agriculture-Farming and Ranching-and Hunting/Mining/Forestry have been a mainstay of the County's economy for more than a century and a half. It will remain so for some time. About 340 people are employed in this sector of the economy. It needs to be supported. Perhaps some secondary industry related to food processing ought to be pursued..
  - Ecotourism has become a sideline to agriculture/tourism activity. The Turner ranches conduct ecotourism outings with some success. It appears to be an area of some potential for new business investment and employment opportunities.
- A Retirement Community is suggested as an idea to be pursued; there is some potential for this initiative. Draker-Cody has suggested that an inventory of resources be made to be the basis of a marketing package to attract retirees to the County. Specific services and amenities that retirees look for are to be kept in mind in preparing the inventory and the promotional material.
- Healthcare, along with education, is the largest employer in the County (about 25% of the employment). Healthcare is a growing and stable economic engine in the county. The new hospital, proposed will add new and enhanced services for county residents. Healthcare is an important service supporting other economic initiatives.
- Film Industry in Sierra County has some potential. The Space port and Elephant Butte Lake have been used in some recent films. This is an economic activity to be encouraged in the County as it brings in money and utilizes local facilities and resources..
- An Economic Development Coordinating group is needed to help coordinate and promote economic initiatives for the County. It is also needed to explore new opportunities for the county. Membership in the Middle Rio Grande Economic development Association is to be maintained as this is an important coordinating body on matters of regional significance.
  - An economic group dedicated solely to the needs of Sierra County is necessary to fully market the assets and opportunities offered by Sierra County.
  - The economic group is to be a coalition of the County, the cities, the chambers of commerce and other business entities.

### *Infrastructure*

- Seventy percent (70%) of the projected growth will take place in the urban area of Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte and Williamsburg. Water and wastewater capacity, currently, are adequate to accommodate the low/moderate growth scenario; however, these facilities may not have the capacity to handle the high growth scenario of almost 8,200 people. It is recommended that the situation be monitored in the event that water and wastewater facilities have to be upgraded.

- Stormwater management is a serious issue in Sierra County. Currently, the County has little or no flood control data with regard to infrastructure records, design criteria and no long-term plan for flood control, and no comprehensive funding strategy. It is recommended that the County, perhaps working with the South-West Council of Governments, prepare a comprehensive drainage management plan for the County including the cities and the village and that the plan include a funding strategy and a cost sharing arrangement for the plan participants.

#### *Community Facilities*

- The community facilities chapter is descriptive and includes a listing of parks, libraries, healthcare facilities, schools, and fire and police services. The recommendation is to prepare a comprehensive listing of community facilities and their services, using this chapter a base, to aid in promoting and marketing the various economic initiatives proposed in this Plan and any future economic opportunities.

#### *Hazards Mitigation*

- Two hazard mitigation plans are in place in Sierra County: Sierra County Disaster Mitigation Plan, and the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.
- The main recommendation is to keep the plans current and that the County participate in any physical exercise that is planned.

#### *Green Community Considerations*

- In 2010 the New Mexico Environment department reported that the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in 2007 is electricity production, followed by the fossil fuel industry and transportation fuel use. This report has not been updated.
- The Cool Climate network, utilizing 2013 data reported the average annual carbon footprint equivalents for many cities and towns in New Mexico. Most places in New Mexico appear to fall in the 38 to 40 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent annually. Truth or Consequences in 2013 had an average annual carbon footprint of 38 metric tonnes (total equivalent). Sandia park seemed to be the highest at 62.4 metric tonnes.
- Recommendations included the following:
  - Encourage energy efficient refurbishing of homes and businesses.
  - Maintaining a compact land use pattern.
  - Encourage in-fill development and higher density residential development.
  - Reduce the volume of solid waste shipped to the landfill site.
  - Initiate a program to educate County residents and business owners about greenhouse gas emissions and energy conservation measures.

#### *Implementation*

- This section of the Comprehensive Plan consists entirely of an implementation matrix. This matrix lists all the goals, objectives and implementation strategies/actions mentioned throughout the Plan in an easy to follow table format. The table also includes additional columns to help the County set out more detailed tasks, establishing priorities, suggested completion dates, who is responsible for the task(s) and status of actions. The intent of this table is to provide the County with a relatively simple format to set priorities and monitor the progress of implementing specific aspects of the Comprehensive Plan.

*Principal Action Necessary*

- That the Sierra County Board of Commissioners adopt this Comprehensive Plan in its entirety, and that the County pursue the goals, objectives and implementation strategies in accord with a prioritization of actions to be determined by Sierra County.

# **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 About This Plan**

This Comprehensive Plan is a major revision and rewrite of the Sierra County Comprehensive Plan of 2006. It reviews, updates and reconstructs demographic, economic and housing data; population and housing projections; current land status; infrastructure, roads information; and, information on community facilities, hazard assessment and other matters. It proposes new objectives and strategies for economic development, land use, and other matters covered in the plan. It is a guide for future development of the County.

A comprehensive plan, basically, is a strategy document, comprised of maps and text, designed to guide and direct growth and development of a county, municipality, or other organization. A comprehensive plan is customarily based on considerable community (stakeholder) input as well as the analysis of existing and past situations. Trends may be identified as well as changes that may be wrought by changing cultural values. Once, comprehensive plans were almost entirely limited to land use growth scenarios. However, in recent years, it has been recognized that other factors may play a role in that growth or may impact or be impacted by that growth. Consequently, comprehensive plans now consider economic development, for example, as an important component.

Sierra County's population exhibited a fairly constant growth between 1960 and 2000, 6,409 and 13,270 respectively. The ten year period between 2000 and 2010 saw a population decrease of 1,282 to a total of 11,988. The United States Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates suggest that the current County population is about 11,615.

Based upon input from the public meetings and discussions with various elected and appointed representatives of Sierra County, city of Truth or Consequences, and the city of Elephant Butte, as well as discussions with the National Forest Service, State Parks' representatives, various members of the business community, the results of public meetings, and our own assessment of needs, it is clear that much more attention to the economic growth of Sierra County is necessary. Particular focus is to be placed on tourism, technology, healthcare, and utilization of natural resources if additional growth is to occur. Importantly, the people of the community want some growth, growth that is a combination of commercial and residential with varying opinions on how best to achieve these. Consequently, in this Plan, emphasis is placed on the identification of possible growth initiatives and specific strategies to pursue those initiatives.

Much of this Plan is based upon and developed in accord with the opinions, ideas and comments of the community. Most businessmen and residents had very clear ideas about where the community needed to go and had suggestions on how it might get there.

## **1.2 Brief History of Sierra County**

Sierra County was founded in 1884 with the County Seat in Hillsboro. The attractions to Sierra County consisted of mining, agriculture, ranching and the hot springs. Sierra County is near the black range mountains located in southwest New Mexico. The county's largest city is Truth or Consequences, the current County seat.

In 1877, Hillsboro was founded with the discovery of gold nearby. It became the County seat in 1884 having the largest population in the area and being the hub for mail. A few miles down the road from Hillsboro is Kingston, founded in 1882 with the discovery of silver.

In 1936, the County seat moved from Hillsboro to Hot Springs. Hot Springs was an attraction for people to gather as a place of healing. It was also a neutral-ground for Indians to rest during their travels. In 1950, Hot Springs was renamed Truth or Consequences, after the popular National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) radio show.

In 1912, the construction of Elephant Butte dam and reservoir began; it was completed in 1916. The reservoir was intended for the irrigation of agricultural lands, still a principal purpose today. A few decades later, Elephant Butte Lake became popular for recreation, camping, hiking, fishing, boating, and tourism. Since 1940, Elephant Butte dam has also provided hydro-electric power. The water released during power generation at Elephant Butte dam is stored downstream in the Caballo Reservoir. Any water released for power in the winter is stored in Caballo dam for irrigation later in the summer.

Despite low lake levels over the past several years, tourism and recreation activity in the area has remained at a reasonably high level. The County and member municipalities are seeking to establish a permanent pool in Elephant Butte Lake, a complicated but worthwhile endeavor. (See Section 4.5.1 of this Plan for a discussion of the permanent pool).

Mining in Sierra County began in 1877. Sierra has silver, gold and copper deposits, along with other minerals. Mines were popular from 1877 to 1940s and picked up in the late 1950's. The copper mine, in the northern part of Hillsboro, was discovered in 1975. In 1982, Quintana Minerals (copper mine) closed the mine due to the low price of copper. The mine is currently in the process of seeking permits to reopen. The Copper Flat Mine project is an effort of THEMAC Resources and mine proponents hope to start construction in 2018.

More recently, space tourism has been introduced to Sierra County. Spaceport America is located 30 miles southeast of Truth or Consequences, and is expected to launch the first commercial passenger space flights within the next few years. Currently there are five tenants housed at the Spaceport employing about 75 people.

Sierra County is looking to grow over the next few decades with emphasis on the technology, tourism, healthcare and natural resource sectors.

## **1.3 Government Structure**

1.3.1 Government Structure. Sierra County is governed by a Board of Commissioners (three commissioners).

The County has the following staff positions:

- County Manager
- Executive Assistant to the County Manager
- County Assessor
- County Clerk
- Flood Director
- County Emergency Manager/Fire Marshall

- County Sheriff
- Road Superintendent
- Facility Manager
- County Treasurer

The County has various community and healthcare facilities: Sierra Vista Hospital, the Veterans' Affairs Home, an event center and fair grounds, various museums and state parks, and part of the Gila National Forest.

The County Volunteer Fire Department consists of 100+ volunteer firefighters, in eight County fire departments.

Police service is available through the Sierra County Sheriff's Department, the Truth or Consequences Police Department, and the New Mexico State Police.

The city of Truth or Consequences is the County seat. The city of Elephant Butte and the village of Williamsburg are the other incorporated municipalities.

## 1.4 Community Character

Sierra County is located in the southwest quadrant of the state. See Figure 1 for the regional setting.

Sierra County is a diverse County in terms of its physical setting, economic activity and land ownership. Created in 1884 from parts of Socorro and Dona Ana Counties, the County encompasses an area of 4,236 square miles (land and water), and had a population of 11,988 (2010). The city of Truth or Consequences with a population of 6,475 (2010) is the County seat.

The Rio Grande River is the major drainage-ways in Sierra County. The River runs north-south through the central part of the County. Except for a small area in the southwest corner of the County which flows into the Mimbres Basin, virtually all surface runoff from the western part of the County flows to the Rio Grande River. Surface water from the eastern part of the region flows to the Jornado Del Muerto.

The extreme eastern and western parts of the County are mountainous with elevations ranging from 5,500 feet to 8,000 feet.

Areas between the western mountains and the Rio Grande River consist of moderate to steeply sloping alluvial fans which are dissected by numerous drainage-ways. The eastern part of the County is dominated by gently to steeply sloping plains. The mountains that rise abruptly from the plains-San Andreas and Fra Cristobal ranges-run north-south.

*(Based upon information from: Soil Survey of Sierra County Area, New Mexico, USDA, Soil Conservation Service, 1984.*

Economic activity in Sierra County includes tourism [Gila National Forest, state parks, various trails (Geronimo Trail)] as well as various facilities and places (Hot Springs, museums, ghost towns, event center); mining activity; agriculture; healthcare; and the commercial retail and service sectors.

Land Ownership is characterized by the amount of land owned or controlled by the Federal and New Mexico State governments. Approximately 25% of the land area is privately owned.



Most of the County is rural in nature with only three major urban centers, Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte and Williamsburg, all located within close proximity to one another. South of Truth or Consequences are the small urban agglomerations of Las Palomas, Caballo, Oasis, Arrey and Derry. Virtually all of the urbanization has taken place along the Rio Grande or close to it. A number of smaller census designated places exist: Hillsboro, Kingston, Winston, Monticello, and several others. These latter mentioned designated places have a mining, farming or ranching history and origin, for the most part.

The area is served by Interstate 25, several State Roads (SR 51, SR 52, SR 152, SR 27 and SR 187), and many County Roads. Rail transport is available through the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad which runs north-south to the east of Truth or Consequences. The Truth or Consequences Municipal Airport provides regional service. Spaceport America, situated on 18,000 acres, is located about 30 miles southeast of Truth or Consequences.

Figure 1-Regional Context

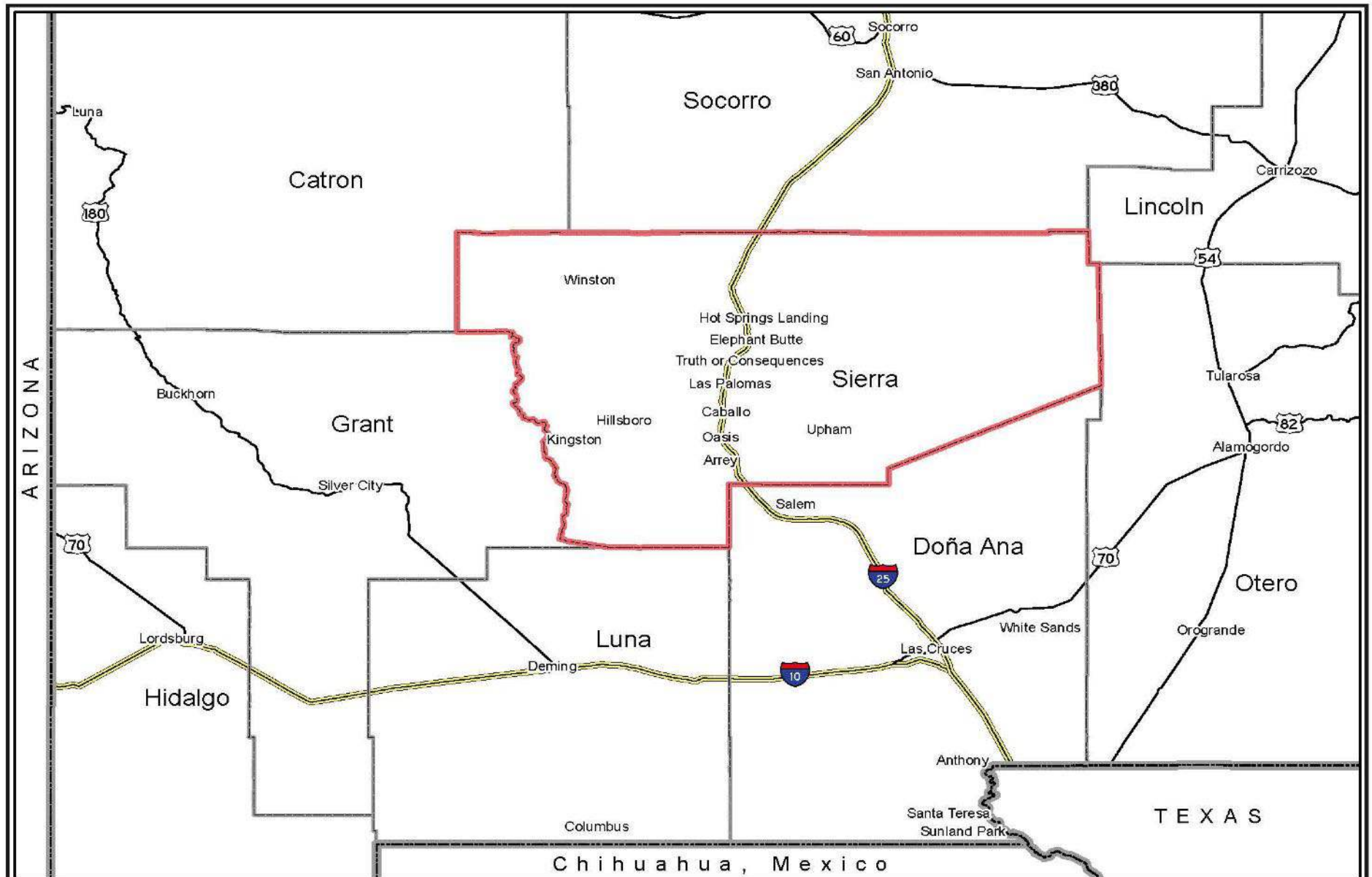


FIGURE	MAP TITLE	PROJECT NAME	DRAKER CODY	12868 Lomas Blvd., N.E. ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87112 PH (505) 323-1415 FAX (505) 323-1418 www.drakercody.com	4500 Lang Ave., N.E. SUITE 200 ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87110 PH (505) 918-1000 FAX (505) 948-4702 www.wilsonpro.com
1	REGIONAL CONTEXT	SIERRA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN	DRAKER CODY		WILSON & COMPANY

## **1.5 Public Participation Process**

1.5.1 Public Participation Process. Input from the public was obtained, initially, from three town hall type meetings at the beginning of the planning process. Meetings were held in Truth or Consequences on February 7, 2017, in Hillsboro on February 9, 2017, and in Winston on February 16, 2017. The public meetings were advertised in the local newspapers, on the Sierra County website and in the community centers in each of the communities.

Attendance at the meetings was generally fair to good, with Hillsboro being the most well attended meeting with 33 people. The fact that the New Mexico legislature was in session likely resulted in smaller turnouts than might have otherwise been the case.

In April a draft comprehensive plan was produced and made available to the public on the Sierra County web site and in hard copy format in the County Administrative offices. Public meetings to present findings and recommendations in the Plan were held in Truth or Consequences on May 15, 2017, in Hillsboro on May 22, 2017, and in Winston on May 24, 2017. The meetings were advertised in the local newspapers, the County web site, and in the community centers of the places where the meetings were held.

Notes from the meetings as well as the PowerPoint presentation were posted on the County web site. Appendix 1 to this Plan contains the notes from the public meetings held on February 7, 9 and 16, 2017. Appendix 2 contains the notes from the meetings held on May 15, 22, and 24, 2017. Appendix 2 also contains comments directed to the consultant, via e-mail, following the public meetings in May, 2017.

## 2.0 DEMOGRAPHICS AND HOUSING

### 2.1 Existing Population Characteristics

2.1.1 General Comment. The U.S. Census Bureau has now published all 2010 Census data; however, some types of housing and economic data that were collected in 2000 were not collected in 2010. Consequently, where appropriate and reasonable, Draker-Cody has used inter-census estimates prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year estimates, usually 2011-2015 estimates.. Economic data from the 2012 economic census is available but, in many cases, data sets are not as complete as expected. Population counts, age-sex data, race/ethnic group information, households by type, housing occupancy, and housing tenure, and some basic labor force data as well as other information are available for 2010 and are used in the development of this Plan.

2.1.2 Existing Population Data. In 2010, the population of Sierra County is 11,988 (U.S. Census Bureau). This is a decrease of 1,282 persons or 9.66% from the 2000 Census count of 13,270.

2.1.3 Population Counts: 1900 to 2010. Table 1A illustrates population counts for Sierra County from 1900 to 2010.

**Table 1A. Sierra County Population: 1900 to 2010**

Year	Sierra County Population (U.S. Census Bureau)	Sierra County Increase or Decrease (-) Actual	Sierra County Percent Growth/ Decline(-)
1900	3,158	-	-
1910	3,536	378	11.97
1920	4,619	1,083	29.36
1930	5,184	565	12.23
1940	6,962	1,778	34.30
1950	7,186	224	3.22
1960	6,409	-777	-10.81
1970	7,189	780	12.17
1980	8,454	1,265	17.60
1990	9,912	1,458	17.25
2000	13,270	3,358	33.88
2010	11,988	-1,282	-9.66

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

Sierra County's population in 1900 was 3,158, followed by a five decades of continuous population growth (7,186 in 1950). In 1960 there was a decrease to 6,409 persons, followed by further increases from 1970 to 2000. The median population increase per decade, between 1900 and 2010, is 12.23%.

The loss in population between 2000 and 2010 is due most likely to outmigration of people and business brought on by poor economic conditions, both nationally and locally.

Table 1B displays basic population data for Sierra County, city of Truth or Consequences, city of Elephant Butte, and the village of Williamsburg.

**Table 1B. Population: Sierra County, Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte and Williamsburg**

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, various years and tables)

YEAR	Sierra County	% Growth /Decline	Truth or Consequences	% Growth /Decline	Elephant Butte	% Growth /Decline	Williamsburg	% Growth /Decline
2010	11,988	-9.66	6,475	-11.17	1,431	2.95	449	-14.80
2000	13,270	33.88	7,289	17.11	1,390	-	527	13.82
1990	9,912	17.25	6,224	19.26	193	-	463	6.93
1980	8,454	17.60	5,219	12.09	NA	-	433	17.98
1970	7,189	12.17	4,656	9.07	NA	-	367	-
1960	6,409	-10.81	4,269	-6.44	NA	-	NA	-
1950	7,186	3.22	4,563	55.20	NA	-	NA	-
1940	6,982	34.30	2,940	120.05	NA	-	NA	-
1930	5,184	12.23	1,336	193.63	NA	-	NA	-
1920	4,619	29.36	455	-	NA	-	NA	-
1910	3,536	11.97	NA	-	NA	-	NA	-
1900	3,158	-	NA	-	NA	-	NA	-

Between 2000 and 2010 only Elephant Butte gained population, a very slight gain of 41 persons.

**2.1.4 Age-Sex, Census Designated Places and Ethnicity Data.** Table 2A sets out the age-sex population data for the Sierra County, Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte, Williamsburg, Hillsboro, Kingston, Winston, Arrey, Caballo, Las Palomas, Oasis, Hot Springs Landing and the State of New Mexico.

Just over forty percent (40.12%) of the County's population is 60 years of age or older compared to the state of New Mexico at 19.06%. Generally, the working age group in Sierra County (ages 20-64) represents 51.61 % of the County population and is closer to the New Mexico rate of 58.62%.

Most of the Census Designated Places tend to have a larger proportion of its population over 60 years of age than the County as a whole: Hillsboro (65.30%), Hot Springs (69.09%). Caballo (50.89%). Arrey, Las Palomas and Oasis are three places with predominantly younger populations (under 60 years of age): Arrey (75.86% under 60) and Las Palomas (67.05% under 60), and Oasis (62.50%).

The median age for Sierra County at 54.5 years is substantially greater than the State of New Mexico median age of 36.7. Attendees at the public meetings often cited the need to offer opportunities in the County that would help retain the area's youth; jobs being the most often repeated requirement.

**Table 2A. 2010 Population Characteristics: Sierra County, Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte, Williamsburg, Hillsboro, Kingston, Winston, Arrey, Caballo, Las Palomas, Oasis, Hot Springs Landing and New Mexico**

Population Characteristic	Sierra County		Truth or Consequences		Elephant Butte		Williamsburg		Hillsboro, CDP		Kingston, CDP		Winston, CDP		Arrey, CDP		Caballo, CDP		Las Palomas, CDP		Oasis, CDP		Hot Springs Landing, CDP		New Mexico	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total Population	11,988	100.0	6,475	100.0	1,431	100.0	449	100.0	124	100.0	32	100.0	61	100.0	232	100.0	112	100.0	173	100.00	149	100.0	110	100.0	2,059,179	100.0
<b>Sex and Age</b>																										
Male	6,027	50.27	3,201	49.44	731	51.08	223	49.67	61	49.19	20	62.5	34	55.74	113	48.71	55	49.11	84	48.55	71	47.65	57	51.82	1,017,421	49.41
Female	5,961	49.72	3,274	50.56	700	48.92	226	50.33	63	50.81	12	37.5	27	44.26	119	51.29	57	50.89	89	51.45	78	52.35	53	48.18	1,041,758	50.59
Under 5 years	568	4.74	368	5.68	37	2.59	8	1.78	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.64	16	6.90	0	0.00	5	2.89	3	2.01	0	0.00	144,981	7.04
5 to 9 years	484	4.04	265	4.09	38	2.66	16	3.56	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.64	18	7.76	0	0.00	8	4.62	5	3.36	2	1.82	143,308	6.96
10 to 14 years	535	4.46	299	4.62	31	2.17	16	3.56	2	1.61	1	3.13	3	4.92	26	11.21	7	6.25	6	3.47	4	2.68	0	0.00	141,691	6.88
15 to 19 years	540	4.50	290	4.48	31	2.17	19	4.23	5	4.03	0	0.00	2	3.28	20	8.62	6	5.36	14	8.09	9	6.04	0	0.00	149,861	7.28
20 to 24 years	482	4.02	310	7.79	26	1.82	13	2.90	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	13	5.60	4	3.57	7	4.05	6	4.02	1	0.91	142,370	6.91
25 to 34 years	808	6.74	523	8.08	63	4.40	20	4.45	1	0.81	1	3.13	2	3.28	11	4.74	0	0.00	13	7.51	11	7.38	5	4.54	267,245	12.98
35 to 44 years	1,023	8.53	569	8.79	64	4.47	35	7.80	4	3.23	3	9.38	5	8.20	35	15.09	13	11.61	15	8.67	10	6.71	2	1.82	248,523	12.07
45 to 54 years	1,652	13.78	894	13.81	181	12.65	60	13.36	17	13.71	3	9.38	10	16.39	30	12.93	11	9.82	28	16.18	25	16.78	12	10.91	292,009	14.18
55 to 59 years	1,086	9.06	551	8.51	145	10.13	51	11.36	14	11.29	9	28.13	7	11.48	7	3.02	14	12.5	20	11.56	20	13.42	12	10.91	136,799	6.64
60 to 64 years	1,136	9.48	543	8.39	200	13.98	46	10.25	25	20.16	4	12.5	6	9.84	15	6.47	21	18.75	16	9.25	17	11.41	13	11.82	120,137	5.83
65 to 74 years	2,014	16.80	911	14.07	374	26.14	85	18.93	36	29.03	7	21.88	17	27.87	26	11.21	28	25.00	24	13.87	25	16.78	37	33.64	153,794	7.47
75 to 84 years	1,238	10.33	674	10.41	194	13.56	59	13.14	13	10.48	4	12.5	6	9.84	13	5.60	7	6.25	8	4.62	9	6.04	24	21.82	86,468	4.20
85 years and over	422	3.52	278	4.29	47	3.28	21	4.68	7	5.65	0	0	1	1.64	2	0.86	1	0.89	9	5.20	5	3.36	2	1.82	31,993	1.55
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>54.5</b>		<b>52.2</b>		<b>62.8</b>		<b>59.2</b>		<b>64.0</b>		<b>58.0</b>		<b>59.5</b>		<b>40.3</b>		<b>60.3</b>		<b>53.2</b>		<b>55.8</b>		<b>70.1</b>		<b>36.7</b>	

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, various tables, 2010)

Table 2B displays the 2010 and 2000 population characteristics for other areas in Sierra County for which data are available. Unfortunately data for several of the communities are not available for the year 2000, and no data earlier than 2000 are available, making even the simplest of time series comparisons difficult.

**Table 2B. 2010 Population Characteristics: Other Areas of Sierra County**

<b>Population Characteristic</b>	<b>2010 Total Population</b>	<b>2000 Total Population</b>		<b>2010 Median Age</b>	<b>2000 Median Age</b>
<b>Hillsboro CDP</b>	124	46		<b>64.0</b>	N/A
<b>Kingston CDP</b>	32	13		<b>58.0</b>	N/A
<b>Winston CDP</b>	61	21		<b>59.5</b>	N/A
<b>Arrey CDP</b>	232	215		<b>40.3</b>	N/A
<b>Caballo CDP</b>	112	53		<b>60.3</b>	N/A
<b>Hot Springs Landing CDP</b>	110	131		<b>70.1</b>	N/A
<b>Las Palomas CDP</b>	173	148		<b>53.2</b>	N/A
<b>Oasis CDP</b>	149	145		<b>55.8</b>	N/A

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 census)

Table 2C shows the 2010 general Population Characteristics - Ethnicity for Sierra County, city of Truth or Consequences, city of Elephant Butte, village of Williamsburg, Hillsboro CDP, Kingston CDP, Winston CDP, Arrey CDP, Caballo CDP, Hot Springs Landing CDP, Las Palomas CDP, Oasis CDP

Please see Appendix 3 to this Plan for a detailed listing of Hispanic, Alaskan and American Indian groups in Sierra County, Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte, Williamsburg, Hillsboro, Kingston, and other Census Designated Areas.

**Table 2C. 2010 Population Characteristics-Ethnicity: Sierra County, Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte, Williamsburg, Hillsboro CDP, Kingston CDP, Winston CDP, Arrey CDP, Caballo CDP, Hot Springs Landing CDP, Las Palomas CDP, Oasis CDP**

Ethnicity	Sierra County		Truth or Consequences		Elephant Butte		Williamsburg		Hillsboro CDP		Kingston CDP	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total Population	11,988	100.0	6,475	100.0	1,431	100.0	449	100.0	124	100.0	32	100.0
Hispanic/Latino	3,352	27.96	1,824	28.17	194	13.56	107	23.83	11	8.87	1	3.13
Non-Hispanic/Latino	8,636	72.04	4,651	71.83	1,237	86.44	342	76.17	113	91.13	31	96.87
White Only	10,265	85.63	5,551	85.73	1,320	92.24	415	92.43	111	89.52	31	96.87
African American Only	49	0.41	41	0.63	4	0.28	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
American Indian and Alaskan Native Only	199	1.66	121	1.87	13	0.91	10	2.23	4	3.23	0	0.00
Asian Only	49	0.41	32	0.49	7	0.49	0	0.00	2	1.61	1	3.13
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Only	3	0.03	2	0.03	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Some Other Race	1,032	8.61	491	7.58	41	2.87	17	3.79	2	1.61	0	0.00
Two or More Races	391	3.26	237	3.66	46	3.21	7	1.56	5	4.03	0	0.00



**Table 2C. (continued): 2010 Population Characteristics-Ethnicity: Sierra County, city of Truth or Consequences, city of Elephant Butte, village of Williamsburg, Hillsboro CDP, Kingston CDP, Winston CDP, Arrey CDP, Caballo CDP, Hot Springs Landing CDP, Las Palomas CDP, Oasis CDP**

Ethnicity	Winston CDP		Arrey CDP		Caballo CDP		Hot Springs Landing CDP		Las Palomas CDP		Oasis CDP	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total Population	61	100.0	232	100.0	112	100.0	110	100.0	173	100.0	149	100.0
Hispanic/Latino	20	32.79	193	83.19	14	12.50	10	9.09	46	26.59	18	12.08
Non-Hispanic/Latino	41	67.21	39	16.81	98	87.50	100	90.91	127	73.41	131	87.92
White Only	55	90.16	154	66.38	98	87.50	100	90.91	158	91.33	136	91.28
African American Only	0	0.00	1	0.43	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	1.34
American Indian and Alaskan Native Only	5	8.20	1	0.43	2	1.79	6	5.45	8	4.62	3	2.01
Asian Only	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.91	0	0.00	1	0.67
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Only	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.91	0	0.00	0	0.00
Some Other Race	1	1.64	74	31.90	6	5.45	0	0.00	5	2.89	4	2.68
Two or More Races	0	0.00	2	0.86	6	5.45	2	1.82	2	1.16	3	2.01

Table 3 illustrates age group counts for Sierra County for the census years 1990, 2000 and 2010. Please see notes for explanation of several of the data entries.

**Table 3. Sierra County: Age Group Comparison 1990 to 2010**

Population Age Groups	Sierra County 2010		Sierra County 2000		Sierra County 1990	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total Population	11,988	100.0	13,270	100.0	9,912	100.0
<b>Sex and Age</b>						
Male	6,027	50.28	6,635	50.0	4,842	48.85
Female	5,961	49.72	6,635	50.0	5,070	51.15
Under 5 years	568	4.74	631	4.76	553	5.58
5 to 9 years	484	4.04	727	5.48	588	5.93
10 to 14 years	535	4.46	816	6.15	450*	4.54
15 to 19 years	540	4.50	744	5.61	378**	3.81
20 to 24 years	482	4.02	466	3.51	461***	4.65
25 to 34 years	808	6.74	1,003	7.56	974	9.83
35 to 44 years	1,023	8.53	1,582	11.92	980	9.89
45 to 54 years	1,652	13.78	1,784	13.44	969	9.78
55 to 59 years	1,086	9.06	908	6.84	565	5.70
60 to 64 years	1,136	9.48	938	7.07	849	8.57
65 to 74 years	2,014	16.80	1,971	14.85	1,746	17.62
75 to 84 years	1,238	10.33	1,287	9.70	1,086	10.96
85 years and over	422	3.52	413	3.11	313	3.16
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>54.5</b>		<b>48.9</b>		<b>51.3</b>	

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1990 data: \*10-13 years, \*\*14-17, \*\*\*18-24)

Population in the main working group, 20 to 64, has increased from 1990 (4,798) to 2000 (6,681) and decreased in 2010 (6,187). The age-group exhibiting the largest loss between 2000 and 2010 is the 35-44 year age group. Notable in Table 3 is the 60 to over 85 year age groups which have increased by 20.43% between 1990 and 2010. The younger age groups up to and including the 15-19 group have experienced marked losses between 2000 and 2010. Also, of note, is the increase in median age from 48.9 to 54.5 between 2000 and 2010.

**2.1.5 Housing and Household Characteristics.** Table 4 sets out housing and household characteristics for Sierra County, Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte, Williamsburg, Hillsboro CDP, Kingston CDP, Winston CDP, Arrey CDP, Caballo CDP, Hot Springs Landing CDP, Las Palomas CDP, Oasis CDP, and New Mexico based on information in the 2010 Census.

The number of housing units in Sierra County in 2010 is 8,356, compared to 8,727 housing units in 2000 (Table DP-1; 2000 Census, Summary File 1). The total number of occupied units in 2010 is 5,917 compared to 6,113 in 2000. The number of vacant housing units in the County in 2010 is 2,439 compared to 2,614 units in 2000. The percentage of owner-occupied housing units for Sierra County has decreased significantly: 51.24% in 2010 versus 74.90% in 2000.

Sierra County has experienced a decrease in the average household size over the period 2000 to 2010, 2.13 in 2000 and 1.98 in 2010, whereas the State of New Mexico has remained almost the same, 2.63 in 2000 and 2.60 in 2010.

