

# Santa Fe County Community Planning Program



## Information Guide

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## Introduction

In order to evolve the community planning process and improve community participation and outreach, the Sustainable Growth Management Plan (SGMP) sets forth several policies that will be implemented through the County's **Community Planning Program** that will be codified in the Sustainable Land Development Code (SLDC).

The purpose of this document is to inform public participation and guide current planning efforts. The intent is to ensure that community plans, the community planning process and public involvement is in compliance with the SGMP.

## Community Planning Program Purpose and Intent

Sustainable community planning depends on the balance and compatibility of systems, both natural and human, while creating a lifestyle and development patterns that respects and works within the natural environments' limits. Santa Fe County has built a strong tradition of community-based planning spanning from past decades to the present. As our communities continue to change and grow, community planning plays an important role in ensuring that future growth is in harmony with existing settings.

## Public Involvement

Policy 1.1: The public should be included in County growth management planning to include community plans, area plans, district plans and development review activities.

To involve the public in both on-going growth management activities and the drafting of new or amending existing community plans, the community planning program as outlined in the SGMP includes two approaches:

**For the drafting of new or for amending existing community plans**, the program refines the current community planning ordinance which establishes Community Planning Committees (CPC's). A CPC may form to engage the community to initiate, draft and present the plan in collaboration with County Planning staff.

**For ongoing activities**, the program will establish through the SLDC a structure for community participation through formalized Community Organizations (CO's) and Registered Organizations (RO's). The CO's and RO's participation will be on an ongoing basis with regular meetings and schedules.

## Community Planning Committees (CPC's) & Community Plans

The community planning process is intended to allow individual communities to develop a community land use plan and regulations based on the conditions and desires of the communities, allowing for the plan to be amended over time as the community changes. A Community Planning Committee may draft a Community Plan for a specific geographic area and develop a future land use plan to include land uses,

densities and design guidelines for the community. County staff works directly with these groups to develop the Community Plan, which will be an amendment to the Sustainable Growth Management Plan when it is approved by the Board.

The community planning process allows traditional, contemporary, traditional historic or other unincorporated community to work at their own pace in context to the attributes of their settings and systems in coordination with the County. Community plans are not intended to be comprehensive plans. The goal is to identify issues related to growth and development, document existing conditions, and draft a future land use plan that will address issues and support the community vision. After adoption by the Board, a community plan is implemented through a Planning District Ordinance that is becomes an amendment to the Land Development Code.

To initiate a community planning process, a representative Community Planning Committee (CPC) is established by the community and authorized by the Board. Members of a CPC shall be residents, property owners and business owners in the community and be representative of its diversity. Once this Committee is recognized by the Board, planning activities may begin. Where other communities are affected by the planning effort, those communities shall receive reasonable notice of the planning effort and the Planning Committee meetings.

### **Community Planning Process**

Communities may prepare a community plan in accordance with the planning process set forth in the SLDC and following principles of the SGMP.

The initiation of the planning process includes the following:

1. Planning Committee Letter of Intent
2. The planning committee shall apply to the Board of County Commissioners with their request to proceed with a community plan. The required information should include the following:
3. A list of members with broad representation from the community who have made a commitment to serve on the planning committee for the duration of the process.
4. Conditions that justify undertaking a community plan
5. Public Participation Plan
6. Public participation assures a diverse representation of community residents, property owners and business owners. A Public participation plan may include, but is not limited to, the following: public meetings, surveys, establishment of topic specific subcommittees, outreach to community groups and interested parties, and conducting focus groups.
7. Requests for County resources
8. Map of existing and proposed community boundary
9. Proof of reasonable attempts to notify the community and all affected property owners about the formation of the planning committee

### **Planning Committee Coordination with County Planning Staff:**

Upon Board approval to proceed with a community plan, the planning committee will meet with County Staff to review the public participation plan, establish roles, scope of work, meeting schedule, work sessions and timeline.

All Community Plans should be consistent with the SGMP and other pertinent policies. Communities may address their unique needs through their Community Plans while remaining consistent with the principles and overall County directives identified in the SGMP.

Existing Community Plans will undergo a review and revision process within 3 years of the adoption of the SLDC in coordination with the Community Planning Committees. Community Plans may be updated to include new information and adjust strategies or land use designations.

An existing Community Plan may also be amended to address changing conditions or key issues not identified in the original plan. In some cases it may be necessary to completely rewrite an existing plan in order to comply with the SGMP or accommodate new community goals and address changed conditions.

