



CONTACT:

Lauren Whitehurst  
505.982.0071, x105

lauren.whitehurst@commonwealconservancy.org

**SANTA FE COUNTY ADVANCES A NEW MODEL OF  
ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT**

*The Village at the Galisteo Basin Preserve gets a new name and  
Santa Fe County Commissioners approve its first development phase*

**Santa Fe, NM, February 11, 2010**—The Santa Fe Board of County Commissioners (BCC) voted 4-0-0 Tuesday to approve the Phase I preliminary plat for the Village at the Galisteo Basin Preserve, a mixed-use, mixed-income community plan within the 13,522-acre Galisteo Basin Preserve. The Commission’s approval included four variances from the 1996 Santa Fe County Land Use Code to accommodate the project’s compact form and hillside topography. Mirroring its carefully woven land plan, the conservation-based community was also renamed: *Trenza*, which is Spanish for “braid.”

“We need creative solutions as to how we deal with the economic realities we are facing and how we conserve important open-space resources,” Commissioner Kathy Holian said after the public testimony was complete. “I believe the *Trenza* community is that solution.”

Twenty-five members of the Santa Fe community spoke during Tuesday’s spirited public hearing, 22 of them voicing support for the village proposal and asking the BCC to approve the project’s first phase as a model for community-based planning, water and energy efficiency, innovative development, open-space protection, public trails access, local economic benefits, and environmental sensitivity.

“The county commissioners’ approval sets a new standard for conservation development in the American West,” said Ted Harrison, president of Commonweal Conservancy, the Santa Fe-based nonprofit organization spearheading the Preserve. “By weaving an intricate community design into a vast open space, *Trenza* and the Galisteo Basin Preserve give form to the public values and environmental ambitions of the county’s emergent Sustainable Development Plan.”

Commonweal will submit the more detailed Phase I final plat to the county later this year. Pending the final-plat approval process, construction could begin as soon as late summer 2011.

The community’s name was presented to the BCC partly in response to Commissioner Mike Anaya’s request that the project be clearly distinguished from the nearby Village of Galisteo. “The name *Trenza* speaks to the strength of a diverse and inclusive community—where the interdependency of people, land, water, and wildlife is explicitly acknowledged and celebrated,” Harrison said. “It also refers to the way water moves through a desert watershed: braided, layered, and interconnected.”

Designed for economic and social diversity, Trenza is proposed to include 965 homes of various types, sizes, and prices, with 30 percent for income-qualified buyers. Commercial, educational, and civic development aims to foster a dynamic, walkable urban core, while parks and pathways will connect neighborhoods and link to the larger Preserve, 96 percent of which is planned to be conserved as protected open space. The BCC approved the village master plan in 2007.

Trenza's Phase I plan anticipates 149 homes; 37,500 square feet of educational, commercial, and civic space for Tierra Encantada Charter High School (CS 37), a small café, an environmental center, and a post office; and parks, recreation areas, and open space, including a five-acre "memorial landscape" for green burial. The approved Phase I variances include:

- allowing driveways to be within 100 feet of alleys and/or intersections to promote compact neighborhood design;
- increasing the maximum slope at intersections from 3 percent to 5 percent, and decreasing the intersection-approach length from 100 feet to 50 feet, to minimize excessive grading and promote compact neighborhood design;
- allowing narrower road-widths to encourage slower Village traffic, safer pedestrian conditions, and more interactive, tightly connected neighborhoods;
- accommodating a 30-foot building height in certain areas to present greater opportunities for passive solar heating and daylight exposure, accommodate more affordable housing, and support the Village's compact urban design goals.

"[T]hese project variances do not pose any threats to health, safety, and welfare concerns, and most of them may, in fact, not be variances under the proposed new [Sustainable Land Development] plan and code," said Jack Kolkmeier, the county land-use administrator, in a note to the BCC.

"The variance requests are site-based—the village is located on a hillside, as a result of extensive analysis for viewshed protection, solar orientation, and minimal impact to the ecosystem and grasslands," said Suby Bowden, principal architect for Suby Bowden and Associates, who spoke as a community member during the public hearing. "These are community-based variances; they are minor variances that produce tremendous community benefit."

### **About the Galisteo Basin Preserve**

The Galisteo Basin Preserve is a 13,522-acre land-conservation and community-development initiative in central Santa Fe County. It is planned to conserve approximately 13,000 acres (96 percent) of protected open space, invite public access through a planned 50-mile trails network, and create a stewardship community that is actively engaged in the care and restoration of the Galisteo Basin. Trenza's village plan and the surrounding Preserve have won national acclaim for integrating landscape-scale conservation, resource efficiency, and clustered urban design. For more information, please visit [GalisteoBasinPreserve.com](http://GalisteoBasinPreserve.com)

### **About Commonweal Conservancy**

Commonweal Conservancy is a nonprofit, conservation-based, community-development organization dedicated to sustaining relationships among people, land, and the built environment. Commonweal acquires properties of cultural and ecological significance and engages in collaborative land planning to create whole communities. For more information about Commonweal, visit [CommonwealConservancy.org](http://CommonwealConservancy.org).