

Section 4: Land Use Plan

San Marcos District, with its 1,700 residents, diverse business and residential environment, and striking natural views represents a unique segment of Santa Fe County. The community comprises equestrian services, a local café, restaurants, eco-tourism, artist studios, film venues and experimental agriculture. The District attracts diverse residents to an area near the city but distinctly rural in character. The Turquoise Trail Scenic Byway, an international attraction, and recreational and historical resources such as the Cerrillos Hills State Park provide exceptional opportunities to explore the District's rich history and beautiful natural backdrop.

The San Marcos District Land Use Plan and Land Use Map are an important component of the community plan. The Land Use Plan reflects the elements outlined in the community planning process and brings them together into an actionable framework to guide future development decisions, zoning and regulations, and capital improvement projects. The Land Use Plan is intended to help align the community vision with the County's policy documents relating to development and land use, environmental stewardship, and economic conditions.

Key issues identified in the planning process include restrictive setback requirements, lot coverage, mining, water, loss of scenic viewsheds, littering, and heavy truck traffic.

The San Marcos District Land Use Categories were developed through the San Marcos District Community Plan Update in accordance with the Sustainable Growth Management Plan (SGMP) Use Categories. The San Marcos District Land Use Plan includes six Land Use Categories: Rural, Rural Fringe, Rural Residential, Commercial Neighborhood, Public Institutional and Federal and State Public Lands.

The community identified the need to better align the existing and future uses with the Vision for the District. The community strives to preserve, protect and enhance the intrinsic and valued features of the area while enabling residents to build a vibrant local economy.

It is the intent of this San Marcos District plan to establish reasonable, context-sensitive standards, appropriate for the independent and rural character of the area.

The Land Use Plan provides descriptions of the Land Use Categories based on conditions identified through the planning process to better match the character of the community.

SAN MARCOS DISTRICT LAND USE CATEGORIES:

Rural. The purpose of this district is to designate areas suitable for a combination of agricultural, equestrian, residential and other compatible uses. The intent of Rural is to protect agricultural uses from encroachment by development and to support agricultural, ranch, very large lot residential, ecotourism, equestrian uses, **home-based businesses and arts studios**. Density transfers and clustered development shall be allowed in order to support continued farming and/or ranching activities, conserve open space or protect scenic features and environmentally sensitive areas. **Parcels in this area are generally greater than 40 acres and are located in the southern portion of the district.**

Rural Fringe. The purpose of this district is to designate areas suitable for a combination of estate-type residential development, agricultural uses and other compatible uses. This zone also serves to protect agricultural and environmental areas that are inappropriate for more intense development due to their sensitivity. The Rural Fringe accommodates primarily large lot residential, retreats, ecotourism, equestrian uses and renewable resource-based activities, seeking a balance between conservation, environmental protection and reasonable opportunity for development.

Rural Residential. The purposes of this district is to provide for the development of single-family homes on large lots, either individually or as part of rural subdivisions; to preserve the scenic and rural character of the County; to provide consolidated open space and agricultural lands; and to recognize the desirability of carrying on compatible agricultural operations and home developments in areas near the fringes of urban development while avoiding unreasonable restrictions on farming or ranching operations. Uses that support rural character of the broader area shall be allowed including agricultural production, small-scale renewable energy production, home-based businesses, **artist studios**, bed and breakfasts, agro-tourism, equestrian and boarding facilities, and farmers markets.

Commercial Neighborhood. The purpose of this district is to allow for low-rise low-intensity convenience retail, **dining, galleries** and personal services, as well as office uses that are intended to serve and are in close proximity to individual residential neighborhoods. Generally, the desired location of these commercial areas is at the periphery, focal point, or a major entrance to one or more neighborhoods, along a minor or subdivision collector or higher roadway classification, or along a major access road at the entrance to or in a focal point of a neighborhood. In San Marcos these properties are in close proximity to NM 14.

Public Institutional. The purpose of the Public Institutional category is to accommodate governmental, educational and non-profit or institutional uses, including public or community parks, recreation facilities and public, non-profit, and institutional residential uses, but excluding any such uses of an extensive heavy industrial character. Development in this area should be multi-use and designed with community input in order to meet community goals and objectives.

Federal and State public lands. The SMD planning area includes areas which are under the ownership and jurisdiction of the State and Federal government. These areas are not subject to local government zoning.

Proposed San Marcos Overlay Zones

Through the community planning process, three overlay zones have been proposed to better align the existing and proposed uses within the district with the vision for the District. These three areas are indicated in general terms on the San Marcos District Future Land Use Map. Establishment of these overlays may require an amendment to the County Zoning Map for the implementation of the San Marcos District Plan.

Agriculture Overlay. The intent of the Agriculture Overlay (SMCD O-AG) is to support the vision of the San Marcos District with goals and policies in the Agriculture and Ranching Element of the SGMP, the County's Code of the West and the County Agriculture and Ranching Implementation Plan. The O-AG accommodates the development of the agricultural use and business that would not cause a detriment to any abutting residential lands. This overlay is appropriate for areas where agriculture and ranching may logically locate because of established land use patterns, and agricultural potential in either greenhouse or land-based environments. The O-AG allows a mixture of agricultural land uses and also establishes appropriate scale and intensity for these uses. The Agricultural Overlay is appropriate for use throughout the San Marcos Community District.

