



# Comprehensive Plan **PUBLIC MEETING**

March 10, 2025



**Taos County**  
New Mexico

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

DRAFT MARCH 2025



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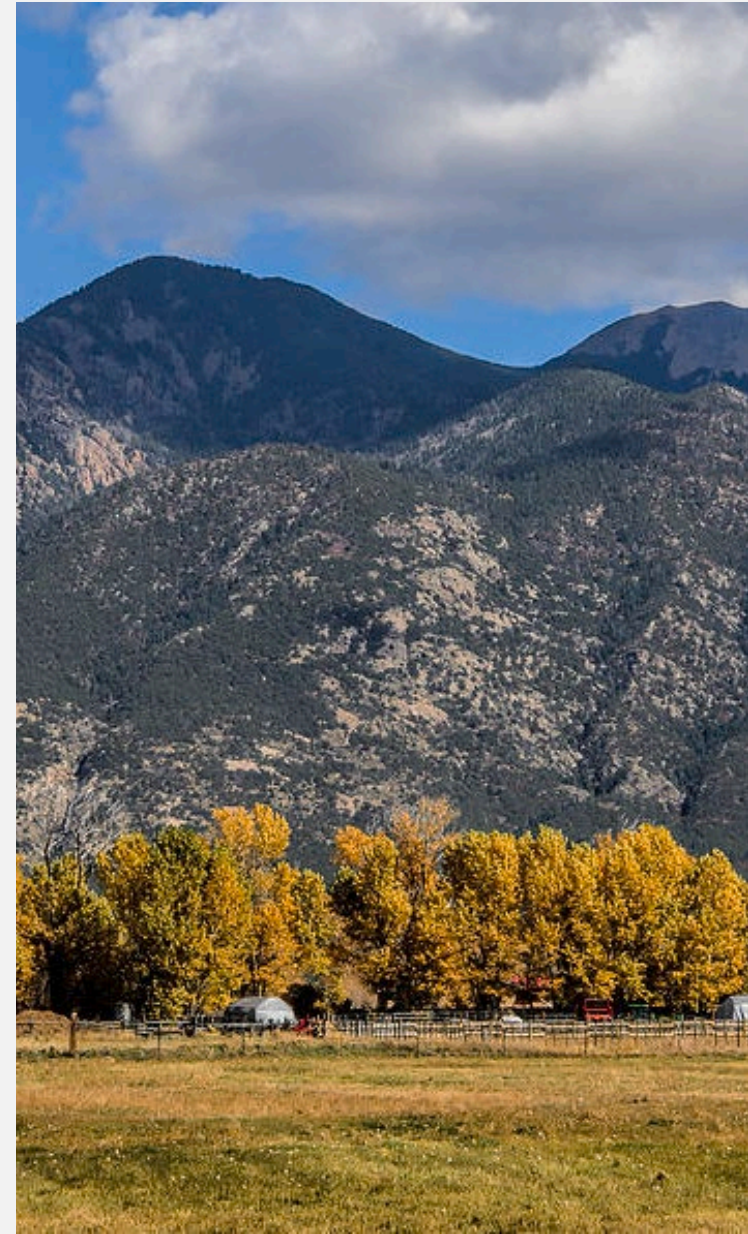
## **STEERING COMMITTEE**