Table 4. 2010 Housing and Household Characteristics: Sierra County, Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte, Williamsburg, Hillsboro, Kingston, Winston, Arrey, Caballo, Hot Springs Landing, Las Palomas, Oasis, and New Mexico

Characteristic	New Mexico			Sierra County			Truth or Consequences		Elephant Butte		Williamsburg		Hillsboro, CDP		Kingston, CDP		Winston, CDP		Arrey, CDP		Caballo, CDP		Hot Springs Landing, CDP		Las Palomas, CDP		Oasis, CDP	
	Number	%		Number	%		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Housing																												
Total Housing Units	901,388	100.0		8,356	100.0		4,226	100.0	1,316	100.00	310	100.0	129	100.0	48	100.0	67	100.00	94	100.00	68	100.00	214	100.00	89	100.00	100	100.00
Occupied Housing Units	791,395	87.8		5,917	70.81		3,247	76.83	772	58.66	245	79.03	78	60.47	20	41.67	36	53.73	79	84.04	56	82.35	65	30.38	77	86.52	77	77.00
Vacant Housing Units	109,993	12.2		2,439	29.19		979	23.17	544	41.34	65	20.97	51	39.53	28	58.33	31	46.27	15	15.96	12	17.65	49	22.90	12	13.48	23	23.00
For Seasonal or Occasional use	36,612	4.1		1,326	15.87		295	6.98	463	35.18	29	9.35	20	15.50	27	56.25	18	26.87	0	0.00	5	7.35	135	63.08	3	3.37	13	13.00
Owner Occupied Housing Units	542,122	60.1		4,282	51.24		2,062	48.79	667	50.68	203	65.48	62	48.06	15	31.25	33	49.25	60	63.83	51	75.00	57	26.64	69	77.53	70	70.00
Renter Occupied Housing Units	249,273	27.7		1,635	19.57		1,185	28.04	105	7.98	42	13.55	16	12.40	5	10.42	3	4.48	19	20.21	5	7.35	8	3.74	8	8.99	7	7.00
Households																												
Total Households	791,395	100.0		5,917	100.00		3,247	100.00	772	100.00	245	100.00	78	100.00	20	100.0	36	100.00	79	100.00	56	100.00	65	100.00	77	100.00	77	100.00
Family Households	518,698	65.5		3,126	52.83		1,508	46.44	464	60.10	117	47.76	32	41.03	10	50.00	15	41.67	70	88.61	38	67.86	38	58.46	53	68.83	39	50.65
Married Couple Family	358,354	45.3		2,368	40.02		1,008	31.04	412	53.37	85	34.69	24	30.77	9	45.00	14	38.89	46	58.23	32	57.14	35	53.85	47	61.04	31	40.26
Female Household- No Husband	110,936	14.0		529	8.94		361	11.12	33	4.27	23	9.39	6	7.69	1	5.00	0	0.00	20	25.32	5	8.93	2	3.08	4	5.19	7	9.09
Non-Family Households	272,697	34.4		2,791	47.17		1,739	53.56	308	39.89	128	52.24	46	58.97	10	50.00	21	58.33	9	11.39	18	32.14	27	51.54	24	31.17	38	49.35
Householder Living Alone	221,347	28.0		2,413	40.78		1,513	46.60	271	35.10	107	43.67	38	48.72	9	45.00	19	52.78	7	8.86	18	32.14	26	40.00	21	27.27	33	42.86
Householder 65 years and over	200,089	25.3		1,223	20.67		752	23.16	155	20.08	60	24.49	22	28.21	6	30.000	19	52.78	3	3.80	3	5.36	10	15.38	10	12.99	17	22.08
Average Household Size	2.60			1.98			1.91		1.85		1.83		1.59		1.60		1.69		2.94		2.00		1.69		2.25		1.94	
Average Family Size	2.43			2.64			2.69		2.31		2.44		2.19		2.10		2.53		3.10		2.42		2.16		2.70		2.64	

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, various tables, 2010)

In 2000, the median value of an owner-occupied unit was \$77,800 and the median gross rent for renter occupied units was \$348 per month (2000 Census, Table DP-4 Summary File 3). According to the 2011-2015 American FactFinder (U.S. Census) 5-Year Estimate, the value of an owner-occupied unit is now \$98,800 and the median rent for a renter-occupied unit is \$575 per month.

Table 5A sets out the number of housing units by the year structures were built for year 2000. Comparable data for 2010 was not collected by the U.S. Census Bureau.

**Table 5A. Sierra County: Year Housing Structures Built-2000 Census**

<b>Year Structure Built</b>	<b>Number of Structures</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
1999 to March 2000	286	3.28
1995 to 1998	807	9.25
1990 to 1994	683	7.83
1980 to 1989	2,009	23.02
1970 to 1979	1,871	21.44
1960 to 1969	772	8.87
1950 to 1959	796	9.12
1940 to 1949	734	8.41
1939 and earlier	769	8.81
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,727</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(Source: 2000 U.S. Census Table H034)

Table 5B sets out the number of housing units by year constructed from data provided by the American FactFinder (U.S. Census) 5-Year Estimates 2011-2015. The 5-Year Estimates suggest that the total number of housing units has decreased about 400 units. According to the QT-H1 General Housing Characteristics, the 2010 total housing count is actually 8,356, suggesting that the 5-Year Estimate of 8,304 is close to the 2010 actual count.

**Table 5B. Sierra County: Year Housing Structures Built-2011-2015 5-Year Estimate**

<b>Year Structure Built</b>	<b>Number of Structures</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
2014 or later	0	0.00
2010 to 2013	39	0.47
2000 to 2009	1,129	13.60
1990 to 1999	1,260	15.17
1980 to 1989	1,641	19.76
1970 to 1979	1,590	19.15
1960 to 1969	700	8.43
1950 to 1959	704	8.48
1940 to 1949	622	7.49
1939 or earlier	619	7.45
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,304</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: American FactFinder 2011-2015 estimate, Table B25034)

## 2.2 Sierra County: Future Growth

This section contains two population growth scenarios: one, a low/moderate population projection for the County to the year 2040; and, the second, a high growth projection based upon the County maintaining a constant proportion of State growth. Also, this section suggests a possible distribution of the two population projections among the three incorporated municipalities, and the remainder of the County (rural areas and Census Designated Places).

**2.2.1 Scenario 1: Low to Moderate Growth Scenario.** The low to moderate growth forecast is based upon a constant median growth rate of 12.23%, the rate of growth experienced by the County since 1900. This constant rate of growth is used for the 2030 and 2040 projections, but not the 2020 projection. The population loss between 2010 and 2015 estimated by American FactFinder (-3.11%) was utilized as a positive factor of increase for the 2020 calculation. The reasoning here is simple: if the County implements some of the economic development strategies recommended in this Plan, or if in the next three years the Copper Flat Mine begins construction and operation and/or the Spaceport develops further, it is very likely that the County population can regain its 2010 count of 11,988, and probably more.

Table 6 illustrates the low to moderate growth forecast for the decades 2020, 2030 and 2040.

**Table 6. Low-Moderate Growth Scenario**

Year	Population	Growth Rate (%)
2010	11,988	-
2011-2015 estimate (American FactFinder)	11,615	-3.11
2020	11,988	+3.11
2030	13,454	12.23
2040	15,099	12.23
<b>Overall Population Increase (2010-2040)</b>	<b>3,111</b>	<b>-</b>

(Calculations by Draker-Cody, Inc.)

It is highly unlikely that Sierra County's growth over the next twenty-three years will be a constant 12.23%; however, given that this is a median growth over 110 years it is not an unreasonable assumption to make. This scenario assumes that Sierra County will grow at a low to medium pace assuming current efforts to attract economic development are maintained and new, enhanced efforts are implemented.

**2.2.2 Scenario 2: High Growth Scenario: Sierra County's Growth as a Proportion of State Growth.** Between 1980 and 2010 Sierra County averaged 0.62 % of the New Mexico's population. The State itself grew by an average of 16.5% over the same period of time.

Table 7 below illustrates the resultant population forecasts for 2020, 2030 and 2040.

**Table 7. High Growth Scenario**

Year	New Mexico Projected Population	Growth Rate (%)	Sierra County Population	Proportion of State Population (%)
2010	2,059,179 (actual)	-	11,988	-
2020	2,398,944	16.50	14,873	0.62
2030	2,794,769	16.50	17,328	0.62
2040	3,255,906	16.50	20,187	0.62
<b>Overall Population Increase (2010-2040)</b>	<b>1,196,727</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,199</b>	<b>-</b>

(Calculations by Draker-Cody, Inc.)

Several significant growth catalysts are possible over the next 10 years: Copper Flat Mine, Spaceport America, enhanced tourism, and the healthcare sector of the Sierra economy. These catalysts make the high growth scenario a very real possibility.

The low to moderate population forecast and the high population forecast represent a reasonable range of growth for Sierra County.

### 2.2.3 Distribution of Population.

In order to distribute the population projections in Table 6 and Table 7, the proportion of the County population encompassed by each of the city of Truth or Consequences, the city of Elephant Butte, and the village of Williamsburg, according to the 2010 census, was calculated. These proportions were then applied to the County projections set out in Table 6. The allocation of population to the municipalities and the County to 2040 assumes that the proportions will remain constant over the planning period.

Table 8 sets out the proportion of the County population encompassed by Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte and Williamsburg.

**Table 8. Proportion of County Population**

Year	Truth or Consequences	Elephant Butte	Williamsburg	Remainder County
2010	54.01%	11.94%	3.75%	30.30%

(Calculations by Draker-Cody, Inc.)

The proportions set out in Table 8 were then applied to the County population projections in Table 6 and Table 7. Table 9 illustrates the results for the low to moderate growth scenario and Table 10 illustrates the results for the high growth scenario. The proportions are held constant for the planning period to 2040.

**Table 9. Distribution of Low to Moderate Growth Scenario Population**

Year	Sierra County Population estimates	Truth or Consequences	Elephant Butte	Williamsburg	Population remaining In County
2010	11,988	6,475	1,431	449	3,633
2020	11,988	6,475	1,431	449	3,633
2030	13,454	7,267	1,606	505	4,076
2040	15,099	8,155	1,803	566	4,575

(Calculations by Draker-Cody, Inc.)

**Table 10. Distribution of High Growth Scenario Population**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Sierra County Population estimates</b>	<b>Truth or Consequences</b>	<b>Elephant Butte</b>	<b>Williamsburg</b>	<b>Population remaining In County</b>
2010	11,988	6,475	1,431	449	3,633
2020	14,873	8,033	1,776	557	4,507
2030	17,328	9,359	2,069	650	5,250
2040	20,187	10,903	2,410	757	6,117

(Calculations by Draker-Cody, Inc.)

The distributions of the projected growth scenarios may change a little over time and with changing circumstances. These estimates are simply a snapshot based on current knowledge and best guess.

## 3.0 LAND USE AND HOUSING

### 3.1 Introductory Comment

Sierra County is largely a rural community of varied physical makeup: rangeland, forests, multiple drainage-ways, and mountains. It is a combination of private lands and public lands. Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte and Williamsburg make up the urban area of the County, accounting for almost 70% of the total County population in 2010. Several Census Designated Places (CDP) and several subdivisions provide other urban or semi-urban settings. Land use in the County is shaped by its physiography, resources, transportation routes, and land ownership.

### 3.2 Existing Land Status

Figure 2 illustrates the existing land status in Sierra County (not all subdivisions are shown). Table 11 lists the area of land (acres) in each defined land status category within the County limits.

**Table 11. Existing Land Status and Acreages within County Limits**

LAND STATUS	ACERAGE	PERCENT of TOTAL AREA
<b>Unincorporated Land</b>		
Bureau of Land Management	767,382	28.35%
Bureau of Reclamation	63,372	2.34%
International Boundary and Water Commission	687	0.03%
Military/Department of Defense	523,907	19.35%
New Mexico State	284,575	10.51%
US Forest Service	378,543	13.98%
Private	668,371	24.69%
Subdivisions**(see note below)	44,917	--
Total Unincorporated	2,686,837	99.25%
<b>Incorporated Land</b>		
Bureau of Land Management	5,193	0.19%
Bureau of Reclamation	52	0.01%
New Mexico State	447	0.04%
Private	13,500	0.50%
Total Incorporated	19,192	0.75%
<b>Grand Total Sierra County</b>	<b>2,707,015</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

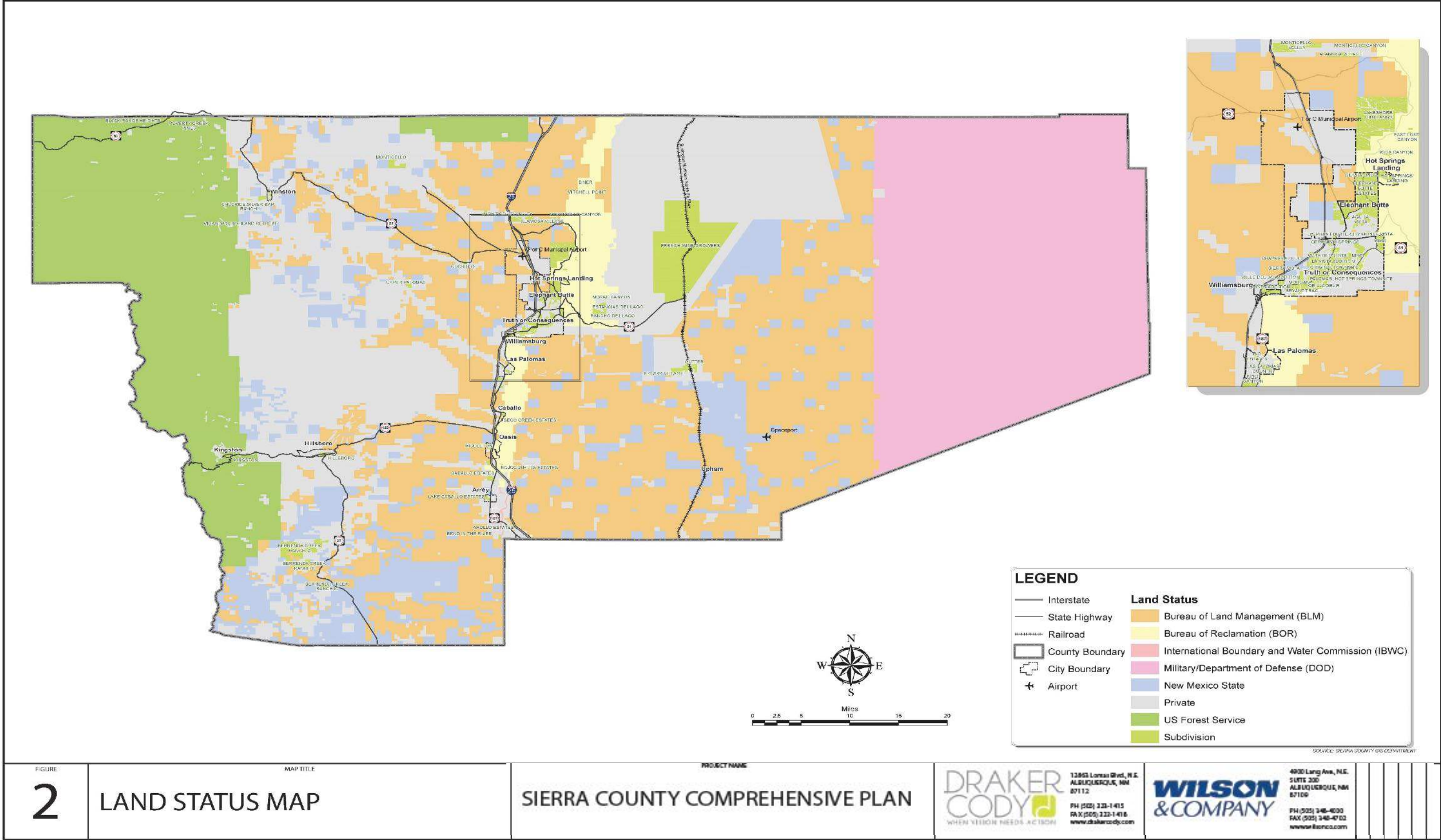
(SOURCE: Area calculations by Wilson & Company: all areas are considered accurate, calculations based upon current available boundary data)

NOTE: \*\* The subdivision acreage is included in total acreage for private lands, and is shown separately only to indicate how much of the private land has been subdivided.

Table 11 illustrates the current land status in Sierra County by acreage and percent of total land area owned publicly and privately. The land status in the incorporated areas of Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte and Williamsburg is shown separately from the unincorporated areas. Approximately 75% of the lands in Sierra County are publicly owned and managed.



Figure 1 - Land Status



### 3.3 Zoning, Subdivision Regulation and other Ordinances

Currently, Sierra County has no zoning ordinance.

The County has a subdivision ordinance, the effective date of which is 2011. Other ordinances related to land use include: Flood Plain Ordinance amended in 2010; Economic Development Ordinance, 1997; Manufactured Housing Ordinance, 1997; and, Illegal Waste Disposal Ordinance, 2010.

### 3.4 Housing

Housing characteristics based on U.S. Census data are described in Section 2.1.5 of this Plan. This Section 3.4 briefly discusses housing values and the need for new housing based upon anticipated growth scenarios.

**3.4.1 Housing and Land Costs.** Housing in Sierra County is mostly modest housing, generally in fair to good condition. There are examples of homes in need of some repair and/or clean-up or removal. Between 2000 and 2010, there were 371 less housing units in the Sierra housing stock; some of these are mobile and manufactured homes.



In 2000, the median value of an owner-occupied unit was \$77,800 and the median gross rent for renter occupied units was \$348 per month (2000 Census, Table DP-4, Summary File). According to the 2011-2015 American FactFinder (U.S. Census) 5-Year Estimate, the value of an owner-occupied unit is \$98,800 and the median rent for a renter-occupied unit was \$575 per month.

In 2000, the median household income was \$24,152 (2000 U.S. Census). The U.S. Census (American FactFinder 5 year estimate) lists the median household income for the period 2011-2015 at \$29,356 (Table DP-03).

**3.4.2 Affordable Housing.** Shortfalls in available housing may be experienced if growth initiated by the Spaceport, mining activity, and a significant increase in tourism are realized within the next few years. Most of the needed housing will be provided in the urban corridor parallel to the Rio Grande. All types of housing will be needed: single detached units, multi-family housing, and units that are affordable.



Source: homes.com

The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordable as a situation in which a household pays no more than thirty percent (30%) of its annual income on housing costs. Those costs include mortgage payments, property taxes, insurance, utilities and perhaps upkeep. HUD estimates that currently (2017), about twelve million American households pay more than 50% of their annual income for housing (HUD.Gov web site).

For Sierra County, assuming the annual median household income of \$29,356 is correct, a household should not be spending more than \$8,807.00 (rounded) annually on housing. If a person had no other debt, and this is important, a home costing between \$149,800 and \$163,000 (dependent on the amount

of down payment and actual income) might be affordable. However, with an additional monthly debt (credit cards, car loan, etc.) of say \$500, the affordable home price drops to a range of \$75,000 to \$92,000 (rounded). Again, this depends on the actual amount of down payment, actual income and monthly debt. As the monthly debt increases, the affordable price begins to decrease rapidly. On the other hand, the higher the annual income and the greater the down payment, the “more” house that can be purchased. [Draker-Cody used a finance calculator using known quantities such as annual income and interest rate. The down payment and debt were varied to produce the estimates above].

While these are crude estimates based on a number of assumptions, it provides some idea of the range of affordable housing prices possible in Sierra County.

### **3.5 Future Land and Housing Requirements**

**3.5.1 Future Housing Requirements.** Section 2.2.1 of this Plan describes the low to moderate growth and the high growth scenarios for the planning period to 2040. The low-moderate growth scenario proposes a future population of 15,099 for Sierra County by the year 2040, while the high growth scenario will produce a population of 20,187 by 2040.

The low-moderate growth scenario results in a total population gain of 3,111 by 2040 (12.23% per decade) and the high growth scenario results in an increase of population of 8,199 over the 2010 base (16.50 % per decade). Based upon historical trends about 70% of the forecasted growth will occur in the urban area of Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte and Williamsburg in either growth scenario. This is the area with municipal services and commercial infrastructure. Some growth may occur in the various Census Designated Places such as Las Palomas and Arrey.

At present there are 175 subdivisions in both the unincorporated and incorporated portions of the County containing a total of 21,000 lots/parcels, approximately, as of February, 2017. Of the 21,000 lots/parcels, approximately 10,000 are developed leaving approximately 11,000 lots available for development. At the current average household size of 1.98 persons, this is sufficient to accommodate all of the additional growth anticipated by both the low-moderate growth scenario and the high growth scenario.

With respect to the unincorporated parts of the County alone, there are about 10,000 subdivided lots/parcels and about 6,800 of these are not currently developed. Inasmuch as only 30% of the anticipated growth will occur in the unincorporated parts of the County, there are more than sufficient lots available to accommodate that growth (less than 1,000 persons in the low/moderate growth scenario and 2,460 persons in the high growth scenario. This translates to approximately 500 housing units for the low/moderate growth scenario and approximately 1,250 housing units for the high growth scenario.

With respect to the incorporated areas, historically they have accommodated 70% of the population; we see no significant change to that.

Within the incorporated areas there are approximately 2,200 undeveloped lots available. This will be sufficient to accommodate the housing need generated by the low-moderate growth scenario (approximately 1,100 dwelling units needed), but it falls short of the housing need generated by the

high growth scenario, about 2,900 units). All of this assumes single detached dwellings. The construction of sufficient multiple family dwellings will alleviate the potential shortfall.

3.5.2 Water Requirements for Growth. The Professional Engineer's Report produced for Truth or Consequences in August, 2015 indicates that both water and waste water will be sufficient to handle the low-moderate growth scenario but not the high growth scenario. Wilson & Company, in Chapter 5 of this Plan, has recommended that growth rates be monitored and if it approaches 1.7% per year, additional improvements to the water and wastewater systems will be required for the incorporated areas.

## **3.6 Land Use**

3.6.1 Land Use Issues. Throughout the data gathering phase (interviews with business community, elected representatives and representatives of various state and federal organizations), review of reports, and public input phases of the project, land use issues, generally, were not voiced as major concerns, with one exception. Whether conducting interviews with individuals of the business community or representatives of various organizations, or with elected officials, or comments made at the public meetings, concern was often expressed about the U.S. Forest Service Travel Management Plan. The fundamentals of the concern revolved about the closure of access roads by the U.S. Forest Service to both public and commercial activity. Also cited was the designation of areas of public land as wilderness areas or monuments and the access restrictions occasioned by these designations. Local concern centers on the restriction of access to commercial outfitters engaged in fishing and hunting ventures. Impacted too are individuals who hunt or fish without use of commercial guides and outfitters. Alleged is a significant loss of jobs and revenue to the various segments of the County. Similar complaints may apply to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Visitors to federal lands, those interested in recreational pursuits such as camping or hiking, may also be affected by access restrictions. What impact, if any, on number of visitors or activities, is difficult to determine without sufficient data. The United States Department of Agriculture has produced a draft report for the Gila National Forest entitled: Draft Assessment Report of Ecological/Social/Economic Sustainability Conditions and Trends, Gila National Forest, USDA, September, 2016. This report does contain data on hunting, fishing and recreational use-visitors to the National Forest for the years 2006 and 2011. Draker-Cody was informed by the Gila National Forest staff, who prepared the report, that all data-outfitter permits, visitor surveys, etc.-are collected on a National Forest wide basis and data for individual counties, such as Sierra, are not available.

From the perspective of the U.S. Forest Service, the closing of access roads is done after consultation, through several public meetings, with the local community. The reasons cited to Draker-Cody were protection of natural resources, and lack of budget funds to maintain the roads. Draker-Cody was told that some special provision for access is made to the ranching community.

From the perspective of the local community, the belief is that the concerns expressed by the local community are paid little heed, and the loss of jobs and revenue, and inconvenience to ranchers and others, occasioned by closure of Forest Service Roads, or access issues with other federal agencies, is a serious loss to the community.

In addition, issues have been raised concerning increased restrictions on, or even loss of, grazing rights to ranchers. And, at least one major business involved in mineral extraction has noted that simply getting access across federal lands to get to privately owned lands to conduct business is becoming more difficult, not impossible, just more paper work and cost.

3.6.1.1 Hunting and Fishing. Draker-Cody is not able to determine or judge what might be the magnitude of losses in jobs and in revenue to the County; however, a 2014 study commissioned by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish sheds some light on the importance of hunting and fishing activities to New Mexico, and to Sierra County in particular. The study published in July, 2014, was prepared by Southwick Associates, and utilized 2013 data (See: The Economic Contributions of Fishing, Hunting and Trapping in New Mexico in 2013: A Statewide and County-Level Analysis, Southwick and Associates, July 31, 2014).

The study relies on three measures: participation in the activities; level of spending; and, the estimated economic impact of the hunting, fishing and trapping activities.

An electronic on-line survey of participants, using license data was conducted in 2014 using license data for the time period April 1, 2012 through January 16, 2014. Over 66,000 e-mail questionnaires were sent to participants, residents and non-residents. Approximately 15,500 responses were received, a response rate of about 24%.

Number of participants in each activity and duration of participation were some of the data collected.

The survey also included question on spending for various categories such as equipment, lodging, food, etc. and where purchases were made.

The economic contribution to the state and to the individual counties was determined through use of the IMPLAN input-output analytical model and multiplier impacts were calculated.

The following tables illustrate the spending for fishing and hunting, by residents and non-residents in New Mexico and in Sierra County (Table 12), and the estimated economic impact (Table 13). Trapping was not an activity in Sierra County in 2013.

**Table 12. Spending on Fishing and Hunting Activities, New Mexico and Sierra County-2013**

Activity	New Mexico			Sierra County		
	Residents	Non-Residents	Total	Residents	Non-Residents	Total
<b>Fishing</b>	\$195,111,084	\$ 72,605,939	\$267,717,023	\$1,885,107	\$714,301	\$2,599,408
<b>Hunting</b>	\$242,080,907	\$100,287,747	\$342,368,654	\$2,835,853	\$1,521,904	\$4,357,758
<b>Totals</b>	\$437,191,991	\$172,893,686	\$610,085,677	\$4,720,960	\$2,236,205	\$6,957,166

(Source: Tables 5 and 9, The Economic Contributions of Fishing, Hunting and Trapping in New Mexico in 2013: A Statewide and County-Level Analysis, Southwick and Associates, July 31, 2014)

Expenditures by hunters and anglers in New Mexico and in Sierra County are significant: over one-half billion dollars in the State and almost seven million dollars in Sierra County.



**Table 13. Estimated Economic Impact of Fishing and Hunting, New Mexico and Sierra County-2013**

<b>Activity</b>				<b>Tax Revenue</b>	
	<b>Jobs</b> (full time and part-time)	<b>Labor</b> <b>Income</b>	<b>State GDP</b>	<b>Federal</b>	<b>State/Local</b>
<b>New Mexico</b>					
<b>Fishing</b>	3,136	\$110,408,401	\$186,273,263	\$22,608,532	\$21,793,815
<b>Hunting</b>	4,755	\$156,009,913	\$265,143,826	\$32,213,037	\$29,265,713
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7,891</b>	<b>\$266,418,314</b>	<b>\$451,417,089</b>	<b>\$54,821,569</b>	<b>\$51,059,528</b>
<b>Sierra County</b>					
<b>Fishing</b>	97	\$2,174,158	\$4,865,567	\$501,332	\$814,472
<b>Hunting</b>	56	\$1,192,127	\$2,876,270	\$293,885	\$395,046
<b>Totals</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>\$3,366,285</b>	<b>\$7,741,837</b>	<b>\$795,217</b>	<b>\$1,209,518</b>

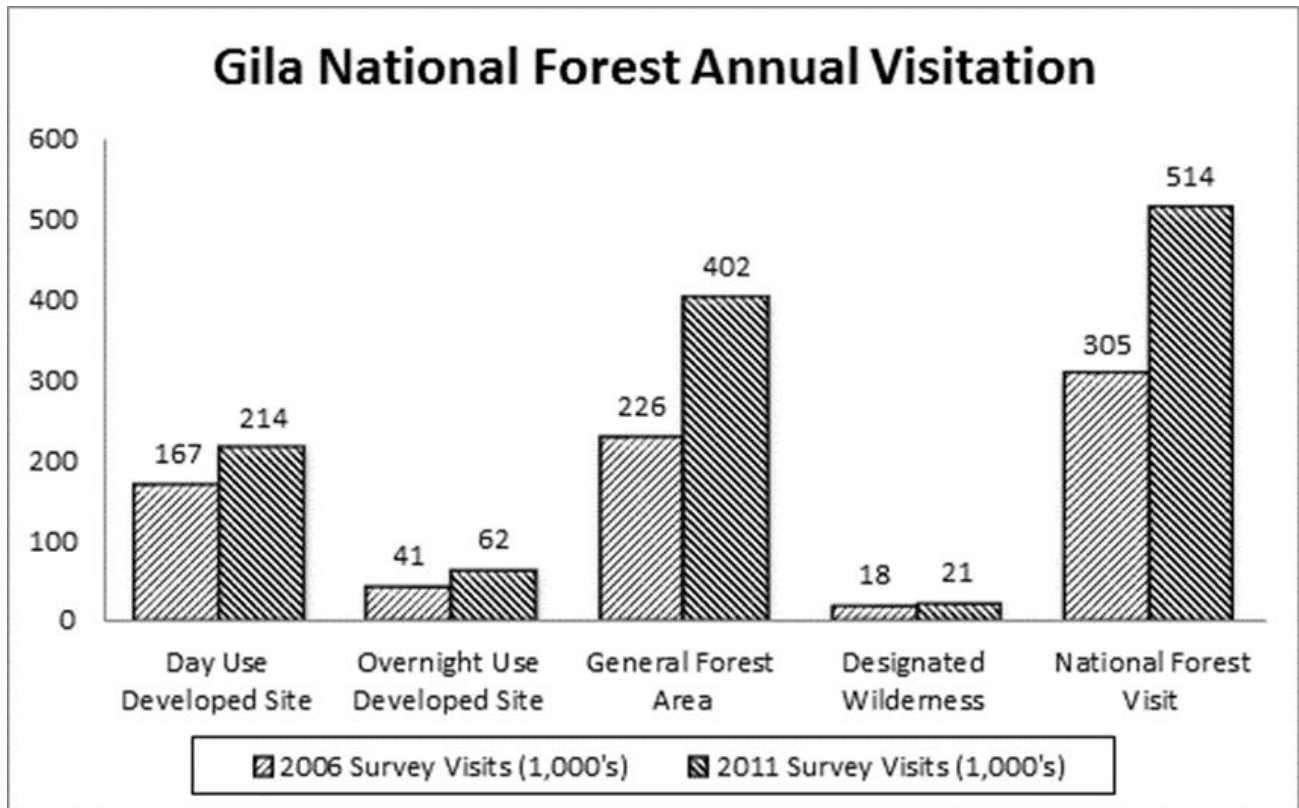
(Source: Tables 6 and 11, The Economic Contributions of Fishing, Hunting and Trapping in New Mexico in 2013: A Statewide and County-Level Analysis, Southwick and Associates, July 31, 2014).

Table 13 suggests that the economic impact of fishing and hunting activities are significant for both the State and for Sierra County. Tax revenue at the State and local level is significant for a County the size of Sierra. The jobs created in Sierra County in the fishing and hunting sectors represent about 4% of the employed labor force for the period 2011-2015 (American Community Survey-5 year estimate, Table DP03).

Tables 12 and 13 serve to point up the importance of fishing and hunting activities for New Mexico and for Sierra County. What the tables do not tell us, nor does the Southwick Associates study, is what percentage of these activities take place in the U.S. Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management lands. Further, there is no sure way of knowing the impact on these activities in terms of jobs or revenue to the County if access to parts of the public lands are cut off. More survey work, specific to the local area is required.

It is reasonable to assume that there is some negative economic impact when access is restricted. However, it would be most helpful to have specific data available to prove the point, especially when additional roads are proposed to be closed, or if access to areas is restricted because of proposed changes in designation of public lands; e.g., changes to wilderness or monument designations. This ought to be a joint responsibility of the local community, and the federal authority proposing changes.

3.6.1.2 Recreation-Visitors to Gila National Forest. The USDA produced Draft Assessment Report of Ecological/Social/Economic Sustainability Conditions and Trends, Gila National Forest, September, 2016 does not separate out visitor information for Sierra County; data are Forest-wide. The bar graph and the table on the following page indicate Annual Visitation to the Gila National Forest and distribution of site type used, respectively, based on surveys of visits in 2006 and 2011. Please note individual survey numbers, by site visited, do not total. Numbers in one group may be counted in other groups because they visited more than one area of the National Forest. Consequently, some visitors in the total count (305,000 for 2006) may have visited more than one site in the Gila National Forest.



(Source: Draft Assessment Report of Ecological/Social/Economic Sustainability Conditions and Trends, Gila National Forest, September, 2016. Figure 189, p.546.)

The following statement is taken directly from the draft report (USDA, 2016, p.546) and explains visitor usage of sites by type in the table below.

“When assessing the proportion of site type used from 2006 to 2011, the biggest changes were in Day Use Developed sites (decreased by 6%) and General Forest Area (increased by 7%). Table 191 shows that while total visitation has increased, the type of site utilized is quite similar between 2006 and 2011. There is a noticeable trend of visitors shifting from utilizing developed sites to dispersed sites. A large percentage dispersed site use is associated with hunting and utilization of backcountry areas including trail use. The risks associated with an increase of dispersed recreation use include resource damage within riparian areas due to concentrated recreation, increased litter, and the possibility of greater conflicts among visitors.”

**Distribution of Site Type Used between 2006 and 2011**

Site Type	2006	2011
Day Use Developed Site	36.9%	30.6%
Overnight Use Developed Site	9.1%	8.9%
General Forest Area	50.0%	57.5%
Designated Wilderness	4.0%	3.0@
Total	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: Draft Assessment Report of Ecological/Social/Economic Sustainability Conditions and Trends, Gila National Forest, September, 2016. Table 191, p.546)

**3.6.1.3 Consultation and National Environmental Policy Act.** Of importance to the local community is that the federal authorities conduct a truly collaborative effort with local entities under the National

Environmental Policy Act, including Sierra County, the cities of Truth or Consequences and Elephant Butte, the Sierra County Soil and Water Conservation District, and other organizations and individuals who may be impacted by federal actions. There is a basic understanding by the local community that federal lands have a national significance. However, it is also understood that these lands are situated locally, and consequently, their proximity has very direct impacts-maybe positive or maybe negative-on the local community, impacts that are not directly experienced by someone living a thousand miles distant. This is a common theme expressed by individuals and organizations in Sierra County.

