

3.2 Planning Assumptions

Listed below are Rio Rancho's early planning assumptions created in 1998 and developed for use during the City's annexation efforts. These assumptions remain, in general, as they were presented in 1998 & subsequently utilized during work sessions conducted by the City's Policy Work Groups (*Section 3.4 – Policy Work Group*) for the consideration and development of future long-range policies incorporated herein as *Section 5.0 - Principles, Policies and Actions*. Although minor editing and the addition of 2000 Census data has taken place, these assumptions remain virtually in their original form.

1. The construction, maintenance, and replacement of capital improvements and infrastructure could become a major constraint on future growth. Much of the City's original infrastructure that was installed in the 1980's now requires increased maintenance since it is 20 years old. Over the next 20 years this infrastructure will be approaching the end of its useful life and will require replacement. The City's FY 2002 Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan (ICIP) contains \$140 million in projects, but is only 50% funded. Consequently, there is a growing backlog of projects that will need to be funded if this City is expected to grow in the future.

2. With continued growth, the currently permitted water supply of 14,420 acre feet of water per year, will meet Rio Rancho's needs for another 3 to 10 years, depending on the growth rate and on conservation (efficiency) measures. Continued pumping could result in dangerous depletion of groundwater within 30 to 60 years. The City has applied for a new pumping permit of 12,000 acre feet from the Office of the State Engineer that should supply the City's future needs for another 30 to 40 years. The purchase of additional water rights could become very expensive and impose additional costs on growth.

It is estimated that by the year 2020, Rio Rancho will have a population of approximately 100,000 persons. Factors that will have an impact on this growth include: the availability of "bulk" land such as the remaining AMREP holdings, and other large tracts of land under single ownership; capability to reassemble and redevelop the vast acreage of obsolete subdivisions; an assured water supply; sanitary sewer treatment capacity; continued economic development providing jobs & transportation network capacity.

4. The current average household size is 2.70 persons per single-family dwelling (2000 Census), and 1.9 persons per multi-family dwelling (1990 Census). Household size is decreasing, but this could be affected by new trends where "baby boomer" households accommodate extended families of parents and children.

5. Rio Rancho will continue to provide affordable entry-level housing in the future. However, there will be a diversity of housing, including high-end custom homes, manufactured homes and multi-family developments including those catering to specialized population segments such as the elderly.

6. Quality of life will continue to be a major attraction for Rio Rancho. If the City can project a clear sense of what this means, it can distinguish itself from any other community. Defining what quality of life means for Rio Rancho was accomplished as one of the first steps of the Vision 2020-ICP project as described further in *Section 3.3 - 2020 Vision Statement*.

7. Rio Rancho will continue to be affected by development occurring on its fringes and elsewhere in the region. For example, the proposed Quail Ranch could have a total build-out population of approximately 50,000 persons over the next 40 years south and west of the City. The Santa Ana Pueblo is planning approximately 1,600 acres of non-residential property near the intersection of US 550 and NM 528 while the City of Albuquerque has designated the Seven-Bar/Cottonwood area as the west side regional center. Policy decisions made by the Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments will affect transportation networks and the Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority has purview over major drainage concerns. Regional issues and concerns are described in more detail in a Section entitled, "Regional Context."

8. Sewer treatment capacity and sanitary landfill space will need to be expanded to accommodate future growth. The City also anticipates the increased use of treated effluent for irrigation purposes and deep well injection to recharge the aquifer over the next 20 years. Additionally, expanded solid waste recycling programs could help to reduce the rate at which the landfill is growing while also conserving energy and resources.

9. In 1999, the City annexed nearly 20 square miles making the City's area approximately 72 square miles. Prior to this annexation, approximately 40% of the City land was estimated to be developed. More than an adequate amount of land currently exists to continue development at the current rate and pattern. Approximately 11,000 acres is needed to accommodate another 50,000 persons and related land uses. There is now enough vacant land within the City limits to serve development for more than 50 years. However, ownership patterns may pose limitations on more cost-efficient or desirable development patterns. The split between new urban (2 to 8 units per acre) and rural residential (less than 2 units per acre) areas will be roughly 60% urban and 40% rural. About 40% of the future urban single-family residential development could occur as infill as opposed to extensive new developments on the City's fringe.

10. The City does not expect significant annexations of additional Rio Rancho Estates properties. However, the City does anticipate that over 6,400 acres of Albuquerque Academy land located north and west of Rio Rancho Estates, will be annexed and developed as part of the Mariposa Ranch project over the next 34 years. In addition, the City anticipates annexing and developing two or three State Land Office parcels over the next twenty years. These annexations are intended to achieve Vision 2020-ICP preferred scenario land use goals by targeting future growth and development in specific areas and developing them as master planned growth nodes with single and/or mixed-use activity centers rather than scattered, low density residential uses.

11. It is anticipated that the number of multi-family dwellings will increase to accommodate a greater portion of the 2020 population. Current multi-family dwelling units represent approximately 1% of the housing mix (2000). Master plans for future growth could provide at least 2% multi-family residential development to promote density and housing choice (*See Section 5.1 – Land Use-Fiscal Analysis*). On the average over the last 10 years, 700 single-family residential dwelling units are constructed each year. The number of single-family dwellings (both urban and rural) is expected to increase by about 14,600 units over the next 20 years.

12. It is projected that the share of Sandoval County population increase going to Rio Rancho will remain constant. Presently, 60% of the Sandoval County population lives in Rio Rancho. When the County population is 172,000 in 2020, Rio Rancho will be home to 100,000.

13. Locating new community facilities and investments such as a new high school, Regional Park or a city center, will stimulate residential development in those areas of the City. These community facilities and investments should be included in the master planning process for major developments such as the Mariposa Ranch project and the growth nodes in the State Land Office parcels.

14. It is hoped that the share of the City budget revenues derived from gross receipts taxes (GRT) will increase from the current 57% with the expansion of retail trade and services within the City over the next 20 years. These recurring sources of GRT should replace the use of one-time GRT from construction to fund City services and operating costs. One-time GRT could be used to fund infrastructure in the future. Fiscal impact analysis should demonstrate the ability of major developments to generate sufficient recurring GRT and property taxes to cover the cost of providing City services to the development.

15. While private automobiles will continue to be a preferred mode of transportation, there will be an increase in the share of other transportation modes, including some form of high capacity transit and bicycling. Total vehicle miles traveled will continue to increase, as they are throughout the West, faster than population growth unless different development forms make it easier to get goods and services closer to home.