



Curry County City of Clovis



Comprehensive Plan Joint Action Guide



PLANNING

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Introduction

As with counties and cities across the country, there are often points of contention between local governments. The most successful governments are able to work cooperatively to solve the issues to the benefit of both. The officials of both Curry County and the City of Clovis recognize this and have a very successful economic development program. The cooperation during the recent tornado disaster further highlights the cooperation of the County and City.

Early in the writing of the comprehensive plans for Curry County and City of Clovis it was apparent that the comprehensive plans for the County and City would need to be “stand alone” documents that addressed the needs and desires of each’s residents. However, it was also discovered that there were many common issues that were of concern to both the County and City, although not always for the same reason. This document identifies issues common to both the County and City and makes recommendations on what general steps the County and City can cooperatively take to address the issue. Generally, these issues and potential solutions are also identified in the individual comprehensive plans.

While outlining some of the steps that should be taken by the County and City, this document does not provide specific standards. These standards must be negotiated between the County and City so that both are satisfied with the outcome. For example this document does not try to impose a standard for how close to a water line one must be, to be required to connect to the water line. However, the document does recommend that the City and County jointly establish a connection standard.

There are also areas of commonality that should be continued. For example, both Curry County and the City of Clovis recognize the importance of Cannon Air Force Base on the future of their communities and have worked tirelessly to protect this interest. Some of the issues identified in the stand-alone plans identify these types of commonalities and urge continued cooperation between the two jurisdictions.

Whether approaching issues from common interests or different perspectives, it benefits both the County and the City to seek joint solutions and implementation strategies. This document is intended to provide a bridge between common issues and to assist in looking for joint actions to keep both jurisdictions strong.



Streets and Roads

Standards for streets and roads are different between the County and City. As might be expected, the County does not typically require curb, gutter, and sidewalks for roads constructed in the County. Also the pavement width is also typically different to account for the lower use rural roads. The City, as an urban entity, does require curb, gutter, and sidewalks, and has rights-of-way wide enough to accommodate traffic flow and usually on-street parking on one or both sides of the street.

The difference in standards is usually only an issue when developed County areas are to be annexed by the City, and at the point where County roads meet City streets. When property with roads built to County standards is annexed to the City, it results in substandard City streets. These streets must then be brought up to standards, special exceptions be granted, or the annexation delayed until the streets are improved to City standards. While this does not directly impact health and safety, it can impact logical growth of the City, potential economic development for the City and County, and have potential significant financial impacts on the residents wishing to be annexed.

The difference in standards can have potential safety implications where County and City roads and streets meet. Different paving widths can cause driver confusion or over corrections. The change in width can cause inattentive drivers to miss the change of width causing them to drive onto the shoulder or off the road completely. Pedestrian safety can also be compromised where residents who live very near the City and close to urban densities are forced to walk on the sides of roads with no visible barrier to vehicle traffic.

County Issues:

- Safety
- Cost of constructing new roads
- Maintenance
- Cost of maintenance
- Rural ambiance/lifestyle

City Issues:

- Safety
- Cost of improving roads prior to annexation
- Drainage
- Liability
- Urban ambiance/lifestyle

Recommendations:

1. Curry County and the City of Clovis should work together to establish consistent street standards for future development occurring at or near the City boundary, which is at or near urban densities.
2. Curry County and the City of Clovis should determine which existing developments in the County are likely to be annexed into the City within the time frame of the Comprehensive Plans, and develop plans for improving streets within those developments to the agreed upon standards.
3. Curry County and the City of Clovis should develop standards for pavement transitions between County and City rights-of-way. In addition to transitions for vehicle traffic, the standards should include provisions for drainage, warning signage, pavement markings, right-of-way acquisition that may be needed, and maintenance responsibilities.
4. Curry County and the City of Clovis should coordinate on speed limits, traffic control, and similar traffic related issues for areas within the City's subdivision sphere.



Land Use Interface

One of the most significant areas of potential conflict between Curry County and the City of Clovis is land uses at or near the edge of the City. The City of Clovis is predominantly urban with the uses and improvements one would expect to find in a City. The majority of Curry County is rural and agricultural in nature, except that in some areas near the City, development has occurred at near urban densities, such as on the highways serving the City. The County does not have zoning which can also lead to uses that are incompatible locating near sensitive uses, both within the County and adjacent to the City.