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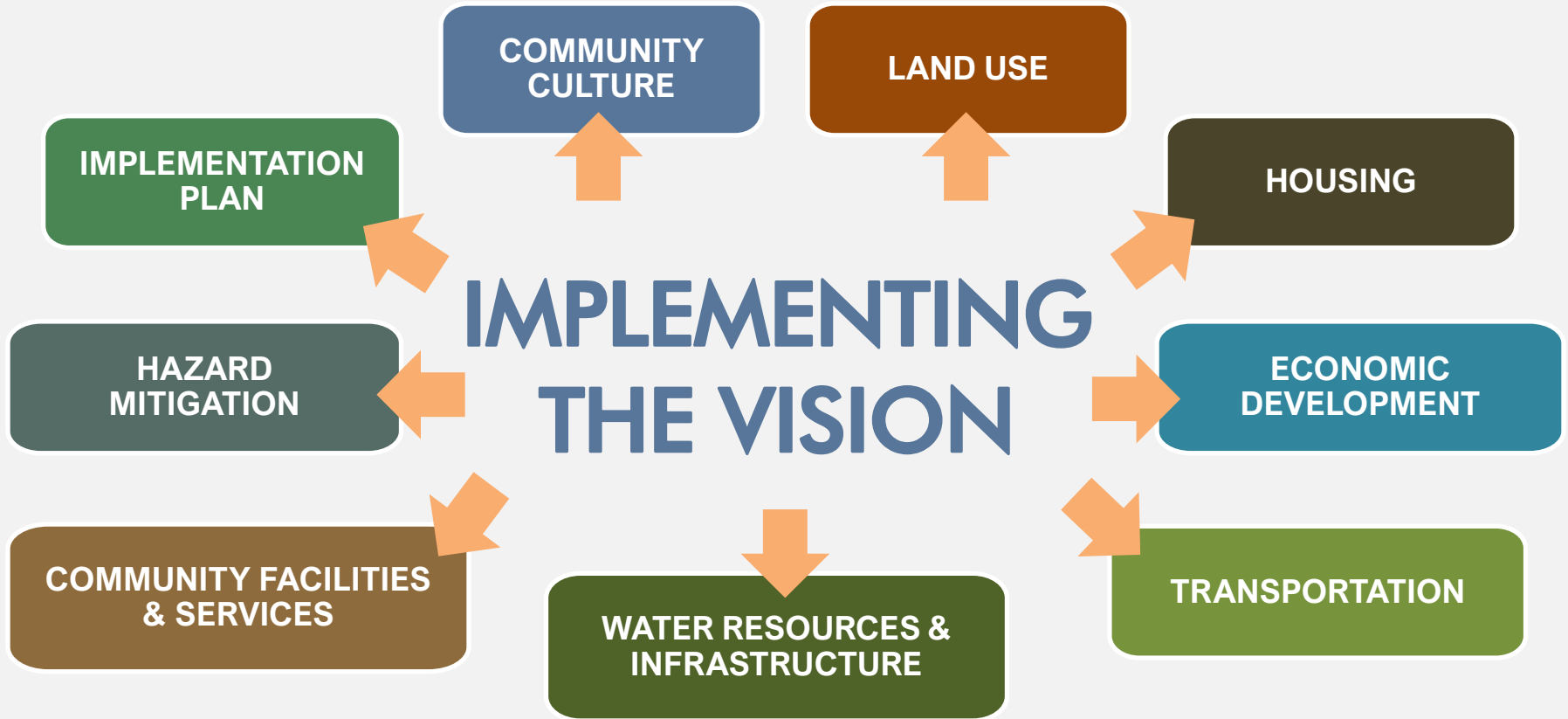


# PLANNING PROCESS

- Project kick-off in December 2023
- Meetings with Steering Committee
- Community Survey - 1,146 participants!
- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Draft goals, objectives, and alternative Land Use Scenarios
- Draft strategies, Future Land Use Scenario, and completion of draft Plan
- Public meetings
  - ✓ Two visioning meetings in Taos on April 11<sup>th</sup>
  - ✓ Two visioning meetings in Questa and Peñasco on April 30<sup>th</sup> & May 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - ✓ Two meetings in Taos on October 7<sup>th</sup>
  - ✓ Two meetings today



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS





# KEY PLANNING THEMES

- Planning Equity
- Filling the Housing Gap
- Water is Life
- Community Partnering
- Stewardship-Based Tourism
- Diversify the Economy



# LAND USE



- **Provide a balanced mix of land uses to accommodate new housing and business/employment:** create a Unified Development Code; promote growth and development in key locations; and identify sites for new development
- **Protect and preserve traditional agriculture and acequia systems:** promote technical expertise of local entities on best practices in agriculture, pasture management, and regenerative ranching and climate-smart best practices; create a “Right to Farm” ordinance; and engage agricultural producers in reviewing regulations that may impact their operations



# LAND USE



- **Improve the visual appearance of Taos County:** incorporate regulations that restrict billboards along major highway corridors into the future Unified Development Code; create a Nuisance Ordinance that addresses dilapidated structures, abandoned vehicles, disposal of tires, conformance with the International Property Maintenance Code, and fines for non-compliance; and determine and implement adequate staffing levels for code enforcement

