

# **Feedback from Three Public Meetings on the Draft Land Use Plan For Tierra Contenta Phase 3A**

## **1. Overview**

### **The Meetings**

On November 7 and 9, 2019, the nonprofit Tierra Contenta Corporation (TCC) hosted three public meetings at the Southside Library. The purpose was to get input from the public on preliminary drafts of a Land Use Plan for one of the last large tract (228 acres) portions of undeveloped land in Tierra Contenta.

Residents of Tierra Contenta and the city as a whole had been encouraged to attend these meetings by these outreach efforts:

- Multiple postings in NextDoor.com—both the citywide section and two sections that Tierra Contenta residents created for their neighborhoods.
- Newspaper advertisements in The New Mexican and Santa Fe Reporter.
- Postings to event calendars in The New Mexican and Albuquerque Journal.
- Leaving leaflets about the meetings during a door-to-door survey within Tierra Contenta.
- Inviting city council members whose districts include Tierra Contenta.
- Contacting neighborhood residents individually

A total of over 100 residents signed in at the three meeting, not counting public officials and members of the TCC planning team. Several dozen more attended without signing in.

### **The Plan Presented Was Informed by Previous Public Input**

Prior to an Amended Plan being drafted, an earlier public meeting had been held on April 11, 2019 at the Genoveva Chavez Community Center. Its purpose was to get advice and feedback from residents on their hopes and concerns about the development of would like----on the high-level goals of the plans as well as any concerns about the development. A total of 45 city residents attended, primarily residents of the developed parts of Tierra Contenta. Others attended without signing in.

In July 2019, SEC Planning of Austin, Texas had been hired and began work on the Land Use Plan component of the Amended Master Plan. The initial public feedback guided a number of features of the Plan. The Plan went through a number of iterations and was ready to present to the public by October, 2019. At that time, the TCC team conducted the outreach for the three November meetings as described above.

### **Detailed Input from the Three Public Meetings in November 2019**

Below, in this report, we have listed comments recorded by six discussion leaders at the three public meetings in November, 2019. These were edited only for clarity and brevity. For example, two identical comments were combined like this: "Include rec center with activities for kids (2)." No critical comments about current conditions in Tierra Contenta or concerns about the development were left out.

### **Key Changes to the Draft Amended Land Use Plan as a Result of Public Input**

Parks – In place of the single, larger park in the first version of the plan, the plan now calls for 4 small parks and one middle-sized park with more recreational features.

Store and Restaurant – Participants voiced a strong preference for having at least one small grocery store and a coffee shop/restaurant. The TCC team had not considered these uses commercially viable, but based on this

strong interest, the team changed the plan to include two parcels comprising over 3 acres for compatible commercial uses and public facilities such as a rec center and a farmers’ market.

Pedestrian Network (sidewalks and trails) – Due to the strong public support of trails and sidewalks inside and surrounding the proposed future development area, some trails were added along with crosswalks where they intersect streets.

Connections to New Mexico School for the Deaf Land – The Land Use Plan now has added locations indicated as reserved as easements for future road extensions to connect roads and the pedestrian network with the NMSD land if and when it is developed.

Goal of Establishing a Master Property Owner Association – Due to numerous concerns expressed about problems in the built-up parts of Tierra Contenta with trash and abuse of the off-site trails, lack of maintenance of streetside landscape strips and similar issues, the Amended Master Plan includes a goal for creating a Master Property Owners Association for Phase 3A. Modest fees charged to property owners (in the range of \$20 per month) will provide funding for monitoring for and correcting problems. This would primarily involve working closely with the City to fix problems with the City-owned trails, parks and open spaces and encouraging the kinds of neighborhood clean-up activities proposed below.]

## **2. Recorded Questions and Comments, along with TCC Responses**

Questions and comments are in italics. TCC answers precede or follow questions and comments.

### **What Participants Said They Liked Most About Developed Parts of Tierra Contenta**

*Pedestrian trails*

*Wildlife corridors*

*Parks*

### **Suggestions for the Land Use Plan and Development of Parcels**

*More open space is needed.* [Answer: 38% of the land in Phase 3A is reserved for open space and trails and another 4% for parks—a much higher percentage than in most new developments in Santa Fe, an amount TCC believes to be more than adequate.]

*No mass grading; minimize land impact* [Answer: the Land Use Plan avoided development on steep slopes, so that needs for grading and filling will be minimized. Grading plans will be subject to City review and permitting after parcels within Phase 3A are sold to developers and other entities.

