



## A. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important aspects of planning and long-range decision making is land use. Land Use patterns drive economic vitality, housing, infrastructure, transportation and quality of life. This section is intended to help guide the City's overall growth in a manner that will help maximize resources and plan for orderly growth and development.

### 1. Key Findings

- There is a potential for revitalization, redevelopment and reuse of existing buildings within the City
- Design standards for residential properties could help promote a harmonious appearance among site built and manufactured housing
- Nuisance abatement regulations are enforced sporadically
- The Hot Springs District has historic character
- Recently annexed areas are absent of zoning designations
- Certain community facilities such as a recreation center are desired among residents
- Existing GIS technology and should continue to interface with City planning initiatives
- Land use decisions effect the Village of Williamsburg therefore, some coordination and communication between jurisdictions is necessary



*Infill/Re-Use opportunity at Main Street and Broadway Avenue*

## B. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES, AND IMPLEMENTATION

**GOAL 1: To promote infill development of vacant land and redevelopment within the City boundaries.**

*Objective A:* Develop incentives for development of vacant properties within the pre-annexation City boundaries.

*Objective B:* Develop incentives for redevelopment of abandoned or dilapidated properties within the City boundaries.

*Policy 2.1:* It is the policy of the City of Truth or Consequences to market the economic benefits of infill development (i.e. the building permit fee waiver), as a mechanism to attract new business to the community.

*Policy 2.2:* It is the policy of the City of Truth or Consequences to facilitate the redevelopment of land that is underutilized or contains abandoned or dilapidated buildings through the establishment of overlay zones and redevelopment districts.



Implementation Actions

*a. Infill Ordinance* - Create an infill development ordinance which sets forth the process for waiving building permit fees for development on vacant parcels within the pre-annexation City boundaries, and within areas currently served by water, wastewater, and electric systems. A summary of the ordinance and the fee waiver process should be printed and made available to the public for recruitment of industry and businesses.

*b. Overlay Zones/Redevelopment Districts* - Conduct a study detailing the process for adopting overlay zones and redevelopment districts. The study should look at the use of overlay zones/redevelopment districts in other communities, present possible locations for overlay zones/redevelopment districts in Truth or Consequences, and make recommendations regarding an implementation timeline for the designation of overlay zones and redevelopment districts.

**GOAL 2: To improve the appearance of the built environment.**

*Objective A:* Create and adopt standards for manufactured and mobile homes in residential areas in an effort to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of residents.

*Objective B:* Seek the removal of dilapidated, abandoned structures that pose a danger to the community.

*Objective C:* Develop an ordinance providing guidelines addressing the appearance and architectural requirements for new structures within the historic district.

*Policy 2.3:* It is the policy of the City of Truth or Consequences to promote and protect the public health, safety and welfare of the general public through design standards and zoning practices.

*Policy 2.4:* It is the policy of the City of Truth or Consequences to provide adequate resources for the enforcement of nuisance, waste, and other ordinances that protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the community.

*Policy 2.5:* It is the policy of the City of Truth or Consequences to recognize the historic merits of the city through creation of a historic district overlay zone.

Implementation Actions

*a. Create and Adopt Residential Design Standards* - Residential design standards shall include requirements for all single family and multi-family dwellings. Design standards for all residential structures could include requirements for the following:

- roof pitch
- affixed to permanent foundation
- exterior siding and roofing that matches color, appearance, and materials of surrounding buildings

*b. Enforcement Handbook* - The City of Truth or Consequences Building Department and code enforcement officials shall work towards the creation of a handbook which should have a dual purpose. First, it should guide enforcement officials in abating nuisance properties. Second, the handbook should be a resource for residents. At a later date the City could begin a community outreach program to spread the word about community clean-up efforts, and build community pride.



*2. Land Use*

Existing LU Map



## 2. Land Use

Existing Land Use Map



*2. Land Use*

Existing Annexed LU



## 2. Land Use

Existing Annexed LU



## 2. Land Use

Future LU



*2. Land Use*

Future Land Use Map



*2. Land Use*

Annexed Future LU



## 2. Land Use

Annexed Future LU



c. *Historic Overlay Zone* - Develop and adopt a historic overlay zone for the historic hot springs district. The overlay zone regulations shall provide guidelines for appropriate design and uses in future development in the district. The overlay zone regulations will also provide information on any maintenance requirements for the district, the approval process for future development in the district, and any tax credits or other available incentives for property owners in the district.

