



# County of Los Alamos

1000 Central Avenue  
Los Alamos, NM 87544

## Agenda - Final Planning and Zoning Commission

*Philip Gursky, Chair; Michael Redondo, Vice Chair;  
Fred Brueggeman; Philip Kunsberg; Ashley Mamula; Jaret  
McDonald; Catherine Mockler;  
Larry Warner and Amy Woods, Members*

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Wednesday, September 14, 2016

5:30 PM

Council Chambers  
1000 Central Avenue

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1. **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

*This section of the agenda is reserved for comments from the public on items that are not otherwise included in this agenda.*

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

4. **PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION BUSINESS**

5. **COMMISSION/DIRECTOR COMMUNICATIONS**

A. [8602-16](#) Los Alamos County Comprehensive Plan 2016 - Draft

**Attachments:** [Draft Los Alamos County Comprehensive Plan](#)

B. [8603-16](#) Minutes from the Planning And Zoning Commission Meeting(s) on August 17, 2016.

**Attachments:** [Minutes August 17, 2016](#)

6. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

PLEASE NOTE: Any action by the Planning and Zoning Commission in granting approval, conditional approval or disapproval of an application may be appealed by the applicant or by persons who have a personal or pecuniary interest adversely affected by the decision as defined by Section 16-454 of the County Code. Such appeals must be filed with the Community Development Department within 15 days of the action in accordance with Section 16-492.

If you are an individual with a disability who is in need of a reader, amplifier, qualified sign language interpreter, or any other form of auxiliary aid or service to attend or participate in the hearing or meeting, please contact the County Human Resources Division at 505-662-8040 at least one week prior to the meeting or as soon as possible.

Public documents, including the agenda and minutes can be provided in various accessible formats. Please contact the personnel in the Community Development Department Office at 505-662-8006 if a summary or other type of accessible format is needed.



# County of Los Alamos

## Staff Report

September 14, 2016

Los Alamos, NM 87544  
www.losalamosnm.us

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**Agenda No.:** A.

**Index (Council Goals):**

**Presenters:**

**Legislative File:** 8602-16

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### **Title**

Los Alamos County Comprehensive Plan 2016 - Draft

### **Attachments**

LACCP

COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN  
LOS ALAMOS COUNTY 2016



DRAFT REPORT  
September 9, 2016









# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## Los Alamos County Council

Rick Reiss, Council Chair  
Susan O'Leary, Council Vice Chair

### *Councilors*

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Steven Girrens  
Kristin Henderson  
David Izraelevitz  
Pete Sheehey

## Los Alamos Planning and Zoning Commission

Philip Gursky, Chair  
Michael Redondo, Vice Chair  
Fred Brueggeman  
Philip Kunsberg  
Ashley Mamula  
Jaret McDonald  
Catherine Mockler  
Laurence B. Warner  
Amy Woods

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## Los Alamos Boards

### *Board of Public Utilities*

Jeff Johnson, Chair  
Andrew Fraser, Vice Chair

### *Fuller Lodge Historic Districts Advisory Board*

Mark Rayburn, Chair  
Becky Hardy, Vice Chair

### *Parks and Recreation Board*

Melanee Hand - Chair  
Paul Cook - Vice Chair

### *Transportation Board*

Khalil Spencer, Chair  
Brian O'Neil, Vice Chair

Public Engagement and Documentation Consultants  
Architectural Research Consultants, Incorporated  
Karpoff and Associates

All photographs by Leslie Bucklin, unless otherwise noted

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# RESOLUTION

## INCORPORATED COUNTY OF LOS ALAMOS RESOLUTION NO. 16-\_\_

### A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF LOS ALAMOS COUNTY

**WHEREAS**, the Los Alamos County Comprehensive Plan (“the Comprehensive Plan”) has not been significantly updated since its original adoption in 1987 and its subsequent amendment in 2005; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with the Los Alamos County Charter, Part I, Article III, Section 308. – Planning, the Council shall adopt a comprehensive plan to guide the future physical development of the County, and the initial adoption and any subsequent modifications of this plan shall take place only after public hearings; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Los Alamos County Code of Ordinances Section 16-53 (b) Periodic review, the planning and zoning commission shall complete a review of the comprehensive plan and official zoning map periodically, as often as desired, but in no event less than once every ten years and shall forward a recommendation for action by the county council; and

**WHEREAS**, the planning and zoning commission, in accordance with the Los Alamos County Code of Ordinances Section 8-203, shall serve in an advisory capacity and have the following functions and responsibilities, and may from time to time recommend amendments, extensions or deletions to the comprehensive plan, and provide citizen input to staff and council on ways and means for improving the county’s planning and zoning functions including formulation of the comprehensive plan; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with the 2005 adopted Vision Statement, incorporated into the comprehensive plan, the county council stated their intent to be responsive to the community by actively engaging all citizens, young and old, in planning and governance; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with the county council’s 2016 adopted Strategic Leadership Plan it is the intent to manage commercial growth well following an updated, concise, and consistent comprehensive plan,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the Incorporated County of Los Alamos that the Los Alamos County Comprehensive Plan 2016 is hereby adopted.

**PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED** this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2016.

**COUNCIL OF THE INCORPORATED COUNTY OF LOS  
ALAMOS, NEW MEXICO**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Rick Reiss**  
**Council Chair**

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Sharon Stover**  
Los Alamos County Clerk



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# Executive Summary

In 2015, Los Alamos County undertook completion of a new comprehensive plan. The original comprehensive plan, adopted in 1987, laid the foundation of the new plan, as did work by the community through subsequent plans and efforts, many of which have been adopted by County Council.

The County has accomplished many of the goals established by the community in the past. This record of success fueled by continued community involvement allows the County to set new goals and develop new strategies going forward. Work on the current plan began with outreach to the community, starting in late 2015. This process enabled the community to discuss desires for the future and the appropriateness of the goals and direction approved by the County Council's 2016 Strategic Leadership Plan.

The current plan recognizes two central and iconic elements: history, specifically recent history and the advent of the Manhattan Project; and environment, the spectacular physical setting of the county and the integral nature of that setting in every aspect of life in the county. The community is constrained geographically by its setting on the several mesas and in the multiple canyons which establish physical limitations and constraints to future growth.

The current document is a policy plan, based on community input and the broad outlines of the goals of the Strategic Leadership Plan, and offering a multifaceted set of potential strategies for Council and community consideration.

Recognizing that the purpose of the comprehensive plan is to guide the physical development of the county, the plan focuses on goals and policies that relate to the growth, appearance and land uses on property in the county.

In the process of developing the current plan, several core issues consistently appeared to be of paramount importance to the community. The plan is organized around these core elements. The elements are based on the desire for greater economic development, a strong commitment to neighborhood preservation, and protection of open space. Accordingly, the community has established three key areas as central to the identity, the values, and the issues facing Los Alamos over the coming years, illustrated on the following page:

The community has established the following three key areas as central to the identity and the values of Los Alamos. These three areas are the **core themes** of the comprehensive plan, introduced on page 2.

### HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOODS and GROWTH

The plan supports:

- Planning for modest growth
- Providing more choices in housing, especially downtown
- Protecting the character of existing residential neighborhoods

### DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT and DOWNTOWN

The plan supports:

- Redeveloping vacant and blighted areas
- Focusing development priorities downtown
- Guiding development to property in and around current boundaries

### OPEN SPACE, TRAILS and MOBILITY

The plan supports:

- Protecting virtually all existing open space
- Maximizing connectivity for open space, trails and pedestrian ways
- Supporting street and infrastructure design for safety and comfort of all users

In order to better articulate the goals, policies and strategies related to these three core areas, the plan adopts a Future Land Use Map illustrating broad directions of future growth and desirable land uses.

The comprehensive plan provides direction and context to guide future land use and growth, while setting forth the


principles of preserving and enhancing community values. Finally, this comprehensive plan is part of a larger and continuing process to periodically review and update the collective community vision for land use in the county. The plan is intended to be modified in the future as the needs and desires of the community change.

## Introduction

Los Alamos is known for its world-changing science and technology, its high-altitude recreational opportunities, small town friendliness and feel, and spectacular natural setting. It is a relatively young community that was created out of a boys' ranch camp beginning in 1917. It started as a community for the scientists who were recruited to work on developing the first atomic bomb. At the time, it was thought of as temporary. Now, some 65 years later, Los Alamos is here to stay.

## Vision Statement

The community today has looked ahead to the next ten, even 20 years, and this is what it sees: Los Alamos will continue to have a small town feel, while improving economic vitality will bring significantly more choices for residents in local retail, restaurants, and recreational opportunities. It will also have more and varied choices for housing, including senior housing and continuing care, smaller units, and affordable housing. Increased tourism will be a benefit to the community through promotion of diversity and growth of the local economy. The community will eliminate blight. It will protect and enhance **open space** and **trails**.







1

# INTRODUCTION



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## Purpose of the Plan

The Los Alamos County 2016 Comprehensive Plan is a high-level, long-range policy document that will guide decisions about the physical development of the county.

The comprehensive plan is intended to be a living document that should and will change to accommodate and reflect new circumstances, technology, natural and cultural forces, and the evolving vision of its citizens.

This document replaces the prior Comprehensive Plan (1987), Los Alamos County Vision Statement and Policy Plan (2005), Historic Preservation Plan Element (2008), Los Alamos Downtown Element (2009), Economic Vitality Element (2010) and White Rock Center Element (2012). It serves as the unified statement of goals and policies for the future growth, development, preservation and aspirations for the County.

In addition to formalizing the goals and policies related to future growth, the plan suggests various strategies for how the policies can be advanced and the goals achieved. These strategies are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive. They are a compendium of ideas, some of which are from previously developed documents. Others are the result of current public participation in a variety of forms.

The comprehensive plan articulates the vision, the goals, and the aspirations of the community. The plan also aims to be practical and useful for its many users. Adopted as part of the comprehensive plan is the County's first official Future Land Use Map. It represents visually the plan's goals and policies, especially as they relate to land use. It describes land use categories in broad terms to allow flexibility while depicting the agreed upon and general direction of future growth.

The County Council and Planning and Zoning Commission will use the policies in the plan, together with the Future Land Use Map, to guide and inform its decisions on requested policy changes, as well as development proposals. County staff, especially within the Community Development Department, will consider conformance with plan policies when reviewing applications. Members of the community will find assurance in plan policies and the map about what to expect by way of change and also neighborhood preservation. Developers and individual applicants will consult the plan and the map when preparing and presenting land use applications.

## The Planning Process

In 2015, the Los Alamos County Council directed the Planning and Zoning Commission, with support from the Community Development Department, to produce an update to the County's comprehensive plan. While some sections of the plan had been updated over several previous years, other sections still dated to the last complete revision in 1987. The Vision Statement and Policy Plan adopted by Council in 2005 served as the consensus document for planning policy for ten years. The Council adopted subsequent long-range policy plans, including the 2016 Strategic Leadership Plan, which forms the basis for the goals and many of the policies in the 2016 comprehensive plan. The Council also directed staff to engage the services of a consultant to create and implement a public outreach and participation process, and to complete that process and the new plan within 12 months.

The County retained Architectural Research Consultants, Incorporated (ARC) of Albuquerque, NM, to perform a broad-based public outreach and participation process over the course of 12 months. The Planning and Zoning Commission led development of the comprehensive plan and Community Development Department (CDD) staff primarily performed technical and professional work. ARC provided facilitation and analysis of public input, as well as some technical and graphic support.

Additionally, ARC established and hosted a web site featuring the comprehensive plan. It provided regular updates of activities, meetings and plan development. It also contained an informal opinion survey, results of two statistically valid random sample surveys, and links to former and current related County documents. It offered the opportunity for citizens to request email updates and notifications, and access to all plan documents, including previous work related directly and indirectly to the comprehensive plan. Historic documentation was also available on the County's CDD comprehensive plan web page.

Work on the new plan was divided into three phases or rounds. In addition to review of prior documents, Round 1 consisted of individual interviews with key community leaders, launch of the comprehensive plan web site, and three public meetings. The goal of Round 1 was to confirm the vision as previously outlined in the 2005 Vision Statement and Policy Plan, and in the 2016 Strategic Leadership Plan, and to identify those issues of key concern to the community. A series of white papers which identified and described existing conditions later became the planning context of the plan. A statistically valid survey (please see the Appendix) was mailed to 3,000 randomly sampled addresses in the county and, along with the community outreach meetings, helped establish the core themes of the plan.

Round 2 focused on those key areas of interest and need identified in Round 1. A second series of three public meetings considered those specific areas and were more technical. The results of these meetings, along with much of the work previously accomplished, helped to create draft goals, policies and strategies for the comprehensive plan. A second statistically valid survey (please see the Appendix) also mailed to 3,000 randomly sampled addresses, confirmed public agreement with the draft goals and policies, which then formed the heart of the plan presented in the Core Themes chapter.

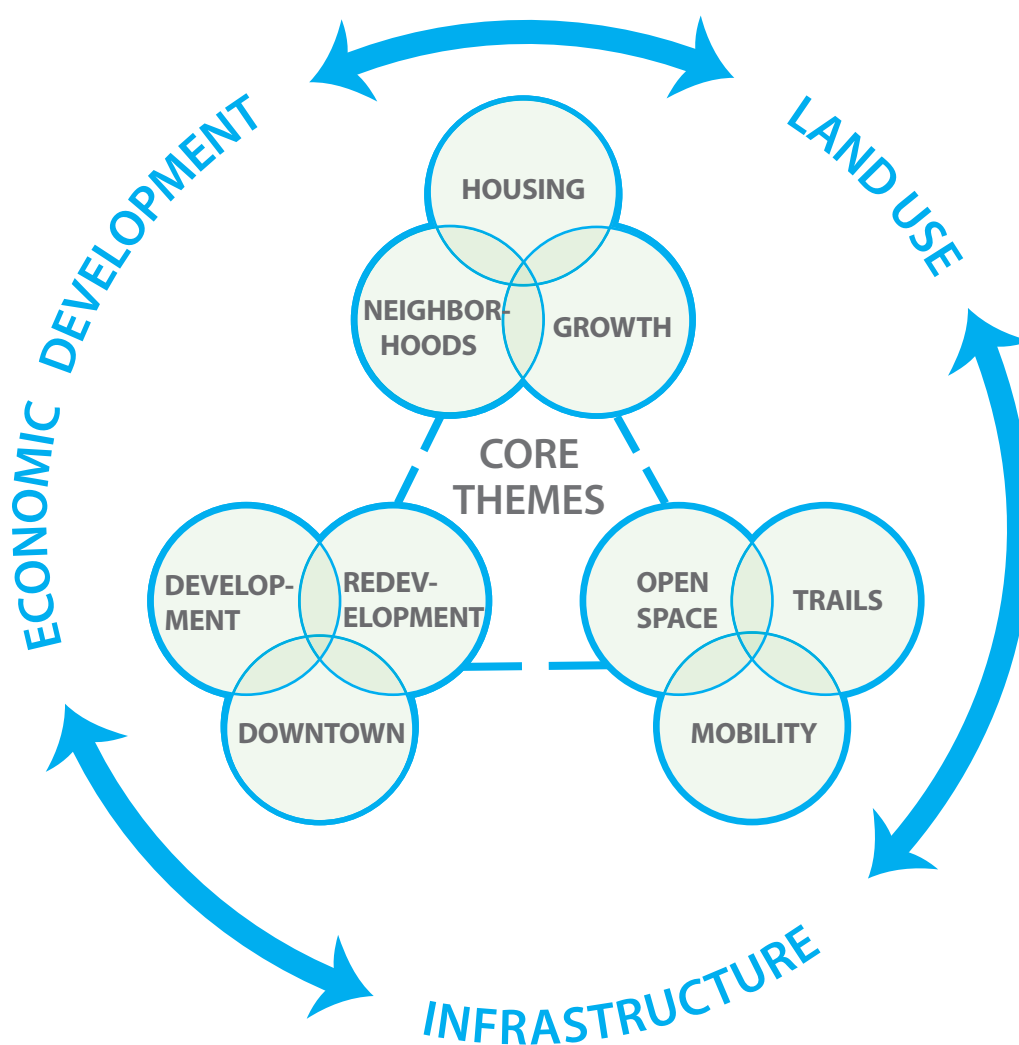
Round 3 consisted of review and adoption of the plan. The Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval of the plan to Council, and Council adopted the new plan by resolution on \_\_\_\_\_, 2016.

## The Core Themes

The core of the plan is organized around three subject groupings.

The extensive public outreach process that initiated planning for the 2016 comprehensive plan confirmed strong community agreement on core values, interests and aspirations of Los Alamos. The issues of greatest interest to the community were those that bound people together, those on which there were strong but consistent opinions, those which the community sought either to change or to preserve. Those issues led to the core themes of the plan and determined its structure.

Recognizing that there was significant overlap among the subject areas, as well as with a number of the goals as stated in the Strategic Leadership Plan, the plan integrates all the themes and the sub-themes within each, with three distinct and consistent dimension considerations. These dimensions help to sort and define the various policies and possible strategies. The dimensions are: economic development, land use and infrastructure.





## The Planning Area

Los Alamos County has a total area of 109 square miles, consisting almost entirely of land, with no significant bodies of water. The vast majority of land, 94 square miles, or nearly 86%, is federally owned. The two population centers, Los Alamos townsite and White Rock, are each census-designated places, or CDPs, which means that the Census Bureau assembles data for each place separately, in addition to data for the county as a whole.

The townsite of Los Alamos is located on the Pajarito Plateau, on a series of mesas, separated by deep canyons. Volcanic eruptions 1.4 to 1.1 million years ago formed the plateau. The canyons were carved by water running down a portion of the Jemez Mountains, which are part of the southernmost extension of the Rocky Mountains. Los Alamos has developed primarily along the flat mesa tops at an elevation of 7,500 feet.

White Rock is located at the base of the mesa at approximately 7,000 feet. It has the same geographic foundation created by the flow from the two Valles Caldera eruptions and sits at the top of White Rock Canyon, carved through basalt and tuff by the Rio Grande. Across the river to the east rises the Caja del Rio plateau. Farther downstream, the canyon narrows and is flooded by Cochiti Dam Reservoir. The area at lower elevation and further distance from the mountains than the Los Alamos townsite experiences lower humidity and higher temperatures. White Rock has more of a desert-like landscape often associated with southern New Mexico.

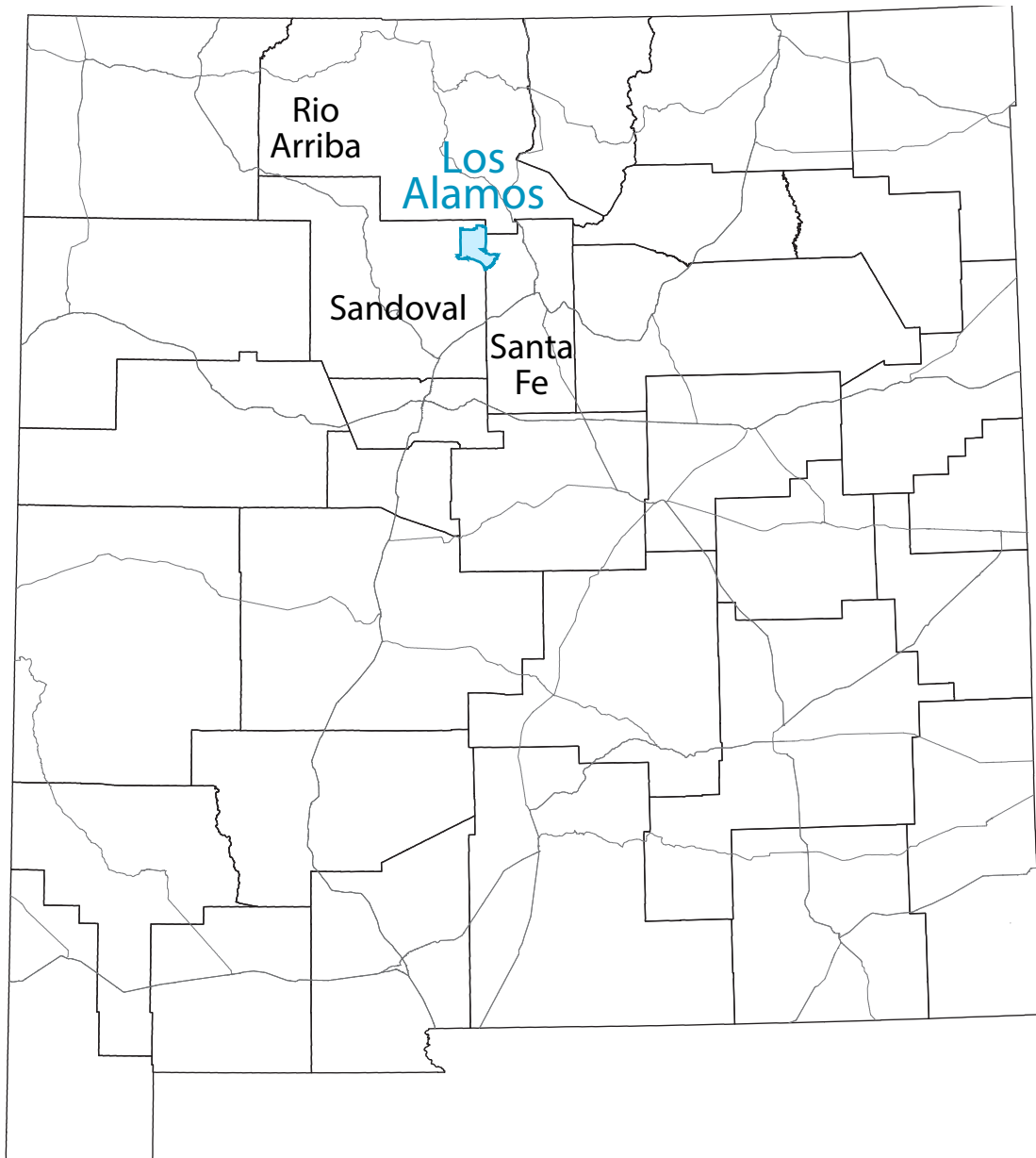
The population of the county has hovered around 18,000 for close to the past 30 years, with distribution consistently split into two-thirds for the Los Alamos townsite and one-third for White Rock.

Los Alamos is home to the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), founded during World War II, and one of the largest science and technological institutions in the world. LANL employs approximately 10,000 people, close to 70% of whom commute daily from surrounding communities. LANL operates under the jurisdiction of the Department of Energy and is located almost entirely on federally owned land. While the County does not have administrative or regulatory jurisdiction over the Laboratory, it shares some services and infrastructure with LANL. The federal government built nearly all the townsite's original infrastructure and many of the residences, which were later turned over to the County and to private residents, respectively.

Los Alamos consistently ranks at the top of lists of best places in the country to live. It has clean air, low crime, and the lowest child poverty rate in the state. It regularly ranks as the highest per capita income location in the country, has high levels of education, excellent public schools, and a spectacular geographic setting.

The map below shows the location of the county in relation to adjacent counties and within the state. Los Alamos is the smallest county in New Mexico. The federal government originally administered it at the time of the Manhattan Project, until it became an incorporated city-county form of government in 1949.

*Location Map of Los Alamos  
within the State of New Mexico*





*Map of Los Alamos County*



## How to Use this Plan

As a policy document for the future physical development of the county, a number of different users will use the comprehensive plan to help guide development decisions.

**The County Council.** The comprehensive plan supplements the County Council's adopted Strategic Leadership Plan with more specific policies, particularly in the area of land use. It is a longer term document, looking ahead 20 years, giving broader goals, long-range assumptions and policies. Council will periodically review and amend the plan as needed to ensure that it remains current and relevant. Council will use the Strategies section of the plan to direct staff from various departments to perform further studies and analyses, to develop programs and projects, or to create other more specific plans in various categories. Council will use the plan to support development review decisions, including rezoning requests, changes to the Future Land Use Map, text amendments to this document or to the Development Code, and for guidance in reviewing appeals. Goals expressed in the plan will also help inform Capital Improvement Project (CIP) spending decisions.

**The Planning and Zoning Commission.** P&Z will use the plan as guidance in the review of almost all public hearing cases: changes to text; rezoning; changes to the Future Land Use Map; special use permits; site plans; and subdivisions.

Conformance with the goals of the plan will be paramount in their decision making. Additionally, plan policies may direct code amendments brought forward for P&Z consideration, and the Future Land Use Map will guide location of zoning districts.

**County Staff.** The Community Development Department will use the plan in preparing code amendments, proposed changes to the zoning map, and providing recommendations to County Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission on various cases such as special uses, rezoning, and variances.

**The Public.** The plan will be useful to the public as both a reference document and as assurance of the county's intent to preserve or develop certain lands. The plan's policies and projections for future growth provide safeguards for residential neighborhoods in terms of appropriate land uses and intensities of development.

**Developers/Applicants.** In establishing land use and other policies that describe county priorities for growth, the plan provides criteria for applicants for development approvals to follow when formulating specific proposals and establishing support for their approval. The plan helps to guide developers and individual applicants toward fair and predictable decisions.

The following summary describes Los Alamos' long-range planning for the physical development of the community since the county was formed in 1949. Each plan has helped influence the community's growth.

## 1957 Long-Range Plan

- The United States Atomic Energy Commission prepared the Long Range Land Use Plan for Los Alamos, New Mexico. This plan established major uses within the county, including the northern, western and eastern areas, and the community center area. At that time, the federal government still owned land in Los Alamos. The plan established public facilities, including the airport, golf course, stables and fairgrounds. One of the plan recommendations that was not acted upon was the removal of the Sundt and Denver Steel houses that were built for Manhattan Project staff and were considered temporary housing.

