

Introduction to the Project

January 6, 2025



Taos County



Architectural Research
Consultants, Incorporated

Purpose

- **Revise and update the land use regulations and subdivision regulations**
 - *Modernize the current codes to meet current conditions*
 - Provide clear and predictable guidance to developers, policy makers, and community stakeholders
 - Work with the County Staff as a team to implement the project
 - Create a unified code
 - *Reflect the vision, values and guiding principles of the comprehensive plan*

Update Themes

- **Simplify and make more user-friendly**
 - *Create single land development code and the application and review processes*
- **Recalibrate the balance of what is not allowed and what is allowed to be built “smartly”**
 - *Encourage smart growth*
 - Encourage affordable housing
 - Development to meet locals’ needs
 - Allow communities to grow
 - Accommodate some growth of second homes and tourists facilities
 - Assure protection of cultural and environmental assets
 - *Allow more economic development opportunities for businesses and jobs*

Update Themes

- **Recalibrate the balance (continued)**
 - *Encourage ecologically-sound and sustainable development practices*
 - *Protect the beauty of Taos County - landscape features, dark skies, farmland, acequias, forests, views, historic buildings, signage*
 - *Reduce review requirements for smaller projects with few or no impacts and conduct rigorous review for larger projects*
 - *Provide more objective rules on desired types of development*
 - *Provide ample opportunities for public involvement in public review process*

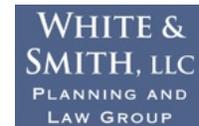
Consultant Team

- Taos County selected **Architectural Research Consultants, Inc. (ARC)** to update the land use code and subdivision regulations in August 2024
- **ARC** teamed with **White & Smith Planning and Law Group (W&S)** on the project

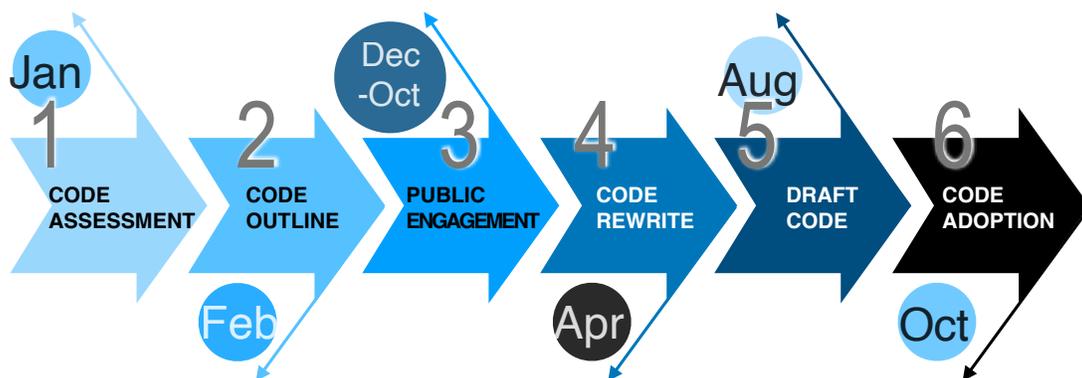
- ARC is an Albuquerque based firm that provides specialized services in community planning, facility programming & evaluation, and research. ARC has worked with the Town of Taos, Taos Pueblo and Taos Municipal Schools and has drafted land use codes for several municipalities and counties in New Mexico. **Steve Burstein**, planner, is lead for ARC.



- W&S, with offices in Kansas City, MO and Charleston, SC, has a national practice in zoning and subdivision law and land development regulations rewrites and updates. They have worked in most states including New Mexico. **Mark White**, partner, is lead for W&S.



Work Plan



Work Plan

- **Task 1. Code assessment**

- *Review zoning and subdivision regulations: standards, administration, enforcement, and other code provisions*
- *Conduct meetings with staff, stakeholders and elected officials to identify code issues*
- *Develop code assessment report including set of objectives for the code update*
 - Give presentation on draft report to the Board of County Commissioners scheduled for January 28, 2025

Work Plan

- **Task 2. Code outline**

- *Apply findings in code assessment to approach and consult with the County Attorney*
- *Develop detailed outline of unified code*

- **Task 3. Public engagement**

- *Develop a public engagement plan*
- *Post documents (educational materials and drafts of code) on Planning Department webpage*
- *Conduct a community survey and, late in project, an open house*
- *Give update presentations to the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners*

Work Plan

- **Task 4. Code Rewrite**
 - *Create separate modules of the code*
 - *Create cross-references within the code*
 - *Develop tables and diagrams to illustrate processes, definitions, development standards*
 - *Incorporate the land use-related ordinances that are standalone*

Work Plan

- **Task 5. Draft document**
 - *Develop three drafts for internal review, legal review, public review and edit based on reviews*
- **Task 6. Present ordinance for approval**
 - *Meet with Planning Commission and with Board of County Commissioners at workshops and in public hearings*
 - *Revise ordinance based on directions from public bodies*

Features of the Existing Codes

Existing Codes and Ordinances



- **Land use code (zoning)**
 - *Last updated in 2018, but had been amended and grown incrementally over many years without comprehensive review and revision*
- **Subdivision regulations**
 - *Adopted in 2005 and have not been substantially revised since then*

- **Various ordinances have amended zoning and subdivision regulations or are standalone regulations**
 - *5 ordinances have amended the land use code*
 - *3 ordinances have amended the subdivision regulations*
 - *5 standalone ordinances were written that relate to land use*

- **The County Rural Area Zone is the principal, default zone district**
 - *Zoning “clearances” are issued to permit new development activities.*
 - *Code provisions differ based on whether the proposed development falls into land use/intensity categories of: residential, commercial, major development, and special use.*
 - *The system is largely discretionary.*
 - *Other use categories include: condominium development, multifamily development, wireless communication facilities, commercial wind power, commercial solar power, mining or extraction. Each has special code provisions.*
 - *Application requirements, review procedures, and development standards differ by land use category/intensity.*

Current Zoning System

- **Two areas have “community and neighborhood zones” - Stagecoach and Upper Las Colonias - where “subzone” districts are mapped**
 - *Such zones are generally recommended in the code*
 - *Allowed uses, prohibited uses and performance criteria are set for each subzone in separate ordinances that amended the land use code*
- **Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) are allowed in any zone**
 - *In a PUD the applicant proposes development standards that may differ from underlying zoning with the intent to achieve innovative development and design solutions*

Please contact us to give us your thoughts on the code update or for further information



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