

Violating Our Vision: Why New Mexico Needs Enforceable Plans

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

New Mexicans treasure their beautiful vistas of snow-capped mountains, desert mesas, and full sky sunsets. They value their long history of diverse cultures merging upon the state known as the “Land of Enchantment.” The people of New Mexico want to see their children grow up with good quality schools and clean, attractive and safe neighborhoods. All these elements of what New Mexicans treasure as their quality of life is threatened by poorly managed growth. Development is occurring in a haphazard manner, jeopardizing New Mexico’s communities.

Many communities in New Mexico want to plan for future growth: encouraging economic investment while protecting their cultural and historic districts and agricultural and open space areas. Counties and municipalities also are limited in public funds and want to spend those monies wisely. Therefore, the comprehensive plan, a plan to direct growth and development, can be a very useful tool. The public has invested a great amount of public funds and time through community involvement to develop these plans. Yet poorly managed growth continues to threaten these communities. Large portions of Mesilla’s green belt is getting plowed over due to a zoning change, and Albuquerque’s school money will soon get diverted from much needed repairs and renovations at existing schools to building new ones in a newly approved development far away from the current urban area. The reason is that community comprehensive plans are not enforceable by law; they have no teeth. Unlike other states in the country, comprehensive plans are adopted as resolutions, meaning they are only for guidance. They are not laws.

Zoning changes that go against a comprehensive plan, like that in Mesilla, and the approval of development projects that are inconsistent with a comprehensive plan, like that in Albuquerque, are occurring in New Mexico because policy makers are not required to refer to the comprehensive plan when making such decisions. As a result, there is a greater chance that development will occur in a piecemeal fashion, not according to the community’s plan. The community’s vision is violated.

It doesn’t have to be this way. Eleven other states in the country-California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Maine, Rhode Island, Delaware, and Florida-all have state laws that protect their communities’ visions by requiring that plans be implemented.¹ If a community chooses to develop a plan that protects its historic district or its rural character, it should be able to implement the plan. If a community chooses to invest its public funds in existing communities repairing existing streets and schools over building new ones far away from urban areas, it should be able to direct such funds through a community plan.

¹ Lincoln, R. 1996. Implementing the Consistency Doctrine in *Modernizing State Planning Statutes: The Growing Smart Working Papers, Vol. 1*, Planning Advisory Service Report, No. 462/463. Chicago: American Planning Association.

Here we share some of New Mexico's stories of communities' efforts to implement their visions for growth and their struggles to protect the quality of life that they treasure. Hopefully we can learn from these stories so our children will have good schools, revitalized neighborhoods, and protected cultural areas like historic plazas, as well as open spaces.

Chapter 2 – Keeping Our Sense of Place in Doña Ana County

La Mesilla, a small quaint farming community with close to 2,000 residents, lies just outside of the city of Las Cruces in southern New Mexico. The town's plaza is decorated with historic adobe buildings dating back to the late 1800's, including the San Albino's Church and the old Fountain Theatre believed to be haunted by the ghost of a frustrated actress.² Surrounding this idyllic town are green fields of chilis, cotton, and pecans. Established before 1850, La Mesilla became one of the largest communities in the New Mexico Territory.³ Settlers were given land ownership by the Mexican government under the Mesilla Civil Colony Land Grant, and agriculture has been the community's way of life ever since.⁴ During the 19th century Mesilla was continually attacked by Apaches, forcing the settlers to concentrate their homes around the Plaza in self-defense.⁵ In 1861 Union troops surrendered to the Confederate Army, leaving Mesilla under control of the South. The Confederates declared Mesilla the capital of the Arizona Territory, which included what is now southern Arizona and southern New Mexico.⁶ Over the past 200 years the community has maintained the beautiful landscape that captures its historic and rural past.