## 1963 Comprehensive Plan

- Well-known planner/architect Leo A. Daly prepared the first comprehensive plan for Los Alamos County following the "Los Alamos Community Transfer Law" signed into law by President Kennedy in 1962, which authorized transfer of federal land in the community of Los Alamos to private ownership and local control. This plan recommended expanding the community center and adding housing, along with procurement of additional federal lands for future needs. The transportation element established a hierarchy of roads. The plan also recognized the potential for Los Alamos to be a center for tourist attractions, including the Pioneer Center, Pueblo Indian culture sites and Bandelier National Monument.



## 1976 Comprehensive Plan

- Los Alamos County staff prepared this plan as an update to the Daly plan, establishing goals and policies to guide plan recommendations. It focused on commercial and educational development, transit service, and designating sites for public schools and a college or university. It recognized housing to be a major problem and specifically recommended building low- and moderate-income housing.

## 1984 Comprehensive Plan (not adopted)

- County staff initiated a comprehensive plan to revise the 1976 plan, including the addition of a set of goals organized by land use, transportation, housing, environment, economy, parks and recreation, utilities, civic center, County services and facilities, and capital improvements.

## 1987 Comprehensive Plan

- Architectural Research Consultants, Incorporated developed a detailed plan that included goals and policies. Elements of the plan are land use/housing, commerce and industry, public facilities, and transportation. This plan remains the last adopted County comprehensive plan. It also includes area master plans for the White Rock Civic Center District, Western Perimeter Area and Rendija Canyon. The plan advocated establishing design standards, a quantitatively rigorous approach to establishing new residential areas, and preservation of Manhattan Project-era historic sites. It recommended multimodal transportation systems and examined various loop roads.
- The County has realized many policy recommendations, including: broadening the county's regional shopping center function (particularly with Smith's Marketplace), relocating the Bradbury Museum to downtown, developing the Western Perimeter area, exploring development of the Pueblo Canyon shelf area, and redeveloping portions of Civic Center for higher densities. The plan also recommended that the U.S. Forest Service, DOE and LANL master planning-transfer various properties to private ownership, increasing the supply of low- and moderate-income housing, and developing an integrated land development code. The County did not act on a recommendation to develop Rendija Canyon.

## 2005 Los Alamos County Vision Statement and Policy Plan (adopted)

- This plan established a 14-theme policy framework that serves as a thematic foundation for the County goals that County Council adopted in the Los Alamos County Strategic Leadership Plan 2016 Update. Thematic categories included: engage citizenship, diversify the economy, update infrastructure, expand education, diversify housing, enhance youth activities, preserve our past, improve recreation, protect the environment, provide health care, work together, improve mobility, revitalize downtown, and act regionally.
- Since 2005, the County has developed individual elements and master plans, but has not attempted to develop a comprehensive plan until the current effort, which began in 2015. These adopted documents included the Historic Preservation Plan Element (2008), Los Alamos Downtown Element (2009), Economic Vitality Element (2010), and White Rock Center Element (2012). Other adopted plans relevant to the comprehensive plan include the Affordable Housing Plan (2010), Creative District Plan (2012), Open Space Management Plan (2015), and Transit Study (2015). Since the County did not incorporate these documents into a unified plan and some are dated, one of the tasks of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan was to evaluate and update these potential plan components as needed and integrate them into the new comprehensive plan format as appropriate.

## 2004 Los Alamos County Comprehensive Plan (not adopted)

- This planning project was led by facilitator Carl Moore to address community vision, land use and community character. Implementation recommendations included revisions to the Land Development Code, and development of master plans for downtown White Rock and Los Alamos Medical Center, a historic preservation plan, recreational trail plan, and transportation plan. The effort relied upon extensive citizen participation, and the visioning work served as the basis for the 2005 vision statement and policy plan.

## 2016 Comprehensive Plan

- o County Council gave direction in 2015 to create a new comprehensive plan as a high-level policy document to guide future development of the county. In February 2016, the Council adopted the 2016 Strategic Leadership Plan, providing more specific and focused goals, including: maximizing opportunities related to the Manhattan Project National Historical Park; maximizing use of County-owned land; improving the quality of existing housing combined with developing appropriate infill housing; supporting environmental stewardship and enhancing recreational opportunities; and pursuing land transfers.



*Sources: Los Alamos Comprehensive Plan 1987, which included ARC's review of information on plans developed prior to 1986; ARC's review of plans developed since 1987.*

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2

# PLANNING CONTEXT





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# 2.1

## PLANNING CONTEXT: HISTORY & LAND USE

LOS ALAMOS TOWNSITE,  
WHITE ROCK, COUNTY  
LAND AREA AND LAND  
STATUS

# Historic Land Use

## Los Alamos Townsite

Los Alamos, or the townsite, is built on four roughly parallel mesas in the east central part of the county. Archaeological and historic evidence of Native American residence in the area dates back to approximately the 10th century. Homesteading in the 19th and 20th centuries was largely for summer grazing for livestock. In 1917, Detroit businessman Ashley Pond II started the Los Alamos Ranch School, a boys' school, named after the aspen trees that dominated the landscape. In 1942, the Department of War used the power of eminent domain to take over the school and other homesteads in the area to establish a secret location for the Manhattan Project, which designed the first atomic bomb, deployed in World War II.

Much of the housing that remains in place to this day was for the scientists and support staff for the Manhattan project.

## White Rock

Located some five miles south and east of the Los Alamos town center on the hill, White Rock is very much a family-oriented community with an area of 7.2 square miles and a population of approximately 5,631 people, many of whom are either employed by or retired from Los Alamos National Laboratories.

The White Rock community was established in 1947, when the Atomic Energy Commission acquired land from the U.S. Forest Service to build a temporary community for construction workers. That community was abandoned by 1953, and by 1958, all of the original buildings had been demolished or removed. The second White Rock was begun in 1963.

The most significant distinguishing physical feature of White Rock is its location on the eastern edge of White Rock Canyon. The canyon averages 1,000 feet in depth, and was carved by the Rio Grande River. The rugged beauty of the canyon enhances its recreational opportunities, such as hiking and climbing. The canyon is also home to three endangered bird species as well as several rare plant species.

While the commercial center of White Rock thrived during the 1980s, it experienced a steady decline beginning in the early 1990s. With substantial financial support from the County Council, the community has invested significant resources in revitalization. In 2012, the Council adopted the White Rock Center Element as a part of the comprehensive plan for Los Alamos. Evidence of revitalization includes the new fire station built in 2007; visitor center constructed in 2012; the new public library and the relocated and updated teen center, opened in 2015; and ongoing senior center renovation and expansion efforts in 2016.

## County Land Area

At 109 square miles, Los Alamos County is the smallest county in the state. The County has two population centers: Los Alamos, also known as the townsite, and White Rock. Together, they comprise the political entity as a municipal/county government. The county is also home to the Los Alamos National Laboratory, or LANL. However, except for certain offices leased to LANL by private owners within the county, LANL properties and functions are predominantly located on federally owned land, outside the jurisdiction of the County. Los Alamos County owns over 6,000 acres, of which 4,000 acres are dedicated to open space.

## Land Status

Prior to 1963, private land did not exist within the County boundaries. Three federal agencies owned all the land: the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), the United States Forest Service, and the National Park Service. This unusual pattern of land ownership was a direct result of the establishment of the Manhattan Project's Site Y at Los Alamos in 1942. To maintain secrecy at the site, all surrounding parcels of land were taken by the Army Corps of Engineers to further the war effort. This property included the Los Alamos Ranch School for Boys, dozens of homesteads on the Pajarito Plateau, and lands within the Santa Fe National Forest and Bandelier National Monument. When Los Alamos grew and established permanent facilities, the AEC saw benefits in selling housing to private owners and transferring land and infrastructure to the local government. The AEC completed disposal of AEC housing and infrastructure by 1968.

### *Land Status Portions in Acres*

#### **Los Alamos County Land Status**

Ownership/Management Type	Areas (Square Miles)	Area (Acres)	Portion of County
U.S. Forest Service	45.25	28,960	41.4%
U.S. Department of Energy	38.31	24,518	35.0%
National Park Service	10.41	6,662	9.5%
Indian/Tribal	0.06	38	0.1%
Private	15.29	9,786	14.0%
County Open Space	~6.25	4,000	5.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>109.32</b>	<b>69,965</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Bureau of Land Management Land Ownership GIS coverage, 2012

## Existing Land Use

The following maps depict existing land use in the Los Alamos townsite and White Rock, benchmarking current conditions. Residential lands are characterized by building types: single family houses, multi-family, and mobile homes. Commercial uses are mostly in the downtown. Public lands are divided into various categories. Vacant lands are also shown on both maps.

White Rock consists mostly of medium and low density residential, with several schools and county sites. The community has a relatively small commercial area. Both communities possess abundant county open space on their peripheries.

### *Comparative Existing Land Use*

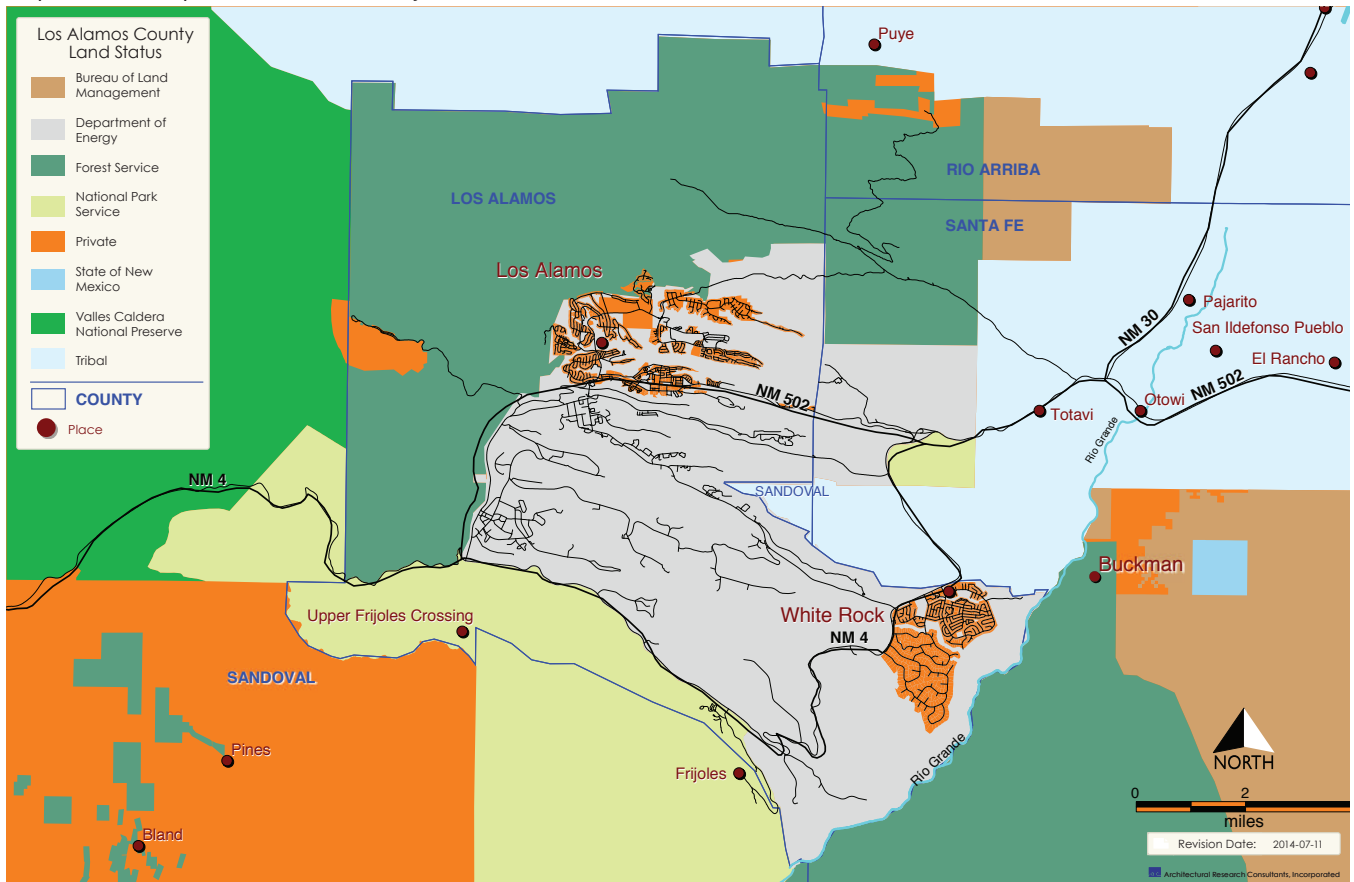
#### **Existing Land Use in Los Alamos Townsite and White Rock**

Land Use Category	Land Area (Acres)		Portion of Land Area	
	Los Alamos	White Rock	Los Alamos	White Rock
Single Family Residential	893	1,438	12%	42%
Multi-Family Residential	299	27	4%	1%
Residential Open Area	19	4	0.3%	0.1%
Mobile Homes	42	0	1%	0%
Commercial	1,578	34	21%	1%
Schools	188	31	3%	1%
Golf Course	164	0	2%	0%
Parks and Recreation	245	189	3%	5%
County - government functions and adjacent open space	3,800	1,665	51%	48%
Quasi-Public	37	32	1%	1%
Vacant Parcels	142	27	2%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,408</b>	<b>3,448</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

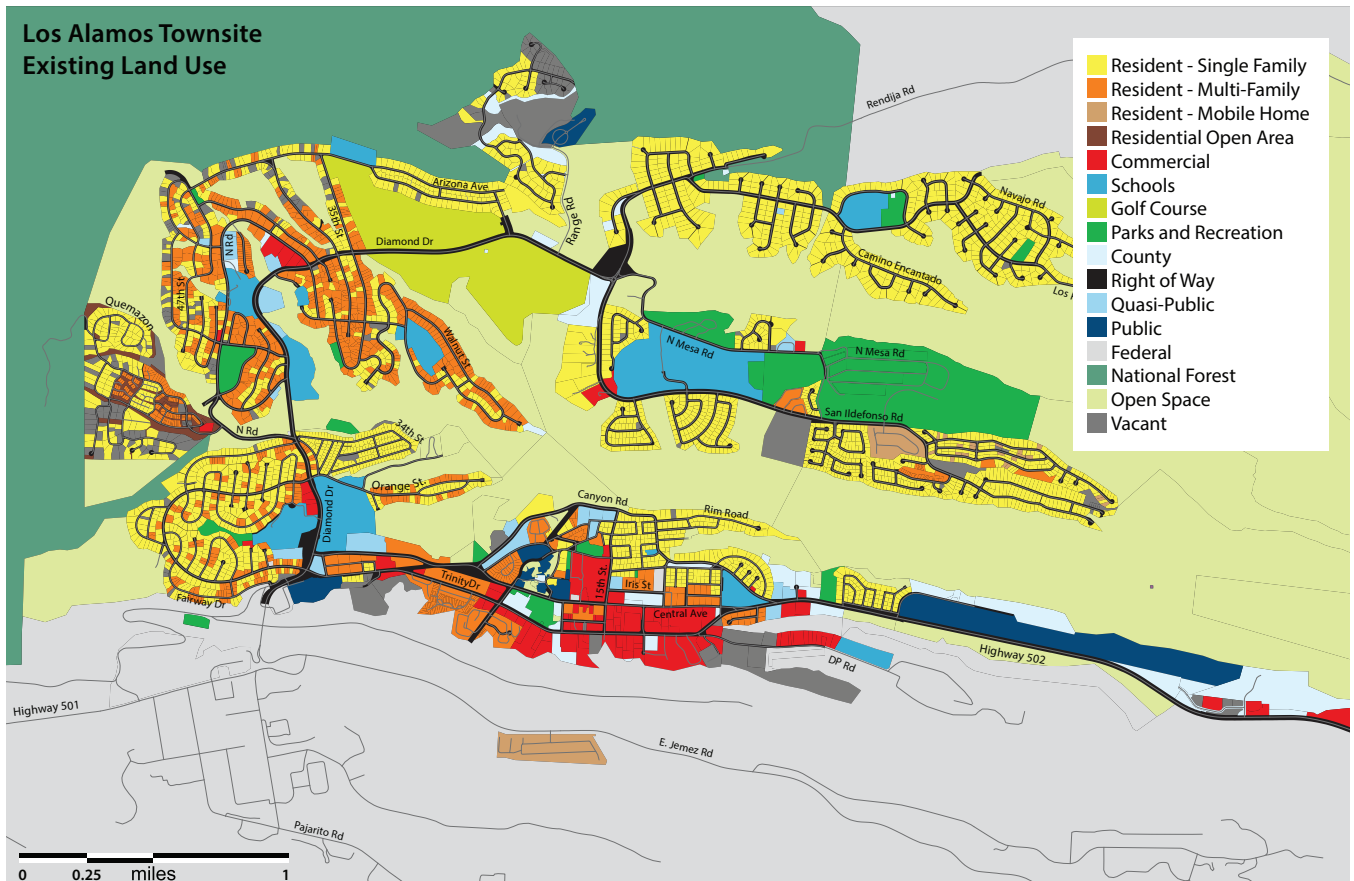
Source: Los Alamos County Assessor's Office 2014 parcel GIS data, analyzed by ARC.



## Map of Ownership of Land in the County

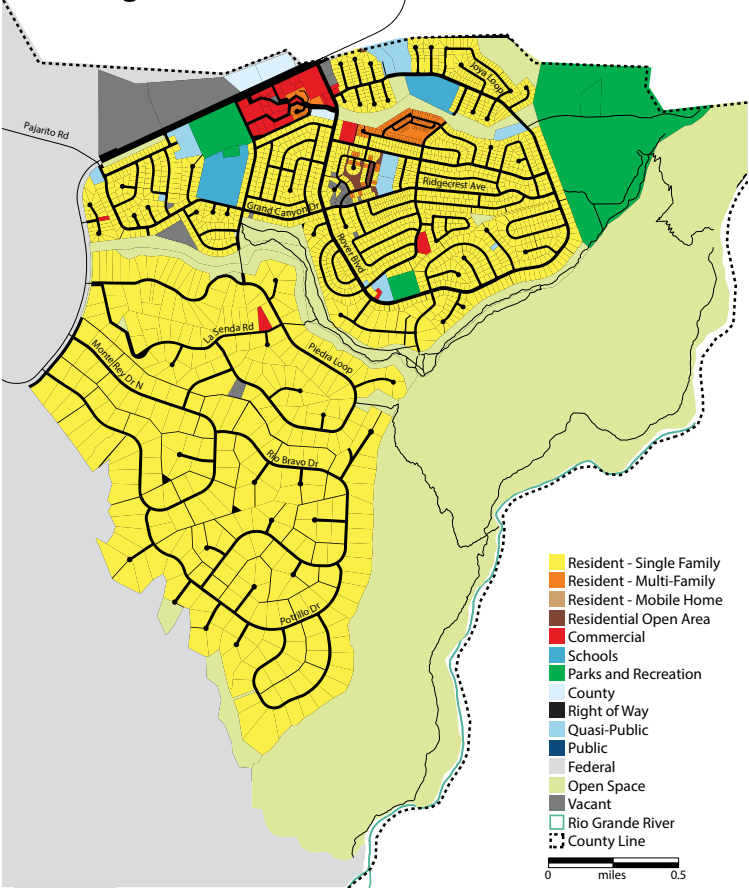


## Map of Existing Land Use in Los Alamos



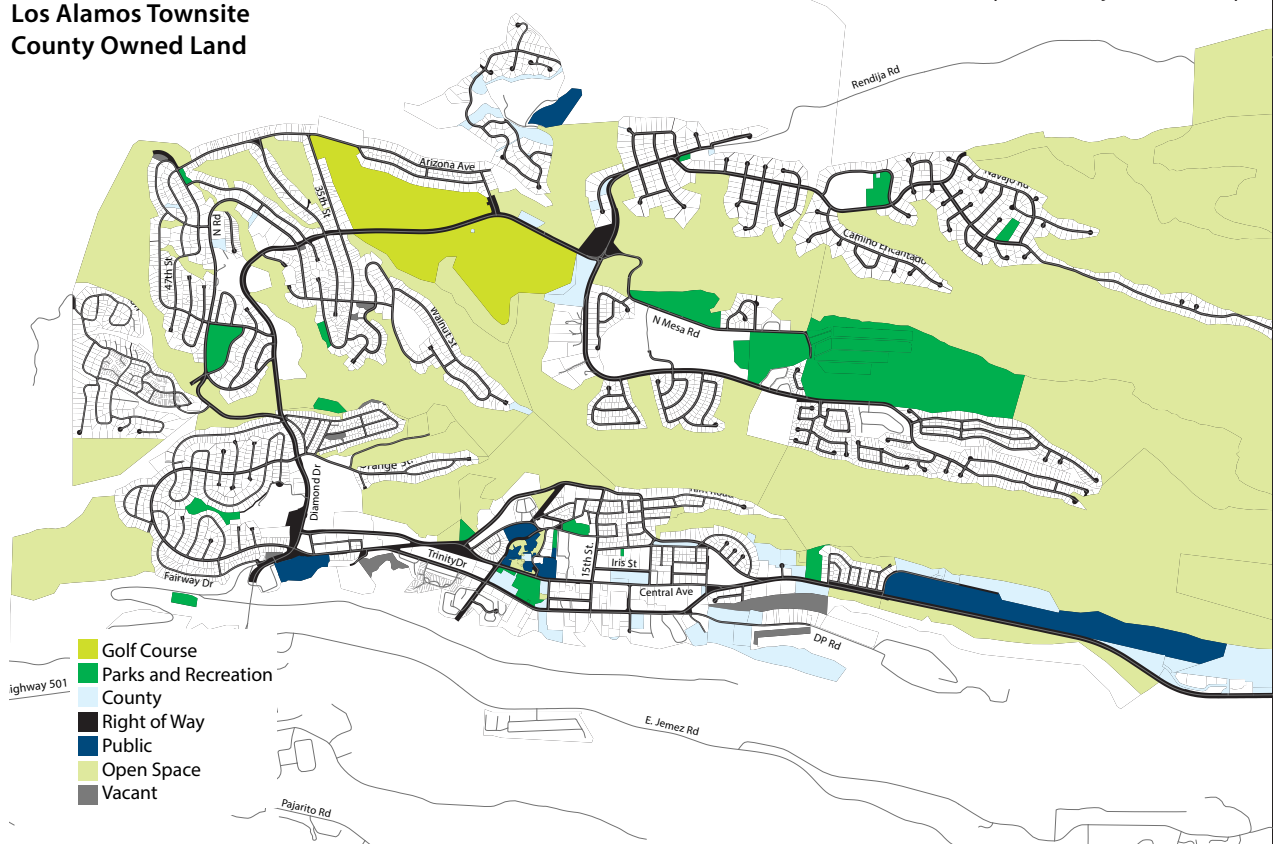
**White Rock  
Existing Land Use**

*Map of Existing Land Use in White Rock*



**Los Alamos Townsite  
County Owned Land**

*Map of County-Owned Property*



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# 2.2

## PLANNING CONTEXT: DEMOGRAPHICS

LOS ALAMOS COUNTY  
POPULATION, GROWTH &  
CHARACTERISTICS



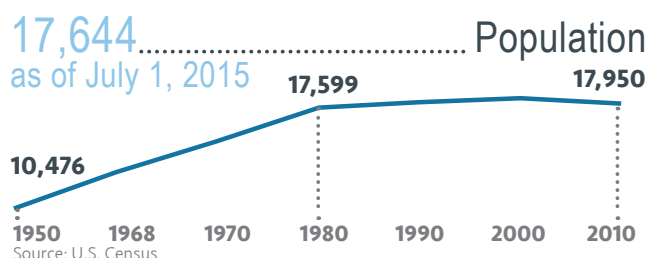
# Population

The information in this section is from the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau or the American Communities Survey 2010-2014 where available.

## Historic Population

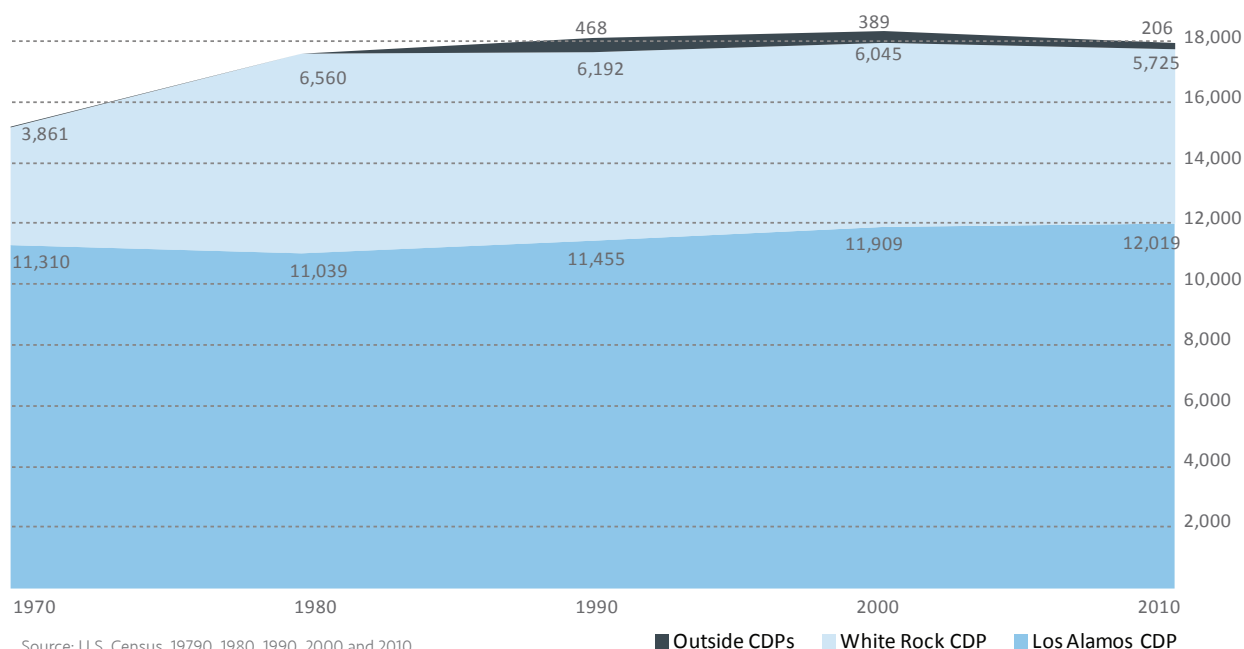
As of July 1, 2015, the population of Los Alamos County was estimated at 17,644. That number decreased approximately 0.33% between 2010 and 2015, but has hovered around 18,000 for the past 30 years, after a steady and significantly higher growth rate for the 30 years or so prior to that (1950 - 1980).

