

## Mayor and Council have a handle on Master Plan

Written by By Tom Hartsock Sun Correspondent  
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Our city leaders are well prepared to handle their jobs, with only a few minor blips along the road. The task can be daunting if done right. This week's agenda – which included a Special and a Regular Meeting, back to back – required reading through some 158 pages of prepared material and making sense of the complete package.

Granted, there were 12 pages dealing the minutes of the prior meeting, two more pages just to list the agenda for both, and 14 pages covered by slides in the Special Meeting – still more eye-strain than most people put themselves through in a week, except for watching TV or playing games on the computer.

The Special Meeting was presented by Steve Burstein of Architectural Research Consultants, Inc. and discussed the Growth Management Master Plan to be further presented to Santa Fe in February. This official public document is a policy guide adopted by the City Council to estimate, as well as possible, the physical development of the community and to determine how the city will grow in the next 20-30 years.

Burstein was quick to point out to the council that some “bullet changes” may still be made in the document, but that approval by them at the Feb. 9 meeting is necessary in order to beat the state's deadline.

Demographic trends for both city and county were discussed and then elaborated on in several areas. These numbers show, among other things, that Gallup has grown every decade for the past 100 years and the median age at the time of the last census was 31.9 years compared to 36.7 for the state.

As a driver in economics, the population of Gallup remains an employment hub, strong in travel, trade, and tourism. The prospects for a stronger economy are even better with the widening of U.S. 491 within two years, the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project by 2023, and the increased promotion and coordination of the Greater Gallup EDC, a 3,000 acre energy logistics park proposed by Gallup Land Partners, and the potential for growth in the film industry.

Economic development incentives from the Local Economic Development Act, the Job Training

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Incentive Program, and the use of Industrial Revenue Bonds are also a positive factor in economic development. There was also a brief presentation of a possible medical cluster that could be developed, especially if a new IHS facility is erected.

Land use for Gallup included admissions of the rocky terrain and steep slopes as well as the bottleneck of the Hogbacks and the flooding risk along certain areas of the Rio Puerco and tributary arroyos. A high range projection of 31,000 inhabitants by 2040 would mean that a lot of changes would have to be made soon in order to prepare adequately for this increase. Current and future prospects, issues, and opportunities were targeted in this section, including the Rehoboth Annexation Area, the Mendoza Road Area, and the Allison Bridge/Road Extension Area.

Some of the other data presented concerned Housing, an inventory of City buildings and parks, a Community Survey of City Parks usage, Water supply, other utilities, and Hazards Mitigation.

Altogether, a pleasant and informative hour hearing about the positive and negative aspects of the future.