Rural Commercial and Arts Overlay. The SMCD O-RC is intended to support the vision and needs of the community and to retain the predominantly rural character of the District. Commercial uses that are small in scale are appropriate (i.e. compatible with existing land use patterns, existing residential areas, land ownership characteristics, and geographic features near the property) within this overlay zone in order to support the community vision of future economic and ecological sustainability to promote self-sufficiency for the community. Commercial development should support local employment and provide local services which do not disrupt the quiet of the District. The SMCD O-RC is identified in general terms on the San Marcos Future Land Use Map. The Rural Commercial Overlay is located along NM 14 within the District both east and west of the highway. This area is envisioned to continue as mixed-use village area supporting neighborhood-scale convenience retail and commercial uses, community facilities and agricultural/equestrian facilities. Commercial services are intended to be low-intensity and primarily serving a local audience. The area is envisioned to support an arts corridor compatible with existing land use patterns, existing residential areas, land ownership characteristics, and geographic features near the property.

Goals and Actions

Land Use

Goal A: Support the rural lifestyle that residents of San Marcos have chosen because of its low density and quiet, private nature.

Action A.1: Develop lot coverage requirements appropriate for the District.

Action A.2: Create appropriate setbacks standards to enable a rural lifestyle and healthy neighbor relationships without restricting development.

Action A.3: Develop dimension and intensity standards to reflect character of the District.

Goal B: Support opportunities for growth of small-scale and home-based businesses that allow residents the opportunity to provide for themselves and share their professional expertise.

Action B.1: Develop scale and intensity standards to enable a harmonious rural lifestyle and healthy neighbor relationships without restricting development.

Action B.2: Review design guidelines to reflect rural character compatible with residential and small-business development.

Action B.3: Establish a Rural Commercial Overlay to facilitate appropriately scaled small-business.

Goal C: Encourage use of renewable energy and sustainable land use patterns to conserve natural resources, enable a rural lifestyle, and set an example for education, sustainability and resource management.

Action C.1: Review design guidelines to encourage as much use of renewable energy and smart land development patterns as possible.

Action C.2: Investigate current business environment; review County policies that can support current businesses.

Action C.3: Explore options to remove barriers for renewable energy projects.

Action C.4: Review options for landscaping to maximize water conservation.

Action C.5: Conduct survey of water availability.

Action C.6: Conduct feasibility study to determine groundwater/aquifer health.

Agriculture

Goal A: Support a healthy equestrian community, enabling a rural lifestyle and stewardship of land and animals.

Action A.1: Develop appropriate size, scale, and intensity standards.

Action A.2: Address waste-disposal issues.

Action A.3: Enable viable equestrian business development.

Action A.4: Enable diverse agricultural uses.

Action A.5: Extend trails and increase access for equestrian uses.

Action A.6: Establish a San Marcos Community Organization to share information and resources among residents and to welcome new residents and businesses into the area.

Goal B: Promote continued use of land for agricultural purposes and agricultural lifestyle, creating cultural and economic connections to support sustainably practiced agriculture.

Action B.1: Develop appropriate size, scale, and intensity standards.

Action B.2: Address waste-disposal issues.

Action B.3: Enable viable equestrian business development.

Action B.4: Develop area-appropriate infrastructure.

Action B.5: Establish partnerships with the Santa Fe Community College and others to implement new technologies and best practices.

Action B.6: Establish a San Marcos Community Organization to share information and resources among residents and to welcome new residents and businesses into the area.

Goal C: Support stewardship of the environment through farming and ranching businesses that enable the continued rural lifestyle and character of the District.

Action C.1: Develop appropriate size, scale, and intensity standards.

Action C.2: Address waste-disposal issues.

Action C.3: Enable viable equestrian business development.

Action C.4: Extend trails and increase access for equestrian uses.

Action C.5: Establish partnerships with the Santa Fe Community College and others to implement new technologies and best practices.

Action C.6: Establish a San Marcos Community Organization to share information and resources among residents and to welcome new residents and businesses into the area.

Cultural Resources

Goal A: Preserve the cultural heritage of San Marcos area by protecting the historical elements, providing educational opportunities, and protecting the scenic views.

Action A.1: Protect archaeological, historical assets, and community character through code language and enforcement.

Action A.2: Review options for landscaping to preserve community character.

Action A.3: Partner with artists to develop signage and arts tours.

Action A.4: Partner with local school(s) to provide cultural education for students and residents.

Goal B: Create a thriving arts and agricultural economy that respects rural, quiet, and private character of the District with dark skies and clean air.

Action B.1: Develop scale and intensity standards that enable a harmonious rural lifestyle and healthy neighbor relationships without restricting development.

Action B.2: Enable appropriately-scaled small business development.

Action B.3: Partner with artists to develop signage and arts tours.

Goal C: Encourage use of renewable energy and promote water conservation to conserve natural resources, as well as maintain a healthy natural environment.

Action C.1: Review options for landscaping to conserve water resources.

Action C.2: Conduct feasibility study to determine groundwater/aquifer health.

Action C.3: Establish partnerships with the Santa Fe Community College and others to implement new technologies and best practices.

Action C.4: Explore options to remove barriers for renewable energy projects.

Action C.5: Develop scale and intensity standards that enable a harmonious rural lifestyle and healthy neighbor relationships without restricting development.