A primary goal of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is to ensure meaningful public input and involvement in evaluating impacts of proposed federal actions. While the emphasis tends to be on environmental impacts, economic and social impacts are also considerations. The Council on Environmental Quality has published a handbook on collaboration for NEPA practitioners (See: Collaboration in NEPA: A Handbook for NEPA Practitioners, Council on Environmental Quality, October, 2007).

The handbook suggests that “There are many ways to collaborate: informally or formally, as partners or in teams, in advisory capacities or as joint decision-makers. When we collaborate with someone we allow that person a relatively high level of influence in our decision-making.” (Collaboration In NEPA, 2007, p. 3).

What appears to be lacking, according to local officials and individuals, is this “high level of influence in decision-making”.

Draker-Cody recommends that where changes are proposed to the designation of federal lands or to access roads, that it be the policy of the Sierra County government to seek and insist on a high level of collaboration between federal agencies and County officials, and other organizations and individuals, as appropriate. Such collaboration is imperative where federal actions may negatively impact County residents and businesses. (See Section 3.7.3 for specific objectives and actions regarding implementation of this recommendation).

3.6.2 Future Growth Scenario. Figure 3, Land Status and Future Growth Scenario is a reproduction of the Land Status Map (Figure 2) with the addition of projected growth areas.

The principal growth area is the major existing urbanized area of Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte and Williamsburg. Also proposed are secondary and tertiary growth areas. The remainder of the County, for the most part, will retain its predominately rural nature consisting of open range, forest and mountain areas.

### 3.6.3 Brief Description of Projected Growth Areas.

Principal Growth Area. The cities of Truth or Consequences and Elephant Butte, the village of Williamsburg, and Las Palomas comprise the core of the principal growth area of Sierra County. Currently, about 70% of the County’s population resides in this area; this Plan anticipates at least the same proportion in the future and quite possibly more. In addition to 70% of the population, most of the major commercial, health facilities, social services, and government agencies are housed in this area, and this agglomeration of facilities will continue to grow, attract people, and support various economic initiatives.



Secondary Growth Areas. Two secondary growth areas are suggested: one is located immediately south of the principal growth area, encompassing Caballo and Oasis. This area is now experiencing some small growth and it is anticipated that this area will provide a type of suburban growth area to Truth or Consequences and Elephant Butte; and, the second area is centered on Arrey and Derry. Arrey and Derry have exhibited small amounts of growth between 2000 and 2010. Draker-Cody expects this growth to continue, and perhaps increase a little with the further development of Spaceport America.

Tertiary Growth Area. Two tertiary growth areas are suggested; one centered on Hillsboro and the second on Monticello. The tertiary growth areas are not sure bets for growth. Growth may not occur at all. However, the Copper Flat Mine near Hillsboro may be the catalyst for some growth in this area. Monticello is rural enough to attract some new residents, and still fairly close to the principal area of urban growth.

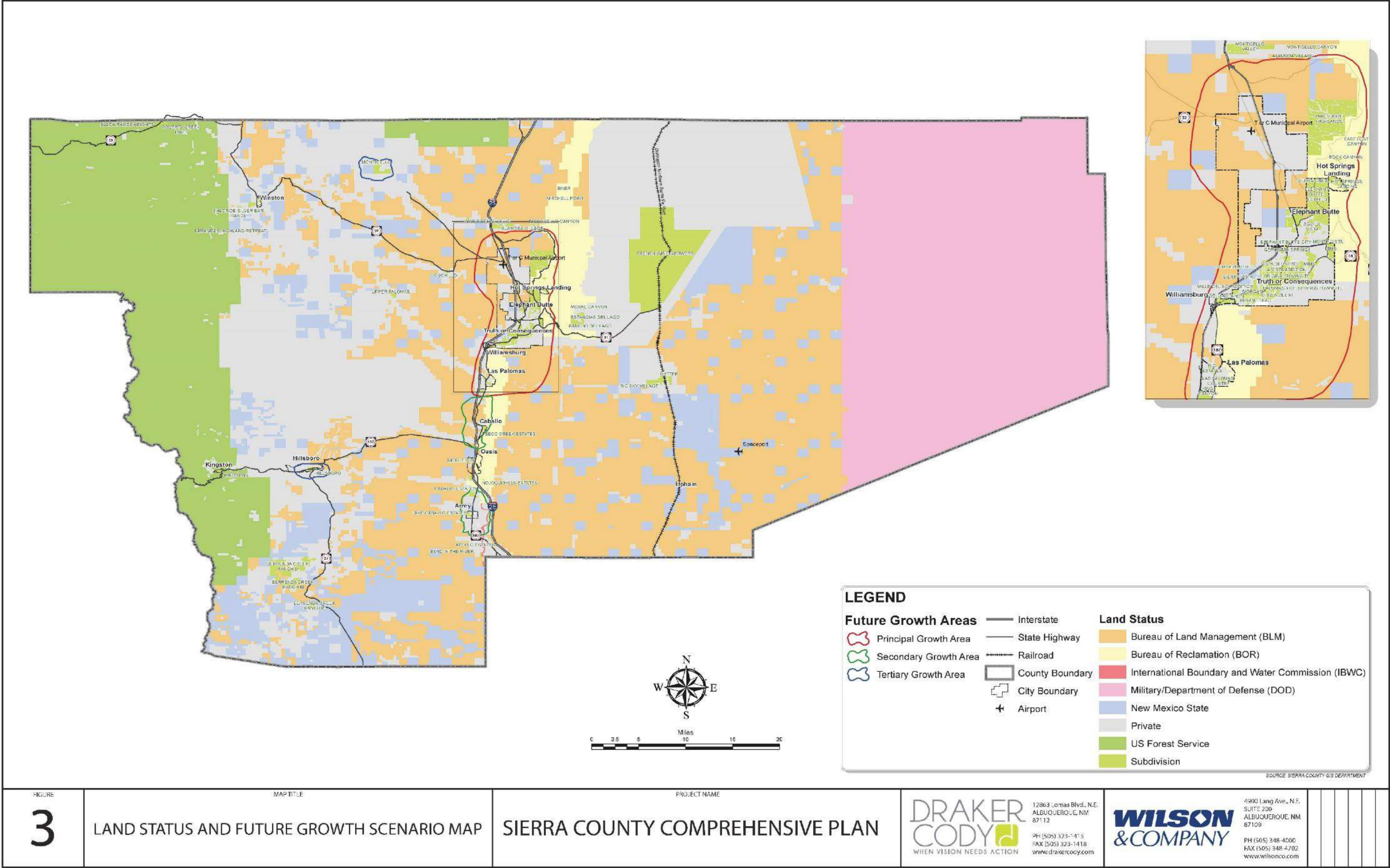
Census Designated Places. Both the secondary and tertiary growth areas are based on Census Designated Places (CDPs). CDPs are small concentrations of populations identified by the U.S. Census Bureau, and these are usually found in rural settings. These places usually contain some community facilities and services. These are nodes where people will choose to live to enjoy some sense of close community living without the negatives of major urban living-noise, traffic, crime, etc.

Other CDPs outside of the secondary and tertiary growth areas have and may continue to experience marginal growth.

Rural, Open Range, Forest, and Mountain Areas. Most of Sierra County is, and will remain in rural use with areas of grassland, forests, and mountains dominating the landscape. Population in these areas will remain sparse as much of the land is National Forest or Bureau of Land Management land, or ranch land. Some of these areas may be subdivided in the future, although few new subdivisions are needed to accommodate the anticipated growth. These areas, as much as possible, should remain in their existing primitive state; it is part of the County's characteristic beauty and charm.

Subdivisions. The subdivisions shown on Figure 3 are principally residential areas and, in the unincorporated areas of the County, most are largely undeveloped. These platted areas provide a variety of residential living choices within the County. As noted earlier just over 30% of these areas are developed, leaving many lots and locations from which to choose.

Figure 2 - Land Status and Future Growth Scenario



### **3.7 Goals, Objectives and Implementation Strategies/Actions**

#### **3.7.1 Goal 1: Provide for an Efficient and Orderly Land Use Pattern in Sierra County to the Extent Permitted and Appropriate.**

##### **Specific Objectives:**

- a. adhere to the growth areas as indicated on Figure 3-Land Status and Growth Scenario Map;
- b. where appropriate, provide development guidelines and standards for various types of land uses;
- c. review and update development and design standards for subdivisions, as appropriate;
- d. encourage in-fill development;
- e. work to protect and preserve property values and the County property tax base;
- f. protect and conserve features of the natural environment as well as areas of historical, cultural and scenic value; and,
- g. consider carefully the need to further subdivide rural lands.

##### **Implementation Strategies and Actions:**

- i. County Commission to adopt this Comprehensive Plan as the guide to the development of the County;
- ii. County Commission to consider a simple property maintenance ordinance in order to protect property values and the municipal property tax base; and, to provide a measure of predictability for residents and newcomers; and,
- iii. County to amend this Plan as opportunities arise, and to accommodate desirable development.

#### **3.7.2 Goal 2: Provide Opportunities for New and Different Housing Types, Sizes and Densities to Attract New Population.**

##### **Specific Objectives:**

- a. ensure an adequate amount of land for housing;
- b. provide for opportunities for multi-family and senior citizen housing; and,
- c. provide for a variety in housing prices, sizes and styles.

##### **Implementation Strategies and Actions:**

- i. Sierra County Board of Commissioners to adopt this Plan as the guide for future development of the County;
- ii. Sierra County Board of Commissioners to encourage mixed residential uses and for mixed commercial-residential uses in specific areas. Review and update the subdivision ordinance to allow for alternate forms of subdivision such as cluster subdivisions, and encourage energy efficient housing design. It should also provide for planned unit developments;
- iii. Sierra County to update its subdivision ordinance as necessary and appropriate;
- iv. work with the cities to promote the development and construction of new housing, especially multi-family housing; and

- v. seek out grants/loans from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to help with the provision of needed housing. This might be in rural areas or the County may partner with Truth or Consequences and/or Elephant Butte and/or Williamsburg on a project for which a need has been identified. Some USDA grant/loan possibilities are listed below:
- Rural Housing Site Loans: loans provided for the purchase and development of housing sites for low (between 50% and 80% of the area median income) and moderate income (upper limit of moderate is \$5,500 above the low income limit) families. Private or public non-profit organizations are eligible.
  - Guaranteed Housing Loans: applicants may have an income of up to 115% of the area median income. Loans available through approved lenders-lenders approved by HUD; any state agency; and several others.
  - Direct Housing Loans: to help low income to build, repair, renovate, or purchase modest housing. Loans up to 30 years; 1% fixed rate.
  - Housing Preservation Grants: grants from USDA to repair, renovate, and refurbish individual homes, rental properties or co-ops owned or occupied by very low and low income rural persons.
  - Single Family Housing Repair Loans and Grants: Loans and grants provided to low income homeowners to repair, improve dwellings or to remove health and safety hazards. Loans up to \$20,000 for 20 years at 1% interest and grants up to \$7,500 are available.
  - Multi-Family Housing Rental Assistance: provides payment to owners of USDA-financed Rural Rental Housing or Farm Labor Housing projects on behalf of low-income tenants unable to pay their full rent.
  - Community Facilities Grants: funds to help develop needed community facilities in communities under 20,000 population. Applicants located in small communities with low populations and low incomes will receive a higher percentage of grants. Funds may be used to provide facilities related to public safety or healthcare or other public services.

There may be other programs available and the USDA web site should be consulted for information on these programs.

### 3.7.3 Goal 3: Establish a Formal and Influential Collaborative Status with Federal Agencies

#### Specific Objectives:

- a. Form a collaborative coalition of local entities; and,
- b. Establish a protocol to deal with proposed changes to federal lands.

#### Implementation Strategies and Actions:

- i. Sierra County to take the lead in establishing a collaborative body of local entities. The core group should include: County representatives; representatives of the cities of Truth or Consequences and Elephant Butte, and the village of Williamsburg; the Sierra Soil and Water Conservation District; representatives of the local chambers of commerce;

- representatives of the mining, ranching, hunting and angling sectors; with others to be added as appropriate and needed, e.g. state agencies;
- ii. the collaborative organization inform appropriate federal authorities that the local community wishes to have collaborative status with a “high level of influence in decision-making” as recommended by the Council on Environmental Quality;
- iii. the collaborative organization to develop a protocol for dealing with changes to federal lands proposed by federal agencies. The protocol should deal with matters such as: what documentation will be required to have meaningful discussion with federal agencies; how necessary studies will be funded; how information will be disseminated to the public; and,
- iv. maintain a good working relationship with local representatives of federal agencies.

#### 3.7.4 Goal 4: Promote Sierra County as a Desirable Place for Families to Live and for People to Visit.

##### Specific Objectives:

- a. County Commission, Sierra County Tourism Committee, and local chambers of commerce to pool resources to market the amenities of the County, in particular the excellent quality of the physical environment, cost of living, health care amenities, attractive and comfortable living environment and other positive characteristics of Sierra County;
- b. provide protection of property rights and property values; and,
- c. County Commission to develop and adopt an anti-littering ordinance to provide a clean, stable community to attract new residents and new business investment.

##### Implementation Strategies and Actions:

- i. Sierra County Commission to develop and adopt an anti-littering ordinance to provide a clean, stable community to attract new residents and new business investment.
- ii. the Sierra County communities (Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte, Williamsburg, Las Palomas, Caballo, and other communities) to work together to provide a clean, tidy community; and,
- iii. Sierra County and other entities such as the Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Advisory Board and the chambers of commerce to work together to better market and enhance existing amenities and develop new amenities to attract newcomers and visitors (see Chapter 4-Economic Development).

## **4.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The economy of Sierra County is varied: agriculture, ranching, mining, tourism and recreation, Spaceport America, and healthcare. The education and health service sector is the largest employer with 1,025 (American Community Survey 2011-2015, 5 year estimates), followed by the arts, entertainment, recreation, food and accommodation sector with 528 employees (American Community Survey 2011-2015, 5 year estimates). The retail sector is the third largest sector with 508 employees (American Community Survey 2011-2015, 5 year estimates). Economic development for Sierra County means at least two things: maintaining and enhancing the businesses it currently has; and, attracting new business and more visitors.

This Chapter is not intended to be, nor is it intended to take the place of a full economic development study and strategy. It represents a start toward a detailed strategy based upon input from various individuals and organizations, and based upon the consultant's observations. It is intended to provide some focus and guidelines to Sierra County in pursuit of new investment and employment opportunities.

There is a wealth of material/reports available on various aspects of the economy in Sierra County. Many of these have been consulted in the preparation of this Chapter; but, there are far too many for any comprehensive analysis of the economic situation in Sierra County, work that should be part of a full economic strategy. The Middle Rio Grande Economic Development Association is a major player in this regard. However, Draker-Cody believes something more direct is needed for Sierra County, and this is addressed later in this Chapter.

**4.1.1 Middle Rio Grande Economic Development Association (MRGEDA).** The MRGEDA is comprised of four counties: Sierra, Socorro, Catron and Valencia. It is a product of the Stronger Economies Together program operated by the Rural Development Office of the United States Department of Agriculture. The purpose of the program is to establish a coalition of communities to maintain and enhance current economic clusters in the region and to promote the region's economic advantages. It is a multi-jurisdictional collaboration.

The MRGEDA has prepared an Economic Development Plan for the region which has identified five economic clusters: agriculture, tourism and recreation industry (including arts and entertainment), healthcare, renewable energy and forestry products, and technology.

With a partial exception of "renewable energy and forest products" the other four clusters are applicable to Sierra County. Renewable energy in the form of solar farms may be a viable initiative for Sierra County. A sixth cluster for Sierra County is resource based industries: mining, hunting, and fishing.

The MRGEDA Plan established goals, objectives and strategies for achieving objectives for all five clusters. What is proposed in this Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is not in conflict with the MRGEDA regional plan, but it is, importantly, focused on Sierra County and directed at enhancing Sierra County's economic opportunities.

## **4.2 Basic Economic Data**

Comprehensive economic data were not collected as part of the 2010 Census. Basic labor force data and occupation data were not collected in the 2010 Census. A national economic survey began at the end of 2012 and collected data have been released; however, data are incomplete for many industry sectors.

The American FactFinder, U.S. Census Bureau, does provide estimates of economic data over an aggregate 5 year interval. The 5-Year estimates were used for basic labor force information (Table 14). Please note that some 2010 actual data are available for some jurisdictions. Table 15 sets out labor force by occupation and industry sectors.

Table 14 sets out the basic labor force data for Sierra County, Truth or Consequences (T or C), Elephant Butte, Williamsburg, Hillsboro CDP, Kingston CDP, Caballo CDP, and Las Palomas CDP.

Table 14. Labor Force Statistics-2000 and 2011-2015 Estimates (American Community Survey)

Category	Sierra Count y 2000 Census	Sierra County 2011- 2015 Estimate		T or C 2000 Censu s	T or C 2011- 2015 Estimat e		Elephan t Butte 2000 Census	Elephant Butte 2011-2015 Estimate		Williams -burg 2000 Census	William s-burg 2011- 2015 Estimat e		Hillsbor o CDP 2000 Census	Hillsboro CDP 2011 Estimate		Kingsto n CDP 2000 Census	Kingston CDP 2011 Estimate¹		Winston CDP 2000 Census	Winston CDP 2011 Estimate¹		Arrey CDP 2000 Census	Arrey CDP 2011 Estimate¹		Caballo CDP 2000 Census	Caballo CDP 2011 Estimate¹		Las Paloma s CDP 2000 Census	Las Palomas CDP 2011 Estimate¹
Employment (Civilian Labor Force)																													
Total Males 16 years and over	5,428	5,140 (2010 actual)		2,893	2,702 (2010 actual)		665	668 (2010 actual)		205	197 (2010 actual)		n/a	58 (2010 actual)		n/a	19 (2010 actual)		n/a	30 (2010 actual)		n/a	76 (2010 actual)		n/a	53 (2010 actual)		n/a	74 (2010 actual)
Total Females 16 years and over	5,555	5,155 (2010 actual)		3,144	2,787 (2010 actual)		686	652 (2010 actual)		220	207 (2010 actual)		n/a	63 (2010 actual)		n/a	12 (2010 actual)		n/a	26 (2010 actual)		n/a	95 (2010 actual)		n/a	52 (2010 actual)		n/a	75 (2010 actual)
Total Population 16 years and over	10,983	10,295 (2010 actual)		6,037	5,489 (2010 actual)		1,351	1,320 (2010 actual)		425	404 (2010 actual)		n/a	121 (2010 actual)		n/a	31 (2010 actual)		n/a	56 (2010 actual)		n/a	171 (2010 actual)		n/a	105 (2010 actual)		n/a	149 (2010 actual)
Males 16 years and over in labor force	2,487	2,213		1,349	1,236		238	218		96	65		n/a	67		n/a	0		n/a	9		n/a	40		n/a	33		n/a	32
Females 16 years and over in labor force	2,297	2,048		1,279	1,108		235	299		90	79		n/a	43		n/a	0		n/a	11		n/a	80		n/a	0		n/a	88
Total Population 16 years and over in Civilian Labor Force	4,784	4,261		2,628	2,344		473	517		186	144		n/a	110		n/a	0		n/a	20		n/a	120		n/a	33		n/a	220
Males 16 and over who are employed	2,313	2,066		1,126	1,099		238	191		96	52		n/a	67		n/a	0		n/a	9		n/a	40		n/a	33		n/a	32
Females 16 and over who are employed	2,157	1,905		1,279	1,108		235	277		90	79		n/a	43		n/a	0		n/a	11		n/a	80		n/a	0		n/a	88
Total Population 16 years and over employed (Civilian)	4,470	3,971		2,405	2,207		473	468		186	131		n/a	110		n/a	0		n/a	20		n/a	120		n/a	33		n/a	220

<sup>1</sup> Source: 2000 Census and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.



From 2000 to 2010 the total Sierra County population 16 years of age and older decreased by 6.26% (Table 14). Estimated number of people 16 years of age and over who are employed in Sierra County also decreased by 11.16 %. Table 14 illustrates a decrease of total population 16 years and over for Sierra County, Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte, and Williamsburg. Sierra County, Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte and Williamsburg all experienced a decrease in the number of persons 16 years of age and older employed. No 2000 data was available to allow any assessment of trends for the CDP's.

Unemployment in the County is serious. As of April, 2017, unemployment in Sierra County was 9.0 % (seasonally unadjusted) (source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics). Only Luna County at 19.6% unemployment was worse for the same period. Taos County at 8.6% was third.

Table 15 sets out labor force data in Sierra County by occupation and industry sector. These are 5-Year (2011-2015) estimates prepared by American FactFinder (U.S. Census) and are based upon samples of the business community. The 2012 Economic Census has released some occupational data, but it is not complete for some of the industrial sectors and thus is not used here.

Truth or Consequences and Elephant Butte account for 67.36% of those employed in the County, while Williamsburg accounts for 4.46% of total employment in the County. The Community Designated Places (CDPs) account for approximately 12.7 %.

According to the 5-year estimates, most persons in Sierra County are employed in the education and health services sector, about 25.8%. About 62% of these are employed in Truth or Consequences, Williamsburg and Elephant Butte. The next largest sector is the recreation, accommodation, entertainment and food sector with 13.3% of total employment. In third place is the retail sector with 12.8% of total employment. Public administration is fourth with 10.5% of total employment. The agriculture, ranching, forestry and mining sector accounts for approximately 9% of total employment.

Table 15. Labor Force by Occupation and Industry Sector

	Sierra County- 2000 Census	Sierra County Estimate 2011- 2015	T or C 2000 Census	T or C Estimate 2011- 2015	Elephant Butte – 2000 Census	Elephant Butte – Estimate 2011- 2015	Williams- burg 2000 Census	Williams- burg Estimate 2011- 2015	Hillsboro CDP 2000 Census	Hillsboro CDP Estimate 2011- 2015	Kingston CDP 2000 Census	Kingston CDP Estimate 2011-2015	Winston CDP 2000 Census	Winston CDP Estimate 2011- 2015	Arrey CDP 2000 Census	Arrey CDP Estimate 2011- 2015	Caballo CDP 2000 Census	Caballo CDP Estimate 2011- 2015	Las Palomas CDP 2000 Census	Las Palomas CDP Estimate 2011- 2015
Occupation (employed civilian population)																				
Management, Professional & Related Occupations	1,198	1,140	595	525	140	91	55	31	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	20	n/a	65	n/a	10	n/a	124
Service occupations	1,014	1,029	727	704	74	216	38	19	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	15	n/a	0	n/a	0
Sales and Office Occupations	969	909	519	532	133	121	39	29	n/a	5	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	27
Farming, Fishing, Forestry Occupations	142	n/a	18	n/a	0	n/a	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Construction, Extraction, Maintenance Occupations	728	421	344	155	64	0	21	8	n/a	45	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	40	n/a	0	n/a	69
Production, Transportation, & Material Moving Occupations	419	472	202	291	37	40	21	44	n/a	15	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	23	n/a	0
Total Employed	4,470	3,971	2,405	2,207	448	468	177	131	n/a	110	n/a	0	n/a	20	n/a	120	n/a	33	n/a	220
Employment by Industry																				
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Mining	372	340	66	87	10	12	5	8	n/a	15	n/a	0	n/a	9	n/a	26	n/a	10	n/a	64
Construction	534	284	231	129	31	9	10	8	n/a	45	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	14	n/a	0	n/a	0
Manufacturing	106	72	39	46	9	0	11	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0
Wholesale	96	48	56	16	2	0	3	0	n/a	22	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0
Retail	500	508	268	280	87	99	25	38	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	27
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	178	236	83	154	30	17	16	6	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	11	n/a	0	n/a	23	n/a	0
Information	62	24	50	24	8	0	4	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental/Leasing	197	146	137	76	17	5	2	14	n/a	28	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, Waste Management	216	223	133	73	37	34	5	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0
Educational, Health & Social Services	949	1,025	529	511	110	86	42	34	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	80	n/a	0	n/a	129
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation & Food Services	658	528	428	440	55	77	26	11	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0
Other Services (except Public Services)	288	121	181	113	39	3	10	5	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0
Public Administration	314	416	204	258	13	126	18	7	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0
Totals	4,470	3,971	2,405	2,207	448	468	177	131	n/a	110	n/a	0	n/a	20	n/a	120	n/a	33	n/a	220

'Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## 4.3 Business and Resident Preferences

Over the course of multiple interviews with members of the community and several public meetings, both Sierra County residents and the Sierra County business community articulated several ideas to generate growth. These ideas and suggestions included: aggressively building on the existing tourism and recreation resources and opportunities, including eco-tourism; supporting the Spaceport; supporting the Copper Flat Mine operation; promoting Sierra County as a retirement community; building the healthcare industry, and maintaining and enhancing hunting and fishing activities (see discussion of hunting and fishing) in Section 3.6.1 of the Plan).

## 4.4 Potential for Growth

Several initiatives can be undertaken by Sierra County, some based in facilities, activities and events now in place; some based on enhancing existing events, and creating new events and facilities; and, creating a stronger, well-coordinated marketing effort.

4.4.1 Strengths to Build On. There are several strengths that Sierra County might utilize as building blocks to generate economic growth. Several of these are listed below. This is not an exhaustive list:

- Scenic Byway. Geronimo Trail is a National Scenic Byway. State Roads 52, 59, 152, 181 and 187 are designated the Geronimo Trail. It should be promoted as part of any tourism package.
- Ghost Towns and Historical Communities. Places like Chloride, Hillsboro, Kingston have some colorful history and some still have functioning businesses or museums. These too could be part of a tourism package.
- Galleries, Gift Shops, and Hot Springs. The hot springs have long been a visitor draw to Sierra County. There are over 40 galleries and gift shops in the Truth or Consequences area alone.
- Spaceport America. Tours of the facility can be arranged. The Spaceport also sponsors various events such as the Drone Summit, and hosts an Open House in the fall. This is a \$220 million facility and it could be an attractive part of a tour package.
- Elephant Butte Lake and Caballo Lake. These facilities have multiple purposes, but recreation is probably the best known of these. With over a million visitors annually, these facilities and the associated state parks are a source of visitors and revenue to the rest of the County. The trick is to get the people out of the parks and out into the rural County or into the cities. The potential is great!
- The Gila National Forest and Bureau of Land Management Lands. The opportunities for a wilderness experience in the National Forest, either hiking or fishing or horseback riding are endless.
- Special Events. There are numerous, annual special events, in Sierra County, in the cities as well as in the historic communities of Hillsboro and Winston and Chloride. These need to be marketed strongly and especially to the visitors to the Elephant Butte Lake, Caballo Lake and Percha Dam. Perhaps special offerings of discounts or prizes can be offered to entice people out of the parks.
- Healthcare. A new hospital is proposed with several new and enhanced services. The Veterans' Affairs Home is an important facility in Truth or Consequences; it contains a nursing facility for veterans as well as an Alzheimer's unit, which is under construction. These are a good foundation for attracting retirees and 'snowbirds' to the area.
- Agriculture: Farming and Ranching. A significant source of employment and a mainstay of the County's economy.
- Middle Rio Grande Economic Development Association. This is a basis for a regional effort in promoting various economic development initiatives.
- Sufficient land is available to provide for the anticipated growth and to provide flexibility in choice of location for housing and commercial development.

- Strong, Close-Knit Community. One of the main reasons given by the residents for living in Sierra County is the small close-knit community and family atmosphere. Especially out in the rural areas residents like the culture and felt safe. If retirees are to be attracted to Sierra County these are some of the characteristics they will look for along with healthcare facilities.

## 4.5 Growth Initiatives

Initiatives suggested here are intended to be accomplished over a period of time, but, also, they must work in concert with one another to attract new business and visitors to Sierra County. Also, these are not the only initiatives that may be possible. Other opportunities will arise over time and these should be evaluated, and, if promising, ought to be added to the list of economic initiatives to be undertaken. As stated earlier, this Chapter is not a full economic strategy. It is intended as the basis for further work.

4.5.1 Tourism/Recreation and a Strong Coordinated Marketing Program. Sierra County hosts several annual events. It has within its boundaries many galleries, museums, natural features, facilities and opportunities for many activities like birding, star gazing, hiking, boating and horseback riding. All of these are oriented to tourism and recreation and offer a variety of great experiences. The natural environment (the Lakes, the National Forest), and the historic communities offer opportunities rich in culture, history and physical experience. Taken all together the County has a formidable tourism package to market.

Tourism and recreation, including entertainment and food industries, account for 13.3 % of employment according to the American Community Survey 5 year estimate (2011-2105) (see Table 15). In a study prepared for the New Mexico Department of Tourism, employment is estimated to be 655 direct and indirect employment in 2015 (The Economic Impact of Tourism in New Mexico: 2015 Analysis, Tourism Economics, July, 2016, p.83). This same study estimates total spending in Sierra County in 2015 to be \$49.9 million (Tourism Economics, 2016, p.82); and total direct and indirect labor income in 2015 is placed at \$13.1 million for the County (Tourism Economics, 2016, p.83).

Numbers of visitors to State Parks in Sierra County in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 and Fiscal Year 2016 is shown below.

State Park	FY 2016	FY 2015
Elephant Butte Lake	966,272	939,831
Caballo Lake	335,179	312,601
Percha Dam	47,554	47,899
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,349,005</b>	<b>1,300,331</b>

(Source: Elephant Butte Lake State Park staff)

Facilities and Events. Sierra County has much to offer visitors, in addition to the facilities offered by and within the State Parks. In addition to the state parks there are multiple facilities and activities from which to choose: several museums such as the Geronimo Springs Museum (Truth or Consequences) and the Black Range Museum (Hillsboro); over 40 art galleries to visit; the Hot Springs Historic District; ghost towns and historical communities such as Chloride, Lake Valley and Kingston; the Geronimo Trail, a National Scenic Byway; birding, star gazing, hiking and horseback riding opportunities; Spaceport America; and various annual events such as: Gathering of Quilts in February; Truth or Consequences Fiesta Golf Tournament in April; Truth or Consequences Fiesta in May; Truth or Consequences Hot Springs Festival in May; Kayak Fishing Tournament in May; Junior Fishing Tournament in June; Elephant Butte Balloon Regatta in August; Sierra County Fair in October; and many more.

Promotional Packages. Events as well as facilities and activities present some great opportunities for packaging trips and experiences for visitors that may attract visitors to the County for purposes other than just the state parks. Offering package deals to a group such as the military is an initiative that the Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Advisory Board should organize and coordinate. Such an effort includes not only organizing activities at a reasonable cost, but also getting local businesses to participate by offering coupons or discounts to the visitors. Holloman Air Force Base and Kirtland Air Force Base are little more than a two hour drive to Truth or Consequences or Elephant Butte. Cannon Air Force Base in Clovis is farther, about a five hour drive. Here, collectively, is a market of thousands of military and civilian personnel.

Promotional/marketing packages also can be offered to many state and national groups; for example:

- RV Clubs
- Motorcycle clubs (recreation clubs)
- National Hunters Association
- National Anglers Association
- American Birding Association
- Audubon Society
- National Association of Rocketry (Albuquerque and Las Cruces)
- Astronomical Societies (Albuquerque and Las Cruces)
- American Hiking Society

Permanent Pool-Elephant Butte Lake. Water in the form of lakes for recreation is a major drawing card for visitors to Sierra County. Despite the lowering of lake levels over the pasts several years, visitor numbers to State parks has increased. Current efforts to establish a permanent pool in Elephant Butte Lake is of paramount importance to maintaining and further developing the tourist and recreation industry in Sierra County.

Sierra County Commission, city of Truth or Consequences, city of Elephant Butte and village of Williamsburg are all supportive of establishing a minimum pool and all have approved resolutions supporting the establishment of such a pool.

Originally constructed to hold water for irrigation purposes, Elephant Butte Reservoir has become much more. It has become a first class recreation destination for vacationers in New Mexico. Holiday weekends see between 100,000 and 140,000 visitors to the Lake. In fact, Elephant Butte Lake State Park, annually, has more visitors and generates more revenue than all other State Parks combined. The revenue generated at Elephant Butte Lake State Park accounts for approximately 83% of the state's entire annual state park revenue.

That the region's economy relies on the Lake and the economic clusters related to Lake activities is a given. Activities such as, hunting, fishing, birding, camping, boating, scuba diving, hiking, and off-roading are some of these economic clusters. Lake activities and events are supported by many local businesses, such as: boat/amphibious equipment sales; rental, repair and storage businesses; recreational/outdoor equipment and repair businesses; photography and film-processing businesses; grocery stores, hotels, and restaurants; and many others. The economy is reliant on a minimum pool of water to maintain its viability.

In addition to the economic impact, the Lake also provides needed water to sustain wildlife in the region. The list of birds, wildlife and fish that could be harmed by low water levels is notable and of concern. The entire ecosystem, like the economy, is reliant on a minimum pool of water.

The reservoir has the capacity to hold just over two (2) million acre feet of water, and capacity has been reached on a few occasions. In 2016, the Lake contained approximately 130,000 acre-feet of water, or about 6.5% of capacity; it has declined a little since then.

What minimum pool is needed? Based on historical data, and insight from wildlife enthusiasts, as well as affected business owners, it is estimated that a minimum pool of 180,000 and 200,000 acre-feet of water is necessary. Maintaining such a level will serve to protect the region's economy, and the Lake's ecosystem, ensuring the continued viability of the economy and the conservation of the ecosystem.

Marketing the County. It is Draker-Cody's position that tourism holds the greatest long term potential for investment and growth in Sierra County. Promotion of events and facilities in an aggressive and coordinated fashion is crucial to the continuing success of the County.