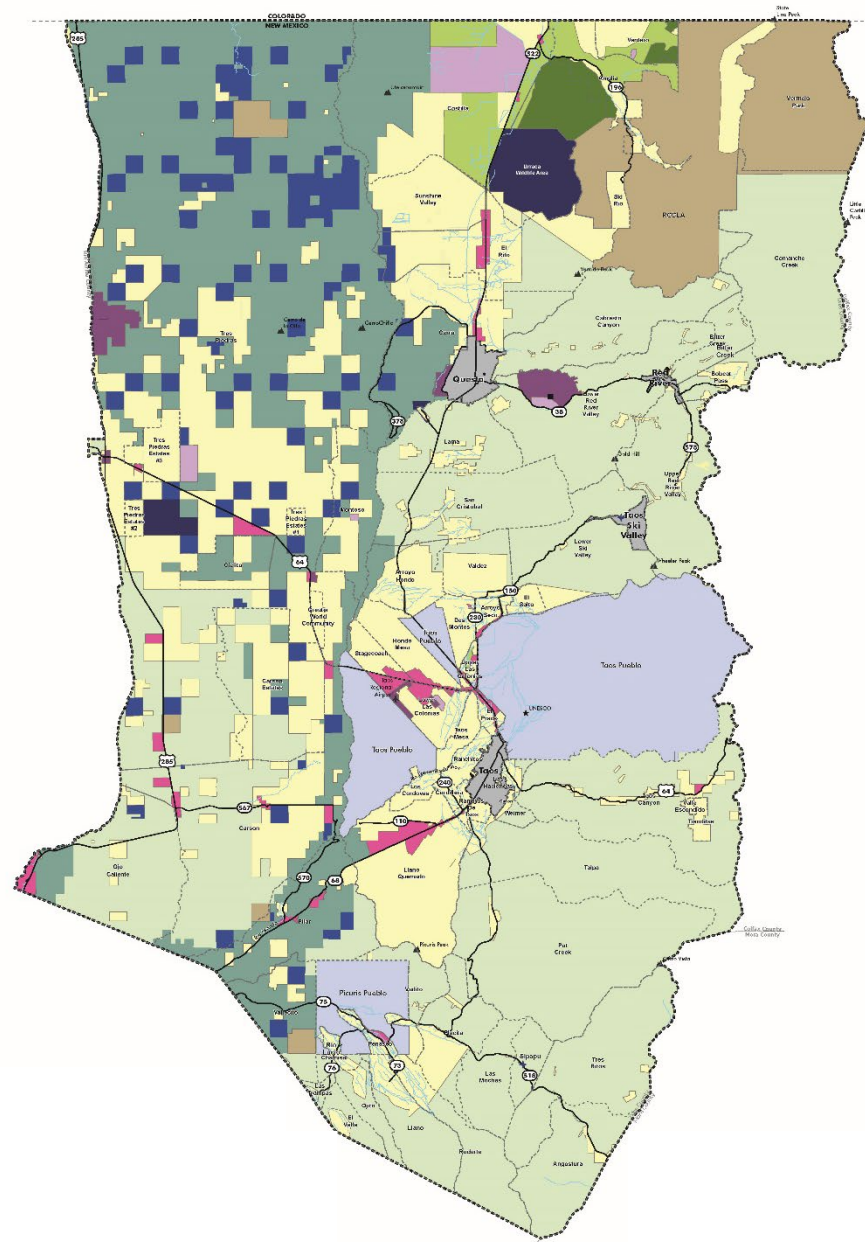
# FUTURE LAND USE SCENARIO



## Land Use

- Rural Residential
- Mixed Use
- Industrial
- Renewable Energy
- Irrigated Agriculture
- Ranching
- Open Space

- USDA Forest Service
- US Bureau of Land Management
- New Mexico State Game and Fish
- State of New Mexico
- Tribal
- ★ UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Questa Mine Site
- Acequias
- Scenic Byways
- Municipalities
- Communities





# HOUSING



- **Increase the housing supply to include diversity of housing types, unit sizes, and prices:** establish a Housing Trust Fund; identify County-owned properties and buildings available for donation to affordable housing program; develop incentives for developers to build affordable housing; coordinate housing programs with Town of Taos; and coordinate with Taos Housing Partnership on community outreach and education on available housing programs

# HOUSING



- **Promote new housing development that offers a variety of housing development types:** identify locations for new mixed-density developments; promote agrihoods, cluster development, and co-housing as sustainable alternatives to traditional subdivisions; pursue public-private partnerships with private or non-profit housing developers; require master planning for large residential development to ensure adequate capacity; recruit a senior living developer/operator to provide senior living services