This quiet town is now threatened to lose the quality of life it so treasures. Poorly managed growth is now threatening Mesilla's sense of place. Since the arrival of the Santa Fe railroad to Las Cruces in 1881 the city of Las Cruces has seen a rapid population growth. By 1900, Las Cruces was twice the size of Mesilla.⁷ Today the city of Las Cruces is 39 times larger, with a population of approximately 78,000⁸ compared to approximately 2,000 in Mesilla.⁹ This rapid growth by its neighbor has always been seen as a threat to Mesilla's identity as a historic and rural place. Representative J. Paul Taylor, who has lived in Mesilla all his life, exemplified this fear in reflecting on the town's incorporation in 1861: "We have to go back historically, in terms of when the town became a town. Because at that time, there was great fear, and the people of the town were thinking ahead, that Las Cruces might incorporate Mesilla and Mesilla would lose its identity as an entity."¹⁰

² Onate High School webpage, <http://excalibur.onate.nmhs.edu/Onate/Tours/OldMesilla/Enmesilla.html>.

³ Kent, A. 1998. *Land use change: open space and the Mesilla, New Mexico, Greenbelt-1667-1997*. Master's thesis, Master's thesis, Las Cruces: New Mexico State University.

⁴ Yguado 1973; after Kent, A. 1998. *Land use change: open space and the Mesilla, New Mexico, Greenbelt-1667-1997*. Master's thesis, Las Cruces: New Mexico State University.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Historic Old Mesilla, New Mexico. Mesilla-Valley.Net website. <http://www.mesilla-valley.net/html/mesilla-newmexico.html>

⁷ US Census reports; after Williams, J.L. 1985. *New Mexico in Maps*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

⁸ Las Cruces website, www.las-cruces.org/main/overview.htm

⁹ US Census reports; after Williams, J.L. 1985. *New Mexico in Maps*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

¹⁰ Kent, A. 1998. *Land use change: open space and the Mesilla, New Mexico, Greenbelt-1667-1997*. Master's thesis, Master's thesis, Las Cruces: New Mexico State University.

Today that concern still exists. In 1959 the community reincorporated, to “keep La Mesilla as it existed; as a separate, recognizably separate village, stated then Planning and Zoning Commissioner, Raymond Cano, “In the old days, Las Cruces and Mesilla were always separate. And we wanted to keep it that way.”¹¹

Along with reincorporating, La Mesilla began to develop a comprehensive plan in the early 1970’s after obtaining a planning grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The primary goals of the plan were to protect the community’s identity from outside forces.¹² “The whole idea was to keep Mesilla’s identity as a rural area and also as a high density area in the old central, historically, if I can use the word, ‘business’ part of town. Because years ago, it used to be the center of business for the valley,” stated Rep. Taylor.¹³ “That was the greatest desire, was to somehow preserve something that reflected our past history and our heritage,” adds Mr. Cano.¹⁴

Since the development of the Mesilla Comprehensive Plan, the community has tried to use it to defend against zoning changes that would alter the town’s character. It became quite clear in public meetings that the town’s desires were not to stop growth, but to keep Mesilla historic and rural.¹⁵ “This was part of the plan. We knew the density would be higher. Many people here are worried about future development. We have not been haphazard about it. We have had a plan. That plan provided for a greenbelt. It provided for some three acre plats...and five acre lots for division of the farm area with good reason: to preserve this very good agricultural land,” explained Rep. Taylor.¹⁶

Ella Nelson, another lifetime resident and former Board of Trustee Member stated, “One of the issues here is the quality of life here in Mesilla and the village atmosphere or whatever you want to call it. People that are attracted to Mesilla are attracted because of this quality and it is made up by people who have lived here a very long time. The issue is not whether to develop or to let people in or not. But it is to decide what we want and to decide what kind of quality we want and how to keep it. That is the main issue. When you approve those developments, you are going to give something up, so be aware of what it is you are going to give up.”¹⁷

One such zoning change occurred in 1994 involving the City of Las Cruces. In an effort to help protect the area along Avenida de Mesilla, the main road leading into Mesilla from Las Cruces, the Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan had designated the area along this road as “rural and agricultural land.” The Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan’s Goals and Objectives state, “land uses along urban boundaries with agriculture and/or the open desert should be planned to maintain a buffer of open space for a clear and sensitive

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

transition between intense urban uses and the rural environment.”¹⁸ The 1994 zoning change involving this area along Avenida de Mesilla, made by the city of Las Cruces, permitted higher density development, from rural/agricultural to low and medium density residential and neighborhood commercial zones. This zoning change clearly violated the city’s own Comprehensive Plan.¹⁹

The town of Mesilla, concerned about this new threat to its community’s character, filed a lawsuit because the zoning change was in direct contradiction to the Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan. The development that could occur under the zoning change would not preserve the sensitive transition between the large city of Las Cruces and the rural community of Mesilla.²⁰ Mesilla’s long time fear of developing into a suburb of Las Cruces and losing its own identity was becoming a reality.