Any and every group or organization that has any involvement in marketing an event, an activity, a facility, or a service must be involved in a coordinated effort. The Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Advisory Board, the local chambers of Commerce, the organizers of special events such as the Elephant Butte Balloon Regatta and the Truth or Consequences Fiesta Golf Tournament, representatives of the State Parks, the National Forest Service, MainStreet Truth or Consequences, the cities of Truth or Consequences and Elephant Butte, and the village of Williamsburg all have a role to play and must act in a coordinated manner. There is only one tourism/recreation boat and the County as a whole is in it together. Efforts at promotion cannot be disjointed. Resources are limited and a unified effort is necessary.

Inasmuch as the Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Advisory Board is county wide, it is recommended that it take the lead in organizing a meeting of all groups for the purpose of developing a coordinated marketing strategy, including media to use and sources of funding.

There are several tourism/ activity promotional magazines available. Notable is the Sierra County Official Visitors Guide and the also the Elephant Butte Adventures magazine. In addition there are numerous other booklets such as Day trips Along the Geronimo Trail and the Sierra County Artists Directory. Where magazines or booklets promote county-wide facilities, services and activities, Draker-Cody suggests that consideration be given to the pooling of resources and the production of one single comprehensive publication.

Such a publication can be a highly effective marketing tool, but it can be expensive. It will take financial contributions of all organizations to make such a publication possible on a continuing basis. Costs to individual organizations can be reduced by selling advertising space to various businesses and other entities. Funds from the New Mexico Certified Communities Initiative program may also be used for marketing expenses.

Many specific facilities and activities in Sierra County (Hillsboro Walking Tour, Spaceport America, Rejuvenate Your Spirit Artists Directory and others) have developed their own pamphlets and they may wish to continue doing so. However, individual major publications may be better for overall marketing in one single guide. Whatever the case, the comprehensive guide and the individual pamphlets should be widely distributed throughout the State in the visitor centers as well as in visitor centers in all other states. Several members of the business community told us during interviews that Sierra County had to start promoting itself strongly outside of New Mexico.

Every visitor guide, every pamphlet describing facilities, events and activities must be in every visitor center, and every hotel lobby in the State and in neighboring states.

Radio, newspapers and TV (although expensive), are other media forms that may be considered for the marketing of the County. The New Mexico Tourism Department website, the County website are a good sources of advertising space. In addition social media such as face book, utilized significantly by the New Mexico Department of Tourism is also a good advertising medium.

4.5.2 Build on Other Major Events in the Area. Sierra County is a member of the Middle Rio Grande Economic Development Association and as such should be looking at building on major events in the region. One of the ideas promoted in the MRGEDA Economic Development Plan is the preparation of a calendar of events. Draker-Cody supports that idea and suggests that Sierra County prepare such a calendar for itself for marketing purposes. The idea either for the County itself, or for the region, is to coat-tail on other events in the area. Sierra County is encouraged to promote existing events in conjunction with events in other jurisdictions or to develop new events to coincide with and complement other events in other jurisdictions. Events like antique shows, music festivals, food festivals, arts and crafts fairs, etc. are possible considerations. These new events must be extensively and aggressively marketed. Visitors to the Balloon Fiesta in Albuquerque may well be interested in visiting facilities and events in Sierra County as “something else to do”. The intent is to grow existing business and encourage new business to locate in Sierra County.

4.5.3 Market to Kirtland, Cannon and Holloman Air Force Bases. The United States Air Force Bases in New Mexico represent a large ready-made source of tourists, and they ought not to be ignored. Kirtland Air Force Base (AFB) and Holloman AFB are less than two hours from Sierra County. Cannon AFB is somewhat farther, five hours distant. County events and features should be marketed, in particular, to Kirtland AFB and to Cannon and Holloman. Military personnel and their families do look for things to do and places to go in the State. The Sierra County communities should prepare promotional packages offering incentives to attract military personnel to Sierra County. Restaurants might offer two entrees for the price of one or some such similar deal. Businesses might offer discounts to military personnel: specialty shops could offer discounts on goods; and, perhaps entry fees to events could be discounted.

4.5.4 Prepare Tourist Packages for General Consumption. Similar to the recommendation for marketing to the Air Force Bases, promotional packages should be organized around specific events, and special offers made on a state-wide basis and out-of-state to attract visitors to Sierra County. Promotional packages should be made available to the visitors in the State parks to entice them to visit other parts of the County and enjoy the facilities and activities offered there.

4.5.5 Sierra County, a Retirement Community. The idea of Sierra County as a retirement community in the sense of attracting and hosting seniors is a serious consideration. Some members of the public were interested in this idea. Draker-Cody does not believe that these members of the public meant that Truth or Consequences should be a retirement community but that retirees simply could be a segment of the community. A vibrant, well rounded community in terms of age, activities and employment opportunities is what is intended. If the community is to be marketed as “senior-friendly”, characteristics of a senior community will have to be determined and documented. Existing facilities and services need to be inventoried and a determination made about what, if any, gaps exist that need to be filled, and how and who will do that and, most importantly, how it all will be financed.

Some important characteristics of a retirement community are: adequate medical care facilities, recreational facilities, low cost of living, low cost utilities, employment opportunities, education opportunities, public transportation, library facilities and shopping opportunities, to mention a few. Certainly Sierra County can now offer many of these features such as low cost of living and good medical facilities.

Related to the retirement community idea is to market the area to snow-birds. Once upon a time snowbirds were a significant presence in the County, but that presence has dwindled over the past several years. An effort to regain that market could be part of marketing the community to retirees.

4.5.6 Spaceport America. Situated on 18,000 acres in Sierra County is the Spaceport America facility. Constructed at a cost of \$220 million, it is owned by the state of New Mexico. Currently, there are five tenants

on the site, Virgin Galactic and SpaceX being the two major space industry tenants. These tenants employ 75 persons, 15 of whom live in or near Truth or Consequences.

Spaceport America estimates that in fiscal year 2016 the economic impact of the spaceport activities to New Mexico was \$20.8 million. In tourism alone, Spaceport America estimates that it has generated about \$1.8 million in fiscal year 2016.

The potential economic development for Sierra County lies in the amenities it now has to offer, the lakes, the scenery, the regional airport. The common belief is that most development generated by the Spaceport will go south to Las Cruces and El Paso because of the concentration of facilities and services there. That is likely to be the case. However, common wisdom in the area suggest that Sierra County can expect about 10%+ of the development to come its way: employment, expenditures, secondary industry, and housing. Sierra County needs to position itself now to take advantage of the opportunities. An industrial park, at or near the airport, with flexibility to accommodate the various needs of businesses that may locate there should be planned now. The park must be fully serviced, and must be strongly marketed.

There is also opportunity for additional resort type development in Sierra County. What Sierra County has that Las Cruces and El Paso do not is water in the form of lakes for recreation. This attraction should draw additional tourist facilities to the County to accommodate some of the needs and wants generated by Spaceport America.

**4.5.7 Agriculture/Ranching/Hunting/Forestry/Mining.** About 340 persons are employed in this sector according to the 5 year (2011-2015) estimate by American Community Survey. See Section 3.6.1 of this Plan for a discussion of economic benefits of hunting and fishing to Sierra County.

In 2013 it is estimated that 153 jobs were directly attributable to hunting and fishing in Sierra County and that the industry generated spending in the County of \$7 million dollars. (The Economic Contributions of Fishing, Hunting and Trapping in New Mexico in 2013: A Statewide and County-Level Analysis, Southwick and Associates, July 31, 2014). There is little or no forestry activity currently taking place in Sierra County, and currently mining at the St. Cloud mine in Chloride employs about 30 persons. Consequently, approximately 170 persons are employed in agriculture and ranching in the 2011-2015 time periods. According to the 2012 Economic census agriculture generated \$39.4 million dollars in sales. In 2012 there were 256 farms./ranches in Sierra County down from 265 in 2007 (U.S. Economic Census).

Agriculture and ranching has been a mainstay for Sierra County for many decades and this will likely continue into the next several decades.

Ecotourism is becoming an economic sideline to agricultural/tourism activity. The two Turner ranches in Sierra County are conducting ecotourism outings and apparently with success. Ecotourism may focus on being involved with local cultures, or may involve wilderness adventures, and learning new ways to exist and co-exist with the environment or other peoples. It emphasizes or should emphasize minimal damage to the natural environment one is visiting and this takes careful planning. Essentially, these might involve direct participation or directly experiencing an activity such as living with a different culture or directly participating in an agricultural or ranching activity.

How many jobs might be created by such enterprises is not known, but the initiation of such activities as part of an overall tourism package adds depth to the activities and experiences for visitors to the area.

**4.5.8 Mining in Sierra County.** The Copper Flat Mine is located off State Road (SR) 152 about five miles east of Hillsboro. THEMAC Resources, out of Toronto, Canada, is the owner and promoter of the reopening



of the mine. THEMAC has been working at preparing necessary studies and applying for permits since 2010 and hopes to have necessary approvals-mine permit and discharge permit-by the end of 2017. Start of construction activity is planned for 2018 and will continue for the next 18 to 24 months. Mine operation is expected to begin in late 2019 or early 2020.

The potential economic impact of the mine is significant for Sierra County. During the construction stage approximately 1,100 direct and indirect jobs will be created in New Mexico. One Hundred and eighty of these are expected to be created in Sierra County. In addition about 275 to 300 permanent full time jobs are expected at full operation of the mine. To help ensure workers in Sierra County are qualified the mine owners have been working with leaders and educational institutions in Sierra County to encourage the development of training programs specific to mine activities.

Average annual salaries for the permanent full time employees will range between \$35,000 and \$60,000 plus benefits. During construction the company projects spending in Sierra County to be approximately \$45 million. During full mine operation THEMAC estimates that annual labor income in Sierra County will be between \$24 and \$30 million. Sierra County will also benefit from property taxes and gross receipts taxes.

During the course of the public meetings held in February, 2017, concerns were expressed about the possibility of mine operations negatively impacting ground water sources. Concerns were also expressed about the life of the mine being only 11 years. The jobs and revenue generated over a 12-14 year period are significant. And, this is just one element in a package of economic opportunities and all should be cultivated even for short or medium terms with the thought that other opportunities will come along to replace these.

While the mine owners, through studies, have indicated that water sources will not be over-used and will not be contaminated, we understand that monitoring of the impact of operations will be required by the State Environment Department.

In addition to the extraction of various ores, the extraction of aggregate, sand, gravel, and crushed stone for various construction projects is also an important part of the Sierra economy.

**4.5.9 Healthcare.** Healthcare is a growing and stable economic engine in Sierra County. A new hospital will be constructed that will provide the same services as now, but also some new services and some enhanced services, including a mobile unit that will visit patients in remote rural areas. The 2012 Economic Census cites the healthcare industry as generating \$40.2 million in sales and receipts.

Also, Veterans Affairs operates a home and nursing care facility for military personnel in Truth or Consequences. An Alzheimer's unit is being added to the home and it will provide 40 beds for Alzheimer's patients.

American Communities Survey 5-year estimate (2011-2015) estimates employment in health, education and social services at 1,025. It is one of the few industry sectors that saw an increase in employment since 2000. These facilities and services provide good employment opportunities, bring revenue into the community, and provide a fundamental service necessary to the support of other commercial initiatives. Businesses looking to locate in Sierra County will look at healthcare services available as an important consideration in making its decision.

**4.5.10 Film Industry.** In a news release from the New Mexico Film Office, dated April 6, 2017, New Mexico was named by the Hollywood reporter as one of "8 Hotspots" for film shooting in the United States. Factors such as tax incentives infrastructure, and critical acclaim for productions like Longmire, and Hell or High Water are reasons for the high ranking.

Closer to home, in Sierra County, the biggest draw appears to be the varied landscape and locations: the lakes, the Spaceport, the ghost towns, the mountains: and, support from County and City governments.

In 2016, Tesoro Pictures filmed “Rose” in and around Truth or Consequences and Hillsboro. In 2015, the film “The Space Between Us” shot principal scenes at Spaceport America. In 2010, scenes from the film “The Book of Eli” were shot around Elephant Butte Lake. Several documentaries such as the BBC/ Smithsonian’s “Quest for Space”, filmed primarily at the Spaceport, have been shot in Sierra County.

The film industry is one of the economic initiatives to be pursued in Sierra County. It is part of diversifying the economy.

**4.5.11 An Economic Development Coordinating Body.** Draker-Cody understands that Sierra County had a formal economic development organization at one time. The organization was disbanded a few years ago. The Middle Rio Grande Economic Development Association (MRGEDA), a coalition of Sierra County, Socorro County, Catron County and Valencia County has prepared an Economic Development Plan for the region. We believe the coalition of counties to be a positive step, and that it provides a level of economic promotion for Sierra County that may not exist now. However, Draker-Cody is of the opinion, and this is shared by some local businessmen, that the MRGEDA, no matter how good intentioned, will not be able to fully market the assets and opportunities offered by Sierra County.

Draker-Cody recommends that Sierra County, the cities of Truth or Consequences and Elephant Butte, the village of Williamsburg and the local chambers of commerce jointly create an economic development organization for Sierra County. This organization must be funded and staffed, and it will be responsible for coordinating the development of economic initiatives in Sierra County. It will also work with the MRGEDA in promoting appropriate regional initiatives that benefit the entire region.

Draker-Cody appreciates the funding implications as well as the political implications of this recommendation. However, we remain convinced that the assets that make up Sierra County, and that the opportunities now before the County require a direct hands-on effort by Sierra County to ensure they occur in a timely and beneficial manner for all sectors of the County.

## **4.6 Goals, Objectives and Implementation Strategies/Actions**

The Economic Development Chapter contains few goals and places greater emphasis on objectives and strategies.

### **4.6.1 Goal 1: Showcase County Tourism Opportunities, and Experiences to Visitors and Potential New Residents.**

- a. Objective 1: Sierra County Board of Commissioners to adopt this Plan as a guide for future development to help promote the economic health of the county.
- b. Objective 2: County to initiate a comprehensive, coordinated tourism marketing action program.

#### **Implementation Strategies/Actions:**

- i. the Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Advisory Board to spearhead a coalition of groups and organizations that include: local chambers of commerce, the National Forest Service, State Parks personnel, MainStreet Truth or Consequences, the cities of Truth or

- Consequences and Elephant Butte, Bureau of Land Management, Spaceport America, members of rural communities, and others as appropriate;
- ii. the Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Coalition to develop a comprehensive visitor guide along with possible media promotions that might include radio, television, and newspaper advertisements;
  - iii. the Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Coalition to investigate sources of funds for the development of a comprehensive visitor guide and other forms of promotion. Possible sources include the Certified Communities Incentive Program funds which the County already has been awarded, contributions from the coalition members, and selling ads in the visitor guide to businesses and other entities;
  - iv. the Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Coalition to either contact directly the New Mexico Tourism Department or utilize the NM Tourism web site to list County activities, if it is not already doing so. There is no cost to doing this and it is a reasonably good source of free advertising. The use of social media in marketing aspects of the County should be explored;
  - v. Sierra County communities to join forces and resources with other counties (MRGEDA for example) to offer joint events, or a series of events that because of a pooling of resources will attract larger numbers of visitors and more revenue to participating communities;
  - vi. the Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Coalition to develop a calendar of Sierra County events and activities as well as events and activities in neighboring counties and municipalities. Working with or as a part of the MRGEDA effort to develop a calendar is appropriate (see sample of such a calendar in Appendix 4). Develop a strategy/plan of action to create or plan events at the same time as events in other jurisdictions to share visitors and create additional business for Sierra County. Music festivals, food festivals, antique show and the like are possible new activities that can be considered and then aggressively marketed;
  - vii. the Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Coalition to join forces and resources with other counties and communities to create a larger event to attract more visitors for a longer period of time;
  - viii. the Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Coalition to market County facilities, assets, services, and events aggressively to Kirtland Air Force Base and to Cannon and Holloman Air Force Bases. The public affairs offices of each base should be contacted for help in distributing information to base personnel. Events and activities and facilities are to be advertised in the AFB newspapers. Local businesses are to be contacted and their support solicited for the offer of discounts on various services and products to military personnel. Preparing a comprehensive promotional marketing package to offer to military personnel and to the general public is strongly advised; and,
  - ix. the County web site and the cities' web sites are to list activities, events and facilities for visitors. Ensure that web site information is always current and accurate.

#### 4.6.2 Goal 2: Promote the County as a business friendly community; a place for new investment and opportunities.

##### Specific Objectives:

- a. Promote positive aspects of Sierra County.
- b. Develop and promote the potential for various enterprises, proposed and currently in place, in Sierra County.

## Implementation Strategies/Actions:

- i. the County Commission and the Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Coalition to promote Sierra County as a business friendly community through promotional materials, and attendance at industrial shows. (Note: in the absence of a formal County economic development group, the County Commission and the Recreation and Tourism Coalition should play this role until such time as a formal economic development group can be put in place);
- ii. specific economic opportunities have been identified in this Chapter (see Section 4.5 of this Plan). In most cases these opportunities should have an implementation or promotional strategy developed by the County to pursue the opportunity, if this is deemed appropriate. The strategy should include what is to be done (specific tasks), by whom, what resources are necessary, and in what time frame. The implementation matrix in Chapter 10 can help in the development of a detailed strategy. The County might consider the hiring of a consultant to prepare a comprehensive economic development study and strategy for the County.

Some of the specific growth initiatives that might be considered are described briefly below:

- Spaceport America. With a facility already in place and several tenants on site, this is a prime opportunity for Sierra County to participate in the space technology being developed in this area. The opportunity for the County to have secondary service industries locate in the County is very real. The County has to position itself now to take advantage of the growth that can occur as a result of the Spaceport. In addition to the support service industry potential, there is the potential for increased tourism activity as a result of users/visitors to the Spaceport.
- Healthcare. A major employment sector of the Sierra County economy, its growth potential has been noted in section 4.5 of the Plan. Of great importance is the fact that good healthcare facilities are necessary to the support and success of other business initiatives. Attracting retirees or snowbirds to the area is an example.
- Sierra County as a Retirement Community. The County should be marketed as “senior-friendly”. Characteristics of a senior community will have to be determined and documented. Existing facilities and services must be inventoried and an assessment made about what other services and facilities are needed. How that will be done and financed are important considerations. The Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Coalition might assume responsibility for this task, or the County Commission might appoint a separate committee to undertake this initiative. Any committee appointed should include representatives of the cities of Truth or Consequences and Elephant Butte, and the village of Williamsburg. This same group should also look at attracting snowbirds to the area.
- Mining Opportunities. The County has given its support to the mining industry, particularly the current efforts of the Copper Flat Mine to obtain its mine and discharge permits. The Copper Flat Mine will provide approximately 1,100 construction jobs and 275 to 300 permanent full time jobs. Salaries at the mine will vary between \$35,000 and \$60,000 annually. Also, the existing Zeolite mine at Chloride is still in production and efforts should be taken to help maintain its operations.
- Hunting and Fishing. See Section 3.6.1 of this Plan for a full discussion of this economic sector. The importance of this industry, relative to other sectors, is notable because of the natural resources of Sierra County and the studies that have been done assessing the positive impact of these activities. Section 3.6.1 cites the

study done for the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish in 2014. In addition, a draft report prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture: Draft Assessment Report of Ecological/Social/Economic Sustainability Conditions and Trends, Gila National Forest, USDA, September, 2016. This report, although focused on a larger area than Sierra County, points out the positive economic benefits of hunting and fishing to the region including Sierra County. The study cites jobs supported and revenue generated. The study also notes the amount of payments made to Sierra County in lieu of taxes in fiscal year 2015: \$1,205,512.

What is not assessed anywhere at this time is the impact on the hunting and fishing activities by reducing access to national forest area.

- Agriculture: Farming and Ranching. A mainstay for the Sierra economy for more than a century and a half, agriculture continues to be a significant employer and generator of significant sales. According to the 2012 Agriculture census, farming and ranching generated \$39.4 million dollars in sales. It accounts for about 5% of employment in the County. This sector of the economy should receive continued support from the County through the new economic development organization to be established. Needs in terms of infrastructure or policy or regulation are to be identified and initiatives taken to meet the needs to the extent possible.
- Eco-Tourism. Draker-Cody understands that eco-tourism is being carried out on the Turner ranches in Sierra County. We are not aware of other commercial efforts in the County. However, the potential for growth in this area is worth considering and promoting, perhaps as part of an overall tourism package.
- Tourism/Recreation. The tourism/recreation industrial sector will continue to be an economic mainstay for Sierra County. It attracts well over one million visitors annually and generates significant revenue for the communities. More must be done to promote Sierra County outside of the state of New Mexico. And, more must be done to entice state park visitors to leave the park grounds and utilize local businesses, attend County events, and experience other County assets such as the ghost towns and historic communities. The establishment of a permanent pool for Elephant Butte Lake is an important action necessary to maintain the economy of the region.

#### 4.6.3 Goal 3: Identify and pursue funding to achieve all economic development initiatives set out in this Plan and other initiatives that may develop as opportunities arise or as developed by other entities such as the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments.

- a. Objective 1: Identify financial and other forms of aid from multiple sources. Identify special designations that may aid the County in financing economic initiatives.

#### Implementation Strategies/Actions

- i. for help with a comprehensive economic development strategy and marketing strategy seek help from the New Mexico Economic Development Department, New Mexico Tourism Department, and New Mexico Finance Authority for funding assistance;
- ii. for help with marketing and advertising, seek help from New Mexico Tourism Department and New Mexico Economic Development Department;
- iii. possible funding-grant and loan-programs that Sierra County should investigate are listed below. This information is taken from the New Mexico Economic Development

Department web site, the USDA website, and the New Mexico Finance Authority web site.

- Public Project Revolving Fund (PPRF): PPRF is a unique revolving loan fund that funds infrastructure and capital equipment projects with low-cost and low-interest rate loans. The key characteristic of the PPRF is that all participating borrowers, regardless of their creditworthiness, receive 'AAA' insured interest rates; among the lowest interest rates available in the market.
- Local Government Planning Fund (LGPF): The LGPF is a New Mexico Finance Authority program which provides up-front capital that can be used for water and wastewater projects, long-term master plans, conservation plans, energy audit plans and economic development plans related to Certified Community Initiative funding. The planning money comes in the form of a grant and is determined using a sliding-scale.
- New Mexico Finance Authority. NMFA has funding available for various types of projects. Of interest here is funding for: plans to implement Local Economic Development Act Ordinances; capital equipment; priority infrastructure plans (from pre-planning through construction); and, economic development feasibility studies.
- Statewide Economic Development Bond Program (SWEDFA). This is a program that could help new and existing businesses. The New Mexico Finance Authority in cooperation with the New Mexico Economic Development Department participates in a lending program for private businesses and non-profit companies. SWEDFA offers a variety of financing strategies to help fund small businesses including bank participations, issue bonds, direct loans and loan/bond guarantees.

Part of the SWEDFA program is the SMART Money loan participation program available to businesses. The SMART Money loan participation is designed to lower the cost for the borrower and share the risk with the bank creating a benefit to both the bank and borrower.

- New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority. The County should investigate this source of funding for housing assistance, either for County initiated projects or for home repair programs, home loan or mortgage programs. Representatives of the NMMFA will be happy to attend a County Commission meeting to talk about MFA programs.
- Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) (USDA). The RBEG program provides funding to rural projects that will finance development of small and emerging businesses. Grants typically range between \$10,000 and \$500,000; there is no maximum level. Sierra County would be eligible or a private non-profit. Funds may be used for: acquisition or development of land; construction, conversion or renovation of buildings; training and technical assistance and several other uses.
- Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) (USDA). The RBDG program supports the development and/or growth of small and emerging businesses in rural areas with fewer than 50 employees' and less than \$1 million in revenue. Enterprise or Opportunity Grants may be used for: planning; construction, conversion or renovation of buildings; technical service; job training; acquisition or development of land and several other uses. These grants typically range between \$10,000 and \$500,000, with no cost-sharing requirement.
- Intermediary Relending Program (IRP) (USDA). The purpose of the IRP program is to alleviate poverty and increase economic activity and employment in rural areas with population less than 50,000). Under this program, loans are made available to

local organizations (private non-profits, public agencies and cooperatives) called intermediaries, to establish revolving loan funds. The revolving loan funds are used to finance business and economic development activity to create or retain jobs in remote or disadvantaged communities. An intermediary may borrow up to \$2 million under its first financing and up to \$1 million at a time thereafter. Funds may be used for several uses one of which is the acquisition, construction, conversion, enlargement, or repair of a business or business facility, particularly when jobs will be created or retained. Maximum loan from intermediaries to ultimate recipients is \$250,000.

- Business and Industry Guaranteed Loans (B&I) (USDA). The B&I is intended to develop, improve or finance business, industry and employment and improve economic conditions in rural communities. This is done by guaranteeing loans that are made through existing credit facilities. A borrower may be a corporation or other legal entity that operates as a profit or non-profit organization. Loans \$5 million and less may be guaranteed up to 80%; for loans between \$5 million and \$ 10 million the maximum guarantee is 70%; and, for loans greater than \$10 million the maximum guarantee is 60%. Maximum loan term is 30 years. Funds may be used for several uses. These include business and industrial acquisitions to prevent business closure, business conversion, enlargement, modernization, or repair and the purchase and development of land, buildings, facilities, equipment, and easements or rights-of-way.

There are other grant/loan programs available for a variety of purposes such as energy efficiency projects. These same three web sites may be consulted for a listing of these programs.

Some Federal programs may also be available, for the present. Through the Economic Development Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce, grants are available for three principal program areas:

- Public Works projects
- Regional Innovation Strategies
- Planning Program and Local Technical Assistance Program

Federal Economic Development Grants are normally awarded to communities to revitalize, expand and upgrade their physical infrastructure to attract new industry, encourage business expansion, diversify local economies, and generate or retain long-term, private sector jobs and investment. The federal government is looking for substantial return on its investment in terms of jobs or other new investment.

#### 4.6.4 Goal 4: Establish an Economic Development Organization for Sierra County

- a. Objective 1. County Commission and members municipalities to establish a County Economic Development organization with support-funding and political- from the cities of Truth or Consequences and Elephant Butte, and the village of Williamsburg to coordinate the development and promotion of various economic initiatives for Sierra County.
- b. Objective 2. Ensure adequate funding for the economic development organization to allow staffing and marketing and promotion activities.

#### Implementation Strategies/Actions.

- i. The County and member municipalities must recognize that this is not an over-night

- undertaking. It will take a little time to set-up, fund and make operational;
- ii. County Commission to initiate discussion with Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte and Williamsburg on a strategy to set-up an economic development organization: timing, funding sources, other resources. The County and the urban area should look at one year to establish the economic development organization;
  - iii. This must be a coordinated and unified effort on the part of the County and the Cities and the Village. Full support of the new organization is required;
  - iv. establish a clear set of responsibilities and accountabilities for the new organization. Expectations must be clearly articulated. A plan with priorities is a must; and,
  - v. the new economic development organization is to work and coordinate efforts, to the extent possible and appropriate, with the Middles Rio Grande Economic Development Association.



## **5.0 INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **5.1 Water**

The Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) is authorized by statute to investigate and develop the water supplies of the state and institute legal proceedings in the name of the state for planning, conservation, protection and development of public waters. In October, 2016, the ISC adopted the new 40-year water plan for Sierra-Socorro Regional Water Plan (RWP), which is the primary source for this section.

The Socorro-Sierra Water Planning Region, which includes Socorro and Sierra counties, is one of 16 water planning regions in the State of New Mexico. Regional water planning was initiated in New Mexico in 1987, its primary purpose being to protect New Mexico water resources and to ensure that each region is prepared to meet future water demands.

### **5.2 Surface Water**

Surface water supplies approximately 79 percent of the water currently diverted in the Socorro-Sierra Water Planning Region, with its primary uses being for irrigated agriculture. The dominant waterway flowing in the region is the Rio Grande. Major surface drainages (including both perennial and intermittent streams) and watersheds in the planning region are shown on Plate 1, which illustrates that most of the region is part of the Rio Grande river basin. There is also some drainage to the Central Closed basin on the eastern side of the region and a small amount of drainage to the Southwest Closed and Gila basins on the west side of the region.

According to the RWP, when evaluating surface water information, it is important to note that streamflow does not represent available supply, as there are also water rights and interstate compact limitations. This is a particular concern in the Socorro-Sierra region where water right constraints limit water use. The administrative water supply discussed in RWP is intended to represent supply considering both physical and legal limitations, but excluding potential compact limitations.

Two large reservoirs (i.e., storage capacity greater than 5,000 acre-feet, as reported in the New Mexico Water Use by Categories 2010 report [Longworth et al., 2013]) are present in Sierra County: Caballo and Elephant Butte. Table 16 summarizes the characteristics of these reservoirs. The United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) controls the operation of Elephant Butte and Caballo dams. During the summer months, water is released at Elephant Butte Dam, within certain limits, to generate electricity, and the released water is stored farther downstream behind Caballo Dam until it is needed for irrigation. Little or no water is released from either reservoir during the winter months. While these reservoirs, particularly Elephant Butte, provide important incidental recreational and economic benefits to the region, the majority of the water that is stored in the reservoirs is for the benefit of water users downstream of the Socorro-Sierra region.

Plate 1 - Major Surface Drainages, Stream Gages, Reservoirs, and Lakes

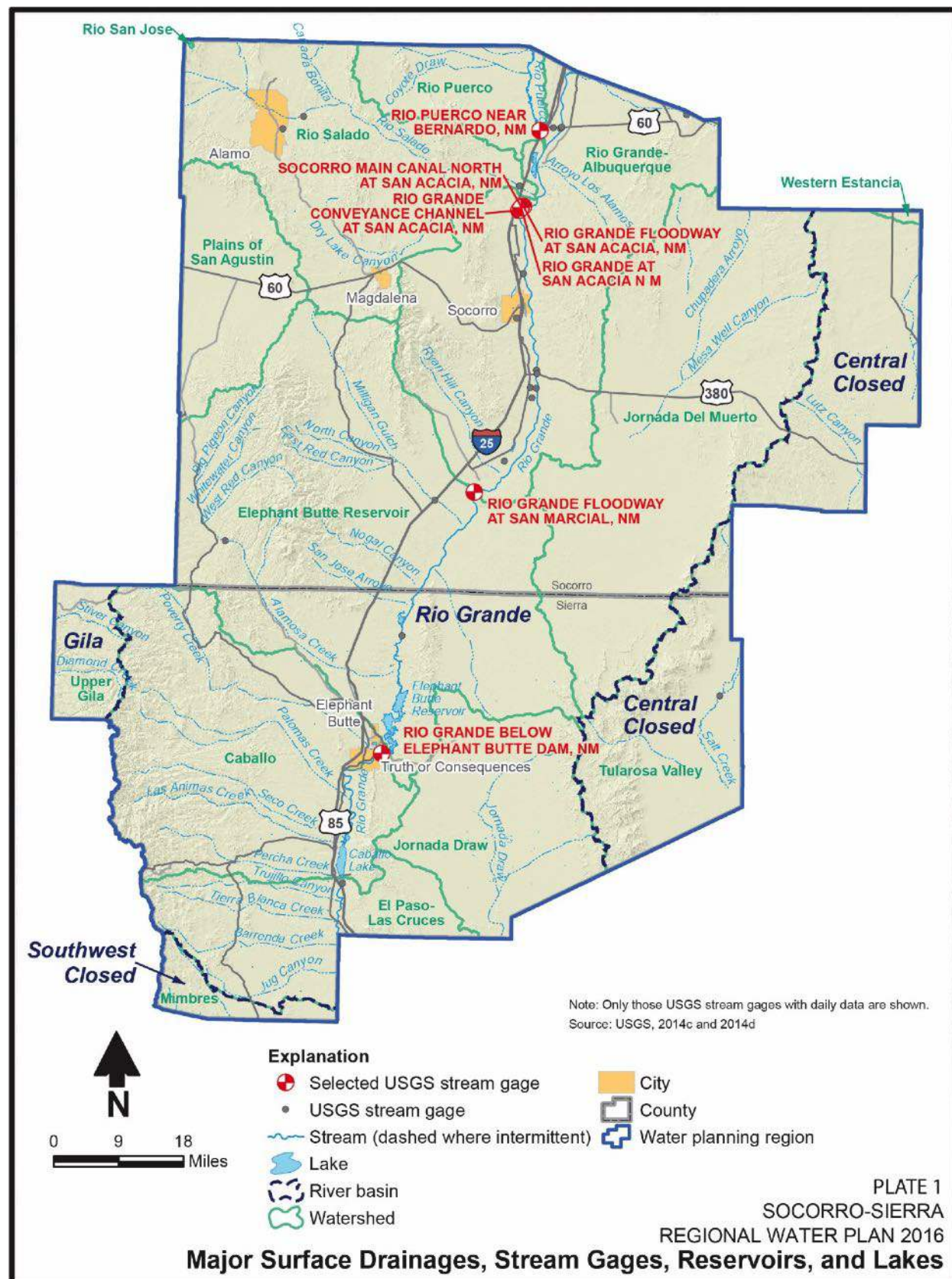


Table 16: Reservoirs Present in Sierra and Socorro Counties

River	Reservoir	Primary Purpose	Operator	Date Completed	Total Storage Capacity (acre-feet)	Surface Area (acres)	Dam Height (feet)	Dam Length (feet)
<b>Socorro County</b>								
Rio Grande	Bosque Del Apache NWR	Wildlife refuge	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	1939	—	—	—	—
<b>Sierra County</b>								
Rio Grande	Elephant Butte Reservoir	Conservation storage (irrigation)	Bureau of Reclamation	1915	2,024,586	36,643	301	1,674
	Caballo Reservoir	Re-regulation for irrigation	Bureau of Reclamation	1937	324,934	9,353	96	4,558

Source: USACE, 1999

### 5.3 Ground Water

The RWP cites that groundwater accounted for about 21 percent of all water diversions in the Socorro-Sierra region in the year 2010 (Longworth et al., 2013). Though the majority of the water supply in the region is surface water, groundwater provides important sources for public water systems and livestock wells throughout the region.