**GOAL 3: Facilitate the development (particularly industrial/warehouse uses) of the recently-annexed area extending towards the Truth or Consequences Municipal Airport, and the future business park located on Broadway Avenue.**

*Objective A:* Address land use and zoning issues for the recently annexed area and future business park to plan for coordinated growth and development.

*Objective B:* Address infrastructure issues/needs for the recently annexed area and future business park in order to maximize the potential for future industrial/warehouse development.

*Policy 2.6:* It is the policy of the City of Truth or Consequences to encourage masterplanning efforts for the recently-annexed area and/or the future business park, including the coordination of infrastructure extensions at the Municipal Airport.

*Policy 2.7:* It is the policy of the City of Truth or Consequences to make any and all necessary zone map amendments for the recently-annexed area and future Broadway Avenue business park.

*Policy 2.8:* It is the policy of the City of Truth or Consequences to provide adequate infrastructure for industrial development at the future business park, including water pressure and wastewater services that meet insurance requirements, and can accommodate the water flow necessary for fire protection.

**Implementation Actions**

a. *Airport Infrastructure Plan* - The City or its designated agent shall create an Airport Infrastructure Plan that coordinates the expansion of wastewater, water, and electric utilities. If well and septic will be used, those services should also be planned.

b. *Amend the Zone Map* - Amend the zoning map to provide commercial and light industrial zoning on public and privately-owned parcels adjacent to the airport.

c. *Create a Business Park infrastructure List* - Create a detailed list of infrastructure needs at the future Broadway Avenue Business Park. The list shall include funding sources for implementing the infrastructure improvements, and a timeline for the implementing the improvements.

**GOAL 4: Improve the City's community facilities in order to meet federal and state standards.**

*Objective A:* Provide updated municipal office facilities to enhance public image, comply with ADA requirements, and improve working conditions for City staff.

*Objective B:* Upgrade, expand, and improve equipment and training for the City police and fire departments on an annual basis.



*Objective C:* Upgrade, expand, and improve recreational services and facilities for all citizens throughout the City.

*Policy 2.9:* It is the policy of the City of Truth or Consequences to utilize all available resources for providing upgraded municipal office facilities.

*Policy 2.10:* It is the policy of the City of Truth or Consequences to communicate and collaborate with the City police and fire departments towards the coordination of services, equipment, and training.

*Policy 2.11:* It is the policy of the City of Truth or Consequences to continue to provide a variety of community-wide services and to plan for the construction of new facilities as resources are available.

**Implementation Actions**

*a. Municipal Office Upgrade Study* - A study shall be conducted to determine the most cost-effective way to plan and construct upgraded municipal office facilities. Items that should be explored in the study include:

- offices shared with Sierra County government
- funding sources for upgraded offices
- phasing plan for upgraded offices

*b. Annual Strategic Planning Meeting* - City staff, and representatives of the police and fire departments should meet to discuss existing and future departmental needs and sources of funding. The meetings should include goal setting, discussions of future equipment and training needs, and a review of the year's successes and failures.

*c. Feasibility Study* - City staff and representatives from local youth and senior organizations meet to design and to chart the goals for a feasibility study for the transformation of the existing pool into a covered venue heated by the geothermal waters existing in the community. The feasibility study shall address the following items:

- cost/benefit analysis
- water rights and water availability
- potential future users
- construction costs
- funding sources
- ongoing maintenance and staffing costs
- ongoing funding sources

**GOAL 5: Coordinate Land Use decisions with other jurisdictions.**

*Objective A:* Hold regular discussions with the Village of Williamsburg regarding its annexation/growth plans, and expansion of water/infrastructure systems since the City provides infrastructure to the Village.

*Objective B:* Explore the feasibility of developing and implementing an extraterritorial zoning ordinance.



*Policy 2.12:* It is the policy of the City of Truth or Consequences to communicate and collaborate with the Village of Williamsburg regarding the Village’s plans for growth.

*Policy 2.13:* It is the policy of the City of Truth or Consequences to work with Sierra County to ensure that county land uses adjacent to the municipal boundary are compatible with uses in the City.

**Implementation Actions**

*a. Williamsburg/Truth or Consequences Planning Initiative* - Both the Village of Williamsburg and the City of Truth or Consequences shall work together to hold a bi-annual planning meeting to discuss topics surrounding land use planning, economic development, and infrastructure in both communities.

*b. Extra-Territorial Planning Effort* - The City of Truth or Consequences shall conduct a study regarding extraterritorial planning. The study will look at extraterritorial planning mechanisms in other cities and counties throughout New Mexico, and will make recommendations for future steps to take in extraterritorial planning efforts between Sierra County and Truth or Consequences. Future steps could include items such as special zoning in the extraterritorial areas, joint meetings of planning groups in the two jurisdictions, joint agreements between the two jurisdictions, etc.

