

3.4 Policy Work Groups

This section summarizes the efforts of five (5) Policy Work Groups created for the overall purpose of proposing *Principles, Policies and Actions* (formerly, "goals, objectives and policies") to guide the development of the City over the next two decades. The efforts of the Work Groups bridged the Vision Statement process and the preparation of the draft Vision 2020-ICP. The Work Groups were developed to:

- *Actively engage the citizens of Rio Rancho in shaping the City's future as an integral part of the planning process.*
- *Build a plan constituency by engaging the public and involving City staff to implement the ICP successfully in the future.*
- *Translate goals and attributes from the visioning process into concrete policy recommendations.*

The Work Groups consisted of approximately 75 citizen volunteers and City staff who participated in a group of their choice. The combination of interested citizens and City staff in each Work Group served the process well since new perspectives could be discussed and important questions about existing City efforts could be answered. The Work Groups reviewed the final Vision Statement adopted by the Governing Body on December 16, 1998, and were provided with data and resource information to establish a base of knowledge from which to begin to consider future policy.

The City also provided four preliminary land use growth scenarios to stimulate discussion. Each preliminary scenario contained basic housing density assumptions and estimated future population by subarea within the newly expanded City limits. These conceptual scenarios were identified as Trend, Nodal, Infill, and Frontier. A continuum of relative development patterns, from spread out to more compact, characterized these four draft scenarios. An unprecedented level of public participation was achieved throughout the visioning process and policy work group efforts with over fifty (50) meetings being held.

Ultimately, the Work Groups reviewed the City's existing Development Policy Statement (adopted in 1991) section of the City's current comprehensive plan to identify specific goals and objectives relevant to their foci and scope. This exercise led to summarizing the major themes and concepts gleaned from the previous meetings and where possible, identifying specific suggestions and directions that represented each group's contributions. Overall, each Work Group confirmed the ideals expressed in the Vision Statement, and generally reinforced the responses in the July 1998 Community Survey.

The Policy Work Groups provided a vital review of the City's existing Development Policy Statement by proposing a wide range of future goals and objectives from which the Vision 2020-ICP *Principles, Policies and Actions* would be derived (*Sections 5.0 through 5.8*). While many of the goals and objectives in the current Development Policy Statement were deemed still applicable, many more were added and/or modified in this new plan. There are a number of basic common themes that appear in the Work Group recommendations that reflect the ten major attributes used during the development of the Vision Statement.

The Work Groups' charge was to develop draft *Principles, Policies and Actions* or implementation strategies. The five (5) Work Groups were named as a result of the visioning process and their respective functions are described below:

Local Government and Community Involvement

- Encourage Rio Rancho's spirit of volunteerism.
- Coordinate with other local governing bodies and planning efforts within the region.
- Establish a historical conservation and preservation context for the future.
- Incorporate neighborhood associations and other civic groups into ongoing planning efforts.
- Evaluate fiscal efficiency of growth and development to ensure overall sustainability.
- Integrate and coordinating tasks of various City Departments into the comprehensive plan

Public Works and Infrastructure

- Improve traffic circulation.
- Diversify the ways in which people and goods circulate within Rio Rancho.
- Ensure that all utilities systems and services are well maintained, functional, and conserve resources.
- Make connections between transportation, land use, and environmental quality.

Community Wellness

- Define and institute quality of life measures.
- Emphasize that the well-being of youth is a positive investment in the future.
- Provide a range of social, educational, medical and recreational activities, facilities, and services that are accessible to all age groups and encompassing physical and emotional well-being.
- Incorporate environmental wellness and sustainability into the public awareness.

Designing Our Space - Amenities and Ambience

- Create a built environment at a human scale that is accessible to all.
- Preserve the natural amenities and environment that make Rio Rancho attractive.
- Use urban design, open space, and parks in functional and efficient ways to conserve resources and meet the needs of the residents.
- Provide flexible yet functional development standards for housing and other land uses to accommodate different preferences as well as environmental constraints.

Planning Ahead - Growth and Economic Development

- Continue Rio Rancho's success in economic development without sacrificing other community values and resources.
- Redevelop antiquated subdivisions and blighted properties.
- Determine which methods of growth management are appropriate in Rio Rancho.
- Make Rio Rancho a place where one can live, work, shop, and play without leaving the City.
- Make Rio Rancho a better place in 2020 than it is in 2001.