Curry County, like most New Mexico counties, includes a number of people who live or have moved into the County to escape the often strict regulations that exists in some cities. The County also depends on the many farms and ranches in the County to provide employment and revenue. In the wide open spaces of the County where homes may be a mile or more apart and surrounded by farmland and ranching activities, there are seldom conflicts. However, when denser development occurs near farms and ranches, conflicts between the uses often occurs. For the County residents, additional traffic, urban run-off that can contaminate fields, blowing trash, noise, light, and an increased potential for vandalism are all impacts that County residents can experience from nearby urban or urban-like development.

Clovis is the County seat and is the largest city in the County. Clovis also provides most of the major services needed by City and County residents, such as medical, retail establishments, and entertainment. The City of Clovis is typical of other cities in the State and includes a mix of denser urban development. Urban dwellings, medical facilities, and schools are particularly sensitive uses from the City's perspective and should be protected from what urban dwellers consider incompatible uses. Unfortunately, many of the uses that make up the rural areas of the County are considered undesirable as neighbors to the City. The recent influx of dairies in the County that support the cheese plant south of Clovis is one example of a use that many Clovis residents feel is an undesirable neighbor. Potential impacts of County uses on the City include, noise, odor, use of pesticides and other chemicals, heavy equipment using public roads, and similar impacts.

As can be seen, the County and City both have a common interest to coordinate land use in the areas near the City, but for vastly different reasons. The County desires to preserve its rural roots and protect its historical land uses; and the City desires to protect its more sensitive uses from potential impacts.

County Issues:

- Protect County lifestyle
- Protect historical businesses (farms and ranches)
- Ensure continued economic health of the County
- Ensure development on the City's edge does not negatively encroach on or affect agricultural areas

City Issues:

- Protect sensitive uses from harmful or nuisance impacts
- Ensure development in the County does not unreasonably hamper growth of the City
- Ensure continued economic health of the City
- Protect both the appearance and function of the land uses on the edges of the City

Recommendations:

1. Curry County and the City of Clovis should establish a joint team to review and standardize the subdivision and zoning (if adopted by the County) regulations of the City and County. This will ensure that future County development can be annexed easily into the City at the appropriate time.



2. Curry County and the City of Clovis should develop common “right-to-farm/ranch” ordinances/covenants that will be recorded on all new developments near areas of potential conflict.
3. Curry County and the City of Clovis should work toward expanding the extra-territorial zone around the City.
4. Curry County and the City of Clovis should establish a development review process and team for reviewing all development within five miles of the City limits in the County, and within one mile of the City limits in the City. The purpose of the review would be to ensure that both County and City concerns are addressed in development approvals and mitigated when possible.



Clovis, Cannon AFB and environs

Cannon Air Force Base

Cannon Air Force Base (CAFB) is extremely important to both Curry County and the City of Clovis. Cannon Air Force Base is similar to a base industry that brings in millions of federal dollars into the County and City, so protection of this asset is of utmost importance to both.

One of CAFB's most attractive features, in addition to the tremendous community support, is the lack of land uses that impact its operations. Many bases, such as El Torro Marine Air Station in California, have been closed because the adjacent land uses began to impact the base so intensely that operations were severely curtailed. The Air Force prepares an Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) report for each of its air fields. Generally, the report describes certain zones based on the type of aircraft flying at the base and makes recommendations as to what land uses are compatible and incompatible. In 2005 an AICUZ report was prepared for CAFB, however, the change of mission will likely make some portions of that report out of date. Regardless, the existing report is a good starting point for the County and City to develop regulations to protect the future operations of the base. An important side effect of the AICUZ report, when followed, is that future uses are also protected from negative impacts from the air field, such as noise, light, and accidents.

County Issues:

- Closure of CAFB would have significant impacts on the County's economy
- Ensure that operations at CAFB are not hampered by inappropriate land uses in the vicinity of CAFB
- Ensure that future uses are not impacted by operations at CAFB
- Ensure that CAFB personnel and their families are made to feel welcome and part of the community

City Issues:

- Closure of CAFB would have significant impacts on the City's economy
- Ensure that operations at CAFB are not hampered by inappropriate land uses in the vicinity of CAFB
- Ensure that future uses are not impacted by operations at CAFB
- Ensure that CAFB personnel and their families are made to feel welcome and part of the community

Recommendations:

1. Curry County and the City of Clovis should continue their excellent history of working together to "Keep Cannon".
2. Curry County and the City of Clovis should adopt a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreeing to follow the recommendations of the AICUZ reports prepared for CAFB.
3. Curry County and the City of Clovis should examine, and if feasible, adopt joint land use plans for the areas around CAFB that are consistent with the AICUZ report.
4. Curry County and the City of Clovis should actively encourage participation of CAFB in land use decision that could impact the operations of the base.
5. Curry County and the City of Clovis should jointly examine ways, such as limited bus service or establishing a special board for that purpose as examples, to better integrate the service personnel and their families into the community.
6. Curry County and the City of Clovis should actively encourage participation of service personnel and their families from the base in community activities, boards, and commissions.



Clovis Municipal Airport

Currently the Clovis Municipal Airport is owned and operated by the City of Clovis on unincorporated land located approximately four miles from the existing City limits. The City is in the process of expanding the airport to allow larger aircraft to safely use the facility. While there are currently no major commercial flights to or from the airport, the new expanded facility has the potential to be a catalyst for new economic activities that center on use of the airport.

Similar to CAFB, the airport is not currently encroached on by inappropriate uses. Unlike CAFB, an AICUZ report is not required to be prepared. However, many of the same principles that apply to CAFB are applicable to the airport. Since the airport can attract new jobs and industry to the area, as well as support the mission of CAFB, it is in both the County's and City's interest to protect the operations of the airport, and also to ensure that the airport does not impact future land uses.

County Issues:

- Expansion of the Clovis Municipal Airport has the potential to bring new jobs and industries to the area
- The expanded airport is important to the continued success of CAFB
- Ensure that future uses are not impacted by operations at the Clovis Municipal Airport

City Issues:

- Expansion of the Clovis Municipal Airport has the potential to bring new jobs and industries to the area
- The expanded airport is important to the continued success of CAFB
- Ensure that future uses are not impacted by operations at the Clovis Municipal Airport

Recommendations:

1. Curry County and the City of Clovis should work toward annexation of the Clovis Municipal Airport to the City of Clovis.
2. A report similar to the AICUZ report prepared for CAFB should be jointly prepared and adopted for the Clovis Municipal Airport.
3. Curry County and the City of Clovis should examine, and if feasible, adopt joint land use plans for the areas around the Clovis Municipal Airport where there is a potential of conflict between the airport and existing and/or future land uses.
4. Curry County and the City of Clovis should adopt a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreeing to follow the recommendations of the report prepared for the Clovis Municipal Airport.



Clovis Municipal Airport Terminal

Water

One of the most significant issues facing Curry County and the City of Clovis, and indeed the western United States, is water supply. There is not significant surface water to draw from within the County for agricultural or domestic uses. The pumping of water from the Ogallala aquifer is slowly reducing the ground water available for the future. Water was one of the strongest issues brought out during the comprehensive plan public input meetings. Recent studies by the Office of the State Engineer confirm that more water is being removed from the aquifer than is being introduced and could lead to eventual shortages. The report indicates that the pre-dominate water use in the County is for agricultural purposes. The report also indicates that ground water is of generally high quality, but that potential threats to quality from leaking underground storage tanks, nitrates from agricultural activities, dairy operations, septic tanks, sewage treatment plants, and contamination from oil and gas field operations all can impact the aquifer.

The County and City, along with other communities, have been working together to secure additional water supplies, specifically the Ute Water Project, formally known as the Eastern New Mexico Rural Water System. If eventually constructed, the Ute Water Project will provide a significant source of new water to the County and City. However, additional water supplies or conservation of existing supplies is needed to ensure that the primary economic engine of the County, farming and ranching, and that an adequate supply of water for domestic uses in the City, are available in the future.