The Doña Ana County District Court ruled against Mesilla, stating that the rezoning was not subjective.²¹ The Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan was only guidance, not law. As a result, concrete will soon cover wild cactuses and cotton and chile fields. Four hundred seventy-five manufactured homes are now moving into the area. Between 1967 and 1997, this area just outside of Mesilla has lost half of its open space to development.²² The charm and unique qualities of Mesilla that have been called home by generations of residents have been changed indefinitely. A part of their identity, their sense of place has been lost.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Court case #CV94-224; after Kent, A. 1998. *Land use change: open space and the Mesilla, New Mexico, Greenbelt-1667-1997*. Master’s thesis, Master’s thesis, Las Cruces: New Mexico State University.

²² Kent, A. 1998. *Land use change: open space and the Mesilla, New Mexico, Greenbelt-1667-1997*. Master’s thesis, Master’s thesis, Las Cruces: New Mexico State University.

Chapter 3 – Planning in Bernalillo County – Toothless Wish Lists

The City of Albuquerque, once a small agrarian community, has grown up to be New Mexico's largest city, with over 600,000 residents. Albuquerque's rapid growth has brought with it major city problems. The residents of Albuquerque are finding themselves having to drive farther to get places and sitting in more and more traffic jams. Neighborhoods are flooded with broken water and sewer lines, and many older schools are literally falling apart. Currently the city has a \$1 billion backlog in infrastructure repairs.²³ While existing parts of the city lag behind in infrastructure needs, new roads, water lines, and schools are being built on the outskirts. Between 1995 and 2000 sixty-eight percent of residential development occurred on the urban fringe, while only 7.6% occurred within the city's 1960 boundaries.²⁴

The residents of Albuquerque would like things to be different. In the 1999 Citizen Satisfaction Survey, in a ratio of 2 to 1 Albuquerque residents said they would prefer residential development to occur on land in the built-up parts of the city rather than vacant land on the outer boundaries. In the same survey, only 26% of residents felt Albuquerque was well planned.²⁵

It's not as if the city doesn't plan. The city's planning department has undergone great efforts to develop plans to direct how the city will grow in order to protect open spaces, redirect investment into older neighborhoods, reduce traffic congestion and air pollution, and spend public funds wisely. The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, the area's highest ranking master plan, clearly states how growth should occur, incorporating the opinions and ideas of many Albuquerque and Bernalillo County residents.

The Comprehensive Plan sets a high priority on directing growth in existing urban areas near existing facilities and requires that infill and redevelopment projects are not hindered by development outside the city. Any large-scale developments outside existing urban areas must provide infrastructure at no net expense to local governments.²⁶ These policies were set to protect the community's vision of growth and its desire to invest taxpayer money in existing neighborhoods. The problem is this plan has no teeth. Like all other comprehensive plans, it was adopted as a resolution, not an ordinance.

In March 1999 Quail Ranch, a proposed development for the West Mesa, won approval by both city and county officials. The development project would be the size of Santa Fe—over 6,700 acres and would accommodate 45,000 people. The project violates the Comprehensive Plan in two specific ways: it will have a tremendous negative impact on

²³ Cordova, T. 1999. Testimony at Extraterritorial Land Use Authority hearing on Black Ranch.

²⁴ Draft Planned Growth Strategy. 2000. Albuquerque: City of Albuquerque.

²⁵ 1999 Citizen Satisfaction Survey by the City of Albuquerque.