In *Texas v. New Mexico and Colorado*, No. 141 Original (U.S. Supreme Court, 2014), Texas alleges that New Mexico has violated the Rio Grande Compact by intercepting water Texas is entitled to under the Compact through groundwater pumping and surface diversions downstream of Elephant Butte Reservoir but upstream of the New Mexico-Texas state line. The motions to intervene along with a motion to dismiss filed by New Mexico are currently pending.

Las Animas Creek Basin is an east-west trending basin centered approximately on Las Animas Creek and located in the west-central portion of Sierra County. Las Animas Creek is a tributary of the Rio Grande, but its surface waters presently flow to Caballo Reservoir. The basin is approximately 32 miles long and ranges in width from 1 to 7 miles; its area is about 150 square miles (Davie and Spiegel, 1967). The basin is contained in an area of about 135 square miles in the western half of Sierra County. The basin's primary aquifers are located in the Quaternary alluvium along Las Animas Creek, in the Quaternary/Tertiary Santa Fe Group, which was deposited by the ancestral Rio Grande, and in underlying Paleozoic rocks.

The Hot Springs Artesian Basin is located in central Sierra County, bordering the modern bed of the Rio Grande. While the Hot Springs Artesian Basin has been declared a groundwater basin by the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer (NMOSE) for the purposes of administering rights to the groundwater, it is also part of the Palomas Basin (Wilkins, 1986; Keller and Cather, 1994) and might more appropriately be called a sub-basin of the larger Palomas structural groundwater basin. Groundwater in the Hot Springs Artesian Basin occurs as thermal and non-thermal waters, under both free-flowing artesian conditions and static conditions. The main aquifers of the basin are the Quaternary/Tertiary Santa Fe Group and the underlying Paleozoic rocks. The non-thermal water is stored in the Santa Fe Group aquifer, and thermal water emerges from the underlying Paleozoic aquifer. Murray (1959) studied the non-thermal artesian conditions near Truth or Consequences, and Summers (1976) includes sections on the thermal groundwater conditions near Truth or Consequences.

The uppermost portion of the Lower Rio Grande Basin is present in the southern portion of the region, which includes Elephant Butte Reservoir, Caballo Reservoir, and the upper portion of the Rincon Valley. The Rincon Valley of the Lower Rio Grande Basin is the narrow valley of the Rio Grande from Caballo Dam to Selden

Canyon (located downstream of the planning region). The primary aquifer in the Rincon Valley is a narrow band of alluvium that follows the present channel of the Rio Grande. The primary use of groundwater in the northern Rincon Valley is for irrigation.

Two population growth scenarios outlined in Chapter 2 of this Plan are considered. These scenarios are dependent on various economic drivers. The 2040 low/moderate growth scenario assumes an increase of 2,159 in the incorporated area over the base line population, whereas, the 2040 high growth scenario assumes an increase of 5,715 over the base line population for the urban area. The Water System Improvements Professional Engineering Report (PER) dated August, 2015, projected capacity improvement recommendations using a 1% average annual growth rate (i.e. the Low/Medium Growth Scenario in this Plan). The approved PER Medium Growth Scenario will accommodate the 2040 low/moderate growth scenario. Sierra County and Truth or Consequences are advised to monitor the assumed 1% annual growth or migration within the Truth or Consequences planning area. The potential to exceed 1.7% or greater population rate, experienced in the 1990's, and indicated by the high growth scenario of this Plan, is possible with full development of the Spaceport, the Copper mine, and increased tourism and healthcare activity. Such increased growth rate will require the Truth or Consequences and surrounding areas to re-evaluate the Water System Improvements PER dated August, 2015.

## **5.4 Water Quality**

Surface water quality in the Socorro-Sierra Water Planning Region is evaluated through periodic monitoring and comparison of sample results to pertinent water quality standards. Several reaches of the Rio Grande and its tributaries and some drainages in outlying parts of the region have been listed on the 2014-2016 New Mexico 303(d) list (NMED, 2014a), see Plate 2. EPA's 303(d) Program assists states, territories and authorized tribes in submitting lists of impaired waters and developing Total Maximum Daily Load Status (TMDLs). A TMDL establishes the maximum amount of a pollutant allowed in a waterbody and serves as the starting point or planning tool for restoring water quality.

In evaluating the impacts of the 303(d) list on the regional water planning process, it is important to consider that impairments are tied to designated uses. Some problems can be very disruptive to a healthy aquatic community, while others reduce the safety of water recreation or increase the risk of fish consumption. Impairments will not necessarily make the water unusable for irrigation or even for domestic water supply, but the water may need treatment prior to use and the costs of this should be recognized. Table 17, is cited in the RWP, which provides Total Maximum Daily Load Status of Streams in the planning area.



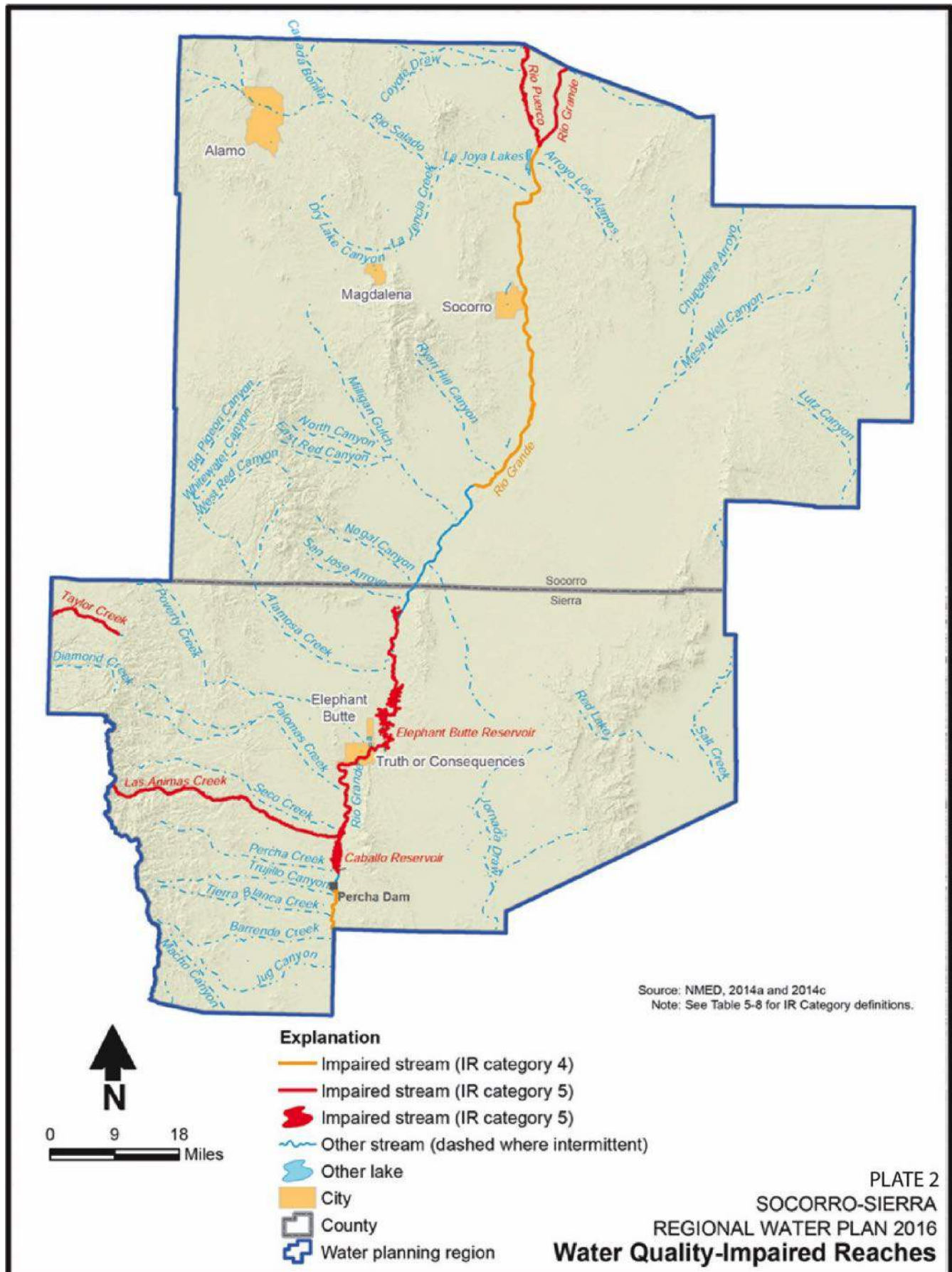


Table 17: Total Maximum Daily Load Status of Streams in Planning Area

Waterbody Name <sup>a</sup> (basin, segment)	Assessment Unit ID	Affected Reach (miles <sup>b</sup> )	Probable Sources of Pollutant	Uses Not Fully Supported <sup>c</sup>	Specific Pollutant	IR Category <sup>d</sup>
<b>Sierra County (cont.)</b>						
Elephant Butte Reservoir	NM-2104_00	6516.56 <sup>e</sup>	Source unknown	WWAL	Mercury in fish tissue PCB in fish tissue	5/5C
Hoyt Creek (Wall Lake to headwaters)	NM-2503_26	19.95	Not assessed	—	—	3/3A
Las Animas Ck (perennial prt Animas Gulch to headwaters)	NM-2103.A_50	27	Source unknown	MCWAL	Benthic-macroinvertebrate bioassessments	5/5C
Las Animas Ck (perennial prt Rio Grande Animas Gulch)	NM-2103.A_51	12.53	Not assessed	—	—	3/3A
Percha Ck (Perennial prt Caballo Rsvr to Wicks Gulch)	NM-2103.A_21	13.1	Not assessed	—	—	3/3A
Rio Grande (Caballo Reservoir to Elephant Butte Reservoir)	NM-2103.A_00	21.18	Not assessed	—	Oxygen, dissolved	5/5C
Rio Grande (Leasburg Dam to one mile below Percha Dam)	NM-2101_10	42.22	Municipal point source discharges Waterfowl On-site treatment systems (septic) Confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) Wildlife other than waterfowl Wastes from pets Impervious surface/parking lot runoff Rangeland grazing	PC	Escherichia coli	4A
Salt Creek (Tularosa Valley)	NM-2801_50	47.13	Not assessed	—	—	3/3A
Taylor Creek (Perennial reaches Beaver Creek to headwaters)	NM-2503_23	22.37	Source unknown Silviculture fire suppression Rangeland grazing	HQColdWAL	Nutrient/eutrophication Biological indicators Temperature, water	5/5C

Source: NMED, 2014a

<sup>a</sup> Only waterbodies assigned to IR categories 3 and above are included.<sup>b</sup> Unless otherwise noted.<sup>c</sup> MWWAL = Marginal warmwater aquatic life

PC = Primary contact

WH = Wildlife habitat

WWAL = Warm water aquatic life

<sup>d</sup> Impairment (IR) category definitions are attached as the last page of this table.<sup>e</sup> Acres

— = No information provided (reach was not assessed).

Water conservation is often a cost-effective and easily implementable measure that a region may use to help balance supplies with demands. The State of New Mexico is committed to water conservation programs that encourage wise use of limited water resources. The Water Use and Conservation Bureau of the NMOSE developed the New Mexico Water Conservation Planning Guide for Public Water Suppliers. When evaluating water rights transfers or 40-year water development plans that hold water rights for future use, the NMOSE considers whether adequate conservation measures are in place. However, the 40 year water development plans are not incorporated into the RWP updates, as the resources needed to complete this work are not currently available. It is therefore important when planning for meeting future water demand to consider the potential for conservation.

The RWP does identify some water conservation measures, which are summarized below for Sierra County.

- Canal lining or piping may result in reduction of seepage losses associated with conveyance, but that seepage will no longer provide return flow to other users.
- Other techniques such as drip irrigation and center pivots may reduce the amount of water diverted, but if the water saved from such reductions is applied to on-farm crop demands, water supplies for downstream uses will be reduced.
- Stormwater Green Infrastructure/Low Impact Development techniques will also provide water conservation, enhanced water quality, and reduce flood risk.

These efforts can result in economic benefits, such as increased crop yield, but may have the adverse effect of reducing return flows and therefore downstream water supply.

## 5.6 Storm Water Management

Sierra County is approximately 4,236 square miles in area, which is overseen by the Sierra County Flood Commission. Presently, the County has little to no flood control data with respect to infrastructure records, design criteria, contributing watershed or basins, and no long-term planned infrastructure for flood control and

no comprehensive funding strategy. Recognizing the lack of organized data, Draker-Cody and Wilson & Company developed a Watershed Map employing USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle DTM Maps (see Figure 4). The Maps provide an overview of the primary drainage tributaries for the County as well as the size of the basins contributing to each tributary.

Secondly, a “high-level” overview of the County’s existing mayor drainage infrastructure was mapped using the GeoJot+ Field Data Collection System, which identifies the structure location using phone GPS technology to record latitude and longitude as well as a digital photograph (see Figure 5). A structure photo was taken of each structure and linked to a GIS based Drainage Structure Location Map. A brief annotated description is assigned to each photo to assist in orienting and describing the flood control structure. The focus of the Flood Control Inventory Map (see Figure 5), is to serve as an organized catalog of the existing county-wide drainage infrastructure, which is expandable to a future and much needed Asset Management Plan.

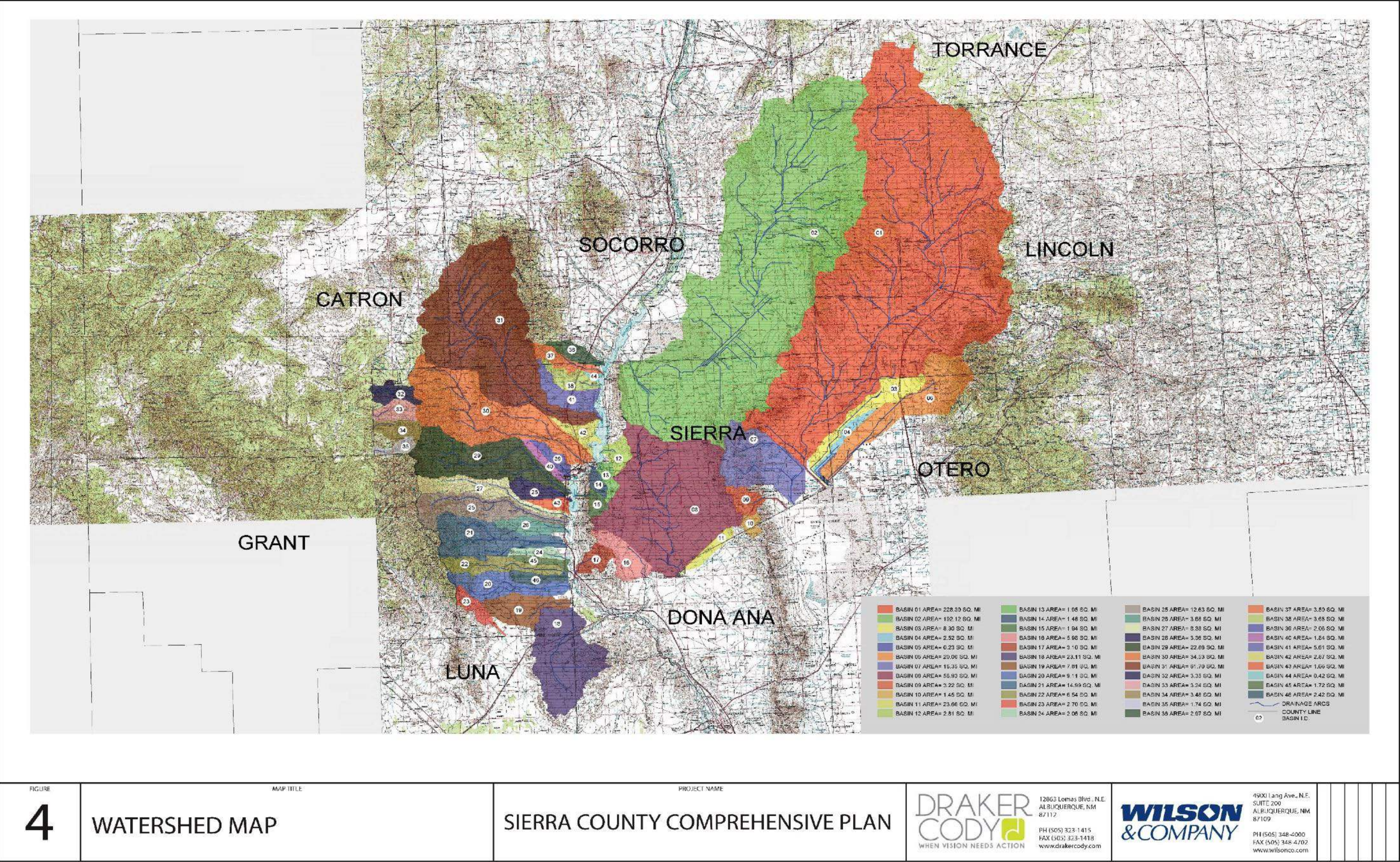
The “high level” overview of the County’s existing major drainage infrastructure expanded over two and a half days of field data gathering. Major existing drainage structures are categorized below:

- Culverts larger than 36” diameter excluding any structures along I-25
- County defined major box culverts
- Arroyos
- Low Water Crossings

Field data collection encompassed all of Sierra County. Reconnaissance areas, included but is not limited to, east area of the County towards the Spaceport; northwest area of the County (i.e. Monticello and Cuchillo); south area of the County (i.e. Palomas, Animas Creek, Hillsboro, Kingston and Berrenda Road, Arrey and Derry); and the north area where drainage structures in the Winston and Chloride area were identified.



Figure 3 - Watershed



FIGURE

4

MAP TITLE

WATERSHED MAP

PROJECT NAME

SIERRA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**DRAKER  
CODY**  
WHEN VISION NEEDS ACTION

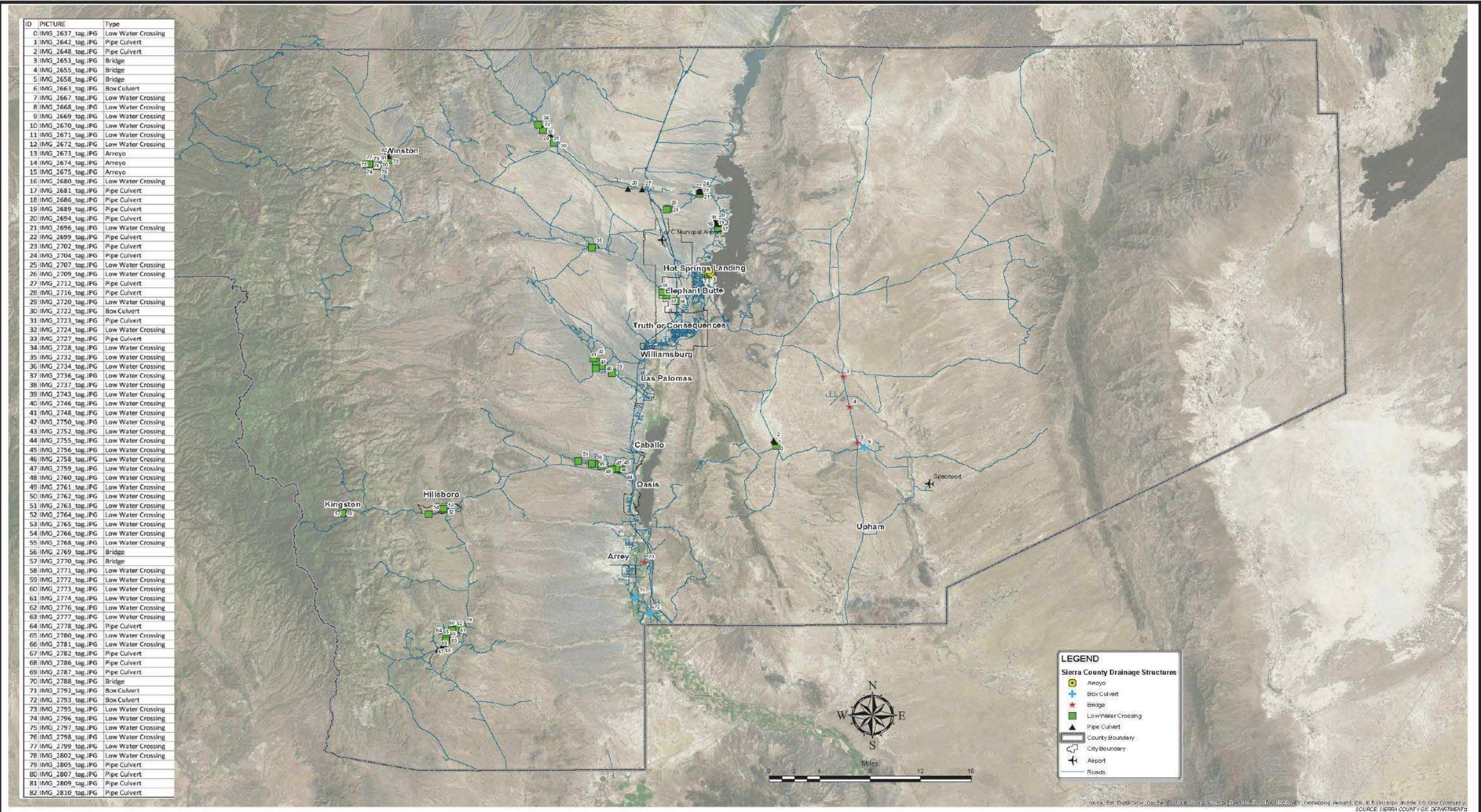
12863 Lomas Blvd., N.E.  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM  
87112  
PH (505) 323-1415  
FAX (505) 323-1418  
www.drakercody.com

**WILSON  
& COMPANY**

1900 Lang Ave., N.E.  
SUITE 200  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM  
87109  
PH (505) 348-6000  
FAX (505) 348-4702  
www.wilsonco.com



Figure 4 - Flood Control Inventory





## **5.7 Waste Water**

The city of Truth or Consequences is currently served by a wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) that is almost 40 years old. Many process components at the WWTP have reached the end of their design life, and some treatment processes currently require excessive (operation and maintenance (O&M) in order to maintain consistent treatment performance. The existing WWTP is permitted to discharge treated effluent to the Rio Grande and, at the moment, is operating adequately to meet the current regulatory requirements of its permit. Historically, the City has and continues to provide wastewater treatment to the community of Williamsburg.

The WWTP is currently operating at approximately 70% of its original design flow (1.06 MGD), and in previous years has operated at almost 95% of its design flow, so future population growth will require expansion and improvements to the WWTP. Furthermore, anticipated future discharge permit requirements will include more stringent nutrient limitations for nitrogen and phosphorus meaning the existing WWTP processes must be improved to meet these requirements. At the same time, increased reuse demands for reclaimed wastewater over the next 20 years and beyond will also require WWTP process upgrades. Ideally, all these issues can be addressed simultaneously by implementing WWTP improvements that will provide increased capacity to produce high quality wastewater effluent for subsequent irrigation reuse or direct discharge to the Rio Grande.

The City has secured USDA Rural Development funding to commence the improvements to the existing WWTP. The proposed treatment system conceptually designed is illustrated in the Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) completed in July, 2016. Upgrades will provide an effluent quality that exceeds the current regulatory requirements of NPDES Permit No NM0020681 and groundwater DP-1162 while providing nutrient removal that will meet future, more stringent regulatory standards. The improved plant design will have increased capacity, with an average daily flow of 1.3 MGD, which is estimated to serve T or C until at least the year 2033.

Unincorporated areas in Sierra County are served by conventional wastewater treatment facilities (i.e. septic tank and field disposal).

## **5.8 Power**

Power service providers vary throughout the County. The city of Truth or Consequences owns and operates its own electricity facility, which serves the City and Williamsburg. The City's Electric Power Division operates and maintains the Hot Springs substation, the overhead power distribution network, and the meters at each customer's location. Power is not generated by the City, but rather purchased from hydroelectric and commercial producers. At the time of this Comprehensive Plan update, the City was preparing to solicit and procure engineering services for evaluating electric power needs and future capital improvements.

Sierra Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SEC) is the primary power provider in Sierra County, serving the unincorporated areas since 1941. SEC is a member owned Electric Coop and a member of the nation-wide Touchstone Cooperatives

## 5.9 Gas

The **New Mexico Gas Company (NM Gas Co.)**, a member of the Emera, Inc. family of energy companies, is the natural gas service provider for the incorporated municipalities of Truth or Consequences, Williamsburg, and Elephant Butte. Based in Albuquerque, NM, NM Gas Co. is the largest utility in the state. Strategically situated between two large natural gas production basins, its service area covers 6,501 square miles, and operates in 23 of the 33 counties in New Mexico including Sierra County (see Plate 3).

Customers outside the NM Gas Co. service area are propane served. Propane service providers vary across the County vary. Cortez Gas Company and Ikard and Newson Propane Co. are propane providers and are both located in Truth or Consequences.

**Plate 3 - Sierra County Service Territories**



## 5.10 Recommendations and Strategies

Table 18 summarizes a list of recommendations and strategies that support land use planning and development.

Table 18: Recommendations and Strategies

Recommendation	Need	Strategy	Estimate Cost
Drainage Management Plan	Both incorporated and unincorporated areas experience significant re-occurring cost and adverse infrastructure impacts due to flooding.	Work with SWCOG to formulate a County-wide DMP that includes the incorporated communities such as T or C, Williamsburg, and Elephant Butte, to include a funding strategy and a cost-sharing arrangement. Example: Cibola County.	\$450,000
Asset Management Plan	Plan is needed for O&M planning and budgeting as well as for funding assistance of Capital Infrastructure Replacement.	Develop a cost effective work plan and budget that utilizes City resources, summer part-time students, and Professional oversight.	Undetermined
T or C Water/Wastewater PER	High land use population projections of 8,200 by 2040. The Truth or Consequences and surrounding areas are advised to re-evaluate the Water System Improvements PER dated August, 2015 and the Wastewater System PER of July, 2016 if high population growth is experienced.	Work with traditional NMFA, CDBG, Colonias and Local funding sources to budget in the appropriate year should the need arise.	\$60,000

## **6.0 TRANSPORTATION**

Regional transportation for Sierra County is primarily served by Interstate 25 (I-25), which roughly bisects Sierra County. Interstate 25 in Sierra County runs from milepost 50.7 north to milepost 102.8. The cities of Truth or Consequences (T or C) and Williamsburg lie near the geographical center of Sierra County. The famous Hatch Chile Valley is located in southern Sierra County. To the west, Hillsboro and Kingston are the gateway to the Gila National Forest. Two of New Mexico's largest recreational lakes (Elephant Butte and Caballo Lake) are centrally located in Sierra County and easily accessed via Interstate 25. Spaceport America is located in Sierra County, 30 miles (48 km) east of Truth or Consequences. Figure 6 illustrates the transportation network.

Figure 5 - Transportation Network

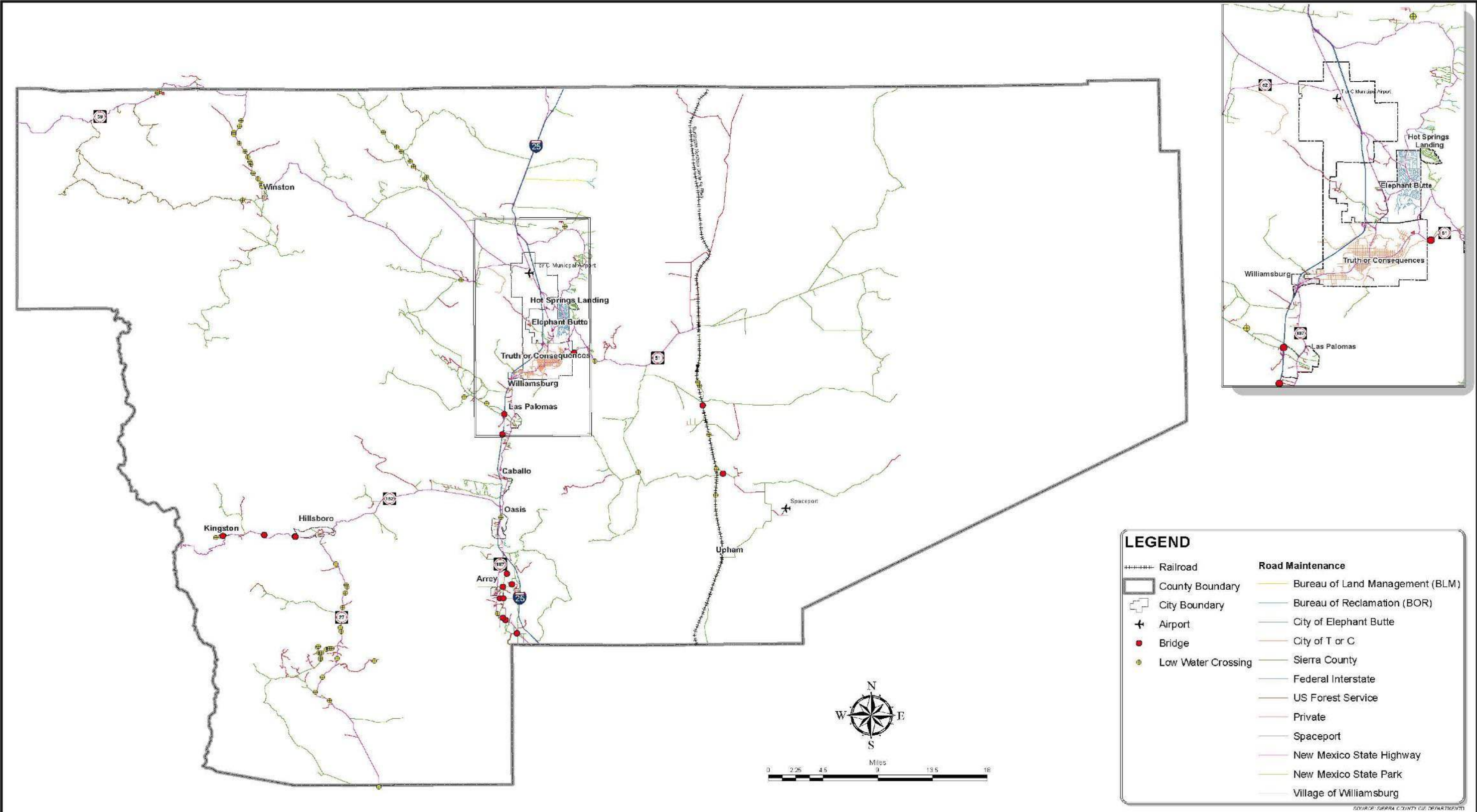


FIGURE	MAP TITLE	PROJECT NAME	SOURCE: SIERRA COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE			
6	TRANSPORTATION NETWORK MAP	SIERRA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN				
			DRAKER CODY WHEN VISION NEEDS ACTION 12863 Lomas Blvd., N.E. ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87112 PH (505) 323-1415 FAX (505) 323-1418 www.drakercody.com			
			WILSON & COMPANY 4000 Lang Ave., N.E. SUITE 200 ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87109 PH (505) 348-4000 FAX (505) 348-4702 www.wilsonco.com			

## 6.1 Road Classification

The general framework of roadway classification categorizes roads by how they perform or function in regard to providing access and mobility. The concept of access vs. mobility is the main criteria used to establish the functional classification of roadways. An arterial facility for example, prioritizes mobility for longer distance trips with high speeds and minimal access to adjoining properties, and is classified at the higher end of the functional classification spectrum. Conversely, the function of local streets prioritizes direct access at lower speeds to neighborhood areas, and is classified at the lower end of the spectrum.

Sierra County is divided into three districts, A, B and C. The Sierra County roadway network consists of 571 certified county road miles, to include 500 miles of dirt roads and 70 miles of paved roads. Specifically, District A has 240.4 miles, District B has 161.6 miles and District C has 155.9 miles. Much of the existing roadway network is laid out to provide connectivity to Interstate 25. Table 19, below, provides a summary of the roadway owning agency and length.

Table 19: Summary of Roadway Owning Agencies and Length

Jurisdiction/Agency	Miles of Roadway	Percentage of Ownership
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)	5.20	0.39%
Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)	5.84	0.44%
City of Elephant Butte	36.65	2.76%
City of T or C	78.73	5.93%
<b>Sierra County</b>	<b>561.83</b>	<b>42.35%</b>
Federal Interstate	104.63	7.89%
US Forest Service	53.34	4.02%
Private	202.92	15.30%
Spaceport	0.47	0.04%
New Mexico State Highway	237.21	17.88%
New Mexico State Parks	35.26	2.66%
Village of Williamsburg	4.56	0.34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1326.65</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## 6.2 Road Conditions

The predominant roadway surfacing is dirt which lacks a substantive cross section capable of carrying increased sustained traffic. The roadway to Spaceport America is paved with Hot Mix Asphalt surfacing but lacks adequate width to provide for any shoulders. There are numerous State of New Mexico routes within Sierra County, most of which consist of chip seal surfacing. Regular maintenance and grading of county roadways maintains a level of smoothness, but also contributes to drainage/flooding issues during seasonal precipitation events as roadway elevations change with continual grading.

For residents in the area surrounding Grants, Sierra County offers a transit service (Sierra Area Transit System) to Grants/Village. The current transit schedule is shown below.

## **6.3 Transit**

Sierra County does not have a mass public transportation provider. The South Central Rural Transportation Planning Organization (SCRTPO) is responsible for the prioritization, planning, and procurement of transportation funding needs in the region. In discussion with the SCRTPO, neither a coordinated plan nor the NMDOT Long Range 2040 Multi-modal Transportation Plan has identified a mass coordinated public transportation system.

