

Sustainable Land Development Plan

Executive Summary

The Sustainable Land Development Plan (“SLDP”) is a statement of the County’s vision for its future and a guide to achieve that vision through the year 2025. The SLDP is focused on achieving environmental, social and economic sustainability. The County recognizes an ecological imperative to protect the environment, a social imperative to create livable communities and an economic imperative to balance opportunities and production with responsible resource use.

The Plan and accompanying Sustainable Land Development Code (“SLDC”) are based on extensive cooperative work between the County, its elected and appointed decision-makers and public stakeholders. The SLDP is the “constitution” for all public and private sector land use decisions. The SLDC, all development approvals, regulations, action programs, the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the Official Map, and other legislation should be consistent with the SLDP.

The SLDP will guide the County's form through:

- Establishment of a tier system;
- Timely provision of public facilities and services through the establishment of sustainable development areas;
- Identification of opportunities for future land uses and development patterns compatible with existing uses;
- Use of an Official Map to identify future public facility areas and preserve critical environmental areas and viewsheds; and
- Adoption of equitable funding mechanisms to pay for the costs of necessary facilities and services that new growth requires.

The SLDP encourages compact development through the establishment of **Development Tiers**, which control the timing and phasing of growth and encourage growth near available facilities and services. The **Sustainable Development Area** concept builds on the Tiers system by establishing future service areas, targeting and leveraging public and private funding and investment to these priority growth areas, and identifying areas in which urban/suburban-level growth is expected to occur within the next 20 years.

The SLDP is part of an ongoing and consistent effort to adopt modern, comprehensive and coordinated plan and regulatory tools in Santa Fe County, and it provides a foundation for the Sustainable Land Development Code (“SLDC”), which will replace the County’s hydrologic zoning system and all land development regulations. The Code is the single most significant implementation tool of the Plan; it sets forth a consistent, predictable process for development review; ensures equitable facility financing; and defines sustainable development patterns, site design and building standards.

The SLDP focuses on increased coordination and outreach in County operations. It protects communities and maintains their voice in planning efforts, and improves representative government by engaging more communities, stakeholders and interest groups in County governance.

Finally, the SLDP includes a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) that sets forth a multi-year program of prioritized public improvements the County will undertake to serve existing and planned development. It sets forth financing alternatives, such as Planned Improvement Districts, impact fees, assessment districts and the use of bonding to support the equitable and timely provision of adequate public facilities and services.

Sustainable Land Development Plan Contents

Volume I: A Sustainable Vision (*Policy Framework and Implementation*)

Volume I includes day-to-day guidance for decision-makers. It includes goals, objectives and policy statements to guide County decisions and measure Plan progress. The Action Plan includes a comprehensive list of action items to implement the SLDP. Each action item is scored and prioritized based on how well it protects agricultural and environmental lands; prevents sprawl; provides for adequate facilities and services; provides incentives for sustainable development; and furthers the goals, objectives and policies of the SLDP. The timing, tool, relative budgetary impact, responsible entity, and impact to the CIP are considered in the Action Plan. The Action Plan also identifies a program for Sustainable County Operations, defining tasks the County should complete to position itself as a leader in sustainable development and operations from the bottom up. Strategies that should be implemented through the Sustainable Land Development Code and strategies that should be implemented to enhance the County's GIS mapping, modeling and land use analysis are also included in Volume 1.

Volume II-A: Plan Elements (*Systems and Settings of Santa Fe County*)

Volume II-A contains an overview of the principles of smart, sustainable growth to ensure a common understanding of the purpose of the SLDP. This Volume includes a full description of existing conditions, challenges and opportunities facing the County. Plan Elements include Sustainable Growth and Development Alternatives, Renewable Energy, Green Development, Demographics, Land Use and Future Growth Scenarios, Governance, Adequate Public Facilities and Financing, Open Space and Natural Resources, Housing, Economic Development, Agriculture and Ranching, Energy, Public Health, Public Safety, Water and Wastewater, and Transportation.

Volume II-B: Plan Elements (*Oil and Gas Element*)

Volume II-B incorporates the Oil and Gas Element in full, as adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on November 18, 2008. As future plans and elements are created, those documents will be incorporated as subsequent additions to Volume II.

Volume III: Suitability Analysis (*Sustainable Land Development Suitability Analysis*)

Volume III describes the land suitability analysis, which provides a quantitative basis for land use decision-making by using GIS data and a factor weighting system to identify those areas more suitable for development; those areas which should be maintained for rural or agricultural uses; and those areas which should be preserved as conservation areas.

Volume IV: Capital Improvements Program and Financing

Volume IV includes a multi-year Capital Improvements Program and alternatives for the financing of planned improvements. Improvements are prioritized based on the degree to which each removes/prevents imminent threat to public health or safety; improves the quality/corrects deficiency of existing services; provides incentive for economic development; reduces long-term operating costs; and furthers the goals of the SLDP.

Volume V: Community Planning

Volume V incorporates adopted community plans, including descriptions of the existing conditions and future vision of each community. To fully recognize the importance of these plans and enhance implementation, policy statements and action items identified in the plans have been integrated into the policy framework and Action Plan of the SLDP. Each of the fourteen community and district plans are included in this Volume.

Map Atlas

The Map Atlas and Supplement contains all of the Plan maps.

Appendix

The Appendix contains additional reference resources, including a Glossary and Renewable Energy Financing & Policy Guide.