²⁶ *Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan*, 1988. Albuquerque: Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Planning Division.

the city's infill and redevelopment efforts and create a huge cost to local governments. Dr. Teresa Cordova, Professor of Architecture and Planning at the University of New Mexico testified at the Quail Ranch hearing, "...approval of Black Ranch would be detrimental to the city's infill efforts as it will siphon city resources away from infill development projects."²⁷ In a memorandum to the Extraterritorial Land Use Authority, the decision making body that made the approval decision, Albuquerque Mayor Jim Baca wrote: "The proposed development is two miles from the nearest urban development . . . this area does not currently and is not envisioned ever to have urban services."²⁸

According to the City of Albuquerque's Environmental Health Department, the costs for new roads for Quail Ranch to the public would be between \$18.9 million and \$57.75 million.²⁹ The City of Albuquerque's fiscal analysis showed that basic infrastructure for Quail Ranch such as water and sewer lines, will cost the city an additional \$23 million at full completion of the development.³⁰ After full build-out, there would then be an additional \$5 million per year for maintaining services.³¹ Albuquerque Public Schools has estimated that the construction of new schools for Quail Ranch will cost \$142 million. This does not include hiring teachers or purchasing new equipment and supplies for each new school.³² "Black Ranch will be a net expense to Albuquerque Public Schools," stated Angela Robbins on behalf of the APS Superintendent at the Quail Ranch hearing.³³

The community has gone through a laborious process to plan for growth, and now it has to face the same problems of traffic, air pollution, and paying for new infrastructure while existing neighborhoods go neglected. It's as if the twenty years of planning never took place.

"Why is my tax money being spent on new streets and schools out in the middle of nowhere when there are giant potholes in my own neighborhood? The sewer system in my block continually backs up and it takes a lengthy time before it is repaired. It is outrageous that Quail Ranch will require Albuquerque Public Schools to spend money on new schools when the school system itself has a \$1 billion backlog in repairs and renovations," exclaims Deanna Archuleta-Loeser, President of Montezuma Elementary PTA. "Half the students are in portable classrooms and most kids don't have real books, the teachers have to photocopy the pages. The school's sewer system got so bad that several parents threatened to call the public health department due to the horrific smell in the bathrooms. Just last week a teacher's hand went right through the wall while she was writing on the chalkboard. I thought we had a plan to invest our public money in existing neighborhoods, not out in the middle of nowhere."

²⁷ *Plaintiffs-Appellants' Statement of Appellate Issues, Action No. CV-99-07613*. 2000. Second Judicial District Court, State of New Mexico, County of Bernalillo.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

An additional problem for both developers and businesses is the lack of predictability in where public investments will be made such as roads and schools. Since the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan is only for guidance, it is unclear where economic investment should be made, on the fringe of the city, like in Quail Ranch, or in existing communities.

The West Side Strategic Plan, an area plan was developed to protect the integrity of the West Side neighborhoods of Albuquerque. This plan details the policies of the Comprehensive Plan at a more local level. It was adopted in 1997 after three years of approximately 30 public meetings involving 25 neighborhood associations. The plan, along with the Comprehensive Plan, clearly states that the area of Coors Boulevard and I-40 should be preserved for open space, residential, and small neighborhood shopping center use. Yet in 1999, the Bluff Shopping Center won approval for a 220,000 square foot “big box” store with only one exit at the intersection of Quail and Coors. This intersection is already an over-crowded intersection, termed “failed” by transportation planners. Before the bulldozers have even moved in, this intersection has become notorious for being the worst traffic accident area on the West Side. What will happen once the mega-scale commercial development moves in attracting more traffic from outside the neighborhood area?

Residents are concerned not only for the tranquility of the neighborhood, but also the safety of their children and their health. Local residents will be subjected to increased levels of carbon monoxide generated from automobile traffic. The community had tried to plan in order to protect itself against these ill effects of poorly managed growth. Since the plans are considered only “wish lists” and not something to be seriously followed, the community has to suffer the consequences. Joe Valles, president of the Grande Heights Neighborhood Association and a participant in the planning process now asks, “What use are the plans if they’re not going to be enforced?”

On the other side of the Sandia Mountains, another community in Bernalillo County, the East Mountains, has tried to protect its quality of life through planning. Residents there have developed the East Mountain Area Plan to protect their rolling green hills of piñon and juniper, their hiking trails, and their beautiful vistas of the surrounding Sandia and Ortiz Mountains. Campbell Ranch, a proposed development, will build more than 4,023 homes in four major villages, along with two golf courses and some hotels.³⁴ Such a project, if approved, would violate the low-density design stated in the City of Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan and the East Mountain Area Plan.