## **6.4 Airport**

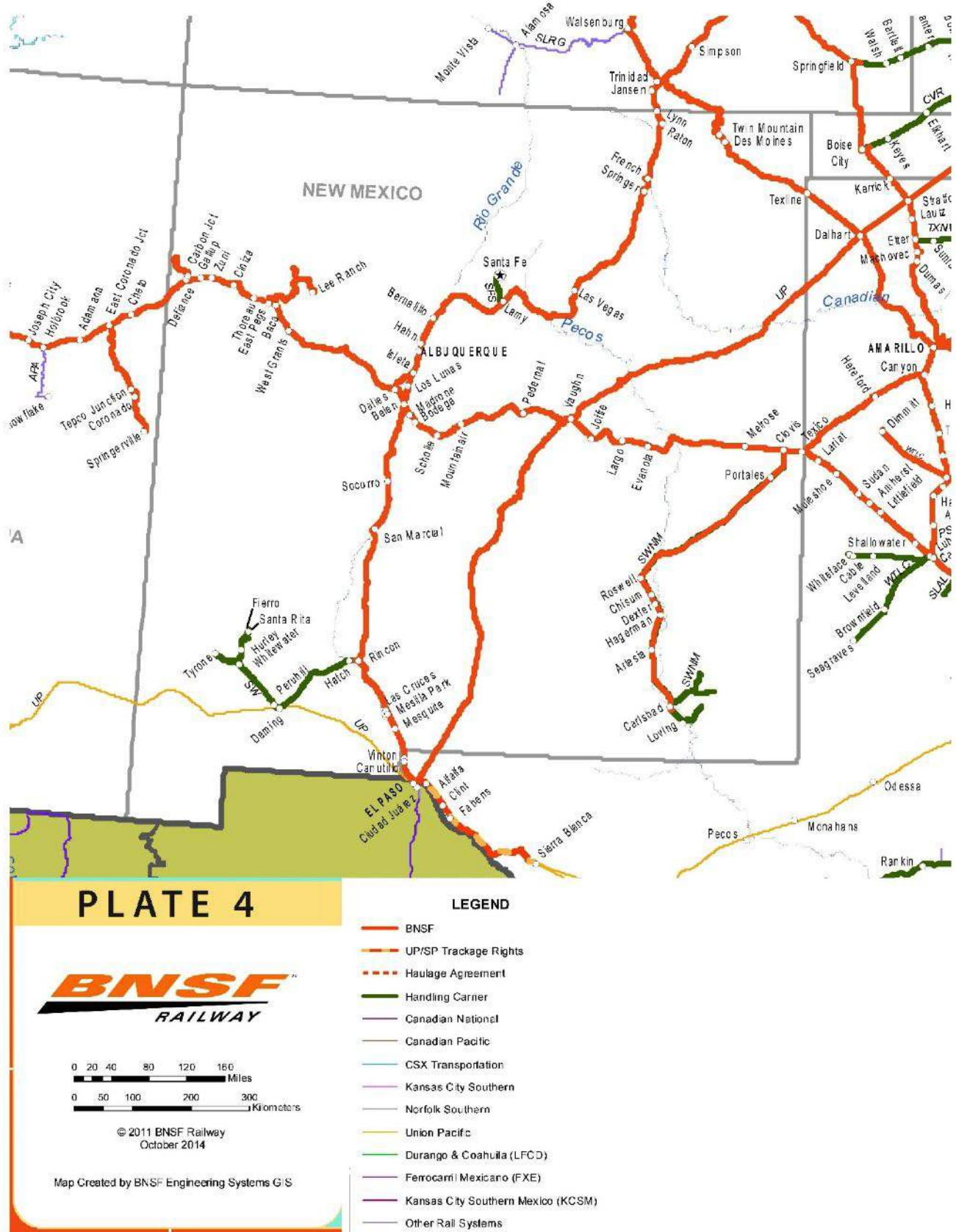
The Truth or Consequences Municipal Airport is located just west of the I-25 interstate, approximately 5 miles north of downtown Truth or Consequences. Surrounding the airport in all directions are breathtaking views of the New Mexico high desert and surrounding mountain ranges. The Municipal Airport presently offers a modern paved runway supported by sophisticated weather and navigation systems which allow the County to remain competitive in today's aviation market.

## **6.5 Railroad**

BNSF Railroad operates a line several miles east of Truth or Consequences. Part of the El Paso Subdivision, the line begins in Belen, NM and terminates in a yard in El Paso, Texas. Freight usually consists of grain. Plate 4 illustrates BNSF track in New Mexico. The rail line adds another dimension to the transportation network to support a variety of economic development initiatives.



Plate 4 - BNSF Railway



## 7.0 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Sierra County's community facilities-parks, County offices, fire halls, healthcare facilities, and schools-are basic components of the County's infrastructure. These facilities provide support to the community in terms of safety, recreation and education opportunities (park and school facilities), and activities and meals for seniors (Sierra County Senior Center); all contribute to the quality of life and the social fabric of the community.

### 7.1 Existing Major Community Facilities

#### 7.1.1 Parks and Recreation:

- Caballo Lake State Park: Highway 187 Caballo, NM 87931. (P) 575-743-3942. Park hours: 24 hours daily. Activities: 170 campsites, fishing, camping, boating, hiking horseback riding, picnicking and birding.
- Elephant Butte Lake State Park: 101 Hwy 195 Elephant Butte, NM 87935. (P) 575-744-5923. Park hours: 24 hours daily. Activities: camping, boating, hiking, marina, birding, fishing, and swimming.
- Percha Dam State Park: Highway 187 Caballo, NM 87931. (P) 575-743-3942. Park hours: 24 hours daily. Activities: camping, hiking, birding and fishing.

#### 7.1.2 Sierra County Public Libraries: The County has public libraries available to their residents, which are operated either by a Municipal Government or independently run by volunteers.

- Truth or Consequences Main Library – Located at 325 Library Lane, T or C NM 87901-2375. (P) 575-894-3027. Hours: Monday – Tuesday 9:00am - 6:00pm; Wednesday – Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm; Saturday 9:00am - 12:00pm; Closed Sundays. Computer lab available.
- Truth or Consequences Branch Library – Located at 401 Foch Street, T or C NM 87901. (P) (505) 894-7821. Hours: Monday – Friday 8:30am – 12:00pm, Wednesday 1:00pm – 4:00pm; Closed Saturday and Sunday.
- Hillsboro Community Library – Located at 158 Elenora St. (PO Box 205), Hillsboro, NM 88042. (P) 575-895-3349. Hours: Closed Sunday and Monday; Tuesday 3:30pm - 5:30pm; Wednesday 1:00pm - 4:00pm; Thursday 3:30pm - 5:30pm; Friday 10:00am - 1:00pm; Saturday 10:00am - 2:00pm. WIFI available.

#### 7.1.3 Sierra Joint Office on Aging – Kenneth James Senior Center. Located at 360 W. 4th St. Truth or Consequences, NM 87901. (P) 575-894-6641. The Center provides daily meals and a meeting place for seniors and other groups in the County. Services are geared towards senior participants, including the developmentally disabled senior citizens, including: homemaker service; respite care; medical transportation, and more.

Sierra Joint Office on Aging also offers senior citizen services that are available at the Senior Recreation Center - 301 Foch Street Truth or Consequences, NM 87901; and Arrey Senior Center St. Rte. 187 Arrey, NM 87930

#### 7.1.4 Fire Services. The County has 100+ volunteer firefighters. The County has eight (8) county stations and three (3) sub-stations.

- Poverty Creek, Winston – Chloride substation, Monticello – Cuchillo substation, Lakeshore, Las Palomas, Hillsboro – Kingston substation, Caballo, Arrey/Derry

#### 7.1.5 Police Services. The Sierra County Sheriff's Department is located at 2501 S. Broadway

Truth or Consequences, NM 87901. They can be contacted at 575-894-9150 from 8am-5pm Monday through Friday. For Emergency Call or after-hours 24 hr. dispatch, call 575-894-7111. The police departments listed below provide coverage for parts of Sierra County.

- Truth or Consequences Police Department: 507 McAdoo T or C, NM 87901. (P) 575-894-1204 & after hours 575-894-7111

**7.1.6 Healthcare Facilities.** The residents of the Sierra County have access to the following facilities within the County:

- Sierra Vista Hospital: 800 E. 9th Avenue Truth or Consequences, New Mexico 87901. (P) 575-894-2111. SVH is a 15-bed Critical Access hospital that opened in 1997. Ambulance service; community health center; emergency services; cardiopulmonary services; laboratory services; counseling center; radiology services; specialty clinics; physical therapy; surgical services; pain management; orthopedic surgical services; cardiovascular services. A new hospital is approved for construction.
- Sierra Vista Community Health Center: 800 E. 9th Avenue Truth or Consequences, New Mexico 87901. (P) 575-894-3221. SVCHC is a community primary health care facility with full access to Sierra Vista Hospital's laboratory, radiology department, respiratory care, physical therapy, pain management, surgical services, ambulance, emergency department, specialty clinics and other services. Same-day appointments are accepted. A sliding fee program is available for those who qualify. In addition, the community center has a patient services staff to assist those without prescription drug coverage through their drug company assistance program.
- Ben Archer Health Center: 1960 Date Street Truth or Consequences, NM 87901. (P) 575-894-7662. Hours of operation are Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M; Tuesday and Thursday 8:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M. BAHC is a primary care service for all communities in Sierra County established in 1994. Services include medical, dental and behavioral health care to all ages.
- New Mexico State Veterans Home: 992 South Broadway, Truth or Consequences, NM 87901. (P) 575-894-4200. NMSTA is New Mexico's only nursing facility for veterans. An Alzheimer's unit has recently been completed.
- Sierra Health Care Center: 1400 North Silver Street Truth or Consequences, NM 8790. (P) 575-894-7855. Skilled nursing, therapy & rehab; Granny Harkey's Alzheimer's & Dementia Neighborhood; home health; personal care homemaking services; hospice; assisted living.

The following are nearby facilities:

- Memorial Medical Center: 2450 S Telshor Blvd. Las Cruces, NM 88011. (P) 575-522-8641. General medical and surgical hospital with 224 beds.
- Mountain View Regional Medical Center: 4311 E. Lohman Ave., Las Cruces, NM 88011. (P) 575-556-7600. General medical and surgical hospital with 168 beds.
- University of New Mexico Hospital: 2211 Lomas Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. (P) 505-272-2111. UNMH is New Mexico's only Level I Trauma Center. In addition to the hospital, there are 43 off-site clinics throughout the state.

**7.1.7 Corrections Departments.** Sierra County houses one (1) detention center.

- Sierra County Detention Facility: 855 Van Patten Truth or Consequences, NM 87901. (P) 575.894.2537. This detention center is used as a holding facility for inmates that are then taken to the facility in Luna County.

**7.1.8 Sierra County School System.** There are 5 public schools and 1 private schools within Sierra County.

**Public Schools:**

- Arrey Elementary School: 4500 Hwy 187 School Road Arrey, NM 87930 Pre K-5

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| ○ Truth or Consequences Elementary: 1500 North Silver Street T or C, NM 87901 | Pre K-3 |
| ○ Sierra Elementary School: 1500 North Silver Street T or C, NM 87901         | 4-5     |
| ○ Truth or Consequences Middle School: 1802 Pershing Street T or C, NM 87901  | 6-8     |
| ○ Hot Springs High School: 1801 N. Pershing Street T or C, NM 87901           | 9-12    |

**Private Schools:**

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| ○ Manzano Christian School: 1300 S. Broadway Street T or C, NM 87901 | Pre K–12 |
|--|----------|

7.1.9 Other Educational Facilities. Post high school educational opportunities are available through the following institution in this area:

Western New Mexico University has an extension that offers face-to-face and online classes in a Bachelor’s program. 601 Sunset St., Truth or Consequences, NM 87901. (P) 575-894-9050.

## **7.2 Goals, Objectives and Implementation Strategies/Actions**

### **7.2.1 Goal 1: Prepare comprehensive listing of Community Facilities to aid in promoting Various economic initiatives and attracting new business and visitors to Sierra County.**

Specific Objectives

- a. prepare a comprehensive detailed inventory and description of community facilities;
- b. include compressive list and description in comprehensive visitors guide and include it as a major part of any package to aggressively market County assets; and,
- c. healthcare services and facilities to be major part of any marketing package aimed at retirees and snowbirds.

## **8.0 HAZARDS MITIGATION**

### **8.1 Existing Hazard Plans**

Sierra County is party to two major hazard plans: Sierra County Disaster Mitigation Plan (01/2012) and the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (08/2012). Emergency situations covered by the Mitigation Plan include, but are not limited to: severe weather, wildfires, flash floods, drought and high wind. It sets out a protocol to be followed in emergencies and sets out responsible parties.

The Wildfire Protection Plan is a comprehensive plan dealing exclusively with the threat of wildfire which follows flooding as the most frequent hazard faced by the County.

### **8.2 Wildfires**



Wildfires are a serious problem in all of Sierra County; hence, the preparation and adoption of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan by Sierra County and all county municipalities in 2005 and revised in 2012. This plan states there is a high probability of wildfires during dry springs and summers, and during periods of extreme drought.

The Wildfire Protection Plan is a comprehensive document which identifies the risks and the hazards associated with wildfires; provides an assessment of fire behavior potential (flame length potential, rate of fire spread); and, an overall action plan. The plan of action includes such topics as organization, fire prevention efforts, reducing building/structure ignitability, a definition with illustrations of defensible space around homes, an assessment of local preparedness and firefighting capabilities, firefighter training and water supply.

### **8.3 Flooding**

Sierra County has had thirty-one (31) flood events (floods and flash floods) from June 1995 through January 2011: Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte, Hillsboro, Monticello, Cuchillo, South Central Portion of Sierra County, Central Portion, West Central Portion, Countywide, Kingston, Lake Valley, Las Palomas, Arrey, Winston, and Chloride. Floods are most likely to occur in July or August.

Dam inundation is a potential flood hazard. Sierra County has two (2) dams, Elephant Butte Dam and Caballo Dam. Currently, there are no occurrences of dam inundation from either dam, and less than a 1% chance of dam inundation due to a decade long drought impacting the entire state of New Mexico.

### **8.4 Thunderstorms**

Sierra County reports severe thunderstorms every year. From January 1960 to January 2012 there were eighteen (18) thunderstorm wind events reported by the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) referenced in the Sierra County Disaster Mitigation Plan. Based on this data, there is a 36.7% probability of a thunderstorm in any given year.

## 8.5 High Wind

Sierra County has had eleven (11) high wind events from March 1995 to December 2010. Based on this data there is a 73% probability in any given year that Sierra County will have a high wind occurrence. The plan states that this is most common in the spring.

## 8.6 Severe Winter Storms

Seasonal snow occurs in mountainous areas 5000 feet in elevation and above. Anything below 5000 feet has minimal snow events. From January 1950 to January 2011 four (4) snow and ice events have been recorded. The probability of a snow/ice event in any given year is 6.5%.

## 8.7 Hazardous Materials Spills and Explosions

The Sierra County Disaster Mitigation Plan does not include a plan of action for hazardous materials spills and explosions.

In any update of the Plan, some attention to hazardous materials spill and explosions should be given to Sierra County.

## 8.8 Acts of Terrorism



The Disaster Mitigation Plan does not contain specific action items related to acts of terrorism. In any update of the Plan, some attention to acts of terrorism should be given to Sierra County.

## 8.9 Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies/Actions.

Only one goal, objective, and action is of prime importance here. Sierra County is party to two major comprehensive hazard plans: Sierra County, New Mexico Comprehensive Disaster Mitigation Plan; and, the Sierra County Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Both Plans have requirements to be reviewed annually and updated every five (5)-years at a minimum. In addition, both plans require staged practice exercises.

Implementation Strategy/Action: The recommended action is that Sierra County participates in any practice exercise and that it be involved with an annual review of both plans to keep them current with local and national situations and with technological advance, as well as including a plan for hazardous materials spills and explosions, and any acts of terrorism. The plans are good practical documents and should be followed. Both plans contain many preventative measures that go a long way to mitigating the described hazards.



## 9.0 GREEN COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS

### 9.1 Introduction

Whatever terminology one chooses-global warming, carbon footprint, anthropogenic, climate change, or greening of our urban environment-,all have become a common part of our vocabulary and an apparent concern in the field of land use planning.



Global warming is believed to be brought on in part by various human activities, such as burning of fossil fuels, soil depletion, and deforestation of large land areas. The suggested result has been an increase of “greenhouse gas” emissions.

Greenhouse gases include:

- carbon dioxide: burning of fossil fuels, solid waste and wood. Also produced through chemical processes such as the manufacture of cement.
- methane: emitted during the production and transport of coal, natural gas, and oil. Methane emissions also result from livestock and other agricultural practices and by the decay of organic waste in municipal solid waste landfills.
- nitrous oxide: emitted during agricultural and industrial activities, as well as during burning of fossil fuels and solid waste.
- fluorinated gases (hydro fluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride and others are synthetic gases produced by various manufacturing processes). While produced in small amounts, they are considered potent greenhouse gases.

(Source for above gas descriptions: United States Environmental Protection Agency)

The New Mexico Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Reference Case Projections, 1990-2020, produced by the Center for Climate Strategies in 2006 has been updated to 2007 by the New Mexico Environment Department (March 15, 2010). Some of the key findings and trends of this latter report are:

- “the largest sources of GHG emissions in 2007 were electricity production (41%), the fossil fuel industry (22%) and transportation fuel use (20%);
- after a 3% annual GHG emissions growth rate experienced 1990 to 2000, the total (gross) direct emissions in New Mexico remained essentially level from 2000 to 2007. Emissions remained level despite a 6.7% growth in New Mexico’s population over that period;
- estimations for emissions from the fossil fuel industry (production, processing and transportation of natural gas, oil, and coal) showed a slight decrease from 2000 19.1 million metric tons carbon dioxide equivalent (MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e) to 2007 (16.9 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e). One trend noted is a five-fold increase in methane emissions from coal mining, which now comprise about 6.5% of the estimated emissions from the fossil fuel industry sector;
- while the state population grew 6.7% from 2000-2007 (see Section 1.4 and 1.5), New Mexicans reduced their average (per capita) emissions from gasoline use by 2.5% and increased their consumption of energy in heating, cooling and power residential buildings by 6%. Over time, energy use in residential and commercial buildings has shifted away from fossil fuel combustion (predominantly natural gas) in favor of electricity use. The increase in electricity use may be the result of a greater use of air conditioning, electric heat, and appliances; and both the waste management and agricultural sectors showed small total increases in GHG emissions (0.6 and 0.4 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e, respectively). These estimates do not include emissions from consumption of fossil fuels (e.g., transportation, equipment operation, heaters, etc.).

Minimizing the production of greenhouse gases and mitigating what has already been produced, including their effects, are the subject matter of much literature. In this Comprehensive Plan for Sierra County, the emphasis is on actions that the County can realistically promote and encourage. Some of these actions are regulatory in nature, some are the implementation of current technology, some are educational and some are policy.

## 9.2 Sierra County CO<sub>2</sub>e Emissions

The table below illustrates the results from a web-based Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator (GGEC) based on the use of 63,000,000 KWH of electricity in the Sierra County area over a period of one year (2016). Data is for the County plus some areas outside the County served by Sierra Electric Cooperative.

The GGEC uses the Emissions & Generation Resource Integrated Database (eGRID) U.S. annual non-base load CO<sub>2</sub> output emission rate to convert reductions of kilowatt-hours of electricity into avoided units of carbon dioxide emissions.

63,000,000 KWH = 44,275 Metric Tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> ) or CO <sub>2</sub> Equivalency
More Equivalency Results:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual greenhouse gas emissions from <u>6,352</u> passenger vehicles driven for one year</li> <li>• Annual greenhouse gas emissions from <u>106,111,659</u> miles driven by an average passenger car</li> <li>• CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from <u>4,981,984</u> gallons of gasoline consumed</li> <li>• CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from <u>47,245,516</u> pounds of coal burned</li> <li>• CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from <u>586</u> tanker trucks' worth of gasoline</li> <li>• CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the <i>electricity</i> use of <u>6,538</u> homes for 1 year</li> <li>• CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the <i>energy</i> use of <u>4,675</u> homes for 1 year</li> <li>• CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from <u>11.2</u> wind turbines installed</li> <li>• CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from burning <u>236</u> railcars' worth of coal</li> <li>• CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from switching <u>1,569,475</u> incandescent lamps to LEDs</li> <li>• CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from <u>1,809,945</u> propane cylinders used for home barbeques</li> <li>• Carbon sequestered by <u>1,147,434</u> tree seedlings grown for 10 years</li> <li>• Carbon sequestered annually by <u>41,911</u> acres of U.S. forest</li> <li>• Carbon sequestered annually by <u>353</u> acres of forest preserved from conversion to cropland</li> <li>• Greenhouse gas emissions avoided by recycling <u>14,051</u> tons of waste instead of sending it to the landfill</li> <li>• Greenhouse gas emissions avoided by recycling <u>2,007</u> garbage trucks full of waste instead of sending it to the landfill</li> <li>• Annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of <u>102,506</u> barrels of oil consumed</li> <li>• Annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of <u>0.013</u> coal fired power plants</li> </ul>

### Notes:

- This calculation does not include any greenhouse gases other than CO<sub>2</sub>.
- This calculation does not include line losses.
- The table above compares the electrical usage and CO<sub>2</sub> output of Sierra County with other known items. For Example: The emission output from 1,488,028 KWH of electricity equals that from 115,031 gallons of gasoline.

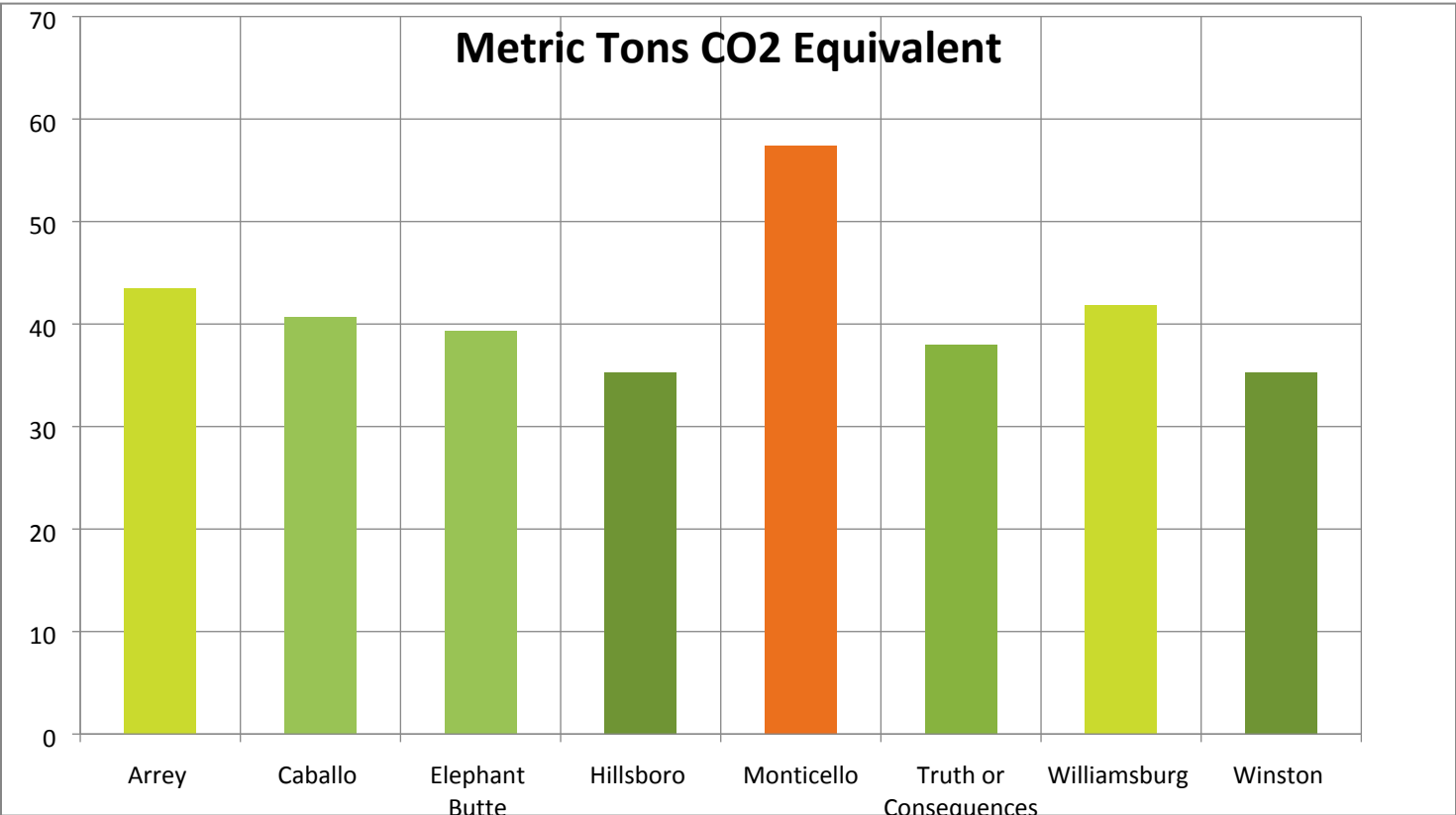
Sources: (EPA 2011) [eGRID2010 Version 1.1](#), U.S. annual non-base load CO<sub>2</sub> output emission rate, year 2007 data  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, DC.



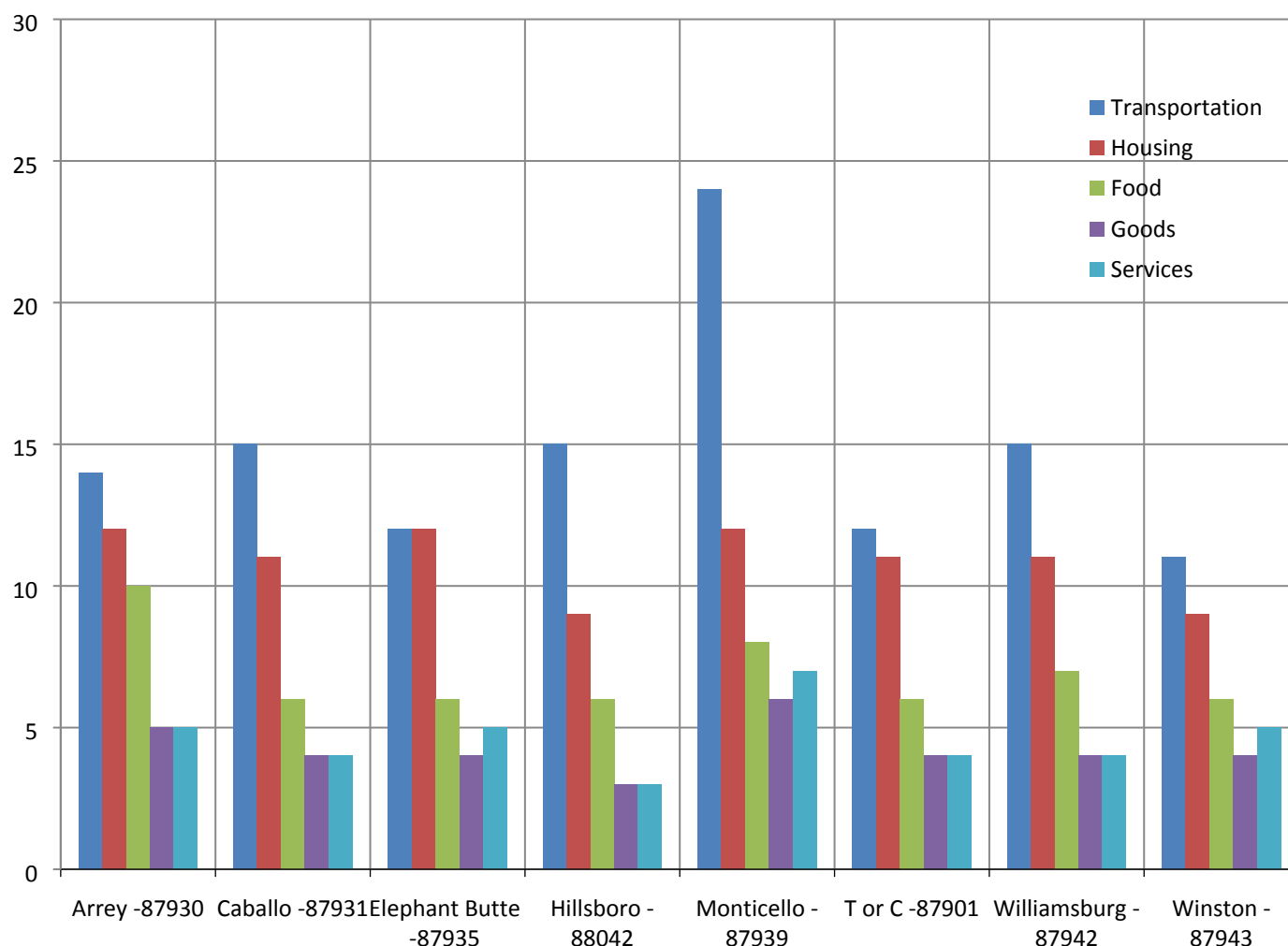
Table 20. Average Annual Household Carbon Footprint



NOTE: The map above and color codes are to be read in conjunction with the bar chart below.



**Table 21. Average Annual Household Carbon Footprint by Zip Code**



The CoolClimate network calculates and publishes information about average annual carbon footprint for various localities across the United States. The information from CoolClimate is taken from a 2013 technical paper written by Christopher M. Jones and Daniel M. Kammen. Low carbon footprints are considered to be 40 tCO<sub>2</sub>e and less, and high is 50 tCO<sub>2</sub>e and more (t stands for tonnes and e is equivalent). The following are estimates for various places in New Mexico:

Truth or Consequences	38.0 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	Socorro	40.3 tCO <sub>2</sub> e
Elephant Butte	39.3 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	Los Lunas	50.7 tCO <sub>2</sub> e
Caballo	40.7 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	Albuquerque	50.6 tCO <sub>2</sub> e
Arrey	43.5 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	Santa Fe	48.1 tCO <sub>2</sub> e
Winston	35.3 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	Las Cruces	47.9 tCO <sub>2</sub> e
Hillsboro	35.3 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	Silver City	44.4 tCO <sub>2</sub> e
Monticello	57.4 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	Carlsbad	45.3 tCO <sub>2</sub> e

The highest estimate appears to be Sandia Park in Bernalillo County at 62.4 tCO<sub>2</sub>e; and. The lowest appears to be Hachita in Grant County with a calculation of 33.3 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

With the exception of Monticello, Sierra County seems to fare reasonably well compared to much of the State.

### 9.3 Some Current Initiatives

9.3.1 New Mexico Cap and Trade. On November 2, 2010, New Mexico passed a greenhouse cap and trade provision, which allows New Mexico to now take part in placing emission reductions on oil and gas industries.

On December 6, 2010, New Mexico passed a state-wide, New Mexico-only plan that places a cap on the amount of emissions generated in the state. Several states, including Arizona have stated they are not ready to participate as of yet. New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez is strongly reconsidering New Mexico's participation and will ask for the resignations of the members of the Environmental Improvement Board (EIB), who passed these last two measures.

On July 29, 2011, the New Energy Economy filed a motion with the EIB stating that the current board had no authority to reconsider the previous board's decisions, and on August 1, 2011, the EIB unanimously approved hearings to repeal the regulations. The first hearing was set for November 8, 2011.

On February 6, 2012, the Environmental Improvement Board repealed the Cap and Trade regulation put into place in November, 2010.

9.3.2 Land Use Initiatives. A number of papers have been written about land use planning and greenhouse gas emission reduction. There are some best practices that have been published in the United States and Canada.

The University of Nebraska in 2009 published a paper entitled; "Mitigating greenhouse gas emissions through local land use planning."

Kansas City, Missouri has published recommendations for a comprehensive planning process for Climate Protection. This is part of Kansas City's commitment to the "Cool Cities" program.

The California Institute for Local Government has offered suggestions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in ten best practices areas, including: transportation, green building and land use planning and community design.

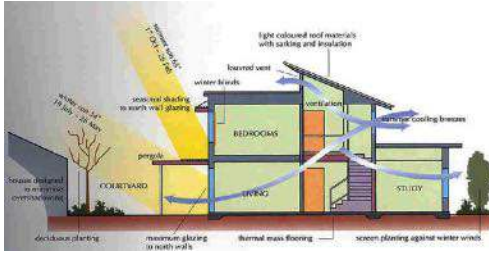
The National Capital Region: Best Practices and Policies to Reduce Greenhouse Gases Report (2008) has some general ideas on how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through land use planning and community design.

The province of Quebec, Canada has published a set of best practices for land use planning and mitigation of greenhouse gases that is referred to often in U.S. literature. It is one of the best references available: Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Land Use Planning, (Government of Quebec, 2005, 77 pages).

Most methods to reduce greenhouse gas emission through land use planning include the following:

- Green/energy-efficient buildings—municipal, industrial, commercial, residential
- Transit-related
  - Reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) through smart growth principles such as pedestrian-oriented communities, mixed use, high-density development, etc.
  - Increases in mass transit
  - Transit-oriented development
- Alternative energy – distributed generation and combined heat and power within urban areas
- Open space conservation
- Urban forestry
- Wildland – urban interface fire management (building or zoning regulations)

**9.3.3 Green Building Design and Construction Standards.** Green building design and construction standards are available through the National Home Builders Association (2007) and through the U.S. Green Building Council.



The U.S. Green Building Council developed a green building certification system, LEED, which stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. (source: Inhabitant.com)

Santa Fe, NM has adopted a Green Residential Building Code. New Mexico has adopted an energy conservation code for both commercial and residential buildings.

**9.3.4 Executive Order 13693: Planning for Federal Sustainability in the Next Decade:** released March 19, 2015, declared that 30% of electricity consumed by the federal government is to come from renewable energy sources by 2025. The executive order established a hierarchy of practices for federal agencies to achieve the 30% by 2025 target (Source: <https://energy.gov/eere/femp/federal-renewable-energy-projects-and-technologies>). President Trump is expected to rescind or, at least, modify this order.

## 9.4 Goals, Objectives and Implementation Strategies/Actions

**9.4.1 Goal 1: Sierra County to consider becoming a sustainable, green community.**

Specific Objectives. Sierra County shall:

- a. encourage energy efficient refurbishing of homes and businesses;
- b. maintain a compact land use pattern;
- c. encourage infill development;
- d. reduce the amount of solid waste sent to the landfill; and
- e. initiate a program to educate County residents and business owners about greenhouse gas emissions and energy conservation measures.