Historic County Population 1950-2010



Historic County Population 1970-2010

## Los Alamos County Population: 1970 to 2010

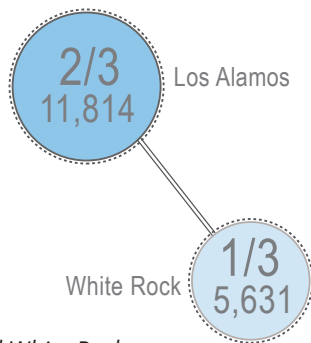


In 1964, Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), or the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory as it was then called, published in its newsletter, *The Atom*, an article, "The Next Twenty Years - A Special Report on the Comprehensive Plan for Los Alamos County." It predicted a range in population growth for Los Alamos for the year 1985, with the mid-range population projection of 25,720, and high range of over 30,000. As it turned out, the population of the County never reached 20,000.

## Projected Population

The most recent available population projections from the University of New Mexico (UNM) show an expected gradual decline through 2040. However, in 2008, the same source, UNM, projected a population increase to 21,000 by 2035. In light of the difficulty of projecting population increases or decreases, especially in a community where the vast percentage of jobs has been tied to a single employer, the comprehensive plan has taken a different approach. Rather than project a certain amount of growth, the plan prepares for a modest amount of growth, aiming to achieve a total county population of 20,000 over the next several years. The first random sample community survey strongly supported this approach.

## Selected Population Characteristics



*Los Alamos and White Rock Populations Compared*

## Population Distribution

Approximately two-thirds of county population resides in the Los Alamos CDP (11,814 in 2015) and one-third live in the White Rock CDP (5,631 in 2015).

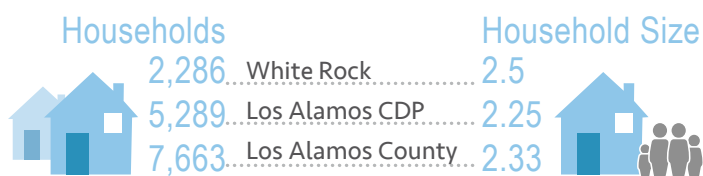
## Density

Los Alamos County ranks second in New Mexico for density (165 persons per square mile) after Bernalillo County (571 persons per square mile). Los Alamos CDP, with 526 persons per square mile, is more dense than White Rock, with 339 persons per square mile.

## Households and Household Size

Households tend to be larger in White Rock than in the townsite and household distribution follows population distribution, generally one-third in White Rock, two-thirds in the townsite.

*Household and Household Size Compared*



Source: U.S. Census, 2010

## County Median Age

The county has 5.3% children under 5 years of age, fewer than the national average of 6.5%, and more older people (15% over 65 and older) than the national average of 13% nationally. (Source: U.S. Census, 2010)

The median age in Los Alamos County has increased from 33.1 years of age in 1980 to 37.8 in 1990, 40.8 in 2000, and to an estimated 43.1 in 2014. (Source: U.S. Census ACS 5-year Estimates, 2010 to 2014 and Los Alamos County Affordable Housing Plan, 2010)

*Median Age History*



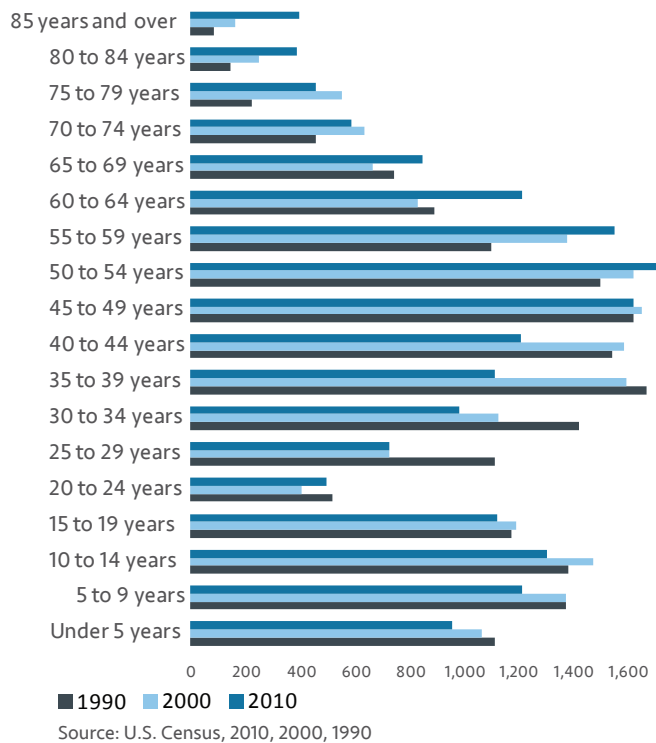
The proportion of the population under age 24 declined from 31% in 1990 to 28% in 2010.

While increasing median age is a national and statewide trend, in Los Alamos, aging of the population is occurring at a faster pace than is typical in other New Mexico communities.

Source: Los Alamos County Affordable Housing Plan, 2010

# Population Age Distribution

County Age Distribution, 1990-2010



Hispanic or Latino. Los Alamos County has less than 1% blacks or African Americans, compared to 13% in the state. The proportion of Asians is only slightly higher than generally in the state (6% vs. 5.4%).

## Diversity

The Los Alamos and White Rock CDPs ranked in the lowest quartile for diversity. The diversity index measures the percentage of a population that are from different racial and ethnic groups and is measured comparatively, with a ranking of 100 being the most diverse. White Rock ranked in the 16th percentile and Los Alamos in the 21st.

## Education

Not surprisingly, education levels are high in Los Alamos; 64.3% of residents aged 25 and up have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to less than 30% in the state.

Los Alamos County and New Mexico Education Levels

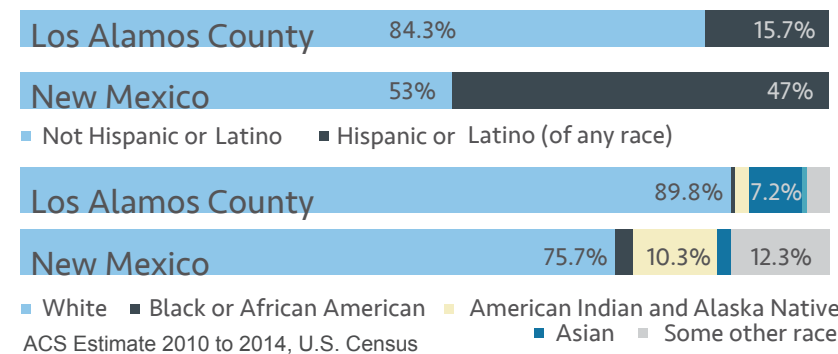


Residents aged 25+  
■ With a Bachelor's degree or higher

## Ethnicity

In 2010, 89% of county residents identified as "white alone, not Hispanic or Latino." This identification is markedly different from the rest of the state, which is nearly 50%.

County and State Ethnic Populations Compared





# 2.3

PLANNING  
CONTEXT:  
HOUSING



# Housing

## Housing Supply

*Note: The information in this section is from the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data, or the American Communities Survey 2010-2014 estimates, where available. In all cases, the information is the most recent.*

As of July 1, 2015, Los Alamos County had 8,354 housing units (5,861 in Los Alamos and 2,392 in White Rock). This number generally splits along the lines of population: two-thirds in Los Alamos and one-third in White Rock, with slightly more units in Los Alamos, reflecting the greater number and percentage of apartments, condominiums and multifamily residences in Los Alamos. White Rock has a higher percentage of home ownership (over 86.7%) than does Los Alamos (62.4%). Rental rates are relatively high, at a median gross rent of \$939/month in Los Alamos and \$1,214 in White Rock. The higher White Rock rent appears to reflect rental of single-

family houses vs. smaller apartments or condominiums in Los Alamos. This premise is borne out by household size, with 2.69 persons per household in White Rock compared to 2.24 in Los Alamos.

Los Alamos County has proportionally more attached housing and fewer mobile homes compared to the state as a whole.

Housing is relatively expensive in Los Alamos County, compared to average values in New Mexico, at \$121,000 above the state average. However, considering the median household income, housing in the county is not expensive. Housing costs 76% more in the county, while the median income is nearly three times higher in the county compared to the state.

### Historic Housing Supply

#### Los Alamos County and CDPs Housing: 2000 and 2010

Geographic Area	Housing Units		2000-2010 Average Change      Annual Rate		Household Size		2000-2010 Change
	2000	2010			2000	2010	
Los Alamos County	7,497	8,354	857	1.1%	2.43	2.33	-0.10
Los Alamos CDP	5,110	5,863	753	1.4%	2.31	2.25	-0.06
White Rock CDP	2,282	2,390	108	0.5%	2.71	2.50	-0.21
County Outside CDPs	105	101	-4	-0.4%	4.46	3.85	-0.61
New Mexico	780,579	901,388	120,809	1.4%	2.63	2.55	-0.08

\*Census Designated Places (CDP) are concentrations of population identified by the United States Census Bureau for statistical purposes. CDPs are delineated for each decennial census as the statistical counterparts of incorporated places, such as cities, towns, and villages

Source: U.S. Census

### Proportion of Housing Types

#### Housing Units by Type

Housing Type	Los Alamos County		New Mexico	Difference
	Number	Portion of Total	Portion of Total	Portion of Total
Single Family	6,209	74.5%	68.5%	6.0%
Duplex	491	5.9%	1.9%	4.0%
Multi-Family	1,365	16.4%	12.9%	3.5%
Mobile Homes	264	3.2%	16.7%	-13.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,329</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*County and State Housing Compared*

## Value of Housing

Perhaps contrary to expectation, the value of housing does not correlate to the high income and educational levels in the county. The median home value is \$302,698, with no significant difference between Los Alamos and White Rock. The average value is slightly higher at \$333,804.

### Comparison of Housing Value and Household Income

	Median Value of Housing	Median Household Income
Los Alamos County	\$280,700	\$124,048
New Mexico	\$159,300	\$44,968
% Greater In Los Alamos County than State	176%	276%

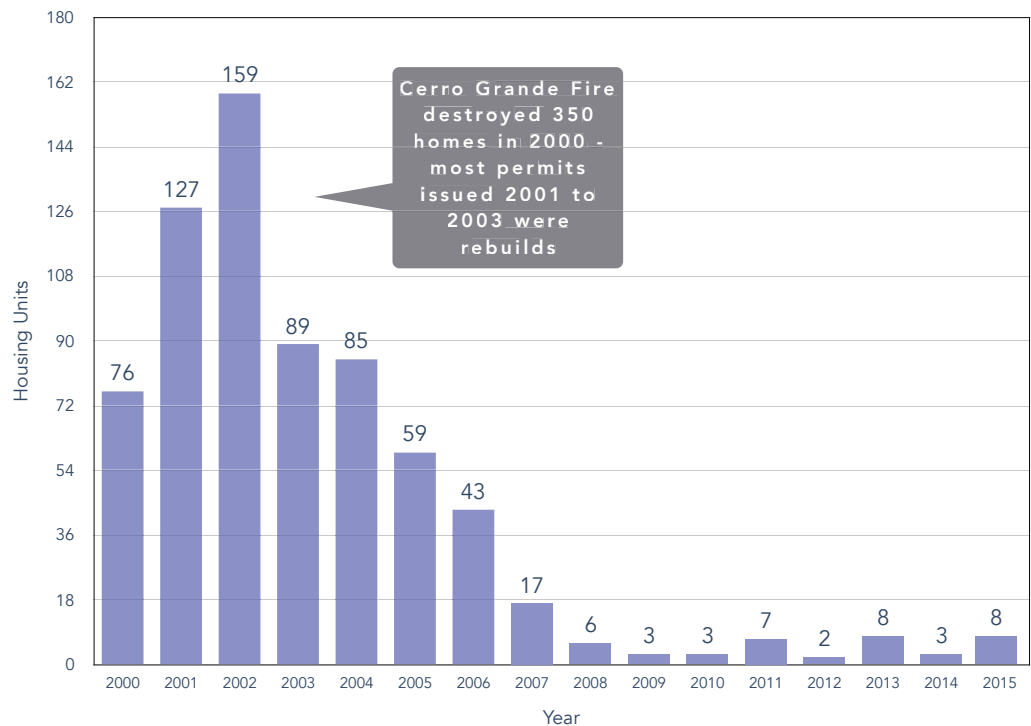
Source: U.S. Census American Communities Survey 2010-2014 Estimates

## New Housing Development

Both locations have seen little growth in housing starts. The County issued three building permits for Los Alamos for new single-family homes in 2014 and none for White Rock during the same year. The number of permits grew to ten new homes in Los Alamos and three in White Rock in 2015, and continues to show an upward trend in housing starts.

*County Residential Permits Issued*

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED IN LOS ALAMOS COUNTY: 2000-2015



## Age of Housing Stock

The housing stock in the county is relatively old. Half of the housing units in the county were built between 1940 and 1969, compared to 25% in the state. Housing built since 1970 constituted 50% of Los Alamos County's stock, but 70% of the total state's housing stock.

As reported in the Los Alamos County Affordable Housing Plan, 2010, the majority of the rental apartment housing stock in Los Alamos is 50 to 60 years old.

### *Proportion of Housing Ages*

#### **Age of Housing Structures in Los Alamos County and New Mexico**

Year Built	Los Alamos County		New Mexico	Difference
	Number	Portion of Total	Portion of Total	Portion of Total
2010 or later	5	0.1%	1.0%	-0.9%
2000 to 2009	1,065	12.8%	16.3%	-3.5%
1990 to 1999	518	6.2%	17.7%	-11.5%
1980 to 1989	1,035	12.4%	17.2%	-4.8%
1970 to 1979	1,507	18.1%	18.1%	0.0%
1960 to 1969	1,617	19.4%	10.1%	9.3%
1950 to 1959	1,807	21.7%	10.3%	11.4%
1940 to 1949	759	9.1%	4.2%	4.9%
1939 or earlier	16	0.2%	5.3%	-5.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,329</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Low and Moderate Income Housing

The Los Alamos Housing Partnership Inc. is a local nonprofit organization that served as the developer of the Piñon Trails subdivision in White Rock. Piñon Trails is a 121-unit development that consists of 50 affordable homes sold to households, most of which HUD would now classify as very low income, with incomes at or below 50% of the area median income (AMI); 80% were from Los Alamos County. (Source: Los Alamos County Affordable Housing Plan, 2010)



# 2.4

## PLANNING CONTEXT: LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LAB DEMOGRAPHICS

LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL  
LABORATORY (LANL)  
PROFOUNDLY INFLUENCES  
THE COMMUNITY.



# Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) Demographics

## General Background

As the impetus for establishing Los Alamos County and as the main employer in the county, Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) profoundly influences the community, including its land use pattern, economy, activities and prospects for the future.

The Laboratory was established in 1943 as part of the Manhattan Project to design and build an atomic bomb. Today, the Laboratory's stated mission is "to develop and apply science and technology to ensure the safety, security, and reliability of the U.S. nuclear deterrent; reduce global threats; and solve other emerging national security and energy challenges."

LANL employs approximately 10,000 people (10,827 in 2015). The workforce numbers include regular employees (Los Alamos National Security, LLC, or LANS, 7,465 employees), SOC LLC (protective force services contractors, 357), contractors (407), students (1,300), unionized craft workers (943), and post-doctoral researchers (355). The annual operating budget is over \$2 billion (\$2.2B in FY 2015).

Only 43% of the regular workforce (LANS) and students live in Los Alamos. The remainder commute from Santa Fe, Española, Taos and Albuquerque. However, the proportion of county residents who work at LANL was reported to be 34% in 2014. Within the same demographic, the average age is reported to be 45. Also in the same demographic, 64% are male and 36% female; 42% are minority; and 65% have university degrees, with 22% having earned a PhD.

Some 31% of all employees are former LANL students or postdoctorate researchers; 53% of LANL scientists and engineers are former students or postdoctorates.

Demographic information in this section is based on data published by LANL in 2016.

LANL has more employees than the State Government in Santa Fe.

LANL directly employed 10,199 people in 2014, or 66% of the total number of employees working in Los Alamos County.

### Employment by Type

#### LANL Employees by Employment Type: 2006-2015

Employment Type	2006	2010	2013	2015
Lab employees*	13,462	14,610	9,574	10,063
Protective force	606	414	397	357
Other contractors	801	594	362	407
Total	14,869	15,618	10,333	10,827

\*Lab employees in 2015 include regular employees, students, unionized craft workers, and post-doctoral researchers

Sources: 2006, 2010-2011, 2012-2013 and 2016 LANL Data Profiles.

## Potential Management Change and Employment Aging and Turnover

Two major potential changes related to LANL may drive change for Los Alamos County:

- Potential change to the LANL management contract. Since 2006, a consortium of entities has operated LANL, including the University of California, Bechtel Corporation, and other for-profit companies. Federal officials recently announced that the operating contract will go out to bid within the next two years. If a nonprofit wins the contract, the County would experience a significant fiscal impact. County management estimated income from both gross receipts generated by the Lab and local spending by Lab employees to be approximately \$40 million annually. While personal spending may not be affected, gross receipts would plummet. Such a change could dramatically impact capital project spending, which, in turn, could affect quality-of-life issues, including the ability of the County to build, improve or maintain cultural and recreational resources, for example. The change would have a comparable effect for the rest of the state, especially adjacent counties. Gross receipts taxes generated by LANL are estimated to be over \$100 million annually statewide.
- The retirement of LANL employees and hiring of younger employees. It has been generally stated that 30% to 40% of the LANL workforce will retire within the next five years. Based on the current number of employees, this percentage represents as many as 2,000 to 3,000 employees, and including spouses, approximately double that number.

Using the reported 43% of the regular LANL workforce who live in the county, and who may or may not continue to reside in the county, some 860 to 1,300 Los Alamos County households could make life and housing changes in the relatively near future. Some may retire in place. Others may wish to remain in Los Alamos, but downsize. Others will move either to warmer climates or to be near family. Still others will need assisted care in Los Alamos County in their later years.

In April 2016 LANL announced that they expected to hire 2,400 new employees over the next several years. The comprehensive plan anticipates the balance between retirees and new employees, and plans for land uses to accommodate housing needs, including a variety of housing types.

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# 2.5

## PLANNING CONTEXT: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC VITALITY AND  
FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY  
ARE STRATEGIC FOCUS  
AREAS IDENTIFIED BY  
THE COUNTY COUNCIL  
TO BE OF PARAMOUNT  
IMPORTANCE IN  
DETERMINING THE NATURE  
AND QUALITY OF THE  
FUTURE OF LOS ALAMOS.

# Economic Development

## County Council Goals

Economic vitality and financial sustainability are strategic focus areas identified by the County Council to be of extreme importance in determining the nature and quality of the future of Los Alamos.

The Council has established the following goals to promote economic vitality:

- Promote a strong and diverse economic base by encouraging new business growth.
- Collaborate with Los Alamos National Laboratory as the area's #1 employer.
- Market and brand Los Alamos as a scenic destination featuring recreation, science and history.
- Maximize the utilization of County-owned land.

The Council has established the following goals to promote financial sustainability:

- Encourage the retention of existing businesses and assist in their opportunities for growth.
- Support spin-off business opportunities from LANL.
- Significantly improve the quantity and quality of retail business.
- Attract new tourism-related business.
- Revitalize and eliminate blight in the downtown areas of Los Alamos and White Rock.
- Maximize our opportunity with respect to the development of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

*Source: Los Alamos County Strategic Leadership Plan,*



## Economic Development Assets

Los Alamos County is unique in many ways. Almost as many people work in the county as live there. The county has one of the highest average worker earnings and per capita personal incomes in the nation, has one of the best school systems in the western United States, and has been ranked as having the “highest quality of life” of any county in the nation. Yet, it has a number of issues unique to Los Alamos County that are challenging for future economic expansion and related economic development programs.

- Nearly 70 years after its founding, the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) remains the largest employer in Los Alamos and in Northern New Mexico, and controls roughly 35 square miles, or one-third of all property in Los Alamos County. The economic vitality of the county still depends largely on activity at LANL. Since 1943, much of Los Alamos County business activity has focused on LANL. In the ten-year period from 2004 to 2013, LANL grew from 8,633 employees in 2004 to 10,199 employees in 2014, and reached above 11,000 employees at one point in the decade.
  - Annual wages from LANL employment in 2014 were estimated at \$1.2 billion, or 80% of all wages earned in the county.
- A disproportionately low number of young working adults aged 20 to 29 make up just 7.4% of the county population, versus 14% nationwide. Conversely, a relatively large population of mature working age people aged 45-65 made up 37.9% of the county population versus 26.5% nationwide. The percentage of county residents who are older than 65 years grew from 1.1% in 1960 to 15% in 2010. The 2014 population of Los Alamos County was estimated at 18,191 people, with a median age of 44.8 years old compared with a U.S. median age of 36.8 years old, a difference of more than 8 years.
- Los Alamos is one of the most educated counties in the nation, with 80.3% of all citizens over 25 completing some college and 36.2% holding a graduate or professional degree or higher. This statistic compares with 58% of all U.S. citizens over 25 who have completed some college and 11.6% who have earned a graduate degree or greater.
- Since 2007, prior to the recession, employment in the county declined by 2,355 jobs (13%).
- Recent polls variously ranked Los Alamos County among the top counties in the U.S. for household affluence, personal wealth, and household income.
- In 2010, the overall cost of living in Los Alamos County was ranked 115, or 15% greater than the U.S. average. (Source: Sperling’s Best Places) However, only one single component of CLI exceeded the U.S. average – housing – which ranked 150% of the U.S. average cost in 2010, while all other components remained at or below the U.S. average.
- Los Alamos County has had an increase in visitors:
  - 33% growth between 2012-2015
  - 20% is due to new Nature Center, 13% for all others
  - Estimated visitor spending in 2015: \$15-\$20 million

## Median Income

As of July 1, 2015, Los Alamos County had the highest median household income in the state, \$111,076, in marked contrast to the rest of the state, which ranks 43rd nationally in the same category, and more than double the national average of \$53,657. Average household income in the County was \$130,885. The poverty rate, which is under 5%, is comparatively low; the national average of 14.8%.

## Income Variability

The community has substantial differences in household incomes. Depending upon the type and size of household, and owner-versus-renter status, household income can vary dramatically and affect a household’s purchasing power for ownership and rental housing. (Source: Los Alamos County Affordable Housing Plan, 2010)

## Unemployment Rate

The County unemployment rate was 4.0% in December 2015, the lowest of all counties in the state, while the state average was 6.6%. (Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics)

## Economic Diversification

The Economic Vitality Strategic Plan adopted in 2010 called for identification and recommendation of land purchases and assembly, and disposition strategies to promote sustainable economic development in the County.

The County seeks to recruit diverse business and residential development that will help the Los Alamos economy to grow in a sustainable manner, reducing the risk of economic decline should the Laboratory budget be cut, or in the event of an unforeseen circumstance, such as a natural disaster or a national economic downturn similar to the recession of 2008.

## Economic Development Challenges

Aggressive marketing efforts have not always succeeded. Flat population growth, high land values and Los Alamos' remote location all contribute to the challenges.

- Through coordinated and aggressive marketing of the community through established national and regional networks, for the past three years, the County and Los Alamos Commerce & Development Corporation (LACDC) have been able to bring dozens of business prospects to visit Los Alamos sites. These prospects range from large housing and senior living project developers, and high technology firms, to local entrepreneurs and national retailers, restaurant, and lodging companies. This effort is facilitated by the county's excellent partnership with the LACDC and the brokerage community. However, despite numerous site tours, few investors and developers have completed a purchase or investment in Los Alamos. The reasons most often given are the lack of well-located properties with sufficient infrastructure at a fair market value. Many of these businesses have chosen to locate in Santa Fe or Rio Arriba Counties instead.
- Los Alamos has limited drive-by exposure, aging infrastructure, relatively expensive housing, and residents who are accustomed to shopping outside of Los Alamos
  - Los Alamos lacks attractive and competitive workforce housing in all price ranges.
  - While visitor numbers have increased since 2010, we have lost 140 hotel beds and hotel developers have yet to complete investments in this market.