A project this size would degrade the rural character of the area by increasing traffic on NM 14 by 600% from 3,400 to 20,000 vehicles per day after full build out with additional traffic from nearby developments.³⁵ Wildlife such as black bears, mountain lions, and cougars would be threatened by the increased population and traffic. New roads will scar the mountain landscape, while golf courses would use much of the area’s valued water. Campbell Ranch may get approved, just like Quail Ranch, even though it violates the

³⁴ Bernalillo County Planning Commission Staff Notes, Agenda No. 4, MP-5, December 14, 2000.

³⁵ Campbell Ranch Master Plan submitted to Bernalillo County Planning Commission, 2000.

East Mountain Area Plan and the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, since these plans are only for guidance. Again, the community's planning efforts to protect their quality of life are practically in vain because such plans are seen as toothless; they are not law.

Chapter 4 – Protecting Our Water in Taos County

Green mountains with snow-topped peaks overshadow the lush valleys of Taos County. Here artists find their inspiration, Native Americans farm the lands that have been their homelands for centuries, and local residents cherish the history of the plaza and the lands that surround it.

During the early 1990's, Taos County residents became increasingly concerned about land being subdivided for new developments without adequate public review. Without a general plan for growth in the region, the beautiful landscapes of Taos valley were threatened from being chopped up like a checkerboard in a very short amount of time. New subdivisions with private septic tanks created an even greater fear, the danger of contamination of the aquifer, the primary drinking water source for the area.

In April 1995 the Taos Board of County Commissioners adopted a land use ordinance that outlined a specific role for residents and neighborhood groups in the development of a county comprehensive plan and the review process of development projects. Each of 35 neighborhoods was to develop their own plan that was then to be incorporated into the county's comprehensive plan. In 1997, after two years of meetings with residents, the Taos County planning staff completed 22 neighborhood plans.³⁶ The Board of County Commissioners incorporated each of the neighborhood plans into the comprehensive plan and then adopted the comprehensive plan as a resolution.

The neighborhoods had expressed a great concern for water supply and the high probability of contamination from private sewer systems. As a result, a primary goal of the Taos County Comprehensive Plan is to protect water quality and quantity. The plan lists a water survey as a first implementation strategy.³⁷ To date, no survey has been done and the land use regulations have not been updated to support these plans.³⁸

Without regulations to support the neighborhood and comprehensive plans, land continues to be subdivided in a haphazard and piecemeal fashion. In the Las Colonias West Mesa Neighborhood, property owner Frank Trujillo has subdivided his property into approximately 100-1 acre parcels.³⁹ Thus creating the potential for 100 separate wells and septic systems. Residents in the neighborhood are distraught, as they believed their neighborhood plan and the Taos County Comprehensive Plan would protect their water resources from such sewer systems. Now, the underground aquifer, the primary drinking water source for the residents of Taos is threatened because a plan was not followed. Regulations were not made to implement the plan, since the plan was not law.

³⁶ DiCicco, D. 2001. Personal communication.

³⁷ Taos County Comprehensive Plan, Taos County Resolution 1997-50.

³⁸ DiCicco, D. 2001. Personal communication.

³⁹ First Judicial District 98-302CV, State of New Mexico Ex-rel. Patricia Madrid et.al vs. Frank R. Trujillo and Ida J. Trujillo.

Chapter 5 – Watching Out for Our Children in San Juan County

The city of Farmington has made great strides at planning how it wants to grow, especially in regard to commercial development. The 1980 Citizen Goals Committee proposed the avoidance of strip commercial development, such as convenient stores and fast food restaurants, along arterial or neighborhood streets. The committee suggested a greater focus on commercial centers concentrated around major intersections. Vision 2010, another planning effort, also concluded with a policy to discourage commercial strip development along neighborhood streets and encourage the development of commercial centers.⁴⁰