# HOUSING



- **Support the rehabilitation of existing dilapidated, vacant, and/or abandoned housing:** develop a land bank program; work with local and regional non-profit housing developers on applying for rehabilitation funds; apply for grants to the NM Clean & Beautiful program
- **Reduce the rate of homelessness in Taos County:** work with the Town of Taos and non-profits on applying for capital outlay to fund a homeless shelter; work with DreamTree and other non-profits to develop supportive housing; coordinate with local providers to address healthcare issues that contribute to homelessness; and disseminate information on available services and programs

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



- **Pursue a diversified, resilient, and equitable economy:** update the LEDA ordinance; work with Kit Carson and UNM-Taos HIVE to continue building on tech-based infrastructure; develop a cooperative warehousing and distribution facility; and provide technical assistance and support to agricultural producers



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



- **Support economic development initiatives:** Business Resources & Innovation Center; develop and sustain a Business Retention and Expansion Program; work with the Chamber and TC Economic Development on developing a “Support Local Business” program; identify primary creative industry growth opportunity areas and support business development; promote and work with employers on applying for JTIP funding; incorporate small-scale manufacturing into the future Unified Development Code; pursue funding for a new medical care facility in a currently under-served area; and identify blighted, brownfield, and potential adaptive reuse sites for redevelopment and development



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A scenic landscape photograph showing a mountain valley. In the foreground, a mountain bike is parked on a rocky ledge, with its handlebars and front wheel visible. The middle ground features a lush green forest and a large, flat, open area that appears to be a dry lake bed or a field. In the background, a range of mountains is visible under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

- **Develop a responsible, stewardship-based tourism economy:** continue to invest and support the Destination Stewardship Network; develop a public education and messaging program focused on the protection and minimization of impacts to natural and cultural landscapes, understanding of local cultures, and overall benefits of environmental stewardship; incubate and foster locally-owned tourism-related businesses that align with the Destination Stewardship Plan; and identify and leverage opportunities for industry growth, development, environmental stewardship, and business support



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



- **Create a well-trained workforce to meet the needs of existing and future employers:** support and promote “Talent-to-Industry Exchanges” to expand the labor supply and identify job skills employers need; partner with local businesses and public schools to address filling skill gaps; promote online classes and continuing education programs offered by Northern NM College and UNM-Taos; identify and support programs that offer paid work-based learning and workforce development opportunities; and support and promote job expos that focus on STEAM technologies