## Efforts to Bring in Economic Development

### Public infrastructure investments

- In late 2015, as a result of these conditions, the County refined a list of long-standing projects involving the productive development of targeted properties owned by the County. The list provided recommendations for County investment in public infrastructure to promote economic growth and development as part of the Economic Vitality Strategic Plan.
- Major streetscape and urban design investments, both through the Main Street program as well as direct County construction and renovation projects, signal support for an important direction already established by the County with respect to infrastructure funding intended to spur private development.
- Infrastructure investments for 20th Street, DP Road and Deacon Street will support development efforts to build out these areas.

### Housing

- With new housing development and expanded opportunities for the local workforce to establish residence in Los Alamos, population will increase, retail will expand, and more spending will remain in the community. Over time, it is hoped that Los Alamos County can reach a "critical mass" of new development and price/quality equilibrium in the property market.

### Local and state incentives

- In 2016, the State adopted legislation that allows use of Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) funds for hotel and restaurant development. The state and our local ordinance also support LEDA for arts and cultural district facilities, and this particular use of funds presents new opportunities for the future.



# 2.6

## PLANNING CONTEXT: TRANSPORTATION



# Transportation

## Overall Road Network

Los Alamos County contains approximately 109 square miles of land. Located on the eastern side of the Jemez Mountains, the County is somewhat isolated, with access only from NM 4 from the south, NM 502 from the east, and an airport. NM 4 connects Los Alamos with US 550 at San Ysidro. NM 4 provides access to the Jemez Springs/Jemez Pueblo, area as well as the Valles Caldera National Preserve. NM 4 also connects White Rock and Bandelier National Park with the Los Alamos Townsite. NM 502 connects Los Alamos with US 84/285 at Pojoaque. US 84/285 is a major arterial which connects a number of scattered independent communities

and native Pueblo lands between Española and Santa Fe. NM 502 carries the majority of the traffic, consisting principally of approximately 10,000 commuters daily. This arterial road affords access to Taos and points in southern Colorado, as well as the central urban areas of New Mexico via I-25.

The following table shows traffic volumes on selected segments of state highways in Los Alamos County. The map below. The following map shows the functional classification of streets in Los Alamos Townsite [and White Rock].

State Highway Segment Volumes

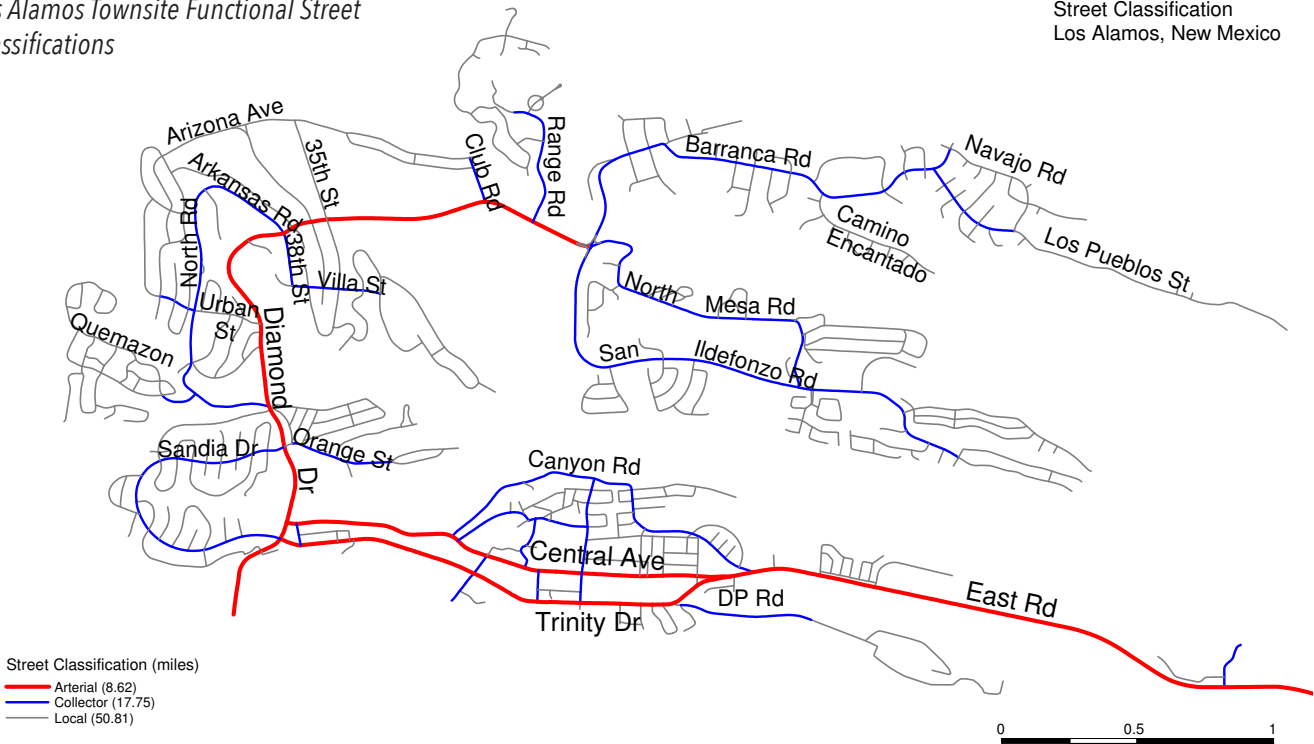
Traffic Volumes On Selected Road Segments in Los Alamos and White Rock

Location	Annual Average Daily Trips (AADT)		
	2014	2013	2012
NM 502 Entering Los Alamos Townsite	13,982	14,054	14,269
Trinity and Diamond	20,264	20,368	20,680
NM 502 at Junction with NM 4 - White Rock	12,993	12,599	12,791
NM 4 Junction with Pajarito Road - White Rock	8,897	8,830	8,870

Source: New Mexico Department of Transportation TIMS Road Segments by Posted Route, 5-27-15 Run Date.

Los Alamos Townsite Functional Street Classifications

Street Classification  
Los Alamos, New Mexico



## Transit Service

Atomic City Transit operates an extensive public bus system throughout the Los Alamos Townsite and White Rock communities. Currently, seven different routes provide bus service to nearly all of the community. Service is relatively frequent (every 30 minutes at peak times), and is free to the public.

The State of New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) operates a regional public transportation system called the NMDOT Park & Ride. It provides both morning and evening service from Los Alamos Townsite to Española, Pojoaque, and Santa Fe, with connections for continuing service to Las Vegas, Bernalillo, Albuquerque, and regional communities located east of the Albuquerque metro area (Moriarty, Edgewood, Sedillo). This service also connects with the New Mexico Rail Runner train (Santa Fe to Belen), and with local transit service in Santa Fe. The North Central Rural Transit District (NCRTD) operates a mid-day bus serving both Española and Pojoaque.

## Bicycle Routes

The current Los Alamos County road network was designed primarily for vehicular traffic, although it has some accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians. There are three dedicated bicycle lanes in Los Alamos Townsite. One is located on Canyon Road, which becomes Central Avenue, between Diamond Drive and Oppenheimer. The second is located along a short segment of San Ildefonso Drive, from North Mesa Road to Sioux Street. A third dedicated bicycle lane is on Diamond Drive between the Los Alamos Medical Center and San Ildefonso Road. Although bicycle lanes painted along Central Avenue mark a bicycle right-of-way, no dedicated bicycle lanes are currently located along either Trinity Drive or Central Avenue.

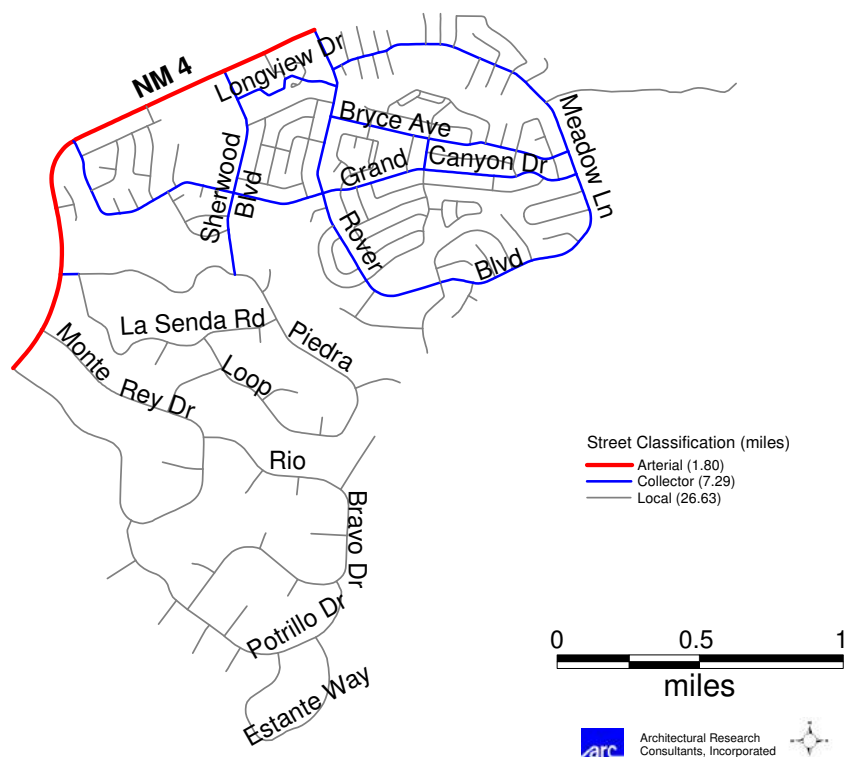
In White Rock, dedicated bicycle lanes are located on both sides of NM 4, between Rover Boulevard and Pajarito Road/Grand Canyon Drive.

## Airport

Los Alamos County Airport is located north of NM 502 on the eastern edge of Los Alamos Townsite. Small private aircraft use the airport, and it has had commercial commuter service to Albuquerque intermittently. Most recently, Boutique Air offered flights beginning in 2015, but terminated its contract with the County in April 2016. The airport contains one 6,000 ft.-long runway. It is located on land leased from the Department of Energy and classified as a low air-traffic facility.

*White Rock Functional Street Classifications*

Street Classification  
White Rock, New Mexico



## Pedestrians and Trails

The older neighborhoods of Los Alamos Townsite and White Rock were designed to facilitate pedestrian access. Interior systems of walkways and shortcuts, located away from roads, connect various activity areas within each neighborhood. More recent development patterns have tended to segregate residential development from all other types of development, creating a dependence on vehicle trips for daily transportation needs. Since 2000, community pedestrian advocates have championed sidewalk projects along Canyon/Central, and through the Historic District. Other traffic-calming measures have been constructed in the Townsite as well.

A 58-mile network of County trails links the foothills, canyons and mesas around Los Alamos. The County trail network links with over 100 miles of federal trails in the surrounding Santa Fe National Forest and the adjacent Valle Caldera National Preserve.

## Physical Constraints to Transportation System

Elevations in Los Alamos County range from 5,000 feet near the Rio Grande River to over 10,000 feet near the western border of the County. The developed areas of Los Alamos County include the Los Alamos Townsite and White Rock, and are located entirely on top of flat mesas separated by steep canyons. Part of the area's original attraction that became Los Alamos County was the relative lack of accessibility created by its location and topography which helped to protect the secret nature of scientific activities occurring at LANL.

Due to the rugged topography of the region surrounding Los Alamos County and land ownership patterns, additional outside access to Los Alamos County would be extremely challenging to develop and construct. Additionally, due to the configuration of development in Los Alamos County, construction of additional local roadways would also pose great challenges. As such, the focus of future transportation planning will likely focus on improving and expanding the transit system, expanding pedestrian and bicycle path facilities, and providing additional multi-modal opportunities.

## County Goals

The Strategic Leadership Plan adopted in 2016 listed mobility as an aspect of the Quality of Life focus area. The stated goal is to "Maintain and improve transportation and mobility."

- Related goals from the Strategic Leadership Plan include:
- Maintain quality essential services and supporting infrastructure.
- Enhance environmental quality and sustainability balancing costs and benefits including County services and utilities.
- Maximize the utilization of County-owned land.

## Future Transportation

Currently, various parties are discussing the possibility of contracting services for development of a County Tourism Plan. This project is in part inspired by the advent of 2015 authorization of plans to develop a Manhattan Project National Historical Park site in Los Alamos and the focus that the planned park will bring to the historic district of the downtown. In addition to safety and mobility issues associated with a projected increase in all modes of traffic (especially pedestrian), the plan will need to address related issues of parking, way-finding and street and urban design. As tourism and visitation in general increase as anticipated, other transportation issues will arise. These issues could include: shuttle service to the ski hill, transportation-related signage considerations, and the use of new and improved technologies to gather and disseminate information.

## Summary

As Los Alamos County continues to develop, the transportation system will need to respond to changes in land use and population distribution by accommodating those changes and others.

The 2016 comprehensive plan update will identify goals and policies related to mobility and transportation planning, and suggest strategies for future study, analysis and implementation.





# 2.7

PLANNING  
CONTEXT:  
UTILITIES

# Utilities

## Introduction

Public utility services represent a substantial resource in terms of the community’s ability to promote and foster growth and development and can serve as a tool to guide growth. Public policy can direct growth to appropriate areas of the community by the installation of appropriately sized utilities.

## Providers

The urban areas of Los Alamos County have access to all major utility services including water, wastewater, natural gas, electricity, and telecommunication. Los Alamos County owns and operates the water distribution, wastewater collection, natural gas distribution and electric distribution utilities within Los Alamos County. Los Alamos County also administers solid waste and recycling services. Telecommunication services are provided by Qwest and Comcast®.

The Los Alamos County Department of Public Utilities (DPU) is funded by rates paid for electric, gas, water, wastewater services and auxiliary fees and has provided the community with these services for more than 45 years. The utility is accountable to the citizens of Los Alamos County through the local Board of Public Utilities.

# Water

Los Alamos County owns and operates the water production facilities and distribution system in Los Alamos County through the DPU. DPU provides water service to the residents and businesses of Los Alamos and White Rock and to Bandelier National Monument. Water is delivered in bulk to LANL under a service agreement with DOE, which operates its own distribution system.

It is intended that the low-cost water from this system will provide for irrigation of parks and school grounds.

Based on the most current planning assessment, water production and supply capabilities in the County are robust. Nevertheless, there is a need for replacement of aging pipelines and other water infrastructure components. Capital improvement planning with associated funding calculations is ongoing.

## Water Rights

Water rights for Los Alamos County total 5,541.3 acre feet per year and are comprised of a combined right of groundwater and surface water. Los Alamos County also has a contract with the Bureau of Reclamation for an additional 1,200 acre-feet of San Juan

Historic Water Rights Use	
Percentage of Water Rights Used: 2006-2015	
2006	75%
2007	76%
2008	80%
2009	73%
2010	73%
2011	79%
2012	82%
2013	72%
2014	66%
2015	61%

Source: Los Alamos County Department of Public Utilities

### County Water Rights Quantities

#### Summary of Los Alamos County Water Rights

Ownership	Quantity
Water Rights Owned by Los Alamos County	3,878.91 acre feet/year (Surface & Groundwater)
Water Rights Owned by LANL	1,662.39 acre feet/year (Surface & Groundwater)
San Juan Chama - Los Alamos County Service Contract	1,200.00 acre feet/year (not yet developed)
<b>Total Water Rights</b>	<b>6,741.30 acre feet/year</b>

Source: Los Alamos County Department of Public Utilities

Chama surface water. This latter source of supply has not yet been developed. Since the late 1960s to the present, total water consumption ranges between 4,000 and 5,000 acre-feet per year. However, on two occasions during this time period, annual consumption exceeded 5,000 acre-feet and encroached upon the permitted water right amount.

## Sources of Water and Treatment Processes

Groundwater is extracted from the main aquifer located below Los Alamos via 12 wells located in three well fields: Guaje, Otowi and Pajarito ranging in depth from 1,519 feet to 3,092 feet. Booster pump stations lift the water through transmission lines to reservoir storage tanks for distribution. The entire water supply is disinfected with chlorine prior to distribution. The Long-Range Water Supply Plan is currently being revised. Adequate water is available for growth in the near term. Water conservation efforts are in place to mitigate increasing demands.

While the County's water rights of 5,541.3 acre feet include both surface water and ground water, DPU has supplied its customers solely with groundwater for potable use. Prior to the Cerro Grande fire in May 2000, surface water from the Los Alamos Reservoir was used for irrigation purposes by the Los Alamos Public Schools and by the County. As of spring 2016, the County has not been able to utilize surface water from the Los Alamos reservoir due to damage to the pipeline caused by multiple flooding events since 2000.

DPU completed a preliminary engineering report in 2012 to evaluate alternatives to develop the 1,200 acre-feet of San Juan Chama Project water. The recommended alternative is to drill up to three wells on the canyon rim in White Rock to intercept groundwater prior to reaching the Rio Grande. Development is on hold pending completion of a revised Long Range Water Supply Plan for Los Alamos County to identify when water demand will warrant developing additional water rights based on population growth and operational expansion at Los Alamos National Laboratories.

The Los Alamos Reservoir was built in the 1930s and 1940s, and was the Los Alamos Ranch School's and later the Manhattan Project's first supply of potable water. After potable use was discontinued in the early 1960s, the reservoir was later used for irrigation of sports fields and community parks until 2000. The Cerro Grande Fire in May

2000 severely damaged the reservoir and its watershed. The reservoir was filled in with sediment from post fire flooding and could no longer function as a water supply. Repair and reconstruction of the reservoir was completed in the spring of 2013. However, a catastrophic flood in September of 2013 again filled the newly repaired reservoir with silt. Repair of the transmission pipeline is scheduled for 2017, after which time it will again be used as a non-potable water resource. It is intended that the low-cost water from this system will provide for irrigation of parks and school grounds. Based on the most current planning assessment, there are no existing deficiencies in the Water Utility.

## Wastewater

Los Alamos County operates two wastewater treatment plants. The Los Alamos community is served by the Los Alamos Wastewater Treatment Plant located in Pueblo Canyon. The plant was placed into service in 2007 and was designed to accommodate increased flows resulting from planned development. Additional capacity can be provided through a planned system addition. The White Rock community is served by a second treatment plant that is scheduled to be replaced in 2019. The new plant will add capacity for additional planned development. The wastewater system is generally in fair condition with adequate capacity for existing needs, but will require evaluation on a case-by-case basis for all future developments.

## Treated Effluent Reuse

Treated effluent from the Los Alamos Wastewater Treatment Plant is used to irrigate four different sites in Los Alamos: North Mesa Soccer Field, North Mesa Ball Fields, Los Alamos Middle School and Los Alamos County Golf Course. Effluent from the White Rock Waste Water Treatment Plant is used to irrigate Overlook Park in White Rock. In total, an estimated 112.37 acres are currently irrigated with treated effluent. DPU has effectively operated effluent distribution facilities, partnered with the county parks division, and administered the required permits for decades. Use of reclaimed water began in 1985 in White Rock at Overlook Park, and in Los Alamos, reclaimed water use began in 1945 when the original golf course was developed. Currently DPU is pursuing expansion of reclaimed water use per the guidance of a comprehensive Non-Potable Master Plan, completed in 2013.

As part of DPU's effort to optimize the use of effluent and surface water for irrigation purposes, Forsgren Associates Inc.



prepared a Non-Potable Water System Master Plan, which was completed in September 2013. The objectives of the Master Plan Study included reviewing existing infrastructure, evaluating existing and potential future irrigated sites, developing realistic demand for system build-out and recommending system improvements. A capital improvement plan was developed as part of the master plan to expand the non-potable water system to spread the use of non-potable water throughout the Los Alamos and White Rock communities to displace use of potable water for irrigation. Expansion of the non-potable system is funded by loan/grant funding from the New Mexico Finance Authority Water Trust Board (WTB). Grant/loan funding is applied for annually from the WTB.

## Natural Gas System

Los Alamos County owns and operates the gas distribution system in Los Alamos and White Rock. Gas is delivered to four locations in the County through regional transmission pipelines owned and operated by New Mexico Gas Company.

In 2013, DPU provided service to approximately 7,090 residential customers that included multi-family connections and approximately 397 commercial/municipal customers. The natural gas system is comprised of both steel and plastic distribution mains and service lines ranging in size from 1/2" to 12" in diameter.

There are two sources of supply available for Los Alamos townsite. The rest is the City Gate Station located directly across from Camino Entrada along State Road 502. The second City Gate Station is located in the Quemazon subdivision. The Los Alamos townsite gas distribution system contains approximately 84 miles of mainline pipe and 41 miles of service lines.

The source of supply for the community of White Rock comes from a 4" steel pipeline owned by the NMGC that begins at the New Mexico 502 and State Road 4 interchange. The White Rock system contains approximately 33 miles of mainline pipe and 18 miles of service lines.

Recent improvements made by DPU have increased the capability of providing a sustainable supply of natural gas throughout the system, which is considered to have adequate capacity for the foreseeable future.

## Electric Supply

The electrical distribution system in the communities of Los Alamos and White Rock is owned and operated by DPU. Approximately two-thirds of the electrical distribution system is underground and one-third is overhead. The commercial districts in each area are served by 3 phase, 15KV, underground primary service with sufficient capacity for most commercial business expansions requiring up to 500 KVA each. Larger size transformers can also be accommodated on a case by case basis.

The community of Los Alamos is served by the Townsite substation with a 15MVA capacity, with plans underway for the construction of a second substation called LASS. The LASS substation will greatly increase system reliability and double the electrical system capacity in Los Alamos. Completion of the LASS substation project is planned by 2018. The community of White Rock is served by the White Rock substation consisting of redundant 5MVA substation transformers. There is also 115KV transmission line capacity at the substation for bulk-power electrical capacity needs.

Also by 2018, DPU is planning on installing electric smart meters throughout its service area. The addition of smart meters will free-up additional electrical capacity. Smart meters can help the LACDPU shift load, shed load, and bank load via energy storage for the benefit of all. As the electrical systems evolve into the smart-grid, DPU is ready and capable to implement new smart-grid technologies for the benefit of its customers. Presently, DPU owns and operates 1MW of utility scale photo-voltaic (PV) solar energy generation and 1.8MW of utility scale battery storage with plans to add a second 1MW of PV.

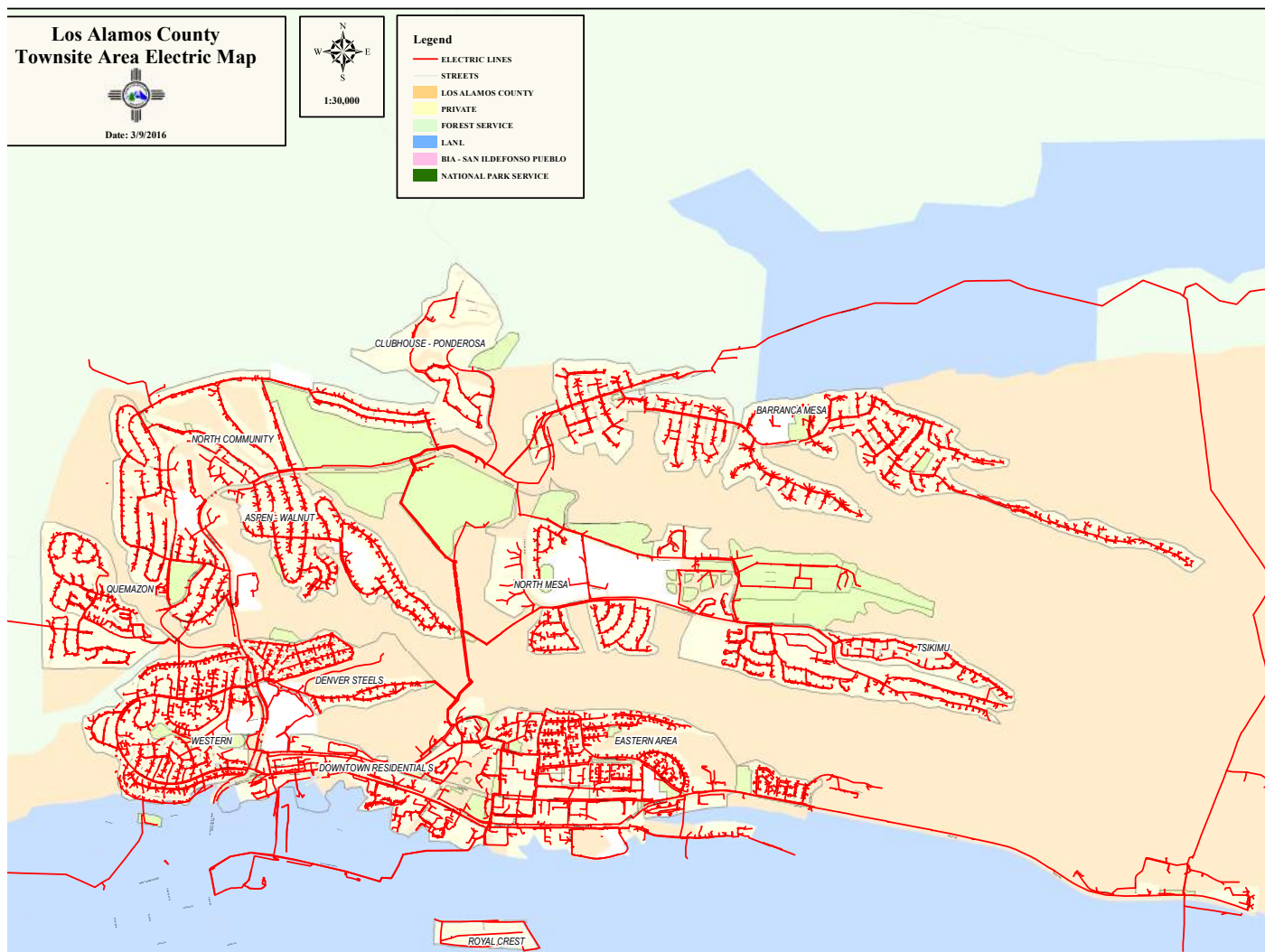
Under the electric coordination agreement with DOE, the County owns and will continue to own the means of energy generation and distribution. LANL is the recipient of 80% of all generated power and pays a proportional share of all capital and operational costs. Los Alamos County anticipates continuing a comparable arrangement with DOE past 2025. Unlike other electric distribution utilities, DPU owns and operates 72 megawatts of power generation capacity, schedules the bulk power and brings it into Los Alamos. This means DPU can purchase, schedule, and bring in additional whole-sale power beyond its current obligations.