In 2000 a zoning change was proposed by Sucuno Limited Partnership for a property near San Juan Community College on the corner of two arterial streets, College Boulevard and Messina. The requested zoning change was from residential single family to local commercial, and was in direct conflict with the 1980 Citizen Goals Committee, Vision 2010, and the Farmington Comprehensive Plan.⁴¹ The community had clearly stated in all these planning efforts they do not want commercial strip malls along arterial streets. Neighborhood businesses such as offices that fit into the neighborhood setting and produce less traffic were preferred. The nearby neighborhood, Piedra Vista High School, and bordering agricultural lands would be altered by the larger commercial development and increased traffic from a strip mall. There was great concern by the planners that if this zoning change was permitted, it would be used to allow for further zoning changes, encouraging a snowball effect in strip mall development in the area.⁴²

“We must take the necessary steps to ensure that new development on the east side of College Boulevard is functionally and visually compatible with the landscaped and professionally designed facilities on the west side of the corridor,” stated Long Range Planner, Michael Sullivan.⁴³

The Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) voted down the change. At the P&Z meeting, Development Service Administrator Tom Kuntz stated that currently there were no access points along College Boulevard where the zoning change was occurring. He also expressed concern that the change would result in multiple driveways as the property was subdivided for restaurants and stores, thus increasing traffic dramatically.⁴⁴

Commissioner Simpson raised the concern of the effect of traffic on the neighborhood children walking to school.⁴⁵ Despite these concerns and the commission vote, the City Council later voted in favor of the zoning change, an action that was contradictory to the

⁴⁰ Farmington Development Services Administration Staff Report on Petition 1808, August 24, 2000.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Draft Minutes, Planning and Zoning Commission Minutes, September 14, 2000.

comprehensive plan and the community's desire to plan such commercial development. Now the floodgates are open for commercial strip development. Children will soon be dodging more and more cars as they walk to school.

Chapter 6 – Recommendations

Community plans, like a county or city’s comprehensive plan, can become useless if they are not implemented. Policy structures must be put in place to carry out the plans. In many New Mexico communities, the plans have been ignored or only seen as guidance. Subsequent growth and development may not coincide with the community’s vision. As a result, communities risk losing their ability to determine how they grow and develop like in Mesilla. Also, without enforceable plans, taxpayer dollars can be wasted on expensive new development projects for roads and schools while existing neighborhoods deteriorate like in Albuquerque. A community may lose its long-term vision for economic investment and growth. It is very unclear where developers and new businesses invest if development decisions are piecemeal and haphazard, not according to a plan. As in all the cases presented in this report, from Mesilla to Farmington, a lack of enforcement leaves the public with an unreliable and unpredictable planning and approval process.

Fortunately, there are solutions that can help communities implement their plans and ensure that their quality of life is protected. Like other states, we can put teeth into our community comprehensive plans.

Policy recommendations to state policy makers:

1. **Help communities implement their long-term vision by requiring communities that choose to develop local comprehensive plans to adopt them as ordinances by the local governing body.** This way these plans have the force of law and are not viewed as only for guidance or wish lists. Robert Lincoln, an attorney and planner in Florida, said it best: “...plans are documents that describe public policies that the community intends to implement, and are not simply a rhetorical expression of the community’s desires.”⁴⁶
2. **Improve government efficiency and provide a more predictable environment for economic investment by requiring local zoning codes, subdivision laws, land use rules, and development decisions to be consistent with comprehensive plans.** When tax dollars are directed by a plan, infrastructure such as schools and streets can be built according to where the community has planned for them, not where development has directed them. Instead of infrastructure following development, development can occur according to where the community has determined public money will be spent. Businesses can then have a more predictable environment in which to build and invest.
3. **Make planning reliable and dependable for developers, landowners, citizens, and agencies by requiring that local government bodies state for the public record how each development decision follows the**

⁴⁶ Lincoln, R. 1996. Implementing the Consistency Doctrine in *Modernizing State Planning Statutes: The Growing Smart Working Papers, Vol. 1*, Planning Advisory Service Report, No. 462/463. Chicago: American Planning Association.

comprehensive plan. Local policy makers should have to refer to the comprehensive plan when making land use decisions. This would provide a structure that the public and local officials can depend on. It would provide more predictability on the outcome of development decisions and the approval process. The community should have a basic understanding that land use decisions will be based on the comprehensive plan. Since members of a community may feel the need to change the plan, there should be a clear public process for amending the plan as an ordinance.