County Issues:

- Agricultural users use the most water in the County, and their continued success depends on availability of an adequate water supply
- A combination of new water supplies, conservation, and reclamation need to be explored
- Water usage can not be adequately monitored and/or controlled on individual wells
- Historic water rights must be protected
- Protecting the aquifer from contamination is an issue for all County well users

City Issues:

- To continue to grow and attract new residents and businesses, an adequate, safe water supply must be available
- A combination of new water supplies, conservation, and reclamation need to be explored
- Uncontrolled wells near the City limits have a potential to impact nearby City wells
- Water planning efforts must include areas of potential City growth
- Protecting the aquifer from contamination is an issue for all City well users

Recommendations:

1. Curry County and the City of Clovis should continue to cooperate on the Eastern New Mexico Rural Water System.
2. Curry County and the City of Clovis should develop policies and regulations regarding individual wells and hook-ups to the City water system. The policies/regulations should include specific distances in which new development in the County is required to connect to the City's water system if certain infrastructure is available. The policies/regulations should also include plans for requiring existing uses in the County near the City edge and existing private wells within the City to connect to City water for domestic uses.
3. Curry County and the City of Clovis should develop and adopt common policies/requirements for water reclamation for certain water intensive uses, such as, but not limited to, car washes, golf courses, and agricultural uses.



4. Curry County and the City of Clovis should establish a joint task force to identify and mitigate abandon and/or leaking fuel and similar tanks that have a potential to contaminate the water supply.
5. Curry County and the City of Clovis should consider raising the minimum parcel size that private wells are allowed to be constructed on.
6. Curry County and the City of Clovis should jointly prepare and adopt a wellhead protection program to protect wells from local sources of contamination.



Irrigation system in Curry County

Waste Water (Sanitary Sewer)

Because Curry County is dominated by vast, open lands with widely spaced housing, the majority of homes in the County are on individual waste water disposal systems. On the other hand, most of the properties in the City of Clovis are connected to the City's sanitary sewer system. Older waste water disposal systems were not built to comply with today's stricter requirements, and have a greater potential for failure and to contaminate the ground water. Ground water is the primary source of the County's and City's water supply and must be protected.

The distances between uses in the County make it infeasible to develop shared waste water systems. However, development occurring near the City are a different matter. The City's waste water disposal plant is more efficient at disposing of waste than individual systems, in both quantity and quality. Individual waste water disposal systems that can be abandoned and connected to a City system, or connected during initial construction should be.

County Issues:

- It is not feasible to create shared waste water disposal systems in most areas of the County
- Improperly maintained or failed individual waste water disposal systems may contribute to ground water contamination
- It is more difficult to annex existing development that is on individual waste water disposal systems

City Issues:

- City sanitary sewer is available in all parts of the City and there should be no individual waste water disposal systems within the City limits
- Improperly maintained or failed individual waste water disposal systems may contribute to ground water contamination
- County areas to be annexed should provide access to City waste water disposal prior to annexation
- Waste water disposal planning efforts must include areas of potential City growth

Recommendations:

1. Curry County and the City of Clovis should develop policies and regulations regarding individual waste water disposal systems and hook-ups to the City waste water disposal system. The policies/regulations should include specific distances in which new development in the County is required to connect to the City's waste water disposal system if certain infrastructure is available. The policies/regulations should also include plans for requiring existing uses in the County near the City edge and existing waste water disposal systems within the City to connect to the City disposal system.
2. Curry County and the City of Clovis should establish a joint task force to identify and mitigate improperly maintained and/or failed waste water disposal systems that have a potential to contaminate the water supply.



Emergency Services

The primary purpose of both Curry County and the City of Clovis is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens. A great portion of this responsibility falls on the emergency services that both provide. As demonstrated after the recent tornado, the County and City are able to coordinate emergency services resources to respond to emergencies. The County and City already have a joint emergency management office giving them the edge over many other cities in New Mexico.

County Issues:

- Limited resources and the size of the County combine to potentially create situations where resources are not immediately available for an emergency
- Coordination with multiple local, State, and Federal agencies may be required for certain emergencies
- The primary medical facilities are not centrally located in the County
- It is important to maintain rapid response times for emergencies as the County grows

City Issues:

- Large scale emergencies may require assets from other local, State, and Federal agencies to provide the best response
- It is important to maintain rapid response times as for emergencies and the City grows

Recommendations:

1. Curry County and the City of Clovis should continue their combined coordination and planning efforts, including the application for grants that benefit both local governments.
2. Curry County and the City of Clovis should work closely with personnel from CAFB to determine the best way to respond to emergencies generated by, or related to, CAFB and may require a joint County-City-Air Force response, such as an aircraft crash or chemical release.
3. Curry County, the City of Clovis, other communities in the County, and officials from the regional medical center should determine if there is a need for emergency helipads and/or similar facilities throughout the County.
4. As the communities grow, both the County and City should plan for adequate equipment and personnel to maintain rapid response times in emergencies.