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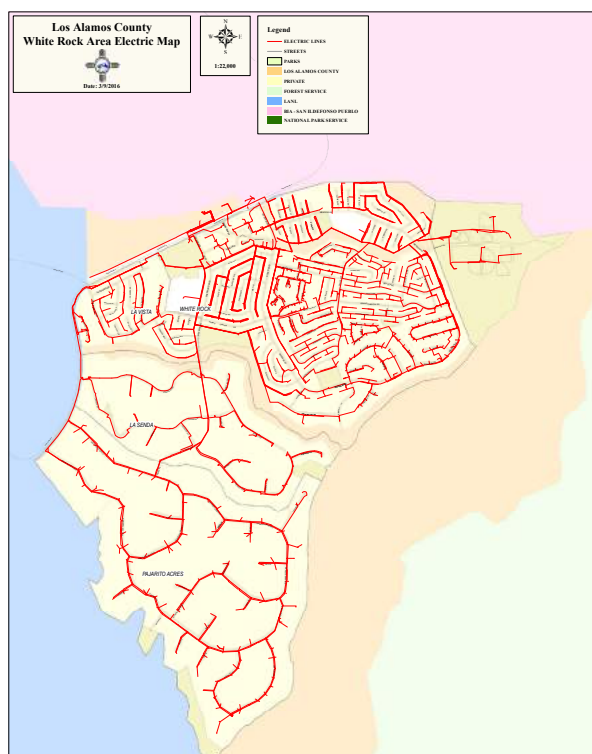
## Broadband Services

Los Alamos County is a member of the REDI Net Joint Powers Agreement in Northern New Mexico, and is actively working to improve the availability and cost of high speed broadband service to home and business. REDI Net was a major fiber optic backbone deployed over the past few years between Santa Fe and Taos as well as in the Rio Grande corridor, including the Pojoaque and Espanola Valleys. Los Alamos County currently receives service from this backbone up to the town site through a radio system, which limits traffic. The County and neighboring Pueblos seek to improve their broadband service and have set aside funds to pursue faster service from the Pojoaque Valley to Los Alamos and White Rock. The County is currently completing a funding request to the State of New Mexico (LEDA fund) to assist in deploying "Middle Mile" fiber optic capacity to the Pajarito Mesa through one of three possible routes. While the preferred route is currently underfunded, it is anticipated that the County will develop strategies to realize a significant improvement in the cost and availability of Internet service in the Los Alamos/White Rock area.

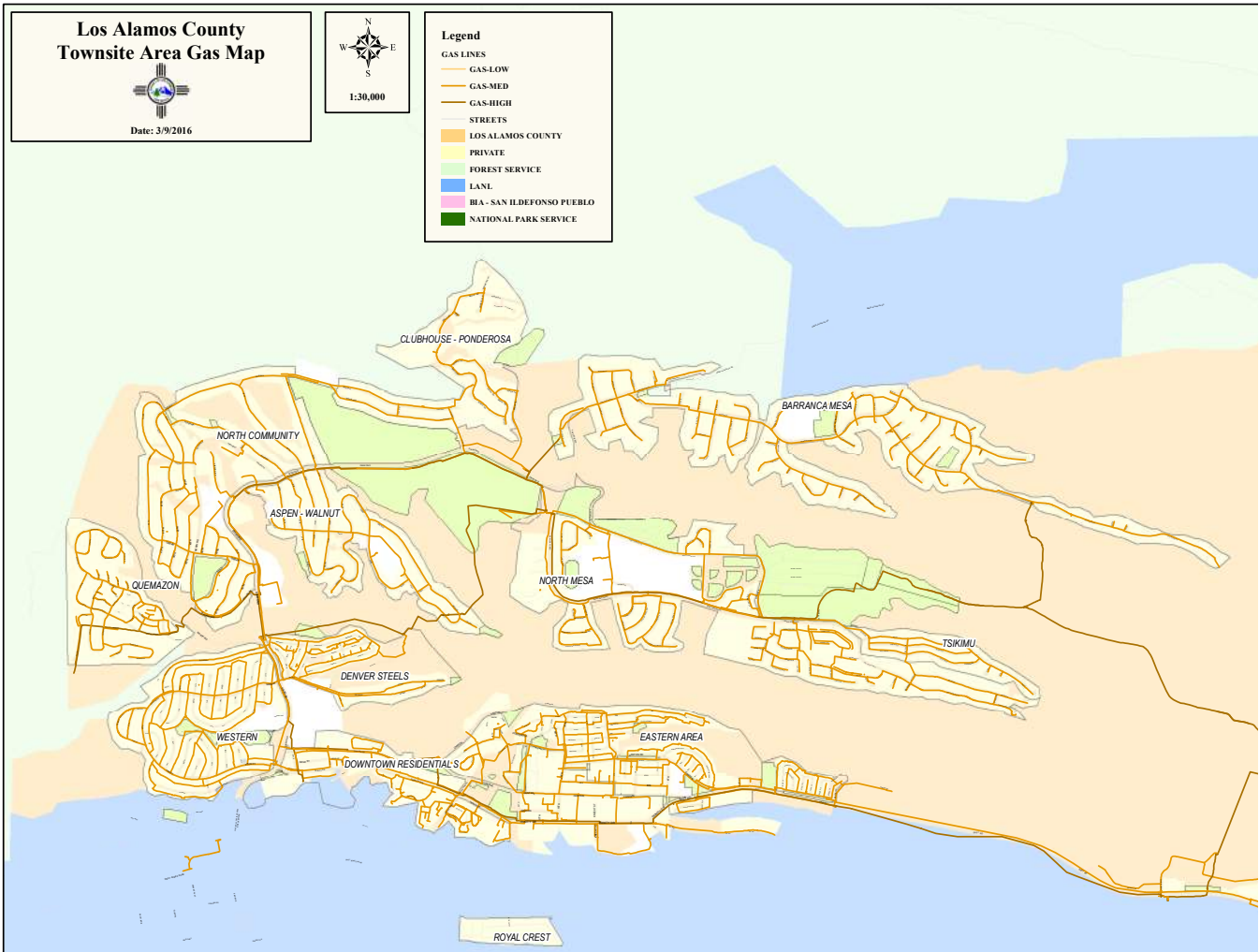




*Electric Lines in Los Alamos Townsite*



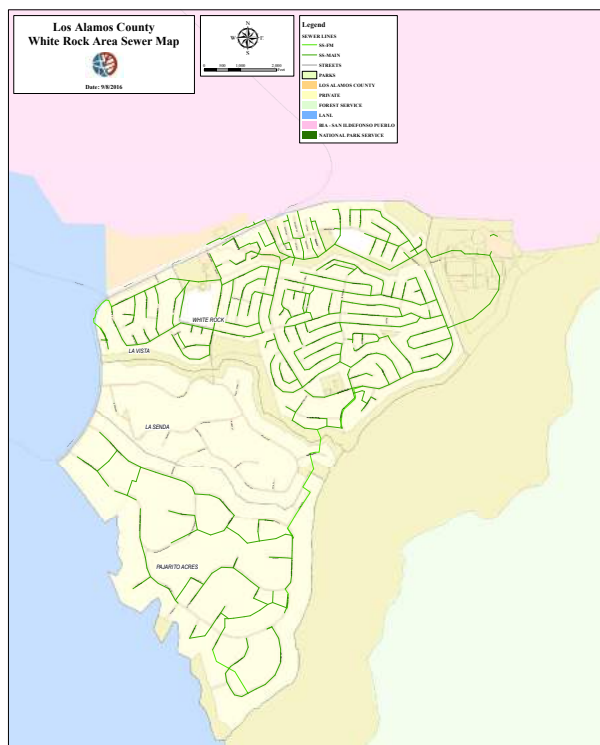
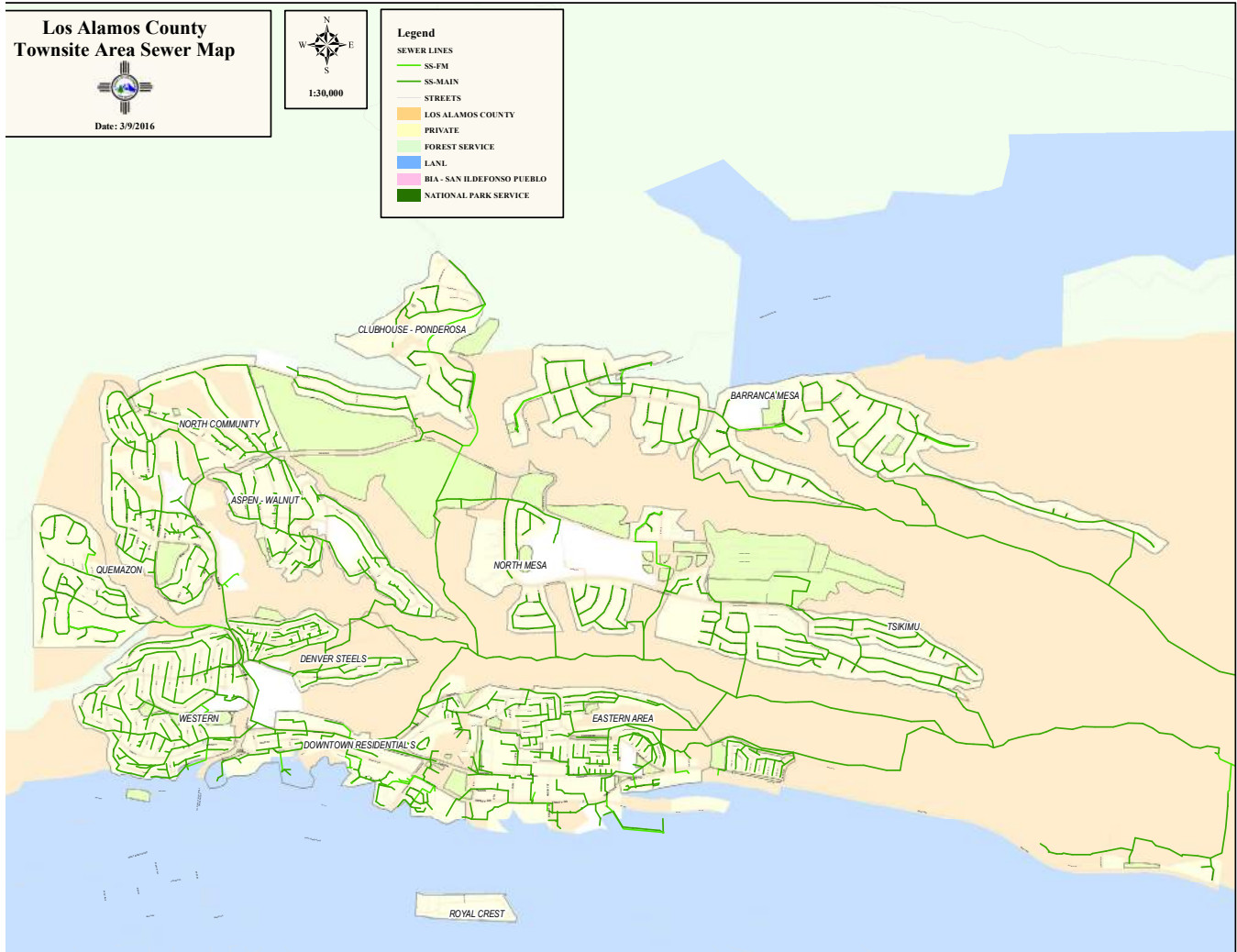
*Electric Lines in White Rock.*



*Natural Gas Lines in Los Alamos Townsite*

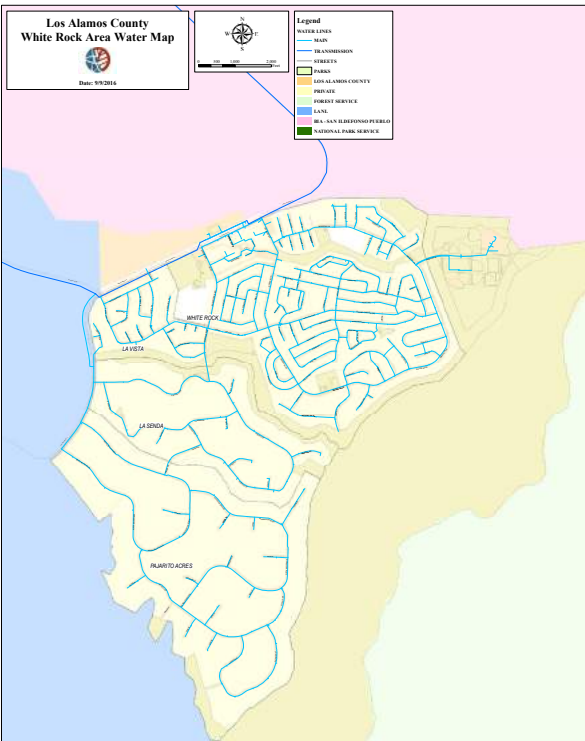


*Natural Gas Lines in White Rock*



Wastewater Lines in Los Alamos Townsite (top) and White Rock (left)





Potable Water Lines in Los Alamos Townsite (top) and White Rock (left)

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# 2.8

## PLANNING CONTEXT: OPEN SPACE

LOS ALAMOS IS LOCATED  
ON THE PAJARITO  
PLATEAU, BETWEEN WHITE  
ROCK CANYON AND THE  
VALLES CALDERA, PART OF  
THE JEMEZ MOUNTAINS  
OF NORTHERN NEW  
MEXICO.



# Open Space

## Open Space and Environmental Stewardship

Los Alamos is located on the Pajarito Plateau, between White Rock Canyon and the Valles Caldera, part of the Jemez Mountains of Northern New Mexico. The mountains were created by volcanic action over the last 13 million years. The town of Los Alamos sits on four mesas created by erosion of the volcanic tuff, which makes up the upper surface of the plateau. Water flowing east from the mountains down to the Rio Grande created the deep canyons that separate the mesas. At 7,355 feet elevation, the predominant tree species are ponderosa pine, aspen, spruce and fir. Native birds include the greater roadrunner, the State bird of New Mexico, and wild turkey. Other fauna include black bear (the State's official animal since 1953), cougars, jaguars, coyotes, porcupines, skunks, deer, elk, squirrels, chipmunks, pronghorns, western diamondbacks, kangaroo rats, jackrabbits, and a multitude of other birds, reptiles and rodents.

The Los Alamos County Council adopted the Open Space Management Plan as a guide for managing the county's 4,000+ acres of open space. The plan acknowledges the value of open space for multiple reasons: aesthetics, watershed protection, wildlife habitat, recreational use, preservation of cultural artifacts, and contribution to the quality of life in Los Alamos. The plan divides County-owned lands into six ecologically based management units, summarizes current conditions, past management practices, and recommends future management actions.

Council strategic goals related to open space and environmental stewardship, and adopted in 2016, include the following goals under the Quality of Life section: Implement a comprehensive range of recreational and cultural amenities that enhance the Los Alamos community. Enhance environmental quality and sustainability, balancing costs and benefits including County services and utilities.

## Natural Resources

The sweeping range of elevation in Los Alamos County creates a continuum of ecosystems and a surprising biodiversity. Spruce-fir, mixed conifer and ponderosa pine forests provide the backdrop for significant viewsheds, and attractive recreation opportunities for the County Trail Network, and they function as important components of watersheds. Groundwater infiltration is focused on riparian areas. Local botanists have identified more than 900 plant species found within the county boundaries. About 130 bird species nest in the county, and the canyons and mesas are home to about 40 reptile and amphibian species and 70 kinds of mammals, including mule deer, elk, black bear, red, grey and kit fox, coyote, ringtail, and mountain lion. The county provides habitat for at least five threatened or endangered species.



## Highlights of open space resources include:

**White Rock Canyon.** Carved by the Rio Grande through lava oozed from the Caja del Rio volcanic field on the east bank of the river and the orange tuffs of the Valles Caldera eruptions, the canyon averages 1,000 feet deep from rim to river. The canyon hosts four rare plant species. It is the northernmost extent of the range of about 20 plants, is frequented by at least three endangered species, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places – the only canyon in the United States to enjoy such a designation.

- **Tent Rocks of Pueblo Canyon.** An unusual combination of geology, the rock towers known variously as hoodoos, stone tents, or tent rocks, are formations found only in a handful of locations around the world. Tent rocks in Pueblo Canyon are composed of welded volcanic ash spewed from a massive eruption of the Valles Caldera about 1.2 million years ago.
- **Los Alamos Reservoir.** First impounded by the Los Alamos Ranch School in the 1920s, the Los Alamos Reservoir has long served as a family destination for picnicking, hiking, and fishing. Post-Cerro Grande and Las Conchas fires runoff has dramatically altered the reservoir. The area has been closed to public access for most of the past 14 years. Although the County owns the dam, the reservoir is located within the Santa Fe National Forest, but the County is expected to purchase the land in the near future.
- **Camp May and Surrounding Areas.** Camp May is a County park consisting of montane grasslands that are a unique feature of the Jemez Mountains. The park provides camping and picnicking, and is adjacent to Pajarito Mountain Ski Area. Together, these places provide a starting point for hiking, cross-country skiing, and mountain biking in the county's highest easily accessible terrain.
- **Cultural Resources.** About 150 cultural sites have been identified on county open space. These sites include multistory pueblos, small room blocks, game pits, lithic scatters, sheepherder shelters and corrals, and rock art sites.
- **Deer Trap Mesa Sites.** Deer Trap Mesa connects to Baranca Mesa by a narrow rock bridge. An ancestral pueblo game pit, also known as a deer trap or eagle trap, it sits in the only break in the cliffs. From the pit, an ancient foot trail heads eastward, passing by small roomblocks of the hunters and farmers who used the mesa top.
- **Natural Arch.** In the Santa Fe National Forest, Rendija Canyon's north wall has a small natural arch punched through volcanic rocks. The arch is a popular destination for hikers.
- **Cave of the Winds.** Located in the Santa Fe National Forest approximately a mile from the center of Los Alamos, the Cave of the Winds, another favorite destination for hikers, has an entrance through a narrow slot on a flat slab of rock. Once inside, visitors have room to stand, and a short narrow passage to explore.



## County Open Space System

### Neighborhood Open Space

One in seven houses in the county is on a perimeter lot that borders open space. Approximately 95% of county residents live within a seven-minute walk of county open space. Many residents of Los Alamos cite the ease of access to natural areas and trails as an important attraction of living in the county.

In the 2012 Community Survey, approximately 20% of residents reported that they use their neighborhood open space at least five times a week, whether for exercise, dog walking or recreation. Every neighborhood in Los Alamos and White Rock has nearby open space and the preservation and care of that open space is important to the adjacent or nearby residents.

The comprehensive plan will map the different kinds of open space and identify gaps, and easement/purchase/donation options needed to create a robust and connected system of trails and open spaces.

### Trails/Open Space System

Los Alamos County has 60+ miles of maintained trails. The trail system represents the most active use of open space in the county. The vast majority of trail use has been and continues to be for recreational purposes. In the 2012 Community Survey, 87% of the respondents stated they had used the trail network in the previous year, and 57% said they used the trail network 12 or more times per year.

Open space offers financial benefits, as well. One out of every seven homes in Los Alamos and White Rock is on a “perimeter lot” that is bordered by County-owned open space or the Santa Fe National Forest. Homes that border open lands typically cost more than equivalent houses on the opposite side of the street that do not border open lands.

Terrain, fire impacts, and a very large percentage of federal land ownership limit land available for residential, commercial, and recreational uses in Los Alamos County. The comprehensive plan will help define appropriate uses for County-owned land parcels, protect lands available for recreation, and provide opportunities for development.

The plan will formalize a countywide open space system to provide long-term protection of the community's natural and recreational landscapes by designating corridors for outdoor recreation, wildlife movement, ecosystem processes, and wildland fuel management.

“The Open Space System should protect and preserve certain parcels of undeveloped land that contain significant wildlife habitat or corridors, cultural resources, trails, or are areas for flood or wildfire protection. The system should align with the land uses defined on the Land Use Map that is part of the Comprehensive Plan Update.”

*(Source: Open Space Management Plan 2015)*

## Planning for and Zoning of Open Space

Prior to 1963, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), the United States Forest Service, and the National Park Service owned all the land in Los Alamos County. During the mid- to late 1960s, the AEC sold what was originally government housing to private owners and transferred land and infrastructure to local government.

As part of the disposal process, the AEC deeded certain lands to Los Alamos County with deed restrictions limiting allowable uses on the properties. The deed restriction specifies that the land will be used for recreational purposes only and that any other use would result in a retraction of the deed and the land would revert to federal ownership. The recreation areas on North and Kwage mesas, including the North Mesa Horse Stable Area, have deed restrictions.

In the 1970s, the County adopted three zoning categories for County-owned land: PL, PL (W-1), and PL (W-2). The County established W-1 and W-2 as either base or overlay districts, differentiating between the two by the level of activity and allowed development. W-1 limits activities to those that have minimal effect on the land, while W-2 allows more active uses and development, including camping, skiing, athletic fields, and the stables, among other uses. (The PL category, "Public Land," can accommodate government and school district uses, including buildings, the airport, and various utilities. It is meant to serve a broad range of community needs.)

In 1980, the County adopted Ordinance No. 252, identifying 25 parcels for open space preservation, with a provision for periodic (five-year) review to determine whether to remove any parcel or parcels from this protected list. Such removal must be by ordinance. In the same year, the County adopted Ordinance 254, identifying another 46 parcels for preservation as parks, recreation areas, and for other public facilities, also subject to the five-year review of status. In the late 1980s, the Department of Energy declared as surplus certain lands along the western perimeter of the townsite. The County created a master plan for the area that included lands for development and for recreation. Three

As follow-up to the 1998 comprehensive plan, an Open Space Advisory Committee was established in May of 2000. The City Council directed the committee to undertake a study that would result in:

“...an open space plan for Los Alamos County [that] would identify land, including acreage to be transferred from the Department of Energy (DOE), that is most important to the community and its natural habitat and provide for its long-term protection. A well-designed open space land plan would also help respond to housing and economic development needs by identifying areas suitable for controlled development.”



tracts were designated for recreation and access to the Santa Fe National Forest, and were conveyed to the County in 1995. The remaining track was sold for private development as Quemazon Communities.

This committee and the subsequent Open Space Task Force spent two years developing a Draft Los Alamos County Open Space Plan. The County Council received the plan, but asked County staff to develop a land use map as a co-strategy for open space management.

