

**DRAFT PROPOSED POSITION STATEMENT  
OF THE SANDOVAL COUNTY FREE ROAMING HORSE ADVISORY COUNCIL  
DEVELOPED BY THE LONGTERM SUBCOMMITTEE**



**WHEREAS**, the Sandoval County Free Roaming Horse Advisory Council (the “Council”) was created by Resolution No. 11-08-18.10 for the purpose of developing legal, long-term, humane, sustainable recommendations and solutions which it would recommend to the County Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council has been working for over a year researching and learning about the complexities and issues regarding the Placitas free roaming horses; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council has obtained public input from citizens of Placitas at its open meetings, who have candidly expressed their views both in favor of the free roaming horses, habitat support perspectives, and various public safety problems caused by the free roaming horses; and

**WHEREAS**, various Council members have met privately with representatives of the Placitas community to solicit their views of the free roaming horses; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council has received information and opinions from professionals regarding the actual number of free roaming horses, the ability of the **land on which the free roaming horses are grazing** to support current and future population numbers, and possible solutions to the problems caused by the free roaming horses; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council has concluded the following:

1. The **land on which the free roaming horses are grazing** in Placitas cannot support the number of existing free roaming horses; and
2. The Placitas community is adamantly opposed to the euthanizing of any free roaming horses for other than medical necessity to prevent suffering; and
3. Horses sold at horse auction operations are often exported for slaughter, so the Placitas community is against selling free roaming horses at horse auctions; and
4. The only acceptable long term solutions in addition to contraception to reduce the number of free roaming horses are the establishment of **places** to which horses in their family groups may be relocated and horse adoptions by legally authorized entities and in compliance with current law.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Sandoval County Free Roaming Horse Advisory Council **RECOMMENDS TO THE COUNTY COMMISSION** that the County adopt the following positions and goals which are not enforceable as a matter of law except for existing or adjusted speed limits:

## **A. Long Term Goals**

1. The Council urges the County Commission to lobby for state legislation that would provide oversight for wild horse preserves, defined as ranges where wild horse can exist as naturally as possible, either on public or private lands commensurate with healthy land and healthy horses.

2. For the immediate problem of excess free roaming horses, the Council urges the County Commission to explore entering into agreements with other appropriate public entities (U.S. Forest Service, BLM, etc.) to develop wild horse preserves for the relocation of Placitas free roaming horses commensurate with healthy land and healthy horses.

3. The Council urges the County Commission to partner with nonprofit entities and interested community members to obtain management skills and resources for the newly established wild horse preserves.

4. The Council urges the County Commission to support as may be determined to be appropriate, the formation of licensed horse rescue or retirement facilities as defined in §§ 77-2-30 and 77-2-31 N.M.S.A. 1978.

5. The Council urges the County Commission to continue the on-going fertility control and herd management programs.

6. The Council urges the County Commission to also support “forever home” adoption of Placitas free roaming horses.

## **B. Feeding and Watering**

1. Because there is not adequate grass in the area and until horses can be relocated, as a general principle, feeding and/or watering of the free roaming horses should be allowed, but community members should do so only away from roads or highways. The County should consider disseminating educational material regarding best practices for feeding and/or watering of the free roaming horses.

2. The County should explore the possibility of establishing designated feeding sites for free roaming horses.

## **C. Interaction**

1. The community should avoid close contact with Placitas free roaming horses because close contact is unsafe both for the person and the horse.

2. The Council does not recommend the installment of cattle guards on county roadways, due to the potential hazards to both the public and the horses themselves.

## **D. Driving Conduct**

1. The Council supports the efforts of the Sandoval County Sherriff to strictly enforce posted speeds on the Placitas highway and streets; and

2. The use of speed signs and other public informational methods to alert and slow down drivers in areas frequented by Free Roaming Horses.