Implementation Strategies/Actions

- a. it is recommended that the County set up a committee made-up of County Commission members and residents to carry out the objectives and actions proposed in this Section 9.4;
- b. encourage the use of solar panels by residents and businesses to reduce use of fossil fuels;
- c.1 adopt this Comprehensive Plan and follow the specific objectives and strategies set out in Section 3.7 of this Plan;
- c.2 encourage the development of existing undeveloped lots in the County. This represents infill and will make more efficient use of existing infrastructure. The County should consider making a few of its lots available for new homes as a housing seed project;
- c.3 maintain a compact pedestrian friendly commercial area;
- c.4 approve new subdivisions and site developments that are energy efficient. Create higher density residential uses and keep road lengths to a minimum to reduce driving and thus reduce use of fossil fuels; promote more recycling in the County to reduce the amount of trash delivered to the landfill site; and
- d. County Board of Commissioners should initiate an education campaign to inform residents and business owners of the effects of greenhouse emissions and the methods that will help mitigate these effects. The campaign should also educate residents and business owners about energy conservation

measures such as purchasing energy efficient appliances, replacing incandescent lighting with helical bulbs or other low energy usage lighting.

## 10.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation section of this Plan consists entirely of an “Implementation Matrix.” This matrix lists the goals, objectives and implementation strategies/actions recommended in each section of the Plan: Land Use, Economic Development, Infrastructure, etc. The matrix provides columns for time frames for each Strategy or Action, specific tasks to be undertaken, the person or group responsible for carrying out the specific action and additional columns for the Sierra County to enter whether a project is complete or if further action is required and, finally a column for comments.

The intent is to provide the Sierra County with a relatively simple format for pursuing the implementation of this Plan and monitoring progress in the implementation of the stated goals, objectives and actions necessary to implement the goals and objectives.

In addition to the Implementation Matrix, the principal action necessary is this: **that the Sierra County Board of Commissioners adopts this Comprehensive Plan in its entirety and that it pursues the goals, objectives and implementation strategies in accordance with a prioritization of the goals and actions, which are to be determined and adopted by Sierra County.**

## 10.1 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

[illegible]

Topic/ Subject	Goal	Objectives	Implementation Strategies or Actions	Priority or Rating Level	Specific Tasks	Responsibility (Organization or Individual)	Estimated Completion Date	Status Date and Further Action Required	Status and Date	Comments or Notes
Economic Development CONT.	<u>Goal 1: Showcase County Tourism Opportunities, and Experiences to Visitors and Potential New Residents.</u> <u>CONT.</u>		<p>v. Sierra County communities to join forces and resources with other counties (MRGEDA for example) to offer a joint event, or a series of events that because of a pooling of resources will attract larger numbers of visitors and more revenue to participating communities.</p> <p>vi. the Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Coalition to develop a calendar of Sierra County events and activities as well as events and activities in neighboring counties and municipalities. Working with or as a part of the MRGEDA effort to develop a calendar will be appropriate. Develop a strategy/plan of action to create or plan events at the same time as events in other jurisdictions to share visitors and create additional business for Sierra County. Music festivals, food festivals, antique show and the like are possible new activities that can be considered and then aggressively marketed;</p> <p>vii. the Sierra Communities Economic Development foundation and the coalition of other groups and organizations to join forces and resources with other counties and communities to create a larger event to attract more visitors for a longer period of time;</p> <p>viii. the Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Coalition to market the County facilities, assets, services, and events aggressively to Kirtland Air Force Base and to Cannon and Holloman Air Force Bases. The public affairs offices of each base should be contacted for help in distributing information to base personnel. Events and activities and facilities are to be advertised in the AFB newspapers. Local businesses are to be contacted and their support solicited for the offer of discounts on various services and products to military personnel. Preparing a comprehensive promotional marketing package to offer to military personnel and to the general public is strongly advised;</p> <p>ix. the County web site as well as the cities’ web sites are to list activities, events and facilities for visitors. Ensure that web site information is always current and accurate.</p>							
	<u>Goal 2: Promote the County as a business friendly community; a place for new investment and opportunities.</u>	<p>a. <u>Promote positive aspects of Sierra County.</u></p> <p>b. <u>Develop and promote the potential for various enterprises, proposed and currently in place, in Sierra County.</u></p>	<p>i. the County Commission and the Sierra the Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Coalition to promote Sierra County as a business friendly community in which to do business through promotional materials, and attendance at industrial shows. (<u>Note:</u> in the absence of a formal County economic development group, the County Commission and the Tourism and Recreation Coalition should play this role until such time as a formal economic development group can be put in place);</p> <p>ii. specific economic opportunities have been identified in this Chapter (see Section 4.5 of this Plan). In most cases these opportunities should have an implementation or promotional strategy developed by the County to pursue the opportunity, if this is deemed appropriate. The strategy should include what is to be done (specific tasks), by whom and in what time frame. The implementation matrix in Chapter 10 can help in the development of a detailed strategy. The County might consider the hiring of a consultant to prepare a comprehensive economic development study and strategy for the County.</p> <p>Some of the specific growth initiatives that might be considered are described briefly below:</p> <p>➤ <u>Spaceport America.</u> With a facility already in place and several tenants on site, this is a prime opportunity for Sierra County to participate in the space technology being developed in this area. The opportunity for the County to have secondary service industries locate in the County is very real. The County has to position itself now to take advantage of the growth that can occur as a result of the Spaceport.</p> <p>In addition to the support service industry potential, there is the potential for increased tourism activity as a result of users/visitors to the Spaceport.</p>							



Topic/ Subject	Goal	Objectives	Implementation Strategies or Actions	Priority or Rating Level	Specific Tasks	Responsibility (Organization or Individual)	Estimated Completion Date	Status Date and Further Action Required	Status and Date	Comments or Notes
Economic Development CONT.	Goal 2: Promote the County as a business friendly community; a place for new investment and opportunities. CONT.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Healthcare. A major employment sector of the Sierra County economy, its growth potential has been noted in section 4.5 of the Plan. Of great importance is the fact that good healthcare facilities are necessary to the support and success of other business initiatives. Attracting retirees or snowbirds to the area is an example.</li><li>➤ Sierra County as a Retirement Community. The County is to be marketed as “senior-friendly”. Characteristics of a senior community will have to be determined and documented. Existing facilities and services must be inventoried and an assessment made about what other services and facilities are needed. How that will be done and financed are important considerations. The Sierra County Recreation and Tourism Coalition might assume responsibility for this task, or the County Commission might appoint a separate committee to undertake this initiative. Any committee appointed should include representatives of the cities of Truth or Consequences and Elephant Butte, and the village of Williamsburg. This same group should also look at attracting snowbirds to the area.</li><li>➤ Mining Opportunities. The County to encourage the mining industry, particularly the current efforts of the Copper Flat Mine to obtain its mine and discharge permits. Copper Flat mine will provide approximately 1,100 construction jobs and 275 to 300 permanent full time jobs. Salaries at the mine will vary between \$35,000 and \$60,000 annually. Also, the existing Zeolite mine at Chloride is still in production and efforts should be taken to help maintain its operations.</li><li>➤ Hunting and Fishing. See Section 3.6.1 of this Plan for a full discussion of this economic sector. The importance of this industry, relative to other sectors, is notable because of the natural resources of Sierra County and the studies that have been done assessing the positive impact of these activities. Section 3.6.1 cites the study done for the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish in 2014. In addition, a draft report prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture: <u>Draft Assessment Report of Ecological/Social/Economic Sustainability Conditions and Trends, Gila national Forest</u>, USDA, September, 2016. This report, although focused on a larger area than Sierra County, points out the positive economic benefits of hunting and fishing to the region including Sierra County. The study cites jobs supported and revenue generated. The study also notes the amount of payments made to Sierra County in lieu of taxes in fiscal year 2015: \$1,205,512.</li><li>➤ Agriculture: Farming and Ranching. A mainstay for the Sierra economy for more than a century and a half, agriculture continues to be a significant employer and generator of significant sales. According to the 2012 Agriculture census, farming and ranching generated \$39.4 million dollars in sales. It accounts for about 5% of employment in the County. This sector of the economy must receive continued support from the County through the new economic development organization.. Needs in terms of infrastructure or policy or regulation are to be identified and initiatives taken to meet the needs to the extent possible.</li><li>➤ Eco-Tourism. The potential for growth in this area is worth considering and promoting, perhaps as part of an overall tourism package.</li><li>➤ Tourism/Recreation. The tourism/recreation industrial sector will continue to be an economic mainstay for Sierra County. It attracts well over one million visitors annually and generates significant revenue for the communities. More must be done to promote Sierra County outside of the state of New Mexico. And, more must be done to entice state park visitors to leave the park grounds and utilize local businesses, attend County events, and experience other County assets such as the ghost towns and historic communities.</li></ul>							

Topic/ Subject	Goal	Objectives	Implementation Strategies or Actions	Priority or Rating Level	Specific Tasks	Responsibility (Organization or Individual)	Estimated Completion Date	Status Date and Further Action Required	Status and Date	Comments or Notes
Economic Development CONT.	Goal 3: Identify and pursue funding to achieve all economic development initiatives set out in this Plan and other initiatives that may develop as opportunities arise or as developed by other entities such as the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments.	a. Objective 1: Identify financial and other forms of aid from multiple sources. Identify special designations that may aid the County in financing economic initiatives.	<div><div>i. for help with a comprehensive economic development strategy and marketing strategy seek help from the New Mexico Economic Development Department, New Mexico Tourism Department, and New Mexico Finance Authority for funding assistance;</div><div>ii. for help with marketing and advertising, seek help from New Mexico Tourism Department and New Mexico Economic Development Department;</div><div>iii. possible funding-grant and loan-programs that Sierra County should investigate are listed below. This information is taken from the New Mexico Economic Development Department web site, the USDA website, and the New Mexico Finance Authority web site.<div><div>➤ Public Project Revolving Fund (PPRF): PPRF is a unique revolving loan fund that funds infrastructure and capital equipment projects with low-cost and low-interest rate loans. The key characteristic of the PPRF is that all participating borrowers, regardless of their creditworthiness, receive ‘AAA’ insured interest rates; among the lowest interest rates available in the market.</div><div>➤ Local Government Planning Fund (LGPF): The LGPF is a New Mexico Finance Authority which provides up-front capital that can be used for water and wastewater projects, long-term master plans, conservation plans, energy audit plans and economic development plans related to Certified Community Initiative funding. The planning money comes in the form of a grant and is determined using a sliding-scale.</div><div>➤ New Mexico Finance Authority. NMFA has funding available for various types of projects. Of interest here is funding for: plans to implement Local Economic Development Act Ordinances; capital equipment; priority infrastructure plans (from pre-planning through construction); and, economic development feasibility studies.</div><div>➤ Statewide Economic Development Bond Program (SWEDFA). This is a program that could help new and existing businesses. The New Mexico Finance Authority in cooperation with the New Mexico Economic Development Department participates in a lending program for private businesses and non-profit companies. SWEDFA offers a variety of financing strategies to help fund small businesses including bank participations, issue bonds, direct loans and loan/bond guarantees.</div></div><div>Part of the SWEDFA program is the SMART Money loan participation program available to businesses. The SMART Money loan participation is designed to lower the cost for the borrower and share the risk with the bank creating a benefit to both the bank and borrower.</div><div><div>➤ New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority. The County should investigate this source of funding for housing assistance, either for County initiated projects or for home repair programs, home loan or mortgage programs. Representatives of the NMMFA will be happy to attend a County Commission meeting to talk about MFA programs.</div><div>➤ Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) (USDA). The RBEG program provides funding to rural projects that will finance development of small and emerging businesses. Grants typically range between \$10,000 and \$500,000; there is no maximum level. Sierra County would be eligible or a private non-profit. Funds may be used for: acquisition or development of land; construction, conversion or renovation of buildings; training and technical assistance and several other uses.</div></div></div></div>							

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Economic Development CONT.	Goal 3: Identify and pursue funding to achieve all economic development initiatives set out in this Plan and other initiatives that may develop as opportunities arise or as developed by other entities such as the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments. CONT.		<div><div>➤ <u>Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) (USDA).</u> The RBDG program supports the development and/or growth of small and emerging businesses in rural areas with fewer than 50 employees’ and less than \$1 million in revenue. Enterprise or Opportunity Grants may be used for: planning; construction, conversion or renovation of buildings; technical service; job training; acquisition or development of land and several other uses. These grants typically range between \$10,000 and \$500,000, with no cost-sharing requirement.</div><div>➤ <u>Intermediary Relending Program (IRP) (USDA).</u> The purpose of the IRP program is to alleviate poverty and increase economic activity and employment in rural areas with population less than 50,000). Under this program, loans are made available to local organizations (private non-profits, public agencies and cooperatives) called intermediaries, to establish revolving loan funds. The revolving loan funds are used to finance business and economic development activity to create or retain jobs in remote or disadvantaged communities. An intermediary may borrow up to \$2 million under its first financing and up to \$1 million at a time thereafter. Funds may be used for several uses one of which is the acquisition, construction, conversion, enlargement, or repair of a business or business facility, particularly when jobs will be created or retained. Maximum loan from intermediaries to ultimate recipients is \$250,000.</div><div>➤ <u>Business and Industry Guaranteed Loans (B&amp;I) (USDA).</u> The B&amp;I is intended to develop, improve or finance business, industry and employment and improve economic conditions in rural communities. This is done by guaranteeing loans that are made through existing credit facilities. A borrower may be a corporation or other legal entity that operates as a profit or non-profit organization. Loans \$5 million and less may be guaranteed up to 80%; for loans between \$5 million and \$ 10 million the maximum guarantee is 70%; and, for loans greater than \$10 million the maximum guarantee is 60%. Maximum loan term is 30 years. Funds may be used for several uses. These include business and industrial acquisitions to prevent business closure, business conversion, enlargement, modernization, or repair and the purchase and development of land, buildings, facilities, equipment, and easements or rights-of-way.</div></div> <div>There are other grant/loan programs available for a variety of purposes such as energy efficiency projects. These same three web sites may be consulted for a listing of these programs.</div> <div><u>Some Federal programs may also be available</u>, for the present. Through the Economic Development Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce, grants are available for three principal program areas:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public Works projects</li><li>• Regional Innovation Strategies</li><li>• Planning program and Local Technical Assistance Program</li></ul></div> <div>Federal Economic Development Grants are normally awarded to communities to revitalize, expand and upgrade their physical infrastructure to attract new industry, encourage business expansion, diversify local economies, and generate or retain long-term, private sector jobs and investment. The federal government is looking for substantial return on its investment in terms of jobs or other new investment.</div>							

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<b>Economic Development CONT.</b>	<u>Goal 4: Establish an Economic Development Organization for Sierra County</u>	a. Objective 1. Seriously consider the establishment of a County Economic Development organization with support-funding and political- from the cities of Truth or Consequences and Elephant Butte, and the village of Williamsburg to coordinate the development and promotion of various economic initiatives for Sierra County. b. Objective 2. Ensure adequate funding for the economic development organization to allow staffing and marketing and promotion activities.	i. The County and member municipalities must recognize that this is not an over-night undertaking. It will take a little time to set-up, fund and make operational; ii. County Commission to initiate discussion with Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte and Williamsburg on a strategy to set-up an economic development organization: timing, funding sources, other resources. The County and the urban area should look at one year to establish the economic development organization; iii. This must be a coordinated and unified effort on the part of the County and the Cities and the Village. Full support of the new organization is required; iv. establish a clear set of responsibilities and accountabilities for the new organization. Expectations must be clearly articulated. A plan with priorities is a must; and, v. the new economic development organization is to work and coordinate efforts, to the extent possible and appropriate, with the Middles Rio Grande Economic Development Association.							
<b>Infrastructure</b>	<u>Drainage Management Plan</u>	Both incorporated and unincorporated areas experience significant re-occurring cost and adverse infrastructure impacts due to flooding.	Work with SWCOG to formulate a County-wide DMP that includes the incorporated communities such as T or C, Williamsburg, and Elephant Butte, and cost share. Example: Cibola County.							
	<u>Asset Management Plan</u>	Plan is needed for M&O planning and budgeting as well as for funding assistance of Capital Infrastructure Replacement.	Develop a cost effective work plan and budget that utilizes City resources, summer pert-time students, and Professor oversight.							
	<u>Tor C Water/Wastewater PER</u>	High land use population projections of 8,200 by 2040. The Truth or Consequences and surrounding areas are advised to re-evaluate the Water System Improvements PER dated August, 2015 and the Wastewater System PER of July, 2016 if high population growth is experienced.	Work with traditional NMFA, CDBG, Colonias and Local funding sources to budget in the appropriate year should the need arise.							
<b>Community Facilities</b>	<u>Goal 1: Prepare comprehensive listing of Community Facilities to aid in promoting Various economic initiatives and attracting new business and visitors to Sierra County.</u>	a. prepare comprehensive detailed inventory and description of community facilities; b. include compressive list and description in comprehensive visitors guide and include it as a major part of any package to aggressively market County assets; and, c. healthcare services and facilities to be major part of any marketing package aimed at retirees and snowbirds.								

Topic/ Subject	Goal	Objectives	Implementation Strategies or Actions	Priority or Rating Level	Specific Tasks	Responsibility (Organization or Individual)	Estimated Completion Date	Status Date and Further Action Required	Status and Date	Comments or Notes
<b>Hazards Mitigation</b>	Only one goal, objective, and action is of prime importance here. Sierra County is party to two major comprehensive hazard plans: Sierra County, New Mexico Comprehensive Disaster Mitigation Plan; and, the Sierra County Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Both Plans have requirements to be reviewed annually and updated every five (5)-years at a minimum. In addition, both plans require staged practice exercises.		The recommended action is that Sierra County participates in any practice exercise and that it be involved with an annual review of both plans to keep them current with local and national situations and with technological advance, as well as including a plan for hazardous materials spills and explosions, and any acts of terrorism. The plans are good practical documents and should be followed. Both plans contain many preventative measures that go a long way to mitigating the described hazards.							
<b>Green Communities</b>	<u>Goal 1: County of Sierra County to become a sustainable, green community.</u>	The County of Sierra County shall:  a. encourage energy efficient refurbishing of homes and businesses; b. maintain a compact land use pattern; c. encourage infill development; d. reduce the amount of solid waste sent to the landfill; and e. initiate a program to educate County residents and business owners about greenhouse gas emissions and energy conservation measures.	a. it is recommended that the County set up a committee made-up of County Commission members and residents to carry out the objectives and actions proposed in this Section 9.4; b. encourage the use of solar panels by residents and businesses to reduce use of fossil fuels; c.1 adopt this Comprehensive Plan and follow the specific objectives and strategies set out in Section 3.7 of this Plan; c.2 encourage the development of existing undeveloped lots in the County. This represents infill and will make more efficient use of existing infrastructure. The County should consider making a few of its lots available for new homes as a housing seed project; c.3 maintain a compact pedestrian friendly commercial area; c.4 approve new subdivisions and site developments that are energy efficient. Create higher density residential uses and keep road lengths to a minimum to reduce driving and thus reduce use of fossil fuels; promote more recycling in the County to reduce the amount of trash delivered to the landfill site; and d. County Board of Commissioners should initiate an education campaign to inform residents and business owners of the effects of greenhouse emissions and the methods that will help mitigate these effects. The campaign should also educate residents and business owners about energy conservation measures such as purchasing energy efficient appliances, replacing incandescent lighting with helical bulbs or other low energy usage lighting.							

# APPENDICES

# **APPENDIX 1 – Public Participation Meeting Notes; February 2017**

*Notes from the meetings as well as the PowerPoint presentations were posted on the County web site.*

## **SIERRA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMUNITY MEETING-FEBRUARY 7, 2017 – 6:30 P.M. COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING, TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES**

### **15 PERSONS ATTENDED THE MEETING**

Rick Draker, Theresa Panciera, and Jaime Jiron of Draker Cody, Inc. were present to conduct the meeting. Rick Draker facilitated the meeting.

The meeting began at 6:28 p.m.

Mr. Draker presented information about comprehensive plans through a PowerPoint presentation. Discussion followed the presentation.

#### **Draker: What do you like about living in Sierra County?**

##### **Responses:**

- Weather
- Open Spaces - there is clean air and blue sky
- Affordable housing
- Friendly people
- Close-knit community
- Smallness, quaint
- Low taxes
- Outdoor recreation – hunting, fishing, lake
- Ownership; that's my place

#### **Draker: Do you feel safe in this community?**

##### **Responses:**

- Safe community – no gangs/no drive by shootings
- Overall response from attendees was 'Yes'

#### **Draker: Growth. Would you like to see growth? How? What level?**

##### **Responses:**

- Yes, with a smart plan
- Don't let in chains or new subdivisions, but rather fill-ins and use the infrastructure that is already here
- More organization and structure
- Have privacy fences to screen "clutter"
- Make landlords take responsibility for rentals and property appearance
- Need industry/business to support the youth and living wage because the youths leave after school because there is nothing here for them. We have to stop losing our young people
- Would be nice if we could distinguish between permanent residents and seasonal residents
- Elephant Butte does not have mail service and it's unfair to have to pay for post office boxes
- More people would move to Elephant Butte if they had mail service
- Adding recreational facilities for children
- Schools have gone from AA to AAAA
- When mining was in operation housing construction and quality was good
- What can kids do? Recreation center, tennis, swimming, library

## **Draker: What economic initiatives should take place in order to create and attract jobs?**

### **Responses:**

- Better attractions- new attractions or enhanced existing attractions
  - Attract tourists to the town all year long, not just summer, to spend their money, as opposed to having them stay permanently. This avoids having to build new infrastructure
- Bring in tourists into town. As opposed to staying at the lake. Consider a shuttle service to do so
  - It was mentioned that this has been done before for a specific town event – the hospital sponsored the service. It wasn't too successful as it wasn't advertised enough
- Develop RV parks within a 5 mile radius that are reasonably priced
- Marketing the County, T or C, Elephant Butte and Williamsburg as a unit
- **Draker: Is there a joint effort to market the county and its communities?**
- **Response:**
  - Yes; spend a lot of money on marketing, but can do better
  - Study every year of numbers where local money is spent
  - All lodgers tax goes into marketing
  - County recreation and tourism board meetings are informational instead of active marketing
  - Market weekend events together and build awareness (recreation and tourism board effort)
- In Sierra County, one function [event] affects another. There isn't enough population to attend all the events especially if events occur at same time
  - Transparency of calendar dates
  - Market to military-offer package deals/incentives

## **Draker: What about the workforce? Skills? Training?**

- Manufacturing not big employer
- Draker: Are there opportunities for training facilities?
  - Western University, high school partners with hospital internships/shadowing 2 students and are graded for the semester
- Are businesses supportive with high school students shadowing in the work-place?
  - Rotary is working on adding shadowing to high school or school program
  - Alzheimer's Unit at State Veterans home
    - Currently there are travelling nurses
    - Would be nice to educate people in town
- Hospital is helping to prepare CNAs and help with tuition to be RN's
  - Look at programs to "grow their own"
- Even Walmart has staffing issues
  - Bringing people in from Las Cruces and Socorro with offer of travel stipends
  - Many people on public assistance – if they get a job they will lose their benefits; all benefits instead of a portion
  - Generational welfare cycle – it is a problem and it needs to stop
  - Also a staffing issue with the new Family Dollar-still trying to hire people
  - Draker: If people were paid minimum wage and travel locally, would that not make a difference?
  - Benefits and education are the pathways for change
    - Offers stability
- County Manager mentioned diversity in workforce is increasing dynamics
  - Sub-clusters – agriculture (farmers, ranchers), technology
  - Agriculture is who they are and it needs to be sustained
  - Sustaining industries and growth of population

## **Draker: What is your opinion on the Spaceport?**

### **Responses:**

- Provides jobs



- Bring in families for flights who will stay 3 or 4 days
- Option: Create a recreational path across the Rio Grande a “tech path” – they have the drone summit – drone park, Segway’s, already have rafting
- This would get people off the highway and into the community
- Spaceport needs to advertise and market itself better
  - Billboards throughout the county and state
  - Need to market heavily along I-25

**Draker: What does the Spaceport offer in terms of secondary industry opportunities? What needs to be done to support the industry?**

**Responses:**

- Competition with Las Cruces – Solution: coordinate involvement with Las Cruces
  - They have hotels, colleges etc.
- Construct a train track from T or C to Las Cruces
- Need things for all ages to do – there is really nothing for younger people to do
- Zoning – who does it? By city, not by county – design guidelines to follow the Spaceport infrastructure
- Option to add recreational activities for children
  - Spaceport/Airport downtime
  - Windy season – kite flying, solar carting, drone ascensions, wind rail race
- Advertise at colleges and universities
- There has to be incentive programs to bring people here

**Draker: What infrastructure is needed to have incentives brought in to support the Spaceport?**

**Responses:**

- Industrial Park near the airport
- Need schools, police, fire for the whole package
- Need housing

**Draker: What do you think of mining in this area? Copper Flat?**

**Responses:**

- Draker: explained facts and longevity of the copper mine – near Hillsboro, 1300 construction jobs (direct and indirect jobs); 275-325 permanent jobs
- Good thing for housing and shopping
- Draker: Does T or C offer the shopping needed?
- Response: Yes, it is the only place to get what you need
- Should offer transportation back and forth from the mine
- Busing is the way that they operated in the 80’s
- St. Cloud (near Chloride) still continues to bus in their miners
- Could have meal trucks to provide food for the miners
- Attendee asked how do others deal with negative attitudes about the copper mine
- Northern NM has done a great job by “updating” information and communication
- What is going on with the mine? County Manager responded:
  - Waiting for approvals and permits
  - Permits have to be done this year, otherwise they will have to re-apply
  - Litigation – Turner hired 2 of the best environmentalists to fight it
- Lifetime of mine is estimated at 11 to 12 years
- County plans to use revenue from the mine to grow the community: infrastructure, marketing, etc.
- Mine will give tours – will take 6 people at a time
- Hydrology study – the water is there and more to support mine operations
- Over the lifetime of the mine there will be a 1-foot drop in water level
- Mine will be using a water recycle system

- Jicarilla water is replacing the water that the mine uses
- About 1 year until construction starts

**Draker: Why have snowbirds gone elsewhere?**

**Responses:**

- Old facilities in the community
- There are not very many places to park an RV – not RV friendly- at reasonable costs
- Snowbirds are going past the city instead of coming in and staying
- “Solar RV Park” would fill the need of the traveler – self-sufficient, provides shade
- RV Parks require low amounts of water, they allow tourists to come into town, spend their money and go back to their RVs
- Need a nice park that is clean and innovative
- It is cheaper to stay at the State Parks rather than an RV park; someone can stay in the park for up to 14 straight days
- RV park in Elephant Butte has food, drink, and activities nearby
- Need a travel center – place to repair RV’s and semi-trucks
- Add support services for RV’s, trailers, diesels etc.
- There are no semi-truck pit stops at exit 79
  - Sunset Grille used to be the stopping spot when it was still in business
  - Truck drivers need a place to sleep, that’s quiet; state has eliminated the pull-outs for drivers
  - “Sleep space” for parking, food, easy on/off the highway
- Important to have snowbirds
  - Significant population
  - Tempting to bring in and move snowbirds – Downside is healthcare services for the elders as it requires more emergency responders

**Draker: What do you think of this area becoming a retirement community?**

**Responses:**

- Need supportive healthcare to build up confidence – bringing in state of the art healthcare for the community
- New hospital being built and bringing in specialists and enhanced services will be an added attraction and plus to the idea of a retirement community
- Hospital is currently working on rural area marketing with GE and have an agreement with them to bring in the best equipment and keep it updated. Demonstrating what can be done in a rural area
- AARP Community Plan – good reference when thinking about community planning
  - Reference for older goals/benchmarks to expand and improve livability for everyone and for retirement
  - Livability index was “slammed” and source of information and data are questionable
  - Pollution index-T or C rated poor – do have dust/pollen/fires, but mostly blue sky. Again, the source of the information is not known
- Golf course is a retirement attraction
- Attracting retirees is Ok but should not be only economic effort

**Draker: Other issues?**

**County Manager asked residents their opinion of a permanent pool size at Elephant Butte to ensure a constant and stable level of water to support activities. Much work to be done-water rights to be purchased and transferred.**

Everyone at the meeting thought a permanent pool to be a good idea

There being no further question or comment, Mr. Draker thanked everyone for coming and for their participation.

Meeting adjourned: 7:55 PM

SIERRA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
COMMUNITY MEETING-FEBRUARY 9, 2017 – 5:30 P.M.  
HILLSBORO COMMUNITY CENTER, HILLSBORO, NEW MEXICO

22 PERSONS ATTENDED THE MEETING

Rick Draker and Jaime Jiron of Draker Cody, Inc. were present to conduct the meeting. Rick Draker facilitated the meeting.

The meeting began at 5:33 p.m. Present were residents from Hillsboro, Kingston and Berrenda Creek Ranch.

Mr. Draker presented information about comprehensive plans through a PowerPoint presentation.

**Draker: Why do you live here and what attracted you here as a place to live?**

**Responses:**

- Sense of community
- Setting
- History
- Low population density
- Isolation from the rest of the county and state – like it that way
- Weather
- Lack of formal regulation and government organization
- Left to themselves
- Low crime
- Not incorporated and they like it that way

**Draker: Is it safe? Is it a close-knit community?**

**Response:**

- Yes

**Draker: What don't you like?**

**Responses:**

- Potholed and rutted roads
- Speeders; main complaint; sheriff's deputies do come out
- When sheriffs go through they know the problem areas.
- Talked about the issue and now they have implemented the speed sign when at the edge of Hillsboro

**Draker: What would you like to see in the future?**

**Responses:**

- Adequate phone and internet access – dependent on DSL and phone lines
  - Kingston has no internet access - increase speed of the internet
  - Wind stream put in \$1M dollars at the ranch
  - Some places have satellite internet – cell phones don't work – his case, cannot get a landline for under \$300,000
  - Using radio telephone – how they use 911 if it's working
- In Kingston, 32 people – they would like to see animal services (spay and neuter)

**Draker: Would you like to see growth here or the County in general?**

**Responses:**

- Not too much
- County as a whole? – would like to see more tourism in Kingston and surrounding areas
- If they open up the copper mine it will bring in more people

**Draker: What are your feelings about Copper Flat mine?**

**Responses:**

- The community is split pro and con
- Concern is the water for the people in Arrey, Caballo and Hillsboro; the impact of the mine on quantity and quality
- The traffic load SR 152
  - Hillsboro and Kingston depend on SR 152 for access and for tourists. Issue will be road congestion during construction and the operation of the mine
  - State important and stakeholders for the highway
  - County roads may be affected
- Water, traffic, road access
- Flood concerns for Hillsboro
- Roads do affect tourism because they are afraid to come down – roads can be closed because of 2 in of snow. SR 27 between Hillsboro and Nutt can be closed because of a little snow
- Highway 27 is maintained now by Hatch District office – Hatch has no idea of bad weather (flooding or snow) they could care less about what happens (state highway district office out of Hatch)
- Highway 27, the road surface is not in good condition

**Draker: What are the pros of the Copper Mine?**

- A resident stated the following opinion: this is an old mining area and we need to accept that it is a legitimate resource and legitimate activity. However, when looked at from Hillsboro's point of view, there isn't much benefit. The population of Hillsboro is older, mostly retired, so the jobs created by the mine are not of any direct benefit. We are concerned because of the highway will be busy with truck traffic and the access to Hillsboro and Kingston will be more difficult. SR 152 not constructed to handle that kind of traffic
- May be some economic benefit to Hillsboro from the workers, but they are not going to live in Hillsboro or shop here
- Jobs will be created; company will pay taxes to County
- Maybe a way to keep youth in the area. The graduates of the Mining school may have job opportunities at the mine

**Draker: How is the housing? Could Hillsboro or Kingston accommodate workers?**

**Responses:**

- No. Housing is not available
- Could handle it from a water point of view
  - The town has no sewage – all septic
- A resident stated that the workers coming in were not necessarily people that they would not want to host full time. In the 1980's they would come in and rent out the trailer park. They used the bar and restaurant, but overall it is not real advantageous, economically

- Services will be needed for the short life time of the copper mine – all the established entities and infrastructure and it will close when the services are gone. Short term project – 11 to 17 years maximum; game plan
- There will be an impact on County in terms of:
  - Schools
  - Hospitalization
  - Housing
  - Sheriff / fire dept.
- Miners will want to live near Caballo or closer to schools

**Draker: Sierra County a few years ago was a destination for snowbirds, not much anymore. What needs to be done to bring it back?**

- Healthcare needed to maintain snowbirds
- They will not stay in Hillsboro- no facilities, but they may visit and use restaurant and museum and the bread and breakfast in Kingston. May hike the area

**Draker: What do you think about the Spaceport?**

**Responses:**

- Negative, our tax dollars built, now, we have to pay to see it
- Service and clean industry is a positive addition to the County-service industries are possible
- People were amazed when Spaceport was actually built – potential to be positive influence – southern oriented access from south with new road, Las Cruces may be big beneficiary
- A lot to offer – not unreasonable that it takes a long time.
- Dangerous business
- Mostly positive
- Economic boom with tax increase

**Draker: Tourism? What would you like to see?**

**Responses:**

- Hillsboro and Kingston are attractive areas; maybe more marketing of attractions
- Difficult to find campsites
- Put in a walking birding trail – an upcoming thing
- There is a horse service trail out of Kingston – someone put up private property signs, so people turn around and do not use trail
- Forest service in a ten year planning project: complaints about road access
- Ted Turner expedition – out of T or C for ranches; connected for eco-tourism business will be viable speaking for Turner that they are in it for the long haul, lodge bringing increase. Thinks focus should be more on tourism and is the future of the area

**Draker: Snowbirds – do they come to Hillsboro/Kingston?**

**Responses:**

- Best season about to start because of snowbirds
  - Early March, April and May
- Mostly passing through during these months
- Tend to stay in Deming, T or C, or Elephant Butte
- See them maybe once a week/once a month
- Focus is on Deming for snowbirds– apparently Deming offers more than T or C

- Visitors and frequency for café
  - Mix – decline in school/field trips, regulars stop coming, consistent but have been changes.
  - Condition of the roads for business have become limited and business has decreased
- Road to Deming is unsafe

**Draker: Is there a benefit to put in effort to bring in snowbirds?**

**Responses:**

- They are good people who have money to spend
- Short term visitors but they do attend and get involved in events
- They may stay in one place but likely will want to explore the whole County
- Lodging is limited in Hillsboro and Kingston. Actively promoting one RV Park with 20 spots
  - Owner wants to develop it, maybe an amusement park theme
  - Cater to occasional and long term tenants
  - Need to repair the entrances to RV site
- Big asset in Hillsboro is the community center – Christmas in the foothills
- Attendee thanked the County for helping with the community center
- 2<sup>nd</sup> avenue to Elenora being paved – County is making this a priority
- Drainage work in Hillsboro is done and working on the funding for the roads. Tests are complete

**Draker: Any other comments on the economic points?**

**Responses:**

- Museum in Kingston; museums do not get support. Library is supported by the community and not the County – staffed by volunteers. Museums need support
- Old jail privately owned – not a current museum, owner would sell it – no one to buy it.