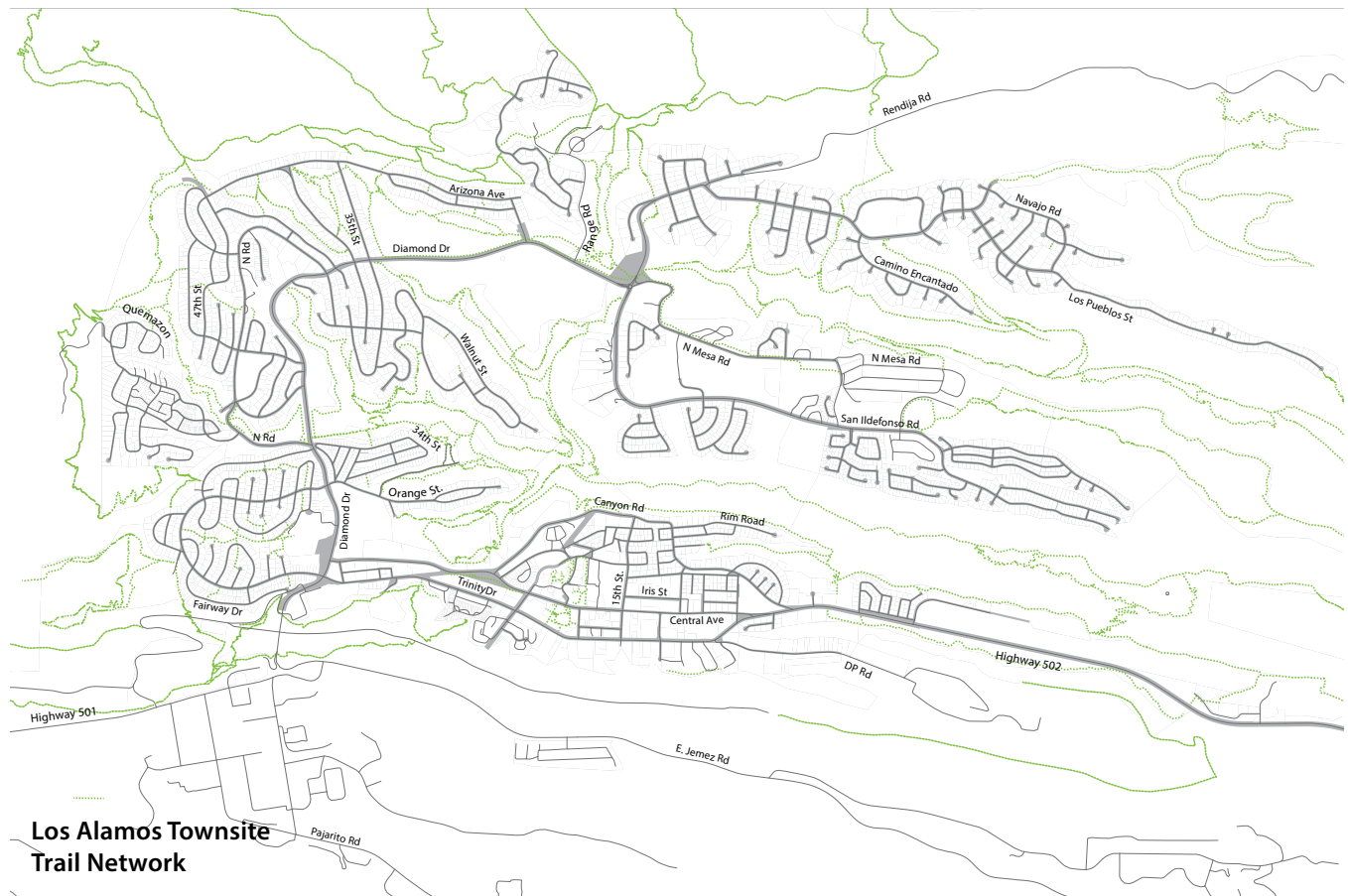
In 2004, Los Alamos County convened a two-day "Town Hall" meeting to develop recommendations for specific parcels on the land use map. The Town Hall participants recommended that Pueblo Canyon, the Rendija Tract transfer parcel, the parcel south of the airport, and all existing PL (W-1) and PL (W-2) lands be designated open space. The meeting reached no consensus on the approximately 15 acres on the east and south sides of the golf course. County Council did not adopt a land use map or an open space plan at that time.

The Los Alamos Open Space Management Plan, adopted in 2015, is based in part on the 2000 document from the Open Space Advisory Committee. It incorporates directives from the 2004 Los Alamos County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, the 2009 Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and data collected over the previous 10 years.

Following the extensive work and analyses that have already been completed, and also based on the current outreach and public participation efforts, and the current adopted strategic goals of County Council, the 2016 comprehensive plan adopts all the parcel specific recommendations for open space as corresponding land use designations in the Future Land Use Map. In addition, all parcels called out in Ordinances 252 and 254 are also confirmed as having open space or park status on the Future Land Use Map. Additional recommendations related to open space and trails are included in the Core Themes section of this plan.



Map of County Trails



Los Alamos Townsite  
Trail Network



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3

# CORE THEMES







# 3.1

## HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOODS & GROWTH

GOALS, POLICIES &  
STRATEGIES



# HOUSING

Craig Martin's scholarly and comprehensive study of the history of housing in Los Alamos pinpoints the perennial housing issues, which are still facing Los Alamos today – not enough housing; not enough different kinds of housing to choose from; and not always very high quality construction.

## Population Growth and Infill

In two statistically valid comprehensive plan surveys conducted in 2016, the community expressed their support for planning for low to moderate growth of approximately 2,000 additional residents over the next 10 to 20 years. This number should be considered in light of the difficulty of such predictions and the perennial lack of certainty regarding the future expansion or potential contraction of LANL employment. Based on the assumption of some growth, but relatively low growth, the comprehensive plan examines where that growth can and should take place. The current population, based on 2015 census estimates is 17,644 with a distribution of approximately 2/3 in Los Alamos and 1/3 in White Rock.

In April 2016 LANL announced that they expected to hire 2,400 new employees over the next five years. Currently, 43% of LANL employees live in Los Alamos County. Projecting the same percentage for new hires would mean 860 would choose to reside in Los Alamos or White Rock. Based on the historic 2/3 and 1/3 split, and the average household size for each (2.1 in Los Alamos and 2.4 in White Rock) would mean approximately 1203 new residents in Los Alamos and 688 new residents in White Rock; or 1891 total.

An analysis based on known vacancies, both constructed housing and vacant land, and on census data that identified the average household size in Los Alamos as 2.1 persons per household, and in White Rock as 2.4 persons per household, indicated that the County could accommodate a potential population growth of approximately 2,000 people within the existing development boundaries.

By the end of January [1943], the town – not yet even a month old – resounded with the first statement of the recurring theme of the story of housing in Los Alamos: Shelter was in short supply. For the next 50 years, and continuing to the present day, the town rarely had enough suitable housing to meet the needs of all the residents. The lack of housing, the perceived inadequacies of the size and types of units available, and the quality of their construction became a primary cause of concern and conversation in the town. Gripping about housing became a local pastime, and remains so today.

-Craig Martin  
*Quads, Shoeboxes and Sunken Living Rooms*  
*A History of Los Alamos Housing – 2000*  
 Reproduced with permission

## FUTURE DWELLING UNITS — Planned, Proposed or Potential

### Potential New Housing

Capacity for New Housing Development			
Los Alamos		White Rock	
Vacant Homes	55	Vacant Homes	20
Vacant Platted Lots	207	Vacant Platted Lots	22
Ponderosa Estates-36.6 Acres unplatted PD-2, proposed	80	Grand Canyon 4.8 Acres unplatted at R-1-10	15
North Mesa-Arbolada -17 Acres unplatted PD-5, proposed	75	A-19 unplatted at R-1-5	160
DP Road-unplatted 9.6 Acres @ R-3-H-40	261		
Canyon View - planned	24		
Entrada - proposed	15		
LAVN – assisted living, proposed	40		
Quemazon - planned	8		
LASO 7.5 Acres @20 DU/Acre	150		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>COMBINED TOTAL – LOS ALAMOS AND WHITE ROCK: 1132</b>			

#### Notes:

- 1) In some cases, Entrada and LASO, rezoning would be required in order to allow residential construction.
- 2) Vacant houses were determined by Utility billing information where less than 2,000 gallons of water were used between July and December 2015. Vacancy was field verified in April 2016.

The analysis shows that there is enough land in combination with existing housing to meet a projected demand for 2,000 additional people and that this amount of growth could be accommodated within the existing and already developed boundaries of the County. This finding matches the community's desire, as heard throughout community outreach meetings, to avoid sprawl and avoid development of designated open space areas. The community expressed their support for infill on vacant land and no expansion beyond already developed areas or into land designated as open space, excluding County-owned, residentially zoned parcels, such as A-19.

The projection does not differentiate, however, among different housing types. A full housing demand study and analysis is beyond the scope of the present work. An examination of demographic distribution, information on availability, and certain trending projections indicate that **there is a shortage of rental apartments, a projected shortage of smaller, down-sized units for retirees, including assisted living or continuum of care options, as well as of housing for smaller households, including for students and post-docs at LANL, and for low to moderate income households** that would consider living in the county if affordable housing were available. All of these projected shortfalls will require further study.



# HOUSING

## GOALS

1. Provide a variety of housing types, sizes and densities, especially downtown
2. Support development of affordable workforce housing
3. Promote development of smaller housing units appropriate for downsizing households
4. Protect existing residential neighborhoods while using available infill opportunities as appropriate
5. Promote maintenance and enhancement of housing stock quality



## ECONOMIC VITALITY

### POLICIES

1. Promote expanding housing supply to meet the demand from employment growth and support economic diversification
2. Promote housing for seniors, students, and workforce to support retention of spending and tax generation in the community

### STRATEGIES

1. Consider inclusionary housing fund rather than requiring a percentage of new housing to be affordable
2. Create a dedicated revenue source for mortgage assistance
3. Preserve existing rental housing stock through incentives
4. Investigate public/private funding options
5. Work with owners of vacant houses to assist in identifying opportunities for sale, rent and improving building condition



## LAND USE

### POLICIES

1. Encourage the creation and retention of a variety of housing options for all segments of the Los Alamos community, including but not limited housing for residents who are low income, students/postdocs, workforce, high end income and seniors
2. Provide workforce and market rate housing at a variety of price ranges, for both rental and ownership markets
3. Preserve historic housing stock
4. Support design standards for high quality and good design of new housing
5. Promote stabilization of rental areas

### STRATEGIES

1. Provide incentives and flexibility through zoning
2. Examine increased density options
3. Consider density bonuses for small units in downtown
4. Use public vacant or under-developed land for housing
5. Consider adoption of an inclusionary housing ordinance



## INFRASTRUCTURE

### POLICIES

1. Provide infrastructure to support new housing creation

### STRATEGIES

1. Investigate cost/benefits of County-built structured parking downtown
2. Expand housing program to include all user and ownership types; e.g. apt rentals
3. Periodically update Affordable Housing Plan including detailed goals and policies
4. Consider County support to build fire walls in quads and duplexes

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# NEIGHBORHOODS

## Established Neighborhoods

Los Alamos and White Rock have a variety of distinct neighborhoods. They are defined largely by housing type, density, and time of construction. Because so much of the single family housing was originally government built, housing types and patterns of development were consistent and cohesive neighborhoods were created. The houses in a given neighborhood looked the same, were the same size, sometimes with some variation in the number of rooms, for example, had the same setbacks, and were typically contained within a defined, exterior street layout.

Except where homes were destroyed by the Cerro Grande Fire in 2000, there are not many vacant lots within existing neighborhoods. Where such lots do exist, primarily in the townsite and to a lesser extent in White Rock, it is desirable to see new houses constructed in order to make the best and most efficient use of existing infrastructure, including utilities. Infill on vacant lots with new and high quality houses will also be beneficial to preserving both value and quality of life in existing neighborhoods.

prudent and desirable to address the possible nature of such safeguards.

The first line of protection is created through rezoning criteria in the development code. Additional safeguards to protect and preserve the character of existing neighborhoods and to support their stabilization could include: landscape buffers; location of parking; height restrictions; further restrictions to outdoor lighting; setback and step-back requirements; and possibly topographic considerations. For full effectiveness and control all these approaches will require enactment through the development code.

Additionally, neighborhood preservation will entail addressing vacant or poorly kept properties. The County is assessing and analyzing the locations and extent of the problem as well as the merits of alternative solutions. The community expressed a preference for a "carrot" versus a "stick" approach, but agreed that all possible solutions should be investigated and applied as appropriate in each case.

## Neighborhood Preservation and Protections

Because of the availability and potential availability of denser housing on currently undeveloped land, the pressure for development or redevelopment adjacent to or within existing neighborhoods is reduced. Nevertheless, in the interest of creating safeguards for existing neighborhoods, it is both

## New Neighborhoods

New neighborhoods will likely develop around new housing areas. Some of the new development patterns will be internally consistent, such as in the A-19, Ponderosa Pines and Arbolada subdivisions. However, as more mixed-use developments are created, which is more likely in the two downtowns and other new mixed-use areas, the development patterns will be varied as housing units are interspersed with other land uses. New kinds of neighborhoods may emerge.

# NEIGHBORHOODS

## GOALS

1. Protect existing residential neighborhoods while using available infill opportunities as appropriate.
2. Promote the creation of a variety of housing options for all segments of the Los Alamos community.
3. Support neighborhood stabilization



## ECONOMIC VITALITY

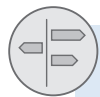
### POLICIES

1. Consider creation of a Short-Term-Rental (STR) ordinance in terms of potential economic benefit to Los Alamos County

### STRATEGIES

1. Create a design manual to help property owners upgrade or redevelop existing housing for increased value and improved appearance
2. Ensure collection of lodgers tax for short-term rentals
3. Re-examine bed & breakfast regulations vis-a-vis STRs





## LAND USE

### POLICIES

1. Support small lot development integrated into neighborhoods for affordable housing
2. Provide outreach and infrastructure support to housing developers during the permitting process
3. Encourage developers to notify and conduct meetings early in the development review process with the neighborhood and to be responsive to neighborhood concerns
4. Strenuously apply property maintenance and code enforcement requirements to vacant or blighted properties.
5. Protect neighborhood open space and internal trail systems
6. Address outdoor lighting to better protect neighboring residential properties

### STRATEGIES

1. Develop buffer techniques and alternatives for new development or re-development adjacent to single-family housing
2. Consider code changes to ensure upgrades are not precluded
3. Consider refinements to current County property maintenance ordinance
4. Prioritize code enforcement efforts
5. Study possibility of limiting accessory dwelling units per development Code
6. Consider easing parking requirements in areas with limited on-site feasibility
7. Consider implementing a stronger neighborhood notification requirement



## INFRASTRUCTURE

### POLICIES

1. Maximize the utilization of County-owned land
2. Make strategic extensions of utilities

### STRATEGIES

1. Provide early public notification and engagement with the neighborhood regarding changes to parks, streets, and utilities
2. Provide green building and new technology how-to information for rebuilding or upgrades
3. Provide incentives for energy efficiency upgrades
4. Educate builders and public to use storm-water as a resource
5. Underground utilities in existing neighborhoods
6. Examine existing easements & options for expansion to allow under-grounding
7. Enhance Internet service

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# GROWTH

Based on the supposition of some, but relatively low population growth, the comprehensive plan examines where that growth can and should take place.

The community has expressed support for low to moderate growth of approximately 2,000 additional residents over the next 10 to 20 years. This number should be considered in light of the difficulty of such predictions and the perennial lack of certainty regarding the future expansion or potential contraction of LANL employment.

In April 2016 LANL announced that they expected to hire 2,400 new employees over the next five years.

It is also projected that between 30% and 40% of the current LANL workforce will retire over approximately the same time frame in which new employees will be brought on.

On balance, it is difficult to anticipate population trends. Projections are historically difficult and can vary from year to year depending on changed circumstances.

The County is encouraging new housing development and recognizes the need for more variety in size, type, and price range of housing units, including Senior and assisted care facilities, as well as affordable housing. The comprehensive plan does not project population growth or decline. Rather, the plan plans for how to accommodate low to moderate growth, hoping to achieve a historic high of 20,000 population over the next decade. It is noted that 20,000 is also a population base that has been discussed in the context of economic development, in that it represents a minimal demographic benchmark for certain national retailers.

Growth is a function of expansion in sectors beyond housing. It is strongly expected that the Manhattan Project National Historical Park will bring growth in tourism, and corresponding impetus for economic development. As Los Alamos develops its role as the gateway to three national parks and continues to be known for its desirability as a place to live, it is certainly possible that a synergistic effect will result from a combination of revitalization, new housing development, tourism and an improved economic climate.

# GROWTH

## GOALS

1. Plan for modest growth of an additional 2,000 residents in the next 20 years
2. Diversify the economic base
3. Maximize our opportunity with respect to the development of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park
4. Support and retain LANL as the best wealth-producing employer
5. Capitalize on Los Alamos County's role as gateway to 3 national parks
6. Expand focus of tourism to include Valle Grande and Bandelier
7. Significantly improve the quantity and quality of retail business
8. Attract new tourism related business
9. Revitalize and eliminate blight in the downtown areas of Los Alamos and White Rock
10. Promote growth in the downtown
11. Increase the percentage of people who work in the County who also live in the County



## ECONOMIC VITALITY

### POLICIES

1. Create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown that includes a central gathering place, nighttime entertainment, and more retail stores and restaurants
2. Promote eco- and education based tourism
3. Promote Los Alamos as venue for athletic events and competitions
4. Attract new tourism related business
5. Market and brand Los Alamos as a scenic destination featuring recreation, science and history
6. Improve County communication with the business community

### STRATEGIES

1. Develop and implement a Tourism Plan, including Wayfinding
2. Provide sufficient land for growth areas, including for industrial and manufacturing uses
3. Consider County built business incubator
4. Support food trucks, which could turn into brick & mortar restaurants



## LAND USE

### POLICIES

1. Encourage the retention of existing businesses and assist in their opportunities for growth
2. Support infill development over expansion of current developed areas
3. Collaborate with Los Alamos National Laboratory as the area's #1 employer
4. Support spinoff business opportunities from LANL
5. Maximize the utilization of County-owned land

### STRATEGIES

1. Showcase Lab-developed technologies
2. Partner with National Parks, Ski Los Alamos, and others to promote Los Alamos County as an outdoor recreation destination



## INFRASTRUCTURE

### POLICIES

1. Maximize the utilization of County-owned land
2. Promote public/private partnerships of utility extensions
3. Explore and promote County/private development strategies to extend utilities
4. Ensure access to broadband communication to all properties in the County

### STRATEGIES

1. Promote public-private partnership strategy for the extension of utilities
2. Continue to pursue grant funding for infrastructure improvements such as Main Street



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# 3.2

## DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT & DOWNTOWN

GOALS, POLICIES &  
STRATEGIES



# DEVELOPMENT

Development is an overarching goal of the community and a necessary component to achieve economic vitality. The community has expressed broad support for a variety of goals and policies related to these more general goals. Significant among these is support for a growing tourism economy. There is great anticipation for development of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park and related interest in and visitation of Bandelier National Monument and the Valles Caldera National Preserve. Los Alamos will promote itself as the gateway to three national parks and capitalize on other outdoor recreation opportunities that already exist. The County will partner with the Ski Mountain [get proper name] as well as publicize the numerous other outdoor recreation opportunities, including hiking and golf. Other tourism related attractions include the Nature Center, the Bradbury Museum, and numerous special events such as Sciencefest.

New opportunities to attract both residents and visitors alike will be developed as well. Some of these were suggested by residents and include a seasonal slide.

Increased interest in Los Alamos could spur development of additional hotel facilities, a convention center, and possibly even a destination resort.

In keeping with national trends, approximately 60% of current residents expect to retire in Los Alamos County. This suggests the need for more assisted living and continuum of care facilities. Additional health care facilities, either associated with the hospital or not, will also be needed.

Central to all development, actual or anticipated is the need for additional housing of all types and sizes for a variety of income levels and needs.

There is also strong support in the community for keeping development within the current developed boundaries and not developing into any existing open space.

Development of County land, not designated as open space, is also a priority for the community. As the County moves forward in assessing the development potential, recruiting development interests, and divesting itself of publicly held land, it will be important that the process for doing so is open and fair to all.

Not all efforts to spur development and economic growth will be on the part of the County. However, the County could be a partner, or even instigator, in some of these endeavors going forward. The comprehensive plan acknowledges the need for development and suggests a number of potential implementing strategies for consideration.

# DEVELOPMENT

## GOALS

1. Significantly improve the quantity and quality of retail business
2. Enhance and maintain a vibrant downtown while keeping a small town character and feel
3. Continue to maximize open space



## ECONOMIC VITALITY

### POLICIES

1. Balance economic development support for growth and sustainability
2. Promote Los Alamos County as a model for emerging technologies
3. Support existing businesses
4. Actively solicit new development opportunities
5. Support spinoff business opportunities from LANL
6. Attract new tourism related business
7. Support County communication with the business community

### STRATEGIES

1. Support construction of new tech facilities to attract new tech businesses
2. Consider a County built business incubator
3. Support "makerspace" opportunities
4. Support land use policies and regulations that support business
5. Reestablish commercial air service





## LAND USE

### POLICIES

1. Maximize the utilization of County-owned land
2. Generally keep development contained within current development boundaries (prevent sprawl)
3. Do not develop or allow development in open space
4. Increase residential density in the downtown area
5. Delay development of areas that require environmental remediation before they are safe and suitable



## INFRASTRUCTURE

### POLICIES

1. Maximize the utilization of County-owned land
2. Provide streetscape improvements
3. Support County utilities extensions
4. Ensure energy-efficient County buildings

### STRATEGIES

1. Adopt a new mixed-use zoning district
2. Streamline development review process, especially for Site Plans
3. Consider lowered threshold for building permit only
4. Develop DP Road Sector Plan

### STRATEGIES

1. Bring high speed Internet to Los Alamos County

# REDEVELOPMENT

Los Alamos County has focused much of its redevelopment efforts in the two downtowns of White Rock and the townsite and significant progress has been made.

The actions recommended in the 2009 Downtown Plan have been actively pursued, including Main Street redevelopment of Central Ave. Streetscape work on Central was completed from Oppenheimer to 15th Street, with the next portion, from 15th St. to Knecht completed in the fall of 2016. A new Teen Center was constructed in the Community Building adjacent to Ashley Pond. Ashley Pond was completely redeveloped with walking paths, a music pavilion, and gardens, including a Master Gardeners' demonstration garden at Central and Oppenheimer. Fuller Lodge renovations were also completed in June 2016. Another major renovation was construction of the new Smith's Marketplace on Trinity, along with development of two other buildings on the site, with a third currently under development in 2016.

Redevelopment of Trinity Drive was on the list of work to be done in 2009 and continues to be a community goal today. The County is currently creating lots for development south of Trinity as an extension of 20th Street. Land on DP Road continues to be transferred to the County and will be the subject of further discussion, in terms of development opportunities and land uses.

The empty former Smith's store has been the subject of much discussion as well, in terms of the community's desire to see all of the Merrimac site, including the empty former Smith's store and the parking lot, upgraded and rehabilitated.

An analysis of redeveloped properties versus those that have not been remodeled, are vacant or underused, showed an approximately equal amount of each, as measured in square footage of footprint. A "birds-eye" view of the downtown area shows the extent of redevelopment that has happened in the relatively recent past. The same graphic shows the areas still in need of development or reconstruction.



# REDEVELOPMENT

Revitalization and redevelopment needs in White Rock are twofold. First, there are numerous vacant houses, many of which are in a deteriorated condition.

Second, the former commercial area around Longview is largely vacant and has been in decline since the 1990s. Major County investment has happened along both sides of State Road 4 and has done much to improve civic pride and encourage private investment. Evidence of the latter is the new construction of the Del Norte Credit Union to be completed in the summer of 2016, as well as reinvestment in Metzger's and other potential projects under consideration also along State Road 4. The County is also currently redeveloping the old Town Hall into a Senior Center complex on Rover.

Much has been done and the results of the County's investments are visible and growing. A major opportunity for new commercial activity in White Rock Center is tourism-oriented retail and services. With more than 250,000 visitors to Bandelier National Monument traveling through White Rock each year, there is an untapped market for visitor amenities and services, supported by retailers such as outdoor gear and specialty retail stores. In addition to tourism related to Bandelier there are now two additional major tourist and visitor attractions in the area and which should create a synergy of opportunities for recreation and economic development. These are the Valles Caldera National Preserve and the Manhattan Project National Historical Park. There is ongoing discussion of how the County will market and brand itself as a major tourist and recreation destination.

The County has made significant public investments in White Rock including the new Visitors Center, Fire Station, a new, award-winning library, teen center, and is currently reconstructing a 10,000 square foot Senior Center. Private investment has followed public, with a new credit union constructed in a prominent and visible location at Route 4 and Rover Boulevard. It is anticipated that as many as 160 new dwellings units will also be built at the site on Route 4 known as A-19, along with other new development as envisioned in the A-19 conceptual master plan.

The synergy that the County has worked hard to develop, and in which it has made major investments, will also create the need for workforce and other housing, which in turn should

drive the establishment of new businesses to serve both the local residents and tourists. A greater variety of higher density, moderately priced housing options will be needed in order to expand both ownership and rental opportunities in White Rock.

Going forward, another focus of redevelopment will be the elimination of blighted and vacant properties, both commercial and residential. The County is investigating various strategies to address both issues, blight and vacancy, which are neither mutually exclusive nor entirely coincident. These could include incentives for development and redevelopment, as well as possible dis-incentives for continued blight.

The importance of housing redevelopment is twofold – first, for aesthetic reasons and to preserve neighborhood values, and second, to increase the supply of available housing, both rental and for sale.

There continues to be general agreement on where further improvement is needed: more and better local shopping opportunities; Trinity Drive, including a solution to the deteriorating service clubs; affordable housing; and opportunities for development on DP Road. The idea of extending the paved multiuse Rim Trail into the heart of Los Alamos has garnered broad support at the Council, the Transportation Board, and with the public. A similar multi-use trail in White Rock should also be considered. There is interest in additional dog parks within neighborhoods. The anticipated increase in tourism will increase the need for more hotel and conference space. Finally, there continues to be the need and support for improved and rehabilitated infrastructure, as well as strategic expansion of infrastructure to support new construction and as a driver for economic development.

# REDEVELOPMENT

## GOALS

1. Redevelop vacant and blighted areas



## ECONOMIC VITALITY

### POLICIES

1. Provide flexibility for uses in redeveloped areas
2. Use County resources and authority to put vacant properties back into use

### STRATEGIES

1. Consider tax financing incentives for redevelopment of blighted areas
2. Consider Metropolitan Redevelopment Area approach.
3. Use Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) funds to stimulate economic development & create private sector jobs
4. Consider Tax Increment District or other special financing mechanisms
5. "Clean and lien;" County-contracted renewal and rental to income-qualified residents; Tax dis-incentives for vacant properties; Vacant property registry



## LAND USE

### POLICIES

1. Establish a vacant house policy
2. Rely on incentives in making land use changes (carrot not stick)
3. Prioritize health and safety violations for code enforcement

### STRATEGIES

1. Conduct a study to determine best approach & practice to eliminate blight
2. Develop a manual for property owners for improving/updating exteriors and landscapes
3. Incentivize property owners to upgrade or redevelop
4. Add new zoning categories to allow mix of uses in more districts, and/or expand list of permitted uses
5. Increase flexibility in Downtown overlay uses to allow added residential use
6. Create a community service network to help homeowners remedy violations



## INFRASTRUCTURE

### POLICIES

1. Develop standards for street sections by street type
2. Foster and promote sustainability practices

### STRATEGIES

1. Provide incentives for energy efficiency upgrades
2. Incorporate transportation system into economic development planning and for increased housing downtown



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# DOWNTOWN

The downtown areas of the townsite and in White Rock are key to development and redevelopment in the County. Significant improvements have already been achieved in these areas and more will be done. A short list of significant construction and improvements includes: two public libraries, a new municipal building, fire station, visitor center, teen centers, Main Street reconstruction, and senior center. The community recognizes and appreciates the work done to date. The vast majority of responses in the first comprehensive plan Survey, at a rate of approximately 4:1, believed that recent changes in Los Alamos, in the built environment (buildings, street improvements, access to trails and open space) have been for the better.

