



Housing Programs Update

Los Alamos County
Community Development Department
August 23, 2016

Current conditions and challenges

- Tight for-sale market
 - Low inventory - 37 listings now available
 - 21 of these have list prices of \$315,000 and over.
- Increasing prices and the rate of sales is much greater than previous years.
- Avg sale price \$274K vs \$255K (2015)
- Very Tight Rental Market
 - Rental property vacancy (limited sample): 0 – 2 % - pre-leasing months ahead –
 - Should ease up in Fall, but still under 5%

Growth Needs and Potential

- LANL employment changes present significant supply challenges
- Comp Plan Survey: 60% retiree respondents indicating that they intend to stay
- Lack of housing in general and also affordable housing expressed as an obstacle for recruitment
- Current vacant land zoned residential can accommodate growth for an 2000 additional residents
 - EVSP Goal: 20,000 by 2020

There are indications of housing investment

- Single Family New home builds – 11 in 2015
- Rental investment
 - Various property owners updating properties

Aspen Studio (9th Avenue) Apartments
Plateau Properties
Mountain Vista

- Recent acquisition of 3301 Canyon Road Apartments
- Residential improvement permitting remaining steady (307 YTD vs 265 this time in 2015)

Home Renewal Program

- 10 projects funded
- 9 with County funding - \$195,200 (Avg. \$21,688)
- Bidding process in August
- Projects begin September
- Next phase for applications
- \$400K in project funds, continuing need for operational funding

Homebuyer program

- \$150,000 in County funding
- Authorizing Ordinance by year-end
- RFP process
- Program up and running by Spring of 2017
- Anticipate assisting 15 -20 homebuyers in first year; program leveraging;
- Local positive economic “ripples” with each transaction

A-19 status/overview

- Estimated 160 new homes for purchase by end of 2018
- Western portion, larger lot single family
- Eastern portion, smaller lots with higher densities, potential for some attached product
- Current negotiation - Dev Agreement in Sept

Other known possible housing opportunities

- Privately held vacant/platted properties – 229 units
 - Includes 77 scattered infill lots
- Vacant unplatted – 185 units
 - Includes 75 unit infill on N. Mesa and 80 unit proposed Ponderosa Estates
- Other County parcels, e.g. A-8 – 200 – 300 units rental – walkable/downtown site
- White Rock Village – 40 units affordable
- Dispersed vacant homes – sample size 91, potentially larger group

Vacant homes – key questions

Is there a problem?

Is this a priority?

What's our strategy?

- How to engage property owners? Carrot or stick approach, or mix of both?

Challenges

- Some vacant properties can be difficult to identify without deeper investigation
- Records of ownership or responsibility for a property can be murky, dispersed among occupants, investors, servicers, and lenders
- Data collection creates privacy and security issues – need for a fair and discrete structure
- Solutions need to be balanced through public/private means and partnerships
- On-going and complicated property issue, presents a longer term set of challenges and responses

Vacant homes – Data Key Findings

- 91 homes ‘high certainty’ of vacancy (Aug 2016)
- Condition of homes and yards ranged very good to very poor. Most common code violation is weeds/vegetation
- Foreclosures (25% apx)
- Family trust (10% apx), out-of-state owners (25% apx)
- Additional vacant homes likely. If base utility fee not paid, home will not show in County utility records
- Additional 350 homes appear to be vacant good portion of the year (estimate based on water use <6000gal Dec 2015-July 2016)
- Property tax foreclosure (very few in LAC)

Vacant homes – Possible strategies

Goal: Create or spur a transaction

Easier (key pieces or tools available)

- Use Energov online as overall Code Enforcement tool to address problem properties
- Targeted/assertive code enforcement
- ‘Clean and Lien’ fund. Hire contractors to secure and clean

More difficult (more time and staff intensive – need development)

- Acquisition/rehab program
 - Initiative with non-county partners to facilitate change of ownership
 - Non-profit involvement for acquisition and home rehab/resale – affordable housing
- Vacant property registration program
- Tax disincentives for holding vacant property

Housing Program Comparison

Program/ Initiative	Unit impact Potential	Financial Impact Capacity to Implement	Leveraging (ROI)	Timeframe
Homeowner Rehab	10 - 15 per year	On-going operational	Medium	Now
Home buyer Program	15 per year	\$150,000 initial seed funding – on- going support from County	High	2017
County vacant land development	160 for sale 200 rental	RFP process; infrastructure needs of site	High	2017 - 2019
Vacant home strategies	undetermined	Staffing; on-going operational Use existing code tools	NA	2017
Other infill development projects	75 units	Potential partnership on infrastructure	High	2018
Acquisition/ Rehab	10 – 15 per year	Link to Rehab/Homebuyer	TBD	2018

Path Forward

- Develop and roll out the homebuyer program (Spring 2017)
- Monitor and highlight the impact of Home Renewal Program
 - Gear up for round 2 – adjust outreach and marketing as needed
- Bring Development Agreement forward for A-19
- Vacant homes
 - Further refine list of “highly likely” vacant properties
 - Develop strategy using County systems to track
 - Develop clean and lien strategy for code enforcement
- Support other project partnerships that will produce housing

Questions