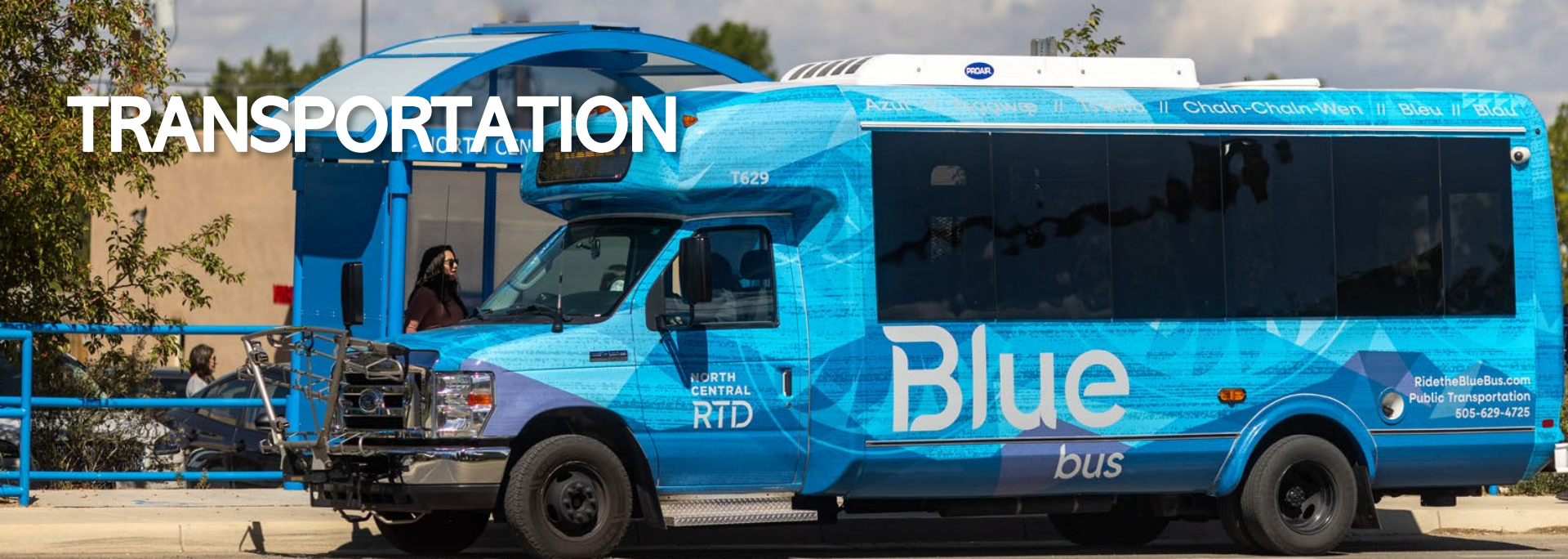
# TRANSPORTATION



- **Maintain safe roadway conditions:** prioritize and complete improvements to Blueberry Hill Road, Tom Holder Bridge, Aguas Calientes Bridge, Rio Chiquito Bridge, Leo Valencia Road, and Tom Holder Road; apply for a NMFA grant to fund a Transportation Asset Management Plan; create a street maintenance plan; evaluate average daily counts for major roadways to determine changes to functional class is warranted; and pursue funding for roadway projects through NMDOT



# TRANSPORTATION



- **Establish a safe and efficient pedestrian and bike system:** create a Recreation and Trails Master Plan and pursue funding for regional trail projects from the Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant program, Bicycle / Pedestrian / Equestrian Program, and the federal Recreational Trails Program
- **Expand transit services in unincorporated Taos County:** work with North Central Rural Transit District on expanding access to transit services for residents, UNM-Taos and other areas; participate with NCRTD planning to determine adjustments, schedule changes, on-demand ridesharing, mobility hubs, etc.; and collaborate with NCRTD and UNM-Taos on promoting bus driver jobs and recruitment

# TRANSPORTATION



- **Expand air travel and general aviation at Taos Regional Airport:** support ongoing maintenance and improvements to runways, aircraft parking apron and ramp areas, helicopter pad, terminal building, etc.; coordinate with Town of Taos on pursuing aviation funding from FAA and NMDOT; and work with local and regional tourism and business representatives to determine interest in expanding air services



# TRANSPORTATION



- **Provide appropriate roadway access to existing and future development:** incorporate context sensitive design into new roadway design and minimize impact to the natural terrain; develop a policy that new roads will be coordinated with adjacent land uses and designated, designed, and built to functional classification standards; and determine the feasibility of adding bike lanes within arterial ROWs
- **Reduce the level of vehicle emissions:** determine locations along highways that have the highest Annual Average Daily Traffic for the installation of EV charging stations; provide EV charging stations at Taos County public facilities; and pursue funding from NMDOT EV Infrastructure Grant Program



# WATER RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE



- **Promote sustainable and efficient management of water resources through conservation:** create a 40-Year Water Plan; assist acequia and community ditch systems on future applications to the Interstate Stream Commission's Acequia and Community Ditch Fund; collaborate with the NM Hydrology Bureau and US Geologic Survey on monitoring groundwater levels; create a water conservation ordinance; and create a water conservation education and public outreach program





# WATER RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Maintain a safe and sustainable water supply:** collaborate on the establishment of a Taos County Regional Water Committee; support funding requests for improvements to community water systems; and lobby the State Legislature and support the Office of the State Engineer on allocating funds to implement the *Abeyta Settlement*
- **Protect the groundwater supply from potential degradation:** develop an educational program on groundwater protection from liquid waste and hazardous materials and promote the use of pre-engineered package wastewater treatment plants as a sustainable alternative to septic tanks and leach fields



# WATER RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE



- **Increase Taos County's capacity to handle major storm events:** create a stormwater design standard in the Subdivision Ordinance; promote and incorporate Low Impact Development techniques; and provide maintenance and improvements to existing drainage channels and other drainage conveyances
- **Expand affordable access to broadband and quality Internet services:** work with current and prospective telecommunication providers to update and expand coverage; determine preferred option to provide widespread affordable broadband; and develop and implement a "Dig Once" policy