There is broad community consensus regarding the need to address blighted properties as a means of improving the appearance of the community and promoting enhanced economic development.

One of the Council's strategic goals is to maximize use of County land. This goal is especially applicable in the townsite downtown where a number of opportunities exist for major development and redevelopment. These are A-13, the 7.5 acre LASO site; A-9, 4.2 acres on the north side of DP Road; A-8, 24 acres on the south side of DP Road; the County's 3+ acre site on 20th Street, south of Trinity; and Deacon Alley. In White Rock, the County is pursuing development of the 60 acre A-19 site, following recent development on former County property at State Road 4 and Rover.

On the private side, the County is examining ways to address remaining vacant and blighted properties such as the Merrimac Center and the old "Black Hole" in the townsite and the Longview area in White Rock.

The comprehensive plan introduces the "Mixed-Use" land use category as a means to simplify and encourage private development by allowing either residential or commercial, or a combination of land uses on designated mixed-use tracts. The County is also encouraging housing development in the downtowns, with the A-8 tract already having been zoned for high density housing. Other support for increased activity in the townsite downtown includes expansion of the Rim Trail, support for a historic district and for the Historic Society's museum campus, Main Street expansion, and subdivision of the 20th Street property in preparation for sale and development. The County also recognizes the need to improve the use and appearance of Trinity Drive and to support new development through installation of utility infrastructure on DP Road, 20th Street, and into A-19 in White Rock.

*"I grew up here but have been gone the past 15 years. I couldn't believe how great it looked when I came back!"*

*Los Alamos Resident*

All the accomplished and anticipated improvements will enable revitalization of both downtown areas, including attracting new retail businesses and restaurants, especially in response to increased tourism.

# DOWNTOWN

## GOALS

1. Create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown that includes a central gathering place, nighttime entertainment, and more retail stores and restaurants
2. Focus development priorities downtown
3. Focus increased residential densities in the downtown
4. Enhance the vibrant, historic, small-town character of Los Alamos by focusing commercial density increases in the downtown area



## ECONOMIC VITALITY

### POLICIES

1. Support a range of retail and service uses that complement one another
2. Support small businesses in the downtown
3. Provide flexibility for uses to change over time as market conditions change

### STRATEGIES

1. Consider public/private partnerships
2. Expand Main Street program improvements
3. Foster the historic importance of Los Alamos County in tourism promotion
4. Continue to preserve and maintain Fuller Lodge and other historic buildings, grounds and archeological resources
5. Support construction of a new hotel and conference center



## LAND USE

### POLICIES

1. Support more, and different types of housing downtown
2. Focus residential density increases in the downtown
3. Support Historical Society Museum campus



## INFRASTRUCTURE

### POLICIES

1. Continue to support infrastructure construction downtown

### STRATEGIES

1. Establish a historic district in the downtown
2. Revisit parking requirements
3. Revisit code restrictions to height

### STRATEGIES

1. Bring high speed Internet to Los Alamos County

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# 3.3

## OPEN SPACE, TRAILS & MOBILITY

GOALS, POLICIES &  
STRATEGIES



# OPEN SPACE

Los Alamos County has over 4,000 acres of open space. 95% of County residents live within a seven minute walk of County open space, and, as reported in the 2012 Community Survey, 20% of residents use their neighborhood open space or trails at least five times a week.

Much of the open space acreage was deeded by the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) to the County in the late 1960s as part of a general divestiture of AEC land, housing and infrastructure. Certain of the land parcels were deed restricted to recreational use only. These included recreation areas on North and Kwage mesas, and the North Mesa Horse Stable Area.

Deed restrictions, while binding, are not impossible to change or remove. Deed restrictions have been renegotiated for a number of parcels in the County over the past several decades. Expanded uses have included a new lift station, RV parking and the Sheriff's Posse land.

In the 1970s two zoning overlay districts, W-1 and W-2, were added to certain lands already zoned PL, Public Land. The overlay districts established the types of uses that would be permitted in the W overlay zones, differentiating between the two in intensity of permitted uses. W-1, the "Scenic open lands district, is intended to maintain, protect and preserve the scenic and environmental quality, open character and the natural recreational value of undeveloped land." While W-2, the "recreation wilderness district, is intended to maintain, protect and preserve the scenic and environmental quality, open character and natural recreational value of undeveloped land; and to accommodate public and private recreational uses of an open nature." W-2 allows the more intensive recreational uses.

Not all Public Land has the "W" overlay. Land zoned only PL includes most of the open space in White Rock, as well as the golf course, certain utility locations, the airport, schools, including UNM-LA, and other publicly held parcels. The PL district is described in code as land "intended to accommodate local government and school district uses and structures, designed to support community needs and the public health, safety and welfare." However, no specific uses are included in code for PL land.

The Future Land Use Map of the comprehensive plan adopts land use categories for open space that establish three levels of open space, based on intensity of use. Parks are the most developed and support the most intense level of uses. The Parks category includes Ashley Pond and the adjacent Master Gardeners [check for correct designation] demonstration garden and all other developed parks and playgrounds. Other open space is designated as Active or Passive Use Open Space, with these categories corresponding to the zoning district categories described above. In addition, the comprehensive plan adopts as land use categories the recommendations of the Open Space Management Plan, adopted by Council in 2015, and which categories were supported by the Parks and Recreation Board in 2016.

By designating open space lands as Active or Passive on the FLUM, the comprehensive plan adds another layer of protection to those lands. As a stated strategy in the plan, it is also expected that the zoning designations will be changed through a rezoning action in the near future.

The Open Space Management Plan and the Parks and Recreation Board recommend adding the W-1 Overlay to the following lands, all currently zoned PL, except Lower Bayo

*The random sample survey conducted in May 2016 showed overwhelming support for keeping all or most currently undeveloped public land as open space, agreed to by 79% of all respondents. Participants in Round One visioning meetings held in March 2016 also expressed enthusiastic support for open space ("sacred places" mapped by participants) and neighborhood connections to county open space trails – some needing improvement or signage. The majority of survey respondents (59%) did not favor development of public land for industrial or manufacturing uses, but were more divided regarding: housing (evenly split 47% yes/maybe yes and 47% no/maybe no) and dog parks (43% no/maybe no). Note: the survey question did not differentiate public land that is current open space from County-owned vacant land; and this may have led to confusion, as shown regarding housing. Respondents favored active recreation (63%) and playgrounds and tot lots use of public lands (61%).*

# OPEN SPACE

Canyon, which is zoned PL/W-2:

- Lower Bayo Canyon, currently zoned PL/W-2
- White Rock Canyon, currently zoned PL
- Graduation Canyon, currently zoned PL
- Range Road Tract, currently zoned PL
- Upper Walnut Canyon, west fork, currently zoned PL
- Upper Walnut Canyon, east fork, currently zoned PL
- Several small drainage easements in North Community, currently zoned PL

The same sources recommend that several parcels zoned PL/W-2, but having split uses on the same parcel, be rezoned to reflect those different uses, as PL/W-1 and PL/W-2. These are illustrated in the map titled, "Current Zoning and Recommended Changes for Open Space." Again, if approved through the comprehensive plan review process, these changes would be reflected in the Future Land Use Map, and would provide direction for rezoning actions.

Other proposed changes are to the following tracts adjacent to the Golf Course:

- Two tracts adjacent to the golf course, currently zoned PD-5, change to PL/W-2
- The Woodland Trail, north of the Golf Course, currently zoned PL, change to PL/W-2
- The south section of the Golf Course containing the Walnut Canyon Rim Trail, currently zoned PD-5, change to PL/W-2

In addition, these changes are recommended in the Open Space Plan and by the Board:

- Kwage Mesa parcel, with Stables on the west half and open land including the Kwage Mesa Trail on the east half, currently zoned W-2, keep west half (stables, indoor arena, playground, tennis courts, and the North Mesa Pathway (circular walking trail)) PL/W-2, and change east half to PL/W-1

- Open space area in Overlook Park containing several trails, currently zoned P-L, change to PL/W-2

All the land use categories corresponding to the proposed zoning changes are illustrated and adopted in the Future Land Use Map.

By mapping open space in the Future Land Use Map the comprehensive plan illustrates an open space network for the County, and suggests strategies –where possible- for closing or minimizing any gaps.

Many earlier goals and aspirations related to open space and recreation have been achieved. These include construction of a new Nature Center, skateboard park, and the current project extending the Rim Trail. The comprehensive plan adopts policies that will guide future development, help establish priorities for new construction, and determine or confirm levels of use and protection in various open space tracts.

## Conclusion

Many earlier goals and aspirations related to open space and recreation have been achieved. These include construction of a new Nature Center, skateboard park, and the current project extending the Rim Trail. The comprehensive plan will adopt policies that will guide future development, help establish priorities for new construction, and determine or confirm levels of use and protection in various open space tracts.

The Strategic Leadership Plan goal of maintaining quality essential services and supporting infrastructure will guide the levels of service to be provided moving forward and the extent to which infrastructure will be maintained and expanded. Safety will continue to be a priority for all modes of transport, both for every day mobility and in the event of emergency evacuation needs.

Many goals related to the use of open space and trails intersect with those related to recreation and transportation. It is hoped that policies adopted as part of the comprehensive plan can acknowledge the interface and interrelated goals of all.

# OPEN SPACE

## GOALS

1. Protect all existing County-designated open space
2. Enhance environmental quality and sustainability balancing costs and benefits including County services and utilities



## ECONOMIC VITALITY

### POLICIES

1. Partner with National Parks, Ski Los Alamos, Sierra Club, others to promote Los Alamos as an outdoor recreation destination
2. Implement a comprehensive range of recreational and cultural amenities that enhance the Los Alamos community
3. Promote Los Alamos County as an "Outdoor Community"
4. Promote increased outdoor recreational tourism as a revenue source for open space maintenance

### STRATEGIES

1. Improve access to public open space and recreational facilities
2. Use Lodger's Tax & Dept. of Tourism income to promote recreational activities
3. Eradicate invasive species
4. Continue to provide maintenance and development support for demonstration gardens



## LAND USE

### POLICIES

1. Be stewards of the natural environment, including the existing ecosystems
2. Do not develop in the canyons or on canyon walls
3. Preserve historic, environmental, and cultural landscapes
4. Maintain and improve outdoor recreation for a diverse population
5. Support Open Space Management Plan recommendations for open space zoning
6. Preserve and protect neighborhood open space

### STRATEGIES

1. Adopt three types of open space on the Future Land Use Map in alignment with recommended changes to zoning
2. Rezone areas currently zoned PL to clarify which category they belong in
3. Identify gaps to open space connections. Propose strategies for connections
4. Build more dog parks



## INFRASTRUCTURE

### POLICIES

1. Support green infrastructure
2. Avoid infrastructure conflicts with open space
3. Minimize infrastructure impacts to open space
4. Require remediation as needed

### STRATEGIES

1. Require reclamation or remediation as needed on all projects
2. Develop storm-water management standards

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# TRAILS

Along with the open space system, the County also has approximately 60 miles of maintained trails. By mapping these trails, it is possible to see the overlap with open space and to identify the gaps in that network. The comprehensive plan supports the maintenance, improvement and enhancement of the trial system.

In addition, the plan identifies four main trail connection gaps. These are illustrated on the Needed Trail Connections Map. They are: East Road crossing from Entrada to the Rim Trail trailhead; connection of the two parts of the existing Rim Trail (this connection project is funded and is currently in construction); extension of the western end of the Rim Trail across Trinity; and connection of the trail networks west of Quemazon and west of the Western area (this connection will require a pedestrian bridge).

Currently, there are two paved multi-use trails in Los Alamos, the Canyon Rim Trail and the Los Alamos Mesa Trail. There is discussion of and support for expansion of the Rim Trail to loop through downtown, with an extension to the Aquatic Center, PEEC, and eventually establishing a complete loop within the larger context of bicycle and pedestrian systems to the eastern edge of the County and perhaps even farther.

In White Rock the multi-use Canada de Buey Trail is paved from State Road 4 to Rover; from Rover to the entrance to Overlook Park the trail has a crusher fine surface.

In addition to their importance for recreation purposes and connectivity, trails also support Safe Routes to School. The plan supports expansion of additional trail extensions, especially in places where such extensions would make connections to and create loops with other trails.

# TRAILS

## GOALS

1. Improve and expand the trails system
2. Fully implement the Trails and Bike Plan



## ECONOMIC VITALITY

### POLICIES

1. Develop and expand trails connecting downtown to surrounding open space
2. Create or improve trails that serve residents of all ages
3. Connect County trails to non-County owned trails adjacent to or near County land

### STRATEGIES

1. Pursue federal and state transportation grant funding for multi-modal circulation
2. Pursue bicycle trail certification
3. Develop policies for off-trail foot, bicycle and equestrian travel



## LAND USE

### POLICIES

1. Promote safety for pedestrians and cyclists, on paved trails and streets
2. Ensure that private development is required to provide trail connections and may not create impediments to any trail connections

### STRATEGIES

1. Map trails and identify gaps in trail connections. Propose strategies for connections
2. Develop strategy for prioritization of gap connections
3. Consider alternate means of circulation, especially for ADA, including golf carts in historic area
4. Consider signage, or speed controls, to slow bicyclists when on same path as pedestrians



## INFRASTRUCTURE

### POLICIES

1. Create designated, safe, convenient, and well-maintained bike and pedestrian pathways and sidewalks
2. Incorporate multi-use trails whenever possible
3. Recognize and acknowledge the difference between bicycling for recreation and bicycling for transportation
4. Ensure safe trail crossings, especially at arterials; weigh cost/benefits of underpasses and/or overpasses

### STRATEGIES

1. Examine potential to expand paved and accessible Rim Trail from DP Road through historic core and Ashley Pond to Aquatic Center and PEEC, and possible loops
2. Link Rim Trail to the Mesa Trail
3. Consider wider easement requirements for trails

# MOBILITY

One of Council's 2016 Strategic Leadership Plan goals is maintaining and improving transportation and mobility. All modes of circulation are an aspect of mobility. The comprehensive plan supports the development and maintenance of a multi-modal transportation system.

The plan recognizes the dual aspects and purposes of mobility and circulation – transportation and recreation. Where unpaved open space and trails networks pertain primarily to recreation, streets and other paved pathways are central to both recreational and transportation purposes. The key to a successful system for all users is convenience and connectivity.

## Pedestrians

Walking is perhaps the most basic form of recreation, exercise, relaxation and of transportation. While the geographic layout of the townsite does not lend itself to easy walking access to shopping and for other errands, Los Alamos' relatively small size and the distribution of elementary schools throughout neighborhoods facilitates a Safe Routes to School program for both pedestrians and bicyclists. Safe access to schools is further aided by a comprehensive transit system, as well as by an established system of paths through and around neighborhoods that was created at the time the neighborhoods were originally laid out. Informal trails are also well established through the extensive open space and trail network. White Rock has an extensive interconnected path and trail system enhanced by the lack of dividing canyons, typical in the townsite.

"Walkability" is an unscientific measure of public pedestrian access to various destinations, including schools, parks, libraries and businesses. Overall, Los Alamos townsite has a poor "walk score" of 13 out of a possible 100 points, which means most errands require the use of a car. White Rock fares better, with a "walk score" of 47, which still means that most errands require a car.

The comprehensive plan anticipates improved walkability by supporting more housing in both the townsite and White Rock downtowns, as well supporting improved pedestrian and bicycling facilities on new and redeveloped streets.

## Buses

In 2016 the County completed a comprehensive transit study and service plan, which evaluated the existing Atomic City Transit bus service and made recommendations based on projected demand for the next five years. The free and extensive bus service currently operates throughout the townsite and White Rock, however, there is no service on weekends or late into the evening. Analyses, discussions and responses to changing needs are ongoing. However, there is general support to keep transit service free to the public. Expanded usage to serve tourism needs could include a downtown "circulator" and service to Bandelier from the townsite.

## Bicycles

Bicycling has expanded significantly as a mode of transportation both nationally and internationally. Bicycle travel is supported by dedicated infrastructure including designated bicycle lanes on streets, protected intersections, requirements for bicycle parking, and the growing trend of bike-share programs in cities, including Albuquerque. The latter may become of greater interest in Los Alamos, especially with the projected growth in tourism. The relative proximity of LANL to the location of most housing, both in Los Alamos and in White Rock, also suggests that bicycling to work could become increasingly popular. While not within the scope of the comprehensive plan, further investigation and planning for bicycle travel, was an interest expressed in the first round of community meetings. In 2005 the Transportation Board recommended to Council that a list of roads be adopted as a Bicycle Transportation System, and that certain improvements, appropriate to each facility,

# MOBILITY

be implemented in conjunction with major maintenance, reconstruction, or construction is performed at that facility. The County is currently in the process of updating the Bicycle Transportation Plan.

Los Alamos also has an extensive network of mountain bike trails, which are more an element of recreation and tourism than transportation. Related to tourism, the Los Alamos region presents numerous opportunities for tapping into bicycle touring. The County is currently working with the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), having identified projects in 2013, to achieve Bronze level status for Los Alamos. The Parks and Recreation department has considered locations for mountain bike parks, including on DP mesa and at the end of Olive Street in the Denver Steels area. The Department of Energy is currently developing a bicycling map for their properties.

Many goals related to the use of open space and trails intersect with those related to recreation and transportation. The policies adopted as part of the comprehensive plan acknowledge the interface and interrelated goals of all.

## Streets

For a long time, the focus of streets has been to serve motorized vehicles. However, both nationally and in communities across New Mexico, that focus has been expanding to accommodate all potential users, and has developed into the concept known as “complete streets.” At its most basic, “complete streets” means streets designed and built for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users of all ages and abilities, as well as for motorized vehicles.

The fundamental goals of a “complete streets” approach have been separately expressed throughout various County documents. These goals include Mobility and Environmental Stewardship, and incorporate Economic Vitality and Financial Sustainability.

There is no single approach or design solution to achieve the accommodation envisioned by the complete streets concept. Rather, each community and each project in the community must be individually tailored to find the right balance of safety, service, convenience and aesthetics.

The comprehensive plan and the Transportation Policy Board advocate adoption of a complete streets policy [\[need to confirm w T- Board\]](#) for all future transportation projects.

Again due to geographic constraints, it is unlikely that any major new roads will be developed in Los Alamos or White Rock. There is certainly interest, as expressed during the community outreach planning portion of the comprehensive plan update, in re-examining access on East Jemez Road, improving the condition of State Road 4 between the townsite and White Rock, as well as reconfiguring the intersection in front of the Los Alamos Medical Center. These and other road issues could be addressed in a Transportation Master Plan.

## Conclusion

The Strategic Leadership Plan goal of maintaining quality essential services and supporting infrastructure will guide the levels of service to be provided moving forward and the extent to which infrastructure will be maintained and expanded. Safety will continue to be a priority for all modes of transport, both for every day mobility and in the event of emergency evacuation needs. Mobility needs related to tourism will also be considered, especially in the two downtowns.

*“A nationwide movement launched by the National Complete Streets Coalition in 2004, Complete Streets integrates people and place in the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of our transportation networks. The Coalition promotes the development and implementation of policies and professional practices that ensure streets are safe for people of all ages and abilities, balance the needs of different modes, and support local land uses, economies, cultures, and natural environments. To date, over 730 agencies at the local, regional, and state levels have adopted Complete Streets policies, totaling over 900 policies nationwide.”*



# MOBILITY

## GOALS

1. Support streets designed for the safety and comfort of all users
2. Maintain and improve transportation and mobility
3. Make improvements to the transportation system that support economic vitality and housing goals
4. Improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and convenience
5. Support long-range regional transportation planning, including regional transit for commuting to work
6. Maximize connectivity and accessibility



## ECONOMIC VITALITY

### POLICIES

1. Consider giving the same level of prioritization to non-motorized circulation (bicycle and pedestrian) as to motorized circulation
2. Support and promote viable airport service

### STRATEGIES

1. Add transit route from the townsite to Bandelier and Valles Caldera



## LAND USE

### POLICIES

1. Create designated, safe, convenient, and well-maintained bike and pedestrian pathways and sidewalks
2. Design for accessibility
3. Make Los Alamos County a bicycle friendly community
4. Consider requiring provisions for bicycle parking

### STRATEGIES

1. Integrate parking with transit
2. Revisit parking requirements
3. Consider separation of bikes and pedestrians on paved trails
4. Consider expanded opportunities for off-site parking



## INFRASTRUCTURE

### POLICIES

1. Create a user-friendly, efficient, multi-modal system that connects the Laboratory, downtown, and White Rock
2. Support a "complete streets" policy for all new and rebuilt roadways
3. Develop and adopt a transportation master plan that incorporates the trails and bike plan and is tied to land use
4. Periodically update transit plan
5. Coordinate transportation on and off the Hill with other systems in the region
6. Support enhanced recreation opportunities

### STRATEGIES

1. Collect data on transportation modes and patterns.
2. Investigate bike-share program associated with Rim Trail.
3. Investigate alternate transportation and circulation options
4. Upgrade infrastructure, including streetscapes, green spaces, entrances to Los Alamos, to reflect civic pride in the community
5. Support a downtown circulator 7 days/week and for extended hours, especially on weekends
6. Examine best approaches for safe pedestrian crossings on arterials such as Trinity, Diamond and State Road 4, including hawks and pedestrian /bike-activated flashing lights
7. Build a BMX track

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4

# FUTURE LAND USE









# 4.1

## PURPOSE OF THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP

THE FUTURE LAND  
USE MAP IS A GRAPHIC  
REPRESENTATION  
OF THE GOALS AND  
POLICIES EXPRESSED IN  
AND ADOPTED BY THE  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

# Future Land Use

The goals and policies of the comprehensive plan translate into anticipated land uses. Land use categories are broad and in some cases represent potential overlap of uses. For example, the Mixed Use category allows both or either residential and commercial uses. This category is employed to exhibit flexibility and to encourage a creative approach to development. By contrast, the residential categories, which represent densities, or the number of dwelling units per acre, primarily serve to protect existing neighborhoods by generally representing the current built status and by establishing limits to any new construction on both vacant or redeveloped land. Just as the whole of the comprehensive plan is a guiding policy document, the Future Land Use Map also represents policies to guide future development.

## Purpose of the Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map is a graphic representation of the Goals and Policies expressed in and adopted by the comprehensive plan. The map depicts the broad categories and general distribution of land uses. It shows the proximity and relation of uses to one another and is a reflection of both the historic development of the county and its expected and anticipated growth.

The map serves as a guide to land development and preservation decisions. It informs the review and decision making process. By establishing residential densities, it confers protections upon existing neighborhoods and directs new housing to desired areas in the county.

The map directs new development to appropriate areas, while providing flexibility in the type and intensity of potential uses. It does this by creating new Mixed-Use areas that are open and adaptable to various uses and subject to a streamlined review process.

While the Future Land Use Map is an expression of the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan, the plan provides direction for consideration of changes to the map. Such changes may be the result of changes to goals or policies, or they may result from specific development proposals, which are in line with and promote the plan's goals.

## Relation of the Future Land Use Map to Zoning

The comprehensive plan generally, and the Future Land Use Map as a part of the comprehensive plan, is a guiding document. Because the comprehensive plan is adopted by Resolution and the Development Code is adopted by Ordinance, in the event of a conflict between them, the code will prevail.

Changes to zoning should be in conformance with the Future Land Use Map. However, there may not be a direct correspondence between current or existing zoning and future land uses. Additionally, more than one zoning district may be consistent with a FLUM category.

## Future Land Use Map Categories

The following land use categories for the Future Land Use Map are established:

- Residential
  - Low Density (0-3 Dwelling Units per Acre)
  - Medium Density (3-7 Dwelling Units per Acre)
  - Medium/High Density (7-15 Dwelling Units per Acre)
  - High Density (15+ Dwelling Units per Acre)
- Institutional
- Commercial
- Office
- Mixed-Use
- Industrial
- Open Space
  - Park
  - Open Space Active (corresponding to W-2)
  - Open Space Passive (corresponding to W-1)
- Federal

## Land Use Classifications

The land use classifications are broad categories defined by the preferred or anticipated land use. With one exception, Federal Land, they are not a reflection of ownership. Neither are they necessarily a depiction of existing uses. Additionally, land use classifications do not directly correspond to zoning. They are intended to adopt and graphically convey a pattern of desirable as well as established land use. It is important to understand that the Future Land Use Map can be changed, and that this plan, along with the Development Code, further define the criteria required to approve such changes. However, by adopting the Future Land Use Map as part of the comprehensive plan, the County provides guidance and direction for future growth and change.