*Fewer homes built with fronts in straight line* [Answer: The Design Standards for Phase 3A encourage builders to come up with attractive streetscapes.]

*Eliminate school site from land use plan? Is a new school really needed?* [Answer: The School District has contractual right to purchase one 9+-acre school site. The District has indicated that population increases on the southwest side of Santa Fe will necessitate an elementary school in this general location.

*Allow some parcels to be sold lot-by-lot—like Mesa del Sol, for smaller-scale builders.* [Answer: This is a goal that will be stated in the Amended Master Plan]

*Consider adding non-residential parking lots.* [Answer: the parcels designated for the school and non-residential uses have been sized to include adequate numbers of parking spaces.]

*New state security regulations for new schools preventing access from surrounding perimeter.* [Answer: this is a matter for the School District to address when it draws up plans for the elementary school.]

*Switch park and commercial center because school won't allow those functions being adjacent.* [Answer: The School District has informed us that the proximity is not an issue.]

*Include landscaper advisement for parks etc.* [Answer: the Amended Master Plan will include concept drawings and specifications for the 4 small and one larger park. All construction plans and landscaping plans are subject to Tierra Contenta's Design Standards and review by Tierra Contenta Corporation's Design Review Committee.]

*Allow for co-housing development with common meeting/dining space for seniors, others (2)* [Answer: This is possible in any residential parcel. One or more buyers of a parcel would have to see a demand for this type of housing and include it in their plans. Alternatively, a co-housing organization could negotiate with a buyer of one of the parcels to purchase a sub-parcel tract for this purpose.]

*Could TCC retain ownership of land due to the housing crisis?* [Answer: This would require that TCC lease all of the land, which it is not prepared to do because of real estate market and financing barriers. However, TCC would be pleased to sell a parcel to an affordable housing land trust, or to help negotiate the purchase of a sub-parcel tract.]

### **General Concerns About Development Phase**

*Is an environmental impact study needed?* [Answer: not until parcels are sold to developers]

*Who's in charge?* [Answer: the nonprofit Tierra Contenta Corporation. See [www.tierracontenta.org](http://www.tierracontenta.org)]

*Archeology concerns - What's the situation with this land? What about state clearances?* [Answer: will be addressed when parcels are purchased and developed]

*Concerned about building on edge of arroyo, too steep/dangerous/people feel trapped (4)* [Answer: the Land Use Plan avoided including terrain with the steepest grades]

*Want to know more about School for the Deaf plans for its land.* [Answer: NMSD has no plans to sell or develop its land in the foreseeable future]

*Concerned about density of parcels* [Answer: the Land Use Plan allows for house lots of varying sizes. Ultimately, home buyers make the decisions of what size lots they want and can afford. Smaller lots are included because they make some homes much more affordable and similar in size to some lots in the historic parts of the city and many lots in recent subdivisions.]

*Concerned about surveying properties/eminent domain/fracking* [Answer: Surveys of parcels will occur only when they are sold. The land is owned by TCC so eminent domain is not relevant. A ban on fracking will be considered even though there is no data to indicate the presence of oil or gas reserves.]

### **Affordable Housing**

*Allow accessory dwelling units.* [Answer: the City's ordinance allowing for these will make it possible.]

*Create more affordability* [Answer: TCC is legally bound to provide 40% of the homes and apartments in Tierra Contenta with incomes and rents restricted in three tiers of affordability: 65% of area median income (AMI), 80% of AMI, and 100% of AMI.]

*Set targets for affordability lower than 80% of area median income—that's still high.* [See answer above]

*Lower income families are usually larger + need more space.* [Answer: TCC and City regulations require builders to provide a mix of bedroom-sizes for the affordable homes, each with a minimum square footage.]

### **Future Businesses and Community Facilities/Services**

[TCC response to the preferences below: TCC is a nonprofit planning and land sales entity. We will make best efforts to see affordably-priced land to developers and service agencies who will commit to building the facilities that have been most favored in our public meetings and formal surveys of residents.]

*Include a locally owned co-op market/less of a food desert*

*Include coffee shop*

*Include community center*

*Include rec center with activities for kids (2)*

*Make room for a farmer's market*

*Include facility for mental health and recovery services*

*Better public transportation, add bus routes (2).* [Answer: TCC will work actively with the City to assure that bus routes are added to Phase 3A. However, TCC does not have the resources or expertise to provide transportation services.]