# WATER RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Expand participation in reducing, reusing, and recycling initiatives:** pursue capital outlay for improvements that allow for additional materials to be accepted and processed at all solid waste transfer stations in Taos County; pursue grants and loans from NMED Solid Waste Bureau's Recycling and Illegal Dumping Program and the Rural Infrastructure Revolving Loan Program; pursue funding for the development of a joint composting facility with the Town of Taos and other jurisdictions in Taos County; and expand on the public educational program to encourage more residents and businesses to reduce, reuse, and recycle



# COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES



- **Maintain an adequate level of law enforcement services:** develop a Public Safety Needs Assessment; pursue and prioritize funding for new equipment, vehicles, rescue trailer, increase staffing, and provide ongoing training and certification for law enforcement officers; pursue funding for a new Sheriff's Office administrative building; and continue engagement efforts with the community
- **Improve fire protection and emergency services:** develop a Fire Safety Needs Assessment and plan; pursue and prioritize funding for new equipment and fire apparatus, ambulance, and engine and ladder trucks; increase volunteer staffing; and provide ongoing training and certification for firefighters and EMTs



# COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES



- **Increase access to public facilities and programs:** create a systematic preventative maintenance and replacement program; complete a Senior Services Needs Assessment; pursue funding to meet capital and program needs at senior centers; and contribute funding to the Taos Library to meet capital and program needs

# COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES



- Support equal access to high-quality, public education and life-long learning opportunities: initiate and participate in a community dialogue with Town of Taos, public school districts, UNM-Taos, and Holy Cross on educational initiatives, graduation rates, dual credit courses, and employment opportunities; collaborate with Taos Municipal Schools, True Kids 1, and True Kids Youth Council on expanding access and participation in after school programs and summer camps; and collaborate with UNM-Taos and Taos Education and Career Center on promoting adult education services



# COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES



- **Expand residents' access to healthcare and mental health services and clinical care:** disseminate information on healthcare services offered by Holy Cross and Taos County Public Health office; collaborate with Holy Cross and UNM-Taos on a strategic plan for attracting and retaining healthcare professionals and specialists; coordinate and work with the Town of Taos, Questa, Red River, Taos Ski Valley, Taos Behavioral Health, NM Department of Health and the State Legislature on expanding mental health and substance abuse and detox services/facilities; develop a feasibility study for the development of a medical care facility within a currently under-served area; and continue to fund the Health Care Assistance Program



# HAZARD MITIGATION



- **Reduce the vulnerability to natural and man-made hazard events:** provide information and encourage residents to sign up on the AlertMe App warning system; create an emergency sheltering plan; identify critical infrastructure facilities and install generator hook-ups; purchase mobile generators and electric heating/cooling systems; develop an emergency routing and evacuation plan; coordinate and encourage collaboration between the County, Town of Taos, Village of Questa, Town of Red River, State of NM, and FEMA on mitigating hazard events; and create a GIS database layer that maps major hazard events, critical infrastructure, Wildland Urban Interface areas, and floodplains



# HAZARD MITIGATION



- **Reducing vulnerability to wildfires:** develop a public awareness program on wildfire mitigation; work with the USDA Forest Service on developing a program for weed and brush removal along natural waterways and WUI areas; implement the actions identified in the Taos County Community Wildfire Protection Plan; provide information and encourage communities to become Firewise sites, take protective actions, and protect their communities and surrounding watershed; and submit grant applications to the Community Planning Assistance for Wildfires program

# HAZARD MITIGATION



- **Minimize vulnerability to flooding and dam failure:** increase the number and capacity of detention basins and drainage conveyance structures, improve culverts, arroyos, and low water crossings, and install new culverts; work with the Town of Taos, Village of Questa, Town of Red River, and US Army Corps to reduce obstructions and overgrowth that impede the free flow of floodwater; continue participation in and compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program; and coordinate with the Town of Taos, Village of Questa, and Taos Pueblo on applying for capital outlay for improving dams



# HAZARD MITIGATION



- **Build resilience and preparedness in responding to pandemics and infectious diseases:** provide ongoing public education on the benefits of getting vaccinated and other preventative measures to reduce the spread of viruses and distribute tests and provide testing sites for coronavirus and other infectious diseases, with a focus on reaching disadvantaged and high-risk populations

# NEXT STEPS



- Presentation to the Planning and Zoning Commission
- Introduction to the Taos County Commission
- Adoption by Taos County Commission

# THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!