

Recommended Comprehensive Plan Language to
Reflect Existing and Proposed Transmission Pipelines

Amend chapters/sections dealing with Community Facilities and Services to reflect the following:

Transmission Pipelines

The County recognizes the existence of *4 interstate and 1 intrastate transmission pipelines* running through portions of the County and acknowledges the potential for additional pipelines running concurrently with existing pipelines or in other areas. Such transmission pipelines provide opportunities to meet the energy demands from the Four Corner's transmission from the San Juan and Permian basins and the State of New Mexico but also pose tremendous risk for those communities potentially affected should a pipeline failure occur. Under normal circumstances, underground pipelines are relatively benign; however, where emergencies such as failures do occur, varied threats to public health, safety and welfare can be significant, from direct impacts such as resident injury or death, severe property damage, debris management, contaminated soils and groundwater pollution to indirect impacts associated with cleanup (expanded access points, groundwater recovery and remediation facilities, expanded soil disturbance, etc.). As such, the County should monitor existing and future pipeline activity and enact, where feasible, regulations complimentary to the New Mexico Oil and Gas Act, as amended, New Mexico case law, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission designed to protect the public health, safety and welfare and regulate land uses in conformance with the New Mexico Municipalities Planning Code, Act _____, as amended.

Among the needs to address are those surface land uses affiliated with transmission pipelines, appropriate access provisions for pipeline rights-of-way, and buffering and setback standards appropriate to reduce adverse impacts to residents of new development should a pipeline failure occur. In addition to buffers and setbacks, the County should examine the feasibility of increased communication with pipeline operators, particularly as related to new development proposals within proximity of transmission pipelines, and investigate measures to protect new land uses with high on-site populations. Regulations should also comply with other applicable policies of this plan, Sandoval County's Landscapes 2 plan or oil and gas ordinance and infrastructure ordinance, and applicable statewide planning goals designed to meet the needs of the citizens of the State of New Mexico. The County should also continue to coordinate its activities with those of the County and State when and if new pipelines are proposed and applications proceed through the permit review and construction phases.