### **Parks, Trails, and Recreational Facilities**

*Unpaved trails for jogging next to paved trails now shown on major arteries (2).* [Answer: this suggestion is being considered.]

*Where trails intersect roads - need for simple trail crossings.* [Answer: these are included in the latest version of the Land Use Plan]

*Is Paseo del Sol extension wide enough for bike lane?* [Answer: yes.]

*Don't substitute bike lanes for bike trails* [Answer: This rule will be imposed on the pedestrian trails along the major arteries – Paseo del Sol and the "Loop" road.]

*Include small neighborhood parks.* [Answer: This preference was incorporated in the current version of the Land Use Plan.]

*More benches in arroyo area.* [Answer: The trails in the arroyo are built and maintained by the City and not the responsibility of TCC. However, a master homeowner association with modest monthly fees is planned to provide sufficient income to augment City efforts to monitor and fix problems with trails, open space and landscape strips along the streets.]

*Have a year-around pool connected to a Rec Center (2).* [Answer: TCC has no capability to provide any public facilities. However, TCC would be eager to work with the City or nonprofit to provide this and/or other high-demand facilities.]

*Add tennis courts.* [Answer: same as above.]

## **Roads, Access, and Traffic**

*Paseo del Sol as only access road is a concern.* [Answer: TCC has completed a traffic study that indicates the offsite road and traffic signage that will be needed at different stages of the build-out. The City will be expected to require these improvements as the Phase 3A parcels are sold and development plans are submitted for approval.]

*Safety concerns over volume of traffic.* [See answer above.]

*Don't continue to allow shared driveways as in earlier phases of Tierra Contenta (3).* [Based on numerous complaints about safety issues and inconvenience, shared driveways will not be allowed in Phase 3A.]

*Make roads wider. (2)* [Answer: based on public input, the Land Use Plan and Design standards will include specifications for the smallest local streets that facilitate safe parking on both sides.]

*Don't allow gated areas (4).* [Answer: TCC will consider banning these via the Design Standards for Phase 3A.]

*Add speed humps* [Answer: we will respond at a later date as to whether these should be included in the Design Standards. At present, TCC believes that the decisions on whether or where to install these should be the City's decision since the City will own and be responsible for the streets.]

*Better access for RVs and other larger vehicles.* [As noted above, TCC's plan for Phase 3A widens the narrowest streets but still, some RV owners will have to find parking/storage spaces offsite.]

*Create better connectivity among the sections of Tierra Contenta* [Answer: Due to this input, we have amended the Land Use Plan to provide easements for future road connections with the land owned by New Mexico School for the Deaf, which, if and when developed, will become Phase 3B.]

## **Water, Energy Conservation and Environmental Features**

*Concerned about growth with limited water supply (2).* [Answer: The City has ample water supplies for prudent growth. Phase 3A design standards and City codes demand strict water conservation in new buildings]

*Stormwater collection not shown on plans. Retention ponds?* [Answer: Engineered plans for these included the ultimate development plans presented to the City buy buyers/developers of the land. ]

*Concerns about arroyo and stormwater management.* [See answer above.]

*Water usage concerns. (2)* [See answers above]

*Make sure water/energy efficiency is prioritized.* [Answer: the Design Standards address both of these issues.]

*"Climate investment" a good thing.* [See answers above]

*Would like trees along streets.* [Answer: the Design Standards require appropriate, attractive low-maintenance landscaping in landscape strips along the streets. TCC will not permit any landscaping on these strips requires irrigation due to our goals of conserving scarce water supplies.]

*Help environment by planting trees* [See answer above.]

## **Current Problems with Developed Areas of Tierra Contenta**

*Current homeowners are involved in lawsuits with builders over bad materials—standards of building must be enforced.* [Answer: TCC staff has supported homeowners by making best efforts to help resolve these kinds of

disputes with homebuilders. However the City's Land Use Department and not TCC is responsible for reviewing construction plans and inspecting for compliance with the City's Building Code.]

[Regarding the 3 concerns below, voiced by current TC residents, TCC Phase 3A Master Plan calls for formation of a Master Property Owners Association to address issues such as these. See page 2 above for details.]

*Stop abuse of public land around Swan Park.*

*Concerned about people ignoring rules banning ATVs on trails and open space areas.*

*Concerned about homeless encampments in arroyo (questioning school location).*

*Encourage organized neighborhood cleanup projects.*