### C. EXISTING LAND USE

The municipal boundaries of Truth or Consequences contain 14,317 acres of land, 6,200 acres of which are sparsely developed, recently-annexed land. The majority of the developed area is located between Interstate 25 and the Rio Grande River. The recently-annexed area doubled the size of the community, and includes the Truth or Consequences Municipal Airport. While a large percent of this annexed land continues under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, future land use planning can designate these areas for development in anticipation of disposal of public lands into private hands.

There are a variety of land uses in Truth or Consequences, including agricultural and open space, light industrial, commercial, and single family and multifamily residential. The predominance of commercial land uses are located along the major thoroughfares which include Broadway, Date, Main and Third streets. Downtown is also a major commercial node containing a variety of smaller scale specialty retail shops, inns, cafes, and offices. Residential areas are scattered throughout the community, with a higher density of housing near major roadways. Industrial uses are primarily located adjacent to Interstate 25 and Smith Street in the north part of the City. However, a large piece of industrial land is located in the south along the boundary with Williamsburg.



*Oblique view of Truth or Consequences*

The approximate land use mix in Truth or Consequences is listed in Table 2.1.

The current land use mix for Truth or Consequences is appropriate for the size of the community. However, increases in industrial or commercial land uses will contribute to greater gross receipts taxes and employment opportunities. Therefore, future land use designa-



tions should focus on providing adequate and serviceable lands for commercial and industrial development, so long as an adequate housing supply is also consistently available.

**Table 2.1: Land Use Percentages**

Category	Percentage
Residential	60%
Multifamily	5%
Commercial	20%
Industrial	10%
Open Space/Parks	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Consensus Planning, Inc.

The existing land use map located on the previous pages, details the land uses in the community. There are large scale copies of these maps on file with the City. The recently-annexed area nearly doubled the size of Truth or Consequences, however, much of the land is vacant, which provides the City an excellent opportunity to manage future growth and development in this area. Currently, this land is not served by City utilities. Currently, there are small pockets of residential and commercial development located in the annexed area,

with the airport being the primary land use on the northwest.

A constraint to land use is the topography in and around Truth or Consequences. The elevation of Truth or Consequences varies by 200 feet within the existing built community. At its lowest, the elevation is 4242 within the river valley. The elevation climbs to 4500 upon reaching the Interstate and levels at the Truth or Consequences Municipal Airport at 4800 feet. Having such a dramatic grade change impacts development potential due to the difficulties that exist for infrastructure expansion.



*An example of topographical constraints*

### 1. Existing Land Use Regulations

#### *a. Truth or Consequences Zoning Code*

The T or C zone code lists eight zoning categories and includes provisions for home occupations, landscaping, general design standards of manufactured homes and recreational vehicle parks, walls/fences, signs and site plan submittal requirements for properties in the C-1 and M-1 districts, over one acre in size. The majority of C-1 zoning follows the major transportation corridors of Main Street, Broadway, Date and Third. R-3 zoning is included in the older residential neighborhoods between the river and the town center, while R-1 zoning is found at the periphery of the community. There is a limited amount of M-1 zoned land, generally located south of the Veteran’s Hospital and at the western boundary of the community.

#### *b. Subdivision Regulations*

The City’s subdivision regulations require that any improvements or the creation of a subdivision require a final plat and a formal review by the building department, which acts as the planning arm of the City. Master Plans are required when certain types of development occur in the City, including:

1. Phased
2. Multiple land uses
3. Annexations
4. A subdivision with more than 100 lots



The City requires the provision of necessary infrastructure, such as sewer, streets, and parks, as well as financial guarantees for large-scale projects.

## 2. Land Use Considerations

Through discussions with Truth or Consequences staff, residents and public officials, the following land use considerations have emerged:

### *a. Redevelopment Potential*

Redevelopment is one tool available to Truth or Consequences that could be utilized to increase the amount of developable land without having to extend services. Redevelopment is the process of renovating existing buildings or underutilized land and developing new uses on the property. Through the process of redevelopment, the City has the opportunity to create an environment that is visually pleasing, pedestrian friendly, and that promotes and enhances existing businesses through storefront improvements. There are several guiding principles that help a community implement redevelopment (this section can also be cross referenced to discussion found in the Community Character Element). These principles include:

- An assisted living complex located near the existing nursing home
- An expansion of the golf course by 9 holes
- A nature preserve and pedestrian bridge connecting the north and south sides of the river.
- A Civic Complex and updated Community Center
- The creation of a Hot Springs Historic District Overlay Zone
- The improvement of the corner gateway lands at Broadway and Main
- Identification of a Redevelopment District or area. Redevelopment could be focused solely on Downtown or on an entire commercial corridor.
- Utilization of the Main Street Program to revitalize areas of the Downtown and primary business corridors
- Streetscape improvements in the form of landscaping, human scale lighting, facade improvements, street furniture, stamped pavement, and crosswalks;
- Allowing mixed use development characterized by multi-family residential, office, retail, and institutional uses within redevelopment districts and/or at busier intersections
- Creation of attractive on-street and off-street parking areas

### *b. Design Standards for all Residential Development*

Many people have expressed a concern about the appearance of the community and would like all residential structures (stick-built and manufactured) to be harmonious with one another.



**c. Nuisance Abatement**

The City of Truth or Consequences has several ordinances that relate to public nuisances. Trash, weeds, abandoned and junk vehicles, litter and dangerous buildings are regulated by the City. Since the community is interested in not overburdening property owners, providing public awareness materials may help to mitigate the negative visual effects of nuisances, while avoiding the costly and time-consuming process of assessing fines or liens on properties.

**d. Hot Springs Historic District Overlay Zone**

Related to the redevelopment issue is the potential establishment of the Hot Springs Historic District Overlay Zone. The Overlay Zone will contain special design standards that new development in the overlay area needs to follow in order to preserve the integrity of the City. Once the historic district boundaries are created, and its nomination has been approved by the state Cultural Properties Review Committee, and the National Register of Historic Places, an Overlay Zone shall be created by adding a new zone category to the City's zoning ordinance. Permissive and conditional land uses, design standards and development processes shall be included in the zoning ordinance for this Overlay District.

**e. Masterplanning and Zoning the Annexed Area**

In order to predict better the type of development to occur within the annexed area, a master plan should be devised. Given the large amount of land and the City's need to extend infrastructure into the area, masterplanning would allow the City to direct growth and development that provides for the greatest efficiency. Regardless of the timeline for extending utilities to the area, creating zoning designations will help to encourage compatible land uses, and allow the City to prepare for future infrastructure extensions, especially around the airport.

**f. Improved Community Facilities**

For both young and old, the ability to recreate is of importance. For City staff, efficient government is a priority. A heated pool and recreation center, would provide youth and seniors with a safe and convenient environment for social and physical activities. A new Civic Complex is another request made by community members and local elected officials. One idea is to combine the administrative offices of the County and City at a location near the new police and fire stations.

**g. County/City Land Use Interface**

Sierra County does not have zoning, which means that the potential exists for development to occur adjacent to the municipal boundary that is incompatible with uses in Truth or Consequences. This, in turn, could have a negative impact on property values within the city. The City should work with the County to prepare a land use plan for the City's planning and platting jurisdiction. Alternatively, the City should explore creation of an extraterritorial zone, which would assign a zoning category that is more compatible with land within the municipal boundary. The extraterritorial zone would allow both the County and the City to share land use planning and decision-making in areas adjacent to the City, but within the County.



#### ***h. Land Use Coordination with the Village of Williamsburg***

As previously mentioned, the City of Truth or Consequences provides the Village of Williamsburg with water system infrastructure. The Village also pays to utilize the Truth or Consequences wastewater treatment facility. Any growth and development that occurs in Williamsburg will impact the ability of Truth or Consequences to provide community services in the future. Currently, the Village of Williamsburg is facing a shortage of developable land for commercial and residential uses. This shortage provides a major obstacle to economic development and growth in the community. There are only two vacant lots located in the Village. To remedy the situation, a primary goal of Williamsburg is to annex land to the south, along New Mexico 187, and to the north. Since that community is still dependent on the Truth or Consequences infrastructure systems, regular communication needs to take place to discuss the City's ability to provide services to those areas as future needs warrant.



*View of Rio Grande*

### **3. Future Land Use**

Pages 19-22 depict the future land use maps for Truth or Consequences, including the recently-annexed area. The future land use map was created during a public meeting where individuals reviewed the existing land use map, and were asked to draw land uses on a future land use map. The future land use maps show land use designations for vacant land within the built core, and future land use designations for the recently-annexed lands. Other future land uses include:

- An assisted-living complex located near the existing nursing home;
- An expansion of the golf course by nine-holes;
- A nature preserve and pedestrian-bridge connecting the north and south sides of the river;
- A Civic Complex and updated Community Center;
- The creation of a Hot Springs Historic District Overlay Zone; and
- The improvement of the corner gateway lands at Broadway and Main.