Plains Regional Medical Center

Transit Services

A very limited demand transit system is in place in the County. The public meeting in Melrose revealed that many residents felt the system was not adequate to serve their needs due mostly to cost and availability. It was also stated at one of the public meetings that it was difficult for those living at CAFB to make it into Clovis if they didn't own a vehicle. The population density and size of the County would make it difficult to provide economical and efficient bus service to all parts of the County. However, it may be possible to provide a very limited, fixed schedule service that runs from certain collection points to the City and back, such as to Melrose, Texico, and CAFB. Service to Texico would also provide an opportunity to Farwell, Texas residents to spend their money in New Mexico.

The City of Clovis operates a bus system within the City limits. While it would not be feasible to use City funds to provide service to County areas and other communities, the City in cooperation with the County and/or other communities could use the existing transit administrative and maintenance infrastructure to achieve an economy of scale. Bringing County and residents from other communities into Clovis would also likely increase tax revenues for the City.

County Issues:

- Those County residents, including those from CAFB, without vehicles have difficulty getting to the City of Clovis for higher level services
- The population density and size of the County make regular transit service to the County impractical

City Issues:

- The City is the commercial and service hub of the County, but outlying County residents without vehicles have difficulty reaching the City

Recommendations:

1. Curry County and the City of Clovis should together examine the feasibility of expanding or supplementing the existing City bus service to provide new routes to collection points in other County communities and to CAFB.
2. Curry County and the City of Clovis should jointly seek grants and other funding to provide expanded transit services.



Beautification

One of the most passionate issues brought out during the public meetings for the comprehensive plan was for beautification and blight removal. The phrase “clean it or screen it” was commonly heard. The concern was primarily focused on the entrance ways into Clovis, where there are a number of abandoned or neglected properties that contain debris, trash, dilapidated and/or dangerous structures, weeds, and similar nuisances that do not convey a sense of well maintained property. The visual impact is primarily a quality of life issue; however, it was also felt that these properties can have a negative impact on economic development, since these are the first properties that one sees as they are entering Clovis.

In addition to the visual blight created by these properties, there are also potential safety issues, as these properties often provide nesting/breeding areas for vermin and vectors, may represent a potential for hazardous material contamination, and are usually fire hazards. While screening, as was suggested at the meetings, will eliminate the visual impact, it does not affect the potential safety issues that can be associated with these properties.

County Issues:

- Protect the health and safety of the residents
- Maintain County lifestyle
- Facilitate economic development
- Improve the citizens’ quality of life

City Issues:

- Protect the health and safety of the residents
- Facilitate economic development
- Improve the citizens’ quality of life
- Improve the appearance of the City’s entries

Recommendations:

1. Curry County and the City of Clovis should establish a joint beautification/blight removal committee that identifies and prioritizes properties that need to be cleaned up.
2. Curry County and the City of Clovis should create consistent ordinances for nuisance abatement that tries to achieve voluntary compliance first.
3. Curry County and the City of Clovis should create a joint nuisance abatement task force with the mission of abating the priority properties identified by the beautification/blight removal committee. The task force should at a minimum include representatives from planning, building inspection, law enforcement, fire, and health inspectors.
4. Curry County and the City of Clovis should jointly create, sponsor, and seek funding for other beautification/nuisance abatement programs, such as trash and graffiti removal, weed control and disposal of household hazardous materials.



Neglected Property East of Clovis

Economic Development

Curry County and the City of Clovis are doing a great job of coordinating their economic development efforts, as was recently seen in the spectacularly successful “Save Cannon” campaign. Another example of the County’s and City’s success is the extremely low unemployment rate. The coordination and cooperation between the County and City set an excellent example that other local governments would be wise to emulate.

County Issues:

- Facilitate job growth
- Ensure the fiscal well being of the County through generation of tax dollars

City Issues:

- Facilitate job growth
- Ensure the fiscal well being of the City through generation of tax dollars

Recommendations:

1. Curry County and the City of Clovis should continue the superb working relationship in regards to economic development issues.
2. Curry County and the City of Clovis should continue to seek grants and other funding for improvements/infrastructure that will attract new business and retain existing businesses.
3. Curry County and the City of Clovis should host economic vision workshops with the community, business leaders, and government representatives, including CAFB and State officials, to determine what industries the County and City should concentrate on recruiting and will be most supported by the community.