- **Residential.** Residential land uses are a depiction of density, or the number of dwelling units per gross acre. Because Los Alamos is relatively small and much of the residential use in the community already exists, the number of categories is limited to four and is based on the general character of existing constructed neighborhoods. Where a subdivision or Planned Development (PD) has been developed, it is placed in the residential category that represents the overall density for entire subdivision or PD. Where open space has been set aside within a subdivision or PD, certain of the lots may be smaller –or larger– than they would be if there were no open space. The land use category reflects the overall density for the development, which includes the open space. Elsewhere, such as in Quemazon, an overall density has been approved, but there is a variety of densities internal to the development. There too, the overall density is reflected in the land use map category.



The following table shows the relationship of residential zoning districts to the residential land use categories in the Future Land Use Map:

## Residential Land Use Categories Related to Zoning Districts

<b>Residential Land Use Categories:</b>	Low Density (0-3 Dwelling Units per Acre)	Medium Density (3-7 Dwelling Units per Acre)	Medium/High Density (7-15 Dwelling Units per Acre)	High Density (15+ Dwelling Units per Acre)
<b>Zoning Districts:</b>	RA, RE, PD-2	R-1-12, R-1-10, R-1-8, PD-5, PD-3.5, R-4	R-1-5, R-M, R-M/NC, R-3-L, PD-7, PD-12, R-5, R-6	R-3-H, R-3-H-40, PD-20

- **Institutional.** Institutional uses include schools, museums, hospitals, libraries, fire and police stations, religious assemblies, government offices such as the Municipal Building, and other government facilities such as senior and teen centers, and the Aquatic Center. This category does not include the temporary rentals of privately owned office space by government entities.
- **Commercial.** This designation applies primarily to retail shopping areas, but also to commercial service providers including restaurants. It can also include offices and certain light industrial uses.
- **Office.** The Office land use designation is applied to those areas where there is not generally retail activity, except as an accessory use. Offices may be administrative, medical, business and professional.
- **Mixed-Use.** The Mixed-Use designation applies to all of the Downtown zones. It may include those areas where housing and non-residential uses occur on the same lot, but it does not have to include housing. It is anticipated, and the comprehensive plan supports, that one or more new zoning categories will be created that will allow mixed uses in other parts of the County. For the purposes of the comprehensive plan, the Mixed-Use designation means that either or both residential and non-residential uses may be permitted on a property designated Mixed-Use. It is further intended that this designation will not require a comprehensive plan amendment to another land use category in order for Site Plan or other development approval.
- **Industrial.** Industrial uses correspond to both the light and heavy industrial zoning districts. This land use category is intended to provide areas with sufficient separation from residential areas so as not to negatively impact residences, but also to allow for sufficient land within the County for manufacturing, processing and distribution functions for economic development. The comprehensive plan recognizes that these uses, which may have environmental impacts incompatible with other uses, including truck traffic, need areas in which to operate without having to mitigate their impacts on immediate neighbors. Commercial uses are allowed in the industrial category.
- **Open Space.** Three open space categories identify different intensities of development and use. The Park category encompasses developed parks, both public and private, of various sizes. The Open Space – Active category corresponds to the W-2 zoning designation and includes public and private recreational uses of a generally open nature, with certain structures related to the recreational uses allowed. Open Space – Passive includes those lands that remain primarily in their natural state, but can accommodate various kinds of low impact recreation such as hiking, biking and equestrian trails.
- **Federal.** This is the only category that is based on ownership and not use. It is useful in showing the relationship of federally owned land to land under County jurisdiction. Because the County has no control over federal land and does not zone land that it does not control, there is no corresponding zoning district. This district includes Department of Energy (DOE), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), National Forest Service and National Park Service lands.

## Land Use Regulations

The County first adopted a code of ordinances, including a development code establishing zoning to guide the use and intensity of land and structures, in 1985. That code also references and directs the planning and zoning commission to create a comprehensive or master plan for the physical development of the county. The County created zoning districts and has expanded and amended them since that time, and adopted a comprehensive plan in 1987. However, a land use map, while envisioned and anticipated, was never adopted.

## Relationship of Land Uses to the Future Land Use Map and Zoning

The Comprehensive Plan establishes the overarching goals of the community and the guiding policies to accomplish those goals. An integral part of the comprehensive plan is the graphic depiction – or translation – of the goals and policies into land uses as shown on a land use map.

Land uses are typically broader categories of use than those defined by zoning. For example, residential districts are described by ranges of density, most often as the number of dwelling units per acre.

The categorization of land uses and traditional zoning have separated uses to protect residential uses from noxious or undesirable uses that could be harmful or bothersome to people in their homes. Such separation is also intended to provide areas for business and manufacturing uses where they can operate as needed without the worry of negatively impacting residential use.

The past 10 to 15 years have seen a growing recognition that not all such separation is necessary or desirable. With the recognition of the value of typically smaller neighborhood commercial uses as an asset for residential areas, many municipalities have loosened their land use regulations to allow for a greater mix of uses, if not immediately adjacent, then closer than was previously thought desirable.

Los Alamos' downtown zoning exhibits this thinking by allowing a broad range of uses, where residences are close and often adjacent to the commercial center of the community, both in the townsite and in White Rock.

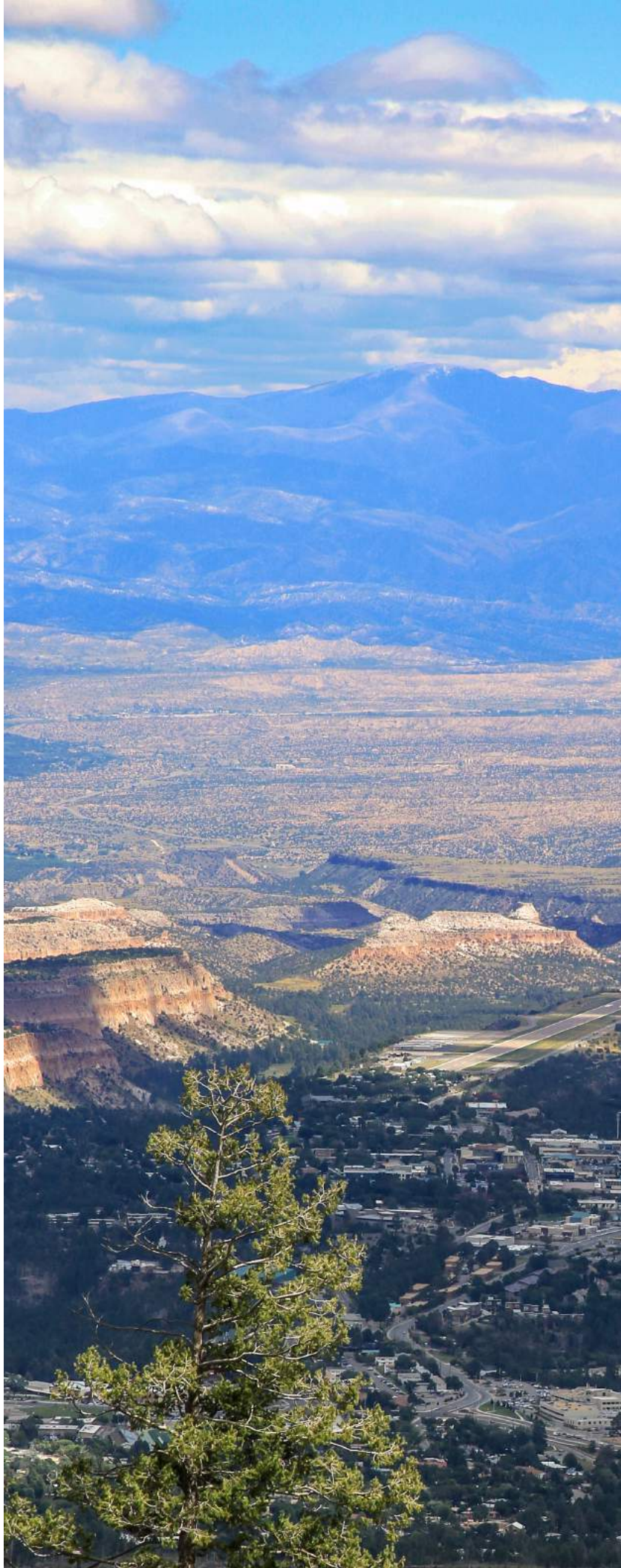
Nevertheless, as the community continues to grow, it will be important to provide certain protections for existing neighborhoods as new development or redevelopment collides with them, especially long-standing, low-density residential areas. This plan will address the intensity of uses in relation to each other and offer guidelines for how most appropriately to construct safeguards and design standards to offer that protection and promote the most appropriate urban design.

In considering open spaces, the County adopted certain zoning districts in the 1970s to establish different levels of intensity of use in open space, as well as reflect certain restrictions that were put in place when the federal government passed the land on to the County. The future land use map will reflect the different kinds of open space in the county and identify gaps in desirable connectivity, and contribute to the development of a comprehensive system of open space and trails for future use and enjoyment.

The future land use map is a guide for future use and development. It is meant to identify areas to be designated for certain uses. The comprehensive plan and the future land use map adopted as part of the plan are planning tools based on current conditions and community values. As evidenced by past planning efforts, physical condition and values evolve over time, sometimes in unexpected ways. The development code establishes mechanisms that allow for change through a periodic review of the documents, the adoption of area or neighborhood plans, and consideration of individual development proposals.

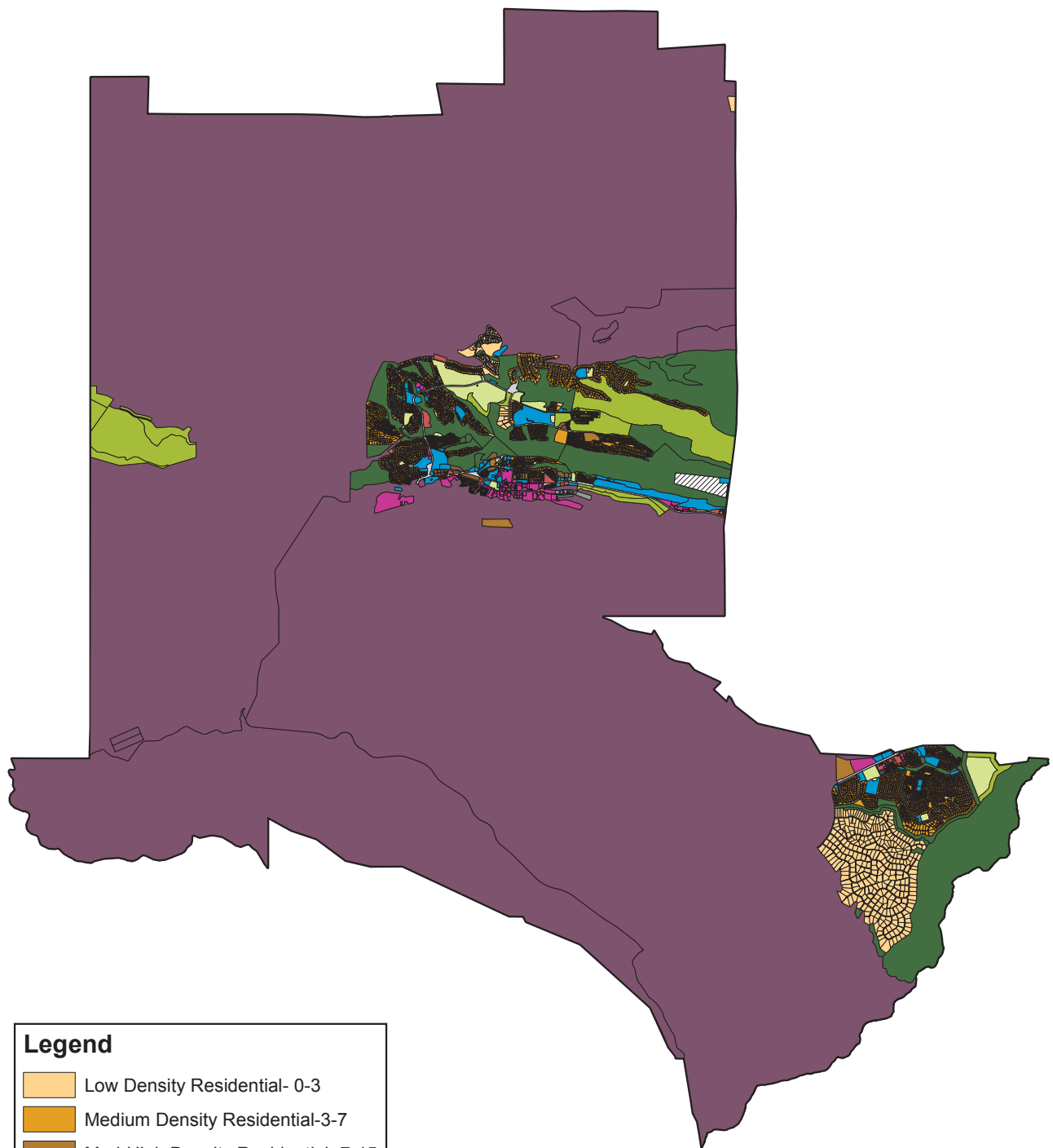






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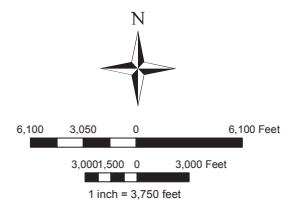
## FUTURE LAND USE MAP



### Legend

- Low Density Residential- 0-3
- Medium Density Residential-3-7
- Med-High Density Residential- 7-15
- High Density Residential-15+
- Institutional
- Parks
- Open Space- Passive
- Open Space- Active
- Mixed-Use
- Commercial/Office
- Industrial
- Federal
- Undesignated

## Future Land Use Los Alamos County Draft 8-30-16



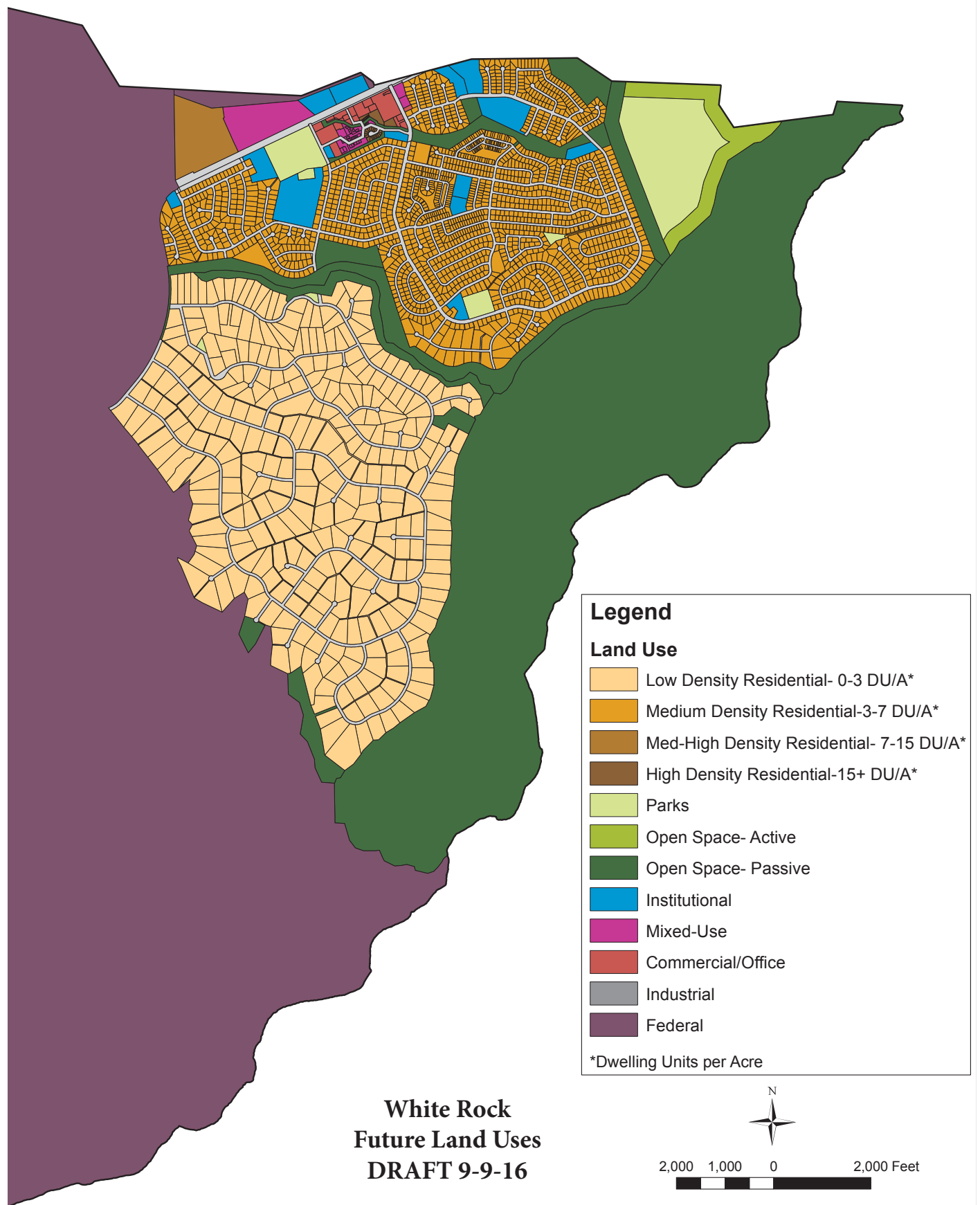
All mapping information is for reference only.  
Users are solely responsible to confirm data accuracy.  
Los Alamos County assumes no liability for errors  
associated with these data.



Future Land Use  
Los Alamos  
Draft 9-9-16

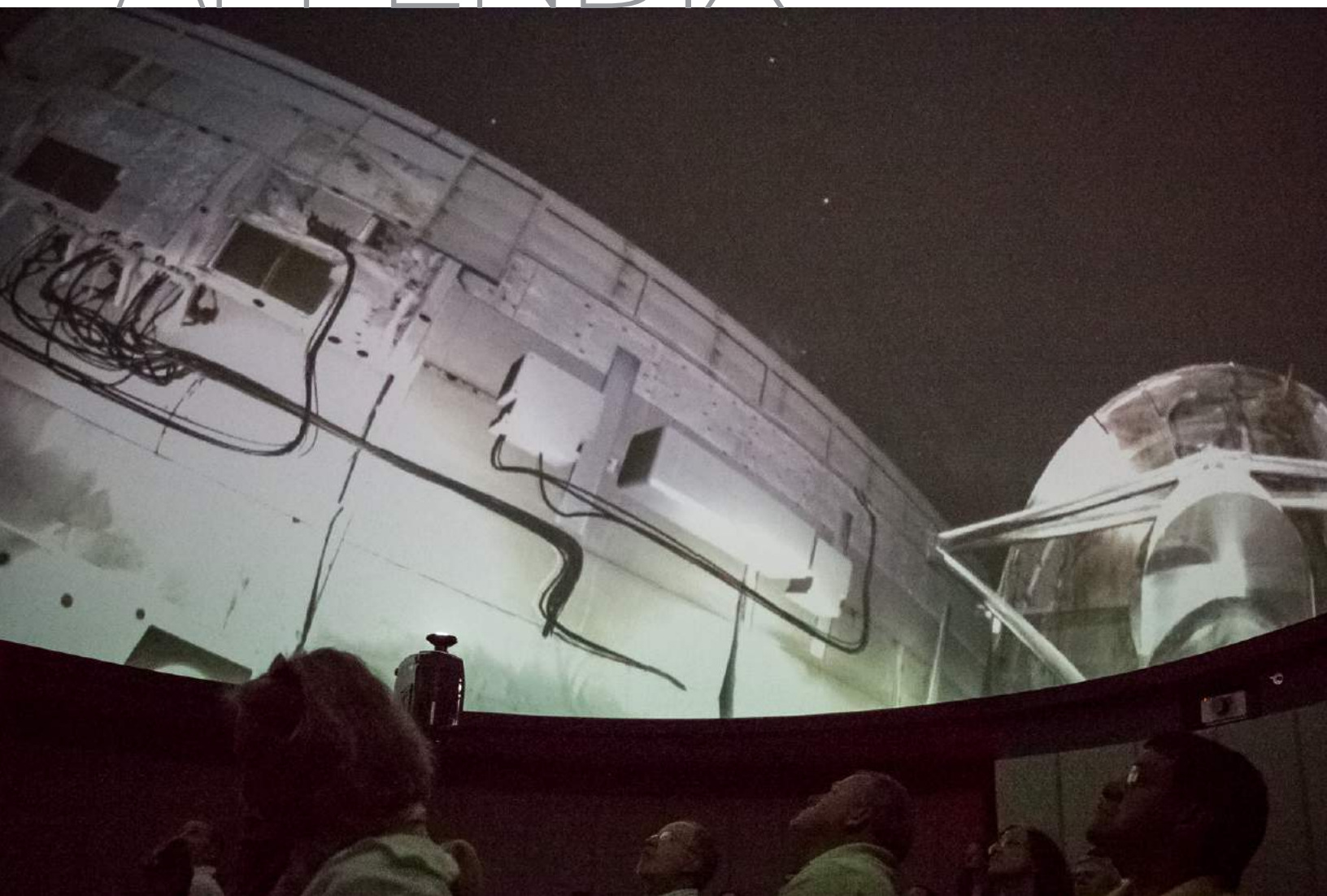
Legend				
Low Density Residential- 0-3	Parks	Commercial/Office		
Medium Density Residential-3-7	Open Space- Active	Industrial		
Med-High Density Residential- 7-15	Open Space- Passive	Federal		
High Density Residential-15+	Institutional	ROW		
	Mixed-Use	Undesignated		





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# APPENDIX



Appendix material to come.





# County of Los Alamos

## Staff Report

September 14, 2016

Los Alamos, NM 87544  
www.losalamosnm.us

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**Agenda No.:** B.

**Index (Council Goals):**

**Presenters:**

**Legislative File:** 8603-16

---

### **Title**

Minutes from the Planning And Zoning Commission Meeting(s) on August 17, 2016.

### **Recommended Action**

**I move that the Commission approve the Minutes for August 17, 2016**

### **Attachments**

A - Draft Minutes for August 17, 2016.



# County of Los Alamos

## Minutes

### Planning and Zoning Commission

1000 Central Avenue  
Los Alamos, NM 87544

*Philip Gursky, Chair; Michael Redondo, Vice Chair;  
Fred Brueggeman; Philip Kunsberg; Ashley Mamula; Jaret McDonald; Catherine Mockler;  
Larry Warner and Amy Woods, Members*

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Wednesday, August 17, 2016

5:30 PM

BCC Room, Suite 110

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#### 1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

**Present** 5 - Chair Gursky, Commissioner McDonald, Commissioner Woods,  
Commissioner Mockler and Commissioner Kunsberg  
**Absent** 3 - Commissioner Brueggeman, Commissioner Warner and  
Commissioner Mamula  
**Remote** 1 - Commissioner Redondo

#### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

#### 3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

#### 4. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION BUSINESS

4. a. Minutes from the Planning And Zoning Commission Meeting(s) on August 10, 2016.

**Attachments:** [PZ Minutes 8-10-16](#)

I move that the Commission approve the Minutes for August 10, 2016.

**Yes:** 5 - Chair Gursky, Commissioner McDonald, Commissioner Woods,  
Commissioner Mockler and Commissioner Kunsberg

**Absent:** 4 - Commissioner Brueggeman, Commissioner Redondo, Commissioner  
Warner and Commissioner Mamula

4. b. Findings of the Public Hearing on August 10, 2016 for Case No.  
SUP-2016-0006

**Attachments:** [A - Findings for Case No. SUP-2016-0006](#)

I move that the P&Z approve the Findings for Case No. SUP-2016-0006

**Yes:** 5 - Chair Gursky, Commissioner Redondo, Commissioner Woods,  
Commissioner Mockler and Commissioner Kunsberg

**Abstain:** 1 - Commissioner McDonald

**Absent:** 3 - Commissioner Brueggeman, Commissioner Warner and Commissioner Mamula

## **5. LOS ALAMOS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

### **5. a. LACCP GOALS AND POLICIES**

**Attachments:** [LACCP GOALS AND POLICIES](#)

### **5. b. Draft Land Use Map**

**Attachments:** [A - Draft Land Use Map.](#)

Colleen Meyer, 2167 A 35th Street, wanted the Commission to be aware of the empty lot on Villa Street and how she would like it to remain as open space because it is probably undevelopable due to the contours of the property.

Melissa Aria, 2168 44th Street, Wanted to know if there will be historical districts designated in the land use maps. Tamara Baer, Los Alamos County Planner, said that that would be a zoning designation so that it would typically would not be on a land use map.

The Commissioners talked about the different ways the word can go out to the public so they can see the draft Comp Plan in September.

## **6. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

## **7. PUBLIC COMMENT**

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

PLEASE NOTE: Any action by the Planning and Zoning Commission in granting approval, conditional approval or disapproval of an application may be appealed by the applicant or by persons who have a personal or pecuniary interest adversely affected by the decision as defined by Section 16-454 of the County Code. Such appeals must be filed with the Community Development Department within 15 days of the action in accordance with Section 16-492.

If you are an individual with a disability who is in need of a reader, amplifier, qualified sign language interpreter, or any other form of auxiliary aid or service to attend or participate in the hearing or meeting, please contact the County Human Resources Division at 505-662-8040 at least one week prior to the meeting or as soon as possible.

Public documents, including the agenda and minutes can be provided in various accessible formats. Please contact the personnel in the Community Development Department Office at 505-662-8006 if a summary or other type of accessible format is needed.