## **Community Organizations (CO's) & Registered Organizations (RO's)**

Policy 1.2: Establish a structure for community participation by adopting process for Community Organizations ("COs") and Registered Organizations ("ROs").

The CO and RO process outlined in the SGMP to improve community participation and outreach will be implemented through the adoption of the SLDC which is currently in the process of being drafted.

### **Community Organizations (CO's)**

Forming a Community Organization (CO's) is an option for communities who want to work on a variety of issues or solve specific problems within the community on an on-going basis. Communities choosing to form CO's will organize themselves in accordance with the SGMP. Their primary function will be to comment on planning, regulation, the development review process and during the pre-application process, on proposed development projects. A CO may also prepare a Strategic Work Plan to identify issues in the community and develop strategies to address those issues. The Strategic Work Plan will be reviewed by the County and appropriate implementation actions will be coordinated with the CO. Additionally, CO's will monitor implementation of an adopted Community Plan and receive notice of proposed development and County actions within their specific geographic area.

#### **Recognition of CO's:**

Communities interested in forming a CO need to apply to the Board through the Planning Division for recognition. The application should include the following:

1. A map or written description of the organization's geographical boundaries or interests.
2. A list of the officers of the organization, including the CO mailing and e-mail addresses and telephone numbers for the receipt of notices from the Administrator.
3. A signed copy of the relevant organizing documents.
4. A regular meeting location and a regular meeting date.
5. The date the organization was founded.
6. The number of organization members.

### **CO Rights and Responsibilities:**

CO's will have the following rights and responsibilities, upon recognition of the CO by the Board:

1. Receive notice and provide written recommendations for any discretionary development application pending within the geographic area designated in the resolution of the Board recognizing the CO, or notice of any public hearing or public meeting concerning such application.
2. Participate in administrative adjudicatory proceedings pending within the area designated in the resolution of the Board recognizing the CO, and as appropriate, present evidence and witnesses at a quasi-judicial hearing before the Board, Planning Commission, or Hearing Officer.
3. Receive notice, participate and make recommendations, as deemed appropriate by the Board, for any amendment to the SGMP, SLDC or an area, specific or community plan, official map, CIP, or zoning map, or monitoring of such documents, within the established geographical boundaries or interests of the CO.
4. Participate and make recommendations in the development of a community strategic work plan, studies, CIP, ICIP and public improvement and assessment districts, and levels of service for community infrastructure and services.
5. Coordinate with ROs, property owners, business owners and residents within the boundaries of the CO in matters related to a pending discretionary development review or administrative adjudicatory application.
6. Meet with the Administrator concerning matters of interest to the CO.
7. Participate in Town Hall meetings with the Administrator and appropriate County staff.
8. Participate in CO leadership retreats and training programs.
9. Participate in an annual Congress of Community Organizations.

### **Registered Organizations (RO's)**

This option is created primarily to provide information to individuals or community groups about pending development review projects and planning activities within their defined geographic area. ROs will be required to submit an application and are recognized by the Administrator upon review of an application.

#### **Recognition of RO's**

Community groups interested in becoming an RO need to apply to the Administrator through the Planning Division for recognition as an RO. The RO application includes the following:

1. Defined geographic area and topic(s) of interest.
2. A list of the members of the officers of the organization, including the RO mailing and e-mail addresses and telephone numbers for the receipt of notices from the Administrator.
3. A signed copy of the adopted by-laws or other relevant organizing documents.
4. A regular meeting location and a regular meeting date.
5. The date the organization was founded.
6. The number of organization members.

## **RO Rights and Responsibilities.**

1. RO's will have the following rights and responsibilities, upon recognition of the RO by the Administrator:
2. Receive notice of any application for discretionary development review pending within the geographic area designated in the application by the RO.
3. Receive notice and participate, as deemed appropriate by the Administrator, for any amendment to the SGMP, SLDC or an area, specific or community plan, official map of the SGMP or zoning map of the SLDC within the established geographical boundaries or interests of the RO.
4. Participate in Town Hall meetings with the Administrator and County planning staff.
5. Participate in an annual Congress of Community Organizations.

## **CO's and RO's Staff Support**

Staff Support for CO's and RO's is limited in order to preserve the autonomy and independence of the community organizations and the due process rights of applicants. Staff support will be limited to the following:

1. For CO's and RO's: Provide notice, participate in Town Hall meetings, and participate in development of any study, plan or regulation as deemed appropriate by the County Manager;
2. For CO's: Participate in annual CO retreats and training programs, annual Congress of Community Organizations, and limited assistance in the development of community strategic work plan.