**Draker: Water quality and quantity?**

**Responses:**

- Hydrological studies indicate that water quantity and quality is good. Impact by mining activity not fully known, but indications are it may be minimal
- Current status (comment from water board member) is that there is plenty of water
- Water usage has in fact decreased. Geology is fractured. No one knows what is the impact of the mine pulling so much water
- What would be the response if the mine opens and does create a problem? What happens then? Who fixes it?
- It is not known what will happen when the mine starts using water – no one knows until it starts
- Water quantity and quality from the mine is an issue for Turner ranch and eco-tourism
- Concern – once water is gone it is gone

**Draker: Other questions and concerns? There is an effort to develop and maintain a permanent minimum pool in Elephant Butte Lake to maintain recreation activities and tourism, etc. Any opinions about that?**

**Responses:**

- Evaporation is an issue – waste of resources
- County manager stated that it will create water authority – water will always be constant. Evaporation is always an issue and it will not go away
- Sustainability of community – maintaining a minimum pool maintains benefits to County and the State. If the lake is not there, County will lose a lot of revenue

- Would rather see T or C have water rights and additions than have El Paso have them. Keep them in NM and Sierra County
- Where did the number to maintain the lake info come from? County Manager: Numbers are estimates of what is required to maintain fish, birds, recreation, etc.
- There has been a loss in permanent population in Hillsboro; houses are owned by people that use them as second homes. Used to be a bank, a bar, 5 restaurants and other businesses in Hillsboro. Now the business is a small the post office, general store/restaurant and wine store
- Flooding: County needs to ensure the levies are intact and not in need of repair
  - Get on it now rather than later because those type of repairs can be expensive
- Project idea: maintain green community corner SR 27 and SR152
  - want the area developed for community and green space for those that live and travel through- a passive area
- Healthcare: Cathy Elverum from Sierra Vista Hospital detailed the changes and new and enhanced services coming with the new hospital., some of which is described below:
  - New hospital 25 bed and enhancements; e.g. helicopter service if patients need to be flown out.
  - Increasing telemedicine
  - pain clinic
  - bringing in chiropractor
  - Physical therapy- once the hospital is done
- People are discharged home; resources lacking once they return home without help
  - Home health – try to arrange discharging with primary doctors. T or C started a project where EMT's are making house calls to touch base and check in on those home alone – taking medicine checking blood pressure etc.
  - Make available a mobile clinic to rural communities based on needs and frequency of needs. They would come in to provide basic services and determine if they need to see a provider. Dependent on federal government funding

**Other matters raised by residents:**

- What is the estimated completion date for the animal shelter?
  - If state does not take the money, procurement – starting in 30 days and it won't take long to complete
  - Up and running by May
  - Half of the money to Sierra County and money to T or C, but County and City will funnel funds to the animal shelter together
- When do we as a community have to let the County know of any request for monies to be included in the County budget for the community center in Hillsboro?
  - The end of next month (March) is the last day that the county can add anything. Need information by the end of March to finalize the budget.

Mr. Draker thanked everyone for coming out and sharing their thoughts.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:10 PM



SIERRA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
COMMUNITY MEETING-FEBRUARY 16, 2017 – 5:30 P.M.  
WINSTON COMMUNITY CENTER, WINSTON, NM

10 PERSONS ATTENDED THE MEETING

Rick Draker and Jaime Jiron of Draker Cody, Inc. were present to conduct the meeting. Rick Draker facilitated the meeting.

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Draker presented information about comprehensive plans through a PowerPoint presentation followed by a discussion.

**Draker: Why do you live here and what keeps you here? What do you like about Winston and the County?**

**Responses:**

- Peace and quiet
- Rural lifestyle and minimum government
- Born and raised as ranchers in the Black Range – lifestyle
- Winston is isolated
- Close-knit community
- Safe community
- Road interference from the EPA and Army Corp of Engineers
- Private road off forest road has not been graded since 2010 because of new ACE rules
  - Effects the hunters
  - Road south going to Hermosa – used to be a county road, now it is a private road.
  - Cannot touch it because of the Clean Water Act-needs to be graded
  - Road is not recognizable from what it used to be

**Draker: What areas can economic growth come from?**

**Responses:**

- Natural resources: hunting that brings people in from all over the County and State; grazing the rest of the season
- A lot of people come here to hunt
  - Hunting activities are “screwed up” because of the inaccessible roads: roads closed or access restricted to horses and pedestrian movement
- The County Manager mentioned that one of the purposes of updating the comprehensive plan is to address with some wording the issues created by the Forest Service “Travel Plan”. The previous Plan did not address the issue of the Forest Service actions to close roads and restrict access affecting ranching efforts and hunting and fishing guides
- Better roads before, when there was less technology

**Draker: Growth? What are the areas they can grow? Mining, Spaceport, Tourism, etc. What other things can be attracted to the County?**

**For example, what do you think of the Spaceport?**

**Responses?**

- Not worth anything
- It’s a money pit
- There’s no spaceship left

- Why would people or business come this way if there is Las Cruces to the south?
- There are good things going on at the Spaceport, but no one knows what they are doing and where they are going with it
- From a construction point, it seems pointless
- Residents aren't getting information that they don't know how it is helping Sierra County
- The old 1992 comprehensive plan talked about economic development-should look at it

**Draker: What do you think about the Copper Flat mine? Good idea, or not?**

**Responses:**

- Yes, good idea; more jobs, provides money for families
- Would help the County move above the \$27,000 median income level

**Draker: Water has been way down in Elephant Butte Reservoir and Caballo Reservoir. What do you think about maintaining a permanent pool in in the reservoir? The County Manager explained the current effort.**

**Responses:**

- As long as it is supporting the farmers, ranchers and there is money to do this, then yes, it is a good idea. It is good that we use it for recreation and the money that it brings in
- While originally intended for irrigation of agricultural lands, it has also become the #1 recreational area in the State
- A resident indicated that he works at Elephant Butte State Park and confirmed the huge level of activity and use of the park and lake

**Draker: Snowbirds. Is it worthwhile to encourage the return of snowbirds, and the County making effort to bring them back and attract them back to the county?**

**Responses:**

- Need appropriate attractions and activities to bring them back
- A resident asked "how is the airport doing"? The County Manager responded that is good. The County has funding to put in a new fueling station and now aircraft can stop and refuel here. They have a good plan in place. Considering adding an industrial park to bring in anchor businesses

**Draker: With regard to the County accommodating senior living, is this something that should be promoted by the County?**

**Responses:**

- Trying to strive for this area to be a senior citizen community may be a good idea, but getting our youth to stay here is more important. They leave. There is nothing here for them, no jobs and not enough attractions
- There is nothing for their youth to do. This results in them getting into trouble
- No jobs after they get out of school - not much for them when they are even in school
- Winston Fiesta plaques – fiestas became outdated. Insurance has gone up. Fiestas still happen but it is smaller now. It helps to fund the community center
- It is more costly to travel to the Fiesta-fuel costs- just to see a parade and have a meal

NOTE: Fiesta is a celebration, a "mining days" event; also, a fundraiser which helped to build the current community center and to continue to support it. It consists of a parade, poker games, dance, and a meal. There was also a rodeo at one time but the insurance became too expensive and the rodeo was dropped. It is a celebration for the community and the life of the community. The turn-out at the last event was about 120 for the BBQ dinner compared to about 2000 several years ago. It was noted that the area youth are still interested in Fiesta and participate in events

**Draker:** Comprehensive plan is a package of strategies that hopefully will work together and augment one another and produce a greater outcome than any single activity. One of the pluses and examples is healthcare

and jobs it creates but also that it supports other areas of economic activity. Draker asked Cathy Elverum of Sierra Vista Hospital to talk about the new hospital and enhanced services coming:

- Loan is done
- Finishing up the last of the interior design
- Will be breaking ground in April
  - Move utilities so that in June it can have room and resources to build
- Helicopter service. Landing pad closer to the hospital
- 25 bed facility
- Next week the intensive care unit will be running
- Surgery area in operation
- Swing bed unit for those that don't need 24 hour care
- Partnering with GE to have them provide equipment; hybrid OR surgical suite can do many things. The equipment can be converted. \$9M at cost for \$3M in bank part of the loan
- Beta site-GE partnership- T or C is an example community of what can be done in a rural setting. Bringing in people from all over the US to observe and see what it can do. Will update equipment at no cost
- It will have big payoffs for the community. It is a hospital for everyone
- There will be a cardiologist there for stints and heart pacers.
- Mobile clinic is ready to go; staffing is in process and once there is government permission they will make rounds to bring basic care services to the smaller communities. They won't act as a primary care but will identify needs from the issues and mobile unit will refer to another doctor. Having service for those available that don't have it easily accessible and cannot get to T or C
- Has there been any thought to start a program with youth getting involved in the hospital? It has been done for many years. Each semester 2 students, that show interest, come in and do a semester program and have to return to the school and present a paper to get credit. For example:
  - Young lady who has a liking and aptitude for the x-ray division; her intent is to go to college to get her certification. Not heard about just like the spaceport
  - Ambulance people have a program where they will come in on a specific home visit to ensure that people are taking their medication and are staying well
  - Unfortunately, like the Spaceport, very few people know of these efforts. We need to do a better job of communicating these efforts
- Hospital: negotiation with James Earl Jones that does PBS voice overs to do a video shoot of the hospital and to showcase what hospital care can look like
  - On PBS programs throughout the state to tell them what they are doing for T or C.
- Snowbirds – if we can get them here they will stay and buy homes. Set down roots, their families will visit. There isn't one piece. Its multiple pieces

**Draker: There is a Regional Economic Development Plan that has been prepared through the auspices of the federal Department of Agriculture. It includes a 4 county area. DCI focus Sierra County - want to add in their ideas. This makes the marketing effort bigger and more important.**

**Draker: Land use – issue about the Forest Service Travel Plan.**

**Roads in the national forest areas are being blocked off apparently without much consultation. There may be safety issues because of possibility of wildfires and the inability of getting fire-fighting equipment to the areas. Are these of concerns here?**

**Responses:**

- Federal monies are going to fire fighting and law enforcement. Use of the wilderness is being monitored, but Forest Service does not seem to be doing anything to maintain a healthy forest. Healthy

forest has about 80 to 150 trees per acre. Sierra County forests have 200 trees per acre. The other issue is the declaration of “wilderness land”. Access is restricted to horseback and hiking

- For the Outfitters access to forest areas is a huge part of their financial well-being. Restricting access reduces revenue and reduces taxes paid
- “Land grabbing” the act of moving the forest service boundary without an act of congress
- Problem for outfitters and for hunters – minimum access already and inaccessible for those that have to pack out game

**Draker: Other areas of concern?**

**Responses:**

- Federal press release - going to release more wolves
  - Thought there was an ordinance to not implement wolves. The situation is that federal law overrules County ordinance
  - Supporting ranchers and farmers is the County goal
- EPA/ESA/Clean Water Act – controlling and taking away rights of access and need to maintain roads
  - Do not impose plans against the comprehensive plan, wishes of the elected officials and the residents
- Access road in of road to Palomas creek is closed with the Travel Plan – isolated the area.
  - Federal solution is to charge a trespass fee to access his land. Don’t have the forms. Not appropriate for their area
  - No one knows how to handle this plan
  - NM is the last state to implement the travel plan

**Draker: Water quality and pressure okay?**

**Response:**

- Water quality and quantity (pressure) is excellent

There being no other comments, the meeting was adjourned.

**Meeting Adjourned: 6:50 p.m.**

## APPENDIX 2 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Participation Meetings Notes; May, 2017

### SIERRA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMUNITY MEETING-MAY 15, 2017 – 5:30 P.M. COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING, TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

#### 9 PERSONS ATTENDED THE MEETING

Rick Draker and Theresa Panciera of Draker Cody, Inc. were present to conduct the meeting. Rick Draker facilitated the meeting.

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Draker presented information about comprehensive plans through a PowerPoint presentation. Discussion followed the presentation.

#### Comments regarding Land Use:

- Turner owns 650,000 of the reported 668,371 acres – please verify those numbers
- Do the NM Game and Fish reports include permits and guide services? This will have a significant negative impact on hunting, fishing, etc.
- The numbers for hunting and outfitters seem low
- NEPA seems to skip the collaboration process and jumps right into the co-operation process
  - There is a definite disconnect with them
  - No weighted average for local needs
  - Missing in the land use section is a comment about recreation (camping, hiking) use that are part of the national Forest usage along with hunting and fishing
- Grazing leases with the National Forests
  - Permit process for ranchers and farmers is being pushed out (ex: have 500 head, then permits for the next year are 250, then re-permit for 100 the following year)
  - It would be nice to know how much cattle was here years ago vs today, because it seems like they are trying to get rid of individual cattle owners
- Map colors should match the colors that the Department of Defense, State parks, etc. use

#### Comments regarding Economic Development:

- What's the unemployment rate prior to February 2017
- Mr. Draker responded that he was not sure but the important point is that it is high right now.
- Strengths to build on are agriculture, hunting, and fishing
  - Look at Economic Development and MainStreet for statistics on the Hot Springs
    - Of the 1.3 Million visitors, most are to the Lake
    - The numbers seems low
- Mr. Draker said these numbers are only state parks. He is trying to get other data outside the state parks
- How much of the 1.3 Mill is fishing?
- Mr. Draker stated he is not aware of any data on how many are fishing the lakes.
- **Rick Draker will contact Ms. Dunlap, Superintendent of the Elephant Butte State Park, to determine if the park conducts any surveys of visitors asking where else they intend to go (i.e. hiking, T or C, Hillsboro, etc.)**

- State Police conduct ‘Saturation Days’, which forces people to bring in alcohol and merchandise from outside the community
- It would be nice to see how well the Dollar Store, in Elephant Butte, does (end of day receipts should show total number of transactions)
- Sierra County has two wineries – one in Hillsboro and one in Caballo
- The Hot Springs Festival is marketed to a specific demographic
- The Elephant Butte Inn used to hold Military Retreats
- Annual Events:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Spaceport America Cup
  - Caballo has equestrian horses/dressage
  - Annual Relay Race from El Paso to the Spaceport
- Healthcare; We need a dialysis clinic or unit here
- An Oncology office opened in T or C in April
- Mines: potentially there may be \$276 Million in tax revenue to the county and state from the mine operation
- Seems like people in Hillsboro know what’s going on with the Spaceport; however, they are negative towards it
  - the Spaceport concept needs to be given a chance
- Can’t verify that all businesses are paying Gross Receipts Tax (GRT)
- Eddy and San Miguel Counties did studies – less than 60% of the businesses are licensed and report earnings to the state
- Eco-Tourism is a great concept; however, for a while it will mostly be Turner Ranches
- FEMA funding is an issue
  - 1986 maps have not been updated
- There is an upcoming meeting regarding Hazard Mitigation Planning

There being no further question or comment, Mr. Draker thanked everyone for coming and for their participation.

Meeting adjourned: 7:00 PM

SIERRA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
COMMUNITY MEETING-MAY 22, 2017 – 5:30 P.M.  
HILLSBORO COMMUNITY CENTER, HILLSBORO, NEW MEXICO

18 PERSONS ATTENDED THE MEETING

Rick Draker and Theresa Panciera of Draker Cody, Inc. were present to conduct the meeting. Rick Draker facilitated the meeting.

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Draker presented information about comprehensive plans through a PowerPoint presentation.

**Comments/Questions during the presentation:**

- **Question:** Does the Forest Service separate fishing from hunting and other activities in the Gila National Forest Service report?

**Response:** Mr. Draker said yes, but it does not separate out Sierra County for the most part. The Gila report does quote the NM Fish and Game report of 2014.

- **Question:** The County manager asked the basis for the hunting and fishing table of numbers? What was the methodology used and what aspects are included: bait, ammunition, etc.?

**Response:** Mr. Draker said that there were three areas of study and these were in the Plan, but he did not recall them off hand.

- **Comment:** The County Manager noted that hikers and campers were missing from consideration in the land use issues with respect to national Forest policy.
  - **Comment:** During Mr. Draker's description of the possible make-up of the collaboration group to deal with the National Forest Travel Plan issue, a resident commented that the Sierra Club, who would be interested, should be part of this group. In response, it was suggested that it might be included, but the emphasis was on local organizations initially, not national ones.
  - **Question:** A resident asked if people can still hunt and hike when the Forest Service closes the roads? Is it not just that there are no vehicles or just can't drive vehicles?
  - **Question:** What is the permanent pool at the lake? What does this mean?
- Response:** The County manager explained that is an effort to maintain permanent volume of water in Elephant Butte Lake to maintain recreation activities and other uses of the water.
- **Comment:** A representative of Turner Ranches commented on the efforts being made in the area of ecotourism by the Turner operation.
    - Both ranches are open to the public for eco tours which have been very successful
    - Ecotourism is growing and becoming more popular.
    - The Turner operation is looking to partner with other organizations and/or activities like Bosque Del Apache, to offer more in depth experiences to the public
    - The comment was made that Turner ranches do pay Gross Receipts Tax; actually pay more for the bison than the cattle

**Other matters raised by residents:**



- **Resident Comment:** Stormwater Management and Flood Control are major issues for Hillsboro and Kingston

- Sierra County should have a certified flood manager
- This is a real important issue
- We need prevention – not as much ‘after-the-fact’ – and maintenance

- **Response:** The County manager stated that there is a Flood manager in place.

Mr. Draker added that one of the recommendations of the Plan is that a comprehensive Stormwater and flood control plan be developed so that there is a logical approach to construction of flood control structures and a logical budgeting process to go along with it. This is intended to be a preventative process as well as maintenance and repair.

- **Resident Comment:** One of the hidden values we have here is the varied environment. The Rio Grande, the mountains, the lakes

- We have one of the most beautiful and undervalued resources in the state
- How do we manage the beauty and the resources of the Eastern side of the Black Range?
- We have the only lakes in the state. I’ve been here 20-years and have seen no changes what-so-ever
- The mining company isn’t after the ore, they’re after the water
- We can’t depend on the mines for growth
- I’m not against growth but we want to keep the dark skies, quiet nights, and good neighbors, and our environment.

- **Resident Question:** When we make our comments, are they written and presented to the county or are they lost? It would be nice to have a synopsis of this meeting’s comments.

**Response:** Mr. Draker responded that the notes from the meeting will be available in a couple of weeks on the County web site. As well they notes from all meetings will appear in the appendices of the comprehensive plan.

- **Resident Comments:** Land Use and Forest Service Travel Plan:

- Gila national Forest does not seem to be that big of a piece of Sierra County
- Only 4% of the jobs in County are in hunting and fishing-not that large a sector
- People and outfitters and guides can still hunt and fish and do their work, it is just less accessible for them and perhaps they have to make greater effort.
- The section of the Plan dealing with the Forest service and access is very negative
- The Copper Flat mine should not happen. From personal experience any time a mine closes because the ore has run out, or for whatever reason, communities are left devastated.

**Response:** Mr. Draker responded that the 4% was not just a number, it represented people, jobs, and incomes.

Mr. Draker said that he would revisit the section of the Plan dealing with the Travel Plan issue and the National Forest.

The County Manager added that people Mr. Draker spoke to were, and are, angry about the issue.

The resident stated that maybe people were angry but the tone of the document did not have to quite so negative.

- **Resident Question:** There did not appear to be any discussion in the Plan about the potential for sustainable energy?

**Response:** Mr. Draker stated in his research, he did not encounter any initiatives or potential for sustainable energy developments, especially wind energy. But he said he would look at it again. The County Manager stated that studies show that Sierra County is not a good candidate for wind energy development, but, perhaps there was potential for solar energy development. The County Manager stated too that sustainable energy is one of five things in the Middle Rio Grande Economic development Association Plan; however, it was noted that such development does not create many permanent jobs

**Resident Question:** Caballo Lake:

- Could the County clean up the walking paths and downed trees along the shoreline?

**Response:** The County manager responded that this was State property and the County had no authority to do any work on state land.

- The resident suggested that perhaps the County could partner with the state to do some clean-up.

- **Resident Question:** When will the final plan come out?

**Response:** Around the end of June or early in July, 2017.

There being no further question or comment, Mr. Draker thanked everyone for coming out and sharing their thoughts.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:50 PM

SIERRA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
COMMUNITY MEETING-MAY 24, 2017 – 5:30 P.M.  
WINSTON COMMUNITY CENTER, WINSTON, NM

17 PERSONS ATTENDED THE MEETING

Rick Draker and Theresa Panciera of Draker Cody, Inc. were present to conduct the meeting. Rick Draker facilitated the meeting.

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Draker presented information about comprehensive plans through a PowerPoint presentation.

**Question:** County Manager - Is the visitation slide on Spending on Fishing and Hunting Activities in NM and Sierra County in the Plan?

**Response:** Mr. Draker stated no; however it will be and hopefully he will also have one that has Sierra County data separated out.

**Question:** Does the unemployment number take into consideration retirement?

**Response:** Mr. Draker stated no it does not.

**Comment:** The Alzheimer's Unit is now finished

**Question:** Mr. Draker stated that his information is that the St. Cloud mine employs about 14-15 people. Is this correct?

**Comment:** A resident stated that it is probably closer to 30 jobs

**Comment:** A resident commented that he thought the consultant had done a good job with this Plan.

There were no further questions or comments. The meeting was adjourned.

**Meeting Adjourned: 6:26 p.m.**

## E-Mail Comments received from Residents following the Meetings.

The following e-mails were received by the consultant.

5/30/2017

Thank you for presenting your summary of the Sierra county plan last night in Hillsboro. I'd like to throw in my two cents on a few points for your consideration.

1. Section 3.6.1 still bothers me the most. I reread it with your spoken comments in mind and I can see how the anger you heard from the county denizens reflects in your write-up. In many other parts of your proposal you were able to move away from the emotions and give cogent approaches to resolving the issues. This proposal is not for the forest service/blm/etc but for Sierra county to take what it is given and make the county a better place for those who live and visit here. It would be nice if you stressed more the importance of users of the forest areas (and this should include individuals who recreate with less impact like hikers and birders) to collaborate to provide a logical cost/benefit analysis of forest service activities on the community. In my opinion, the benefits of modifying forest service activities are not likely to exceed the costs. However, if they do then there is an obligation to inform and for the forest service to modify their plans. On the other hand, if maintaining roads, etc, are more expensive than the benefits to the community, we are obligated to alter our behaviors. After all, we are not being excluded from the forests, we are only being inconvenienced or made to work harder. We must remember that the forests are owned by all Americans, not just the few who happen to live near them and want to extract resources at an unacceptable cost to the country as a whole. There are other types of welfare projects that can be more effectively and economically implemented.
2. From reading your report, it is clear that the need for collaborations and communications in our county are of paramount importance if we wish to make this a better place. I hope your report stimulates the local powers-that-be to provide the impetus and give encouragement to Sierra county residents. One cost effective way that got little attention in your report for communicating what Sierra county is about to both our county and potential visitors is the use of the internet and social media.
3. One thing that is definitely lacking is a way to measure project successes and collect data for future county plans. All projects should include a **quantitative** way to measure success. Simple surveys are generally inadequate.
4. Another important thing that is missing is a way to collect data for future planning. While reading the report, I was constantly struck by how little hard data were presented regarding the relative impact of various industries on the county economy. Just because an industry has been considered an integral part of the community does not necessarily mean that it has had a positive impact on a large segment of the population. I realize that it will be difficult to collect these data but an effort must be made.
5. In section 9.1 it is stated that "Global warming is **believed** to be brought on in part by various human activities". This is not a belief but rather a scientific fact and therefore it is not appropriate to state it as a belief.

Thank you for considering these points.

531/2017

Mr. Draker,

Just to respond to your statement that global warming "is believed to be brought out in part by various human activities" in regard to the Sierra County plan. I merely want to underline that the causative connections between human activity and global warming is, in science, beyond debate and therefore should not be referenced as something to be or that is "believed."

I suggest that this statement be corrected.

6/1/2017

I read in Section 9.1 that it says the 'Global warming is BELIEVED to be brought on in part by various human activities'... (Caps, mine)

Mr. Draker, it is NOT a 'belief' but a scientific FACT so I would like to see this word 'believed' removed from the plan. Makes no sense to have us not listening to 98% of the scientists in the world on the subject. Also, by using the 'believed' word, it slants the entire conversation. Facts are, indeed, facts and not beliefs.

Thanks for your time and consideration,

6/1/2017

Mr. Drake,

I take considerable exception to your characterization of climate change in section 9.1 of the Sierra County Draft Comprehensive Plan (bold supplied) that:

Whatever terminology one chooses-global warming, carbon footprint, anthropogenic, climate change, or greening of our urban environment-,all

have become a common part of our vocabulary and an apparent concern in the field of land use planning. Global warming **is believed to be** brought on in part by various human activities, such as burning of fossil fuels, soil depletion, and deforestation of large land areas.

Your use of the phrase "believed to be" is inappropriate given that:

The **scientific opinion on climate change** is the overall judgment among scientists regarding the extent to which [global warming](#) is occurring, its causes, and its probable consequences. The [scientific consensus](#) is that the Earth's [climate system](#) is unequivocally warming, and that it is *extremely likely* (meaning 95% probability or higher) that this warming is predominantly caused by humans. It is likely that this mainly arises from increased concentrations of [greenhouse gases](#) in the [atmosphere](#), such as from [deforestation](#) and the burning of [fossil fuels](#), partially offset by human caused increases in [aerosols](#); natural changes had little effect.

Please see the attached article for an extended discussion. While I have referred you to an article, I have direct experience on this issue. As a Foreign Affairs Specialist for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), I assisted in preparing U.S delegations for the series of negotiations resulting in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. NOAA scientists were among those honored with the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 on climate change.

Your personal belief on climate change has no place in the County Plan. I urge you to drop or amend the language of section 9.1. Please note my comments in the appendix to the plan.

Thank you,

## **APPENDIX 3 – Population Characteristics – Ethnicity-Detailed Listing of American Indian, Alaskan, Hispanic**

2010 Population Characteristics-Ethnicity: Sierra County, City of T or C, City of Elephant Butte, Village of Williamsburg, Hillsboro, CDP, and Kingston, CDP

Ethnicity	Sierra County			City of T or C			City of Elephant Butte			Village of Williamsburg			Hillsboro, CDP			Kingston, CDP		
	Number	%		Number	%		Number	%		Number	%		Number	%		Number	%	
Total Population	11,988	100.0		6,475	100.0		1,431	100.0		449	100.00		124	100.0		32	100.0	
Hispanic/Latino	3,352	27.96		1,824	28.17		194	13.56		107	23.83		11	8.87		1	3.13	
Non-Hisp/Latino	8,636	72.04		4,651	71.83		1,237	86.44		342	76.17		113	91.13		31	96.87	
Alaskan Native:	Tribe Alone	Tribe Alone or in Comb with 1 or more Tribes	Tribe Alone or in any Combo	Tribe Alone	Tribe Alone or in Comb with 1 or more Tribes	Tribe Alone or in any Combo	Tribe Alone	Tribe Alone or in Comb with 1 or more Tribes	Tribe Alone or in any Combo	Tribe Alone	Tribe Alone or in Comb with 1 or more Tribes	Tribe Alone or in any Combo	Tribe Alone	Tribe Alone or in Comb with 1 or more Tribes	Tribe Alone or in any Combo	Tribe Alone	Tribe Alone or in Comb with 1 or more Tribes	Tribe Alone or in any Combo
Athabascan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aleut	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Inupiat {Eskimo}	2	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tlingit-Haida	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tsimshian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yup'ik	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
American Indian:																		
Apache	19	21	56	12	13	40	1	1	3	2	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arapaho	3	3	3	0	0	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blackfeet	2	2	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canadian & French American	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Central American	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cherokee	24	24	79	11	11	49	2	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Cheyenne	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chickasaw	2	2	3	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chippewa	5	5	8	1	1	3	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Choctaw	2	2	5	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colville	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Comanche	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cree	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Creek	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Crow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delaware	5	5	6	5	5	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hopi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Houma	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Iroquois	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kiowa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lumbee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Menominee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mexican American	8	8	10	8	8	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Navajo	23	25	51	16	17	30	1	1	4	0	1	3	2	2	3	0	0	0
Osage	6	6	9	6	6	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ottawa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Paiute	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pima	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Potawatomi	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pueblo	6	7	15	2	3	6	1	1	3	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Puget Sound Salish	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Seminole	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shoshone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sioux	10	11	15	9	10	12	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South American	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spanish American	4	4	5	4	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tohono O'Odham	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ute	2	2	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yakama	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yaqui	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



2010 Population Characteristics-Ethnicity: Sierra County, City of T or C, City of Elephant Butte, Village of Williamsburg, Hillsboro, CDP, and Kingston, CDP

Ethnicity	Winston, CDP			Arrey, CDP			Caballo, CDP			Hot Springs Landing, CDP			Las Palomas, CDP			Oasis, CDP		
	Number	%		Number	%		Number	%		Number	%		Number	%		Number	%	
Total Population	61	100.0		232	100.0		112	100.0		110	100.00		173	100.0		149	100.0	
Hispanic/Latino	20	32.79		139	59.19		14	12.50		10	9.09		46	26.60		18	12.08	
Non-Hisp/Latino	41	67.21		39	16.81		98	87.50		100	90.91		127	73.41		131	87.92	
Alaskan Native:	Tribe Alone	Tribe Alone or in Comb with 1 or more Tribes	Tribe Alone or in any Combo	Tribe Alone	Tribe Alone or in Comb with 1 or more Tribes	Tribe Alone or in any Combo	Tribe Alone	Tribe Alone or in Comb with 1 or more Tribes	Tribe Alone or in any Combo	Tribe Alone	Tribe Alone or in Comb with 1 or more Tribes	Tribe Alone or in any Combo	Tribe Alone	Tribe Alone or in Comb with 1 or more Tribes	Tribe Alone or in any Combo	Tribe Alone	Tribe Alone or in Comb with 1 or more Tribes	Tribe Alone or in any Combo
Athabascan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aleut	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Inupiat {Eskimo}	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tlingit-Haida	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tsimshian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yup'ik	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
American Indian:																		
Apache	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Arapaho	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blackfeet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canadian & French American	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Central American	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cherokee	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0
Cheyenne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chickasaw	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chippewa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Choctaw	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colville	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Comanche	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Creek	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Crow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delaware	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hopi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Houma	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Iroquois	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kiowa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lumbee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Menominee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mexican American	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Navajo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	2	2	3	0	0	0
Osage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ottawa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Paiute	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pima	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Potawatomi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pueblo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Puget Sound Salish	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Seminole	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shoshone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sioux	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South American	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spanish American	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tohono O'Odham	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ute	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yakama	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yaqui	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

## **APPENDIX 4 –SAMPLE CALENDAR OF EVENTS IN SIERRA, CATRON, SOCORRO COUNTIES**

# May 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
					Truth or Consequences Fiesta	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
						Truth or Consequences -
Mother's Day 14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Fiesta Golf Tournament					Kayak Fishing Tournament	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
						Fly Freedom's Flag Parade
28	Memorial Day 29	30	31			

## Events

Sierra County

Catron County

Socorro County

Valencia County

# June 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Winston-Chloride-Dusty-Chiz Annual Fiesta
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Elephant Butte Chili Challenge Cook-Off Cruzin' South Rt. 66 Summerfest
11	12	13	Flag Day 14	15	16	17 Junior Open Fishing -
Father's Day 18 Tournament	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

## Events

Sierra County

Catron County

Socorro County

Valencia County  
Hub City Music Festival - TBD

# July 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
						4 <sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks at the Lake
2	3	Independence Day 4 4 <sup>th</sup> of July Celebration	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					
Valencia County Fair and Rodeo						

## Events

Sierra County

Catron County

Socorro County

Valencia County  
Hub City Music Festival -  
TBD

# August 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	Labor Day 4	5
		Valencia County Fair and Rodeo				
			Bosque Farms Community Fair			
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
						Hot August Community Yard Sale
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
						Hot August Nights 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament
						Hot August Nights
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
			Catron County Fair			
						Elephant Butte Balloon -
27	28	29	30	31		
Regatta						
Events		Sierra County	Catron County	Socorro County	Valencia County Hub City Music Festival - TBD	

# September 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
					Elephant Days	
						C.A.S.T. for Kids Fishing Tournament
						Pie Festival
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
						Captain Laura S. Haines M Mountain Fly-In
						Rio Abajo Days
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Events		Sierra County		Catron County	Socorro County	Valencia County



# October 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
				Sierra County Fair		
					Socorrofest	
8	Columbus Day 9	10	11	12	13	14
			Annual Chile Challenge 4-Wheel Drive Trail Event			
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
					Halloween Extravaganza	
29	30	Halloween 31				
	City of Socorro Halloween Haunted House & Carnival					

## Events

Sierra County

Catron County

Socorro County

Valencia County