

November 7, 2018

Dear Councilors,

After many considerations and discussions over the course of several months, the Tourism Implementation Task Force, at this time, cannot offer a recommendation to Council for a **long-term solution** for the possible re-location of the Los Alamos Visitor Center. The primary reasons for this decision are as follows:

- **Unknown Funding Sources.** With the unknowns regarding GRT due to the transition of the LANL contract, as well as the status of the County's flat budget, the Task Force cannot responsibly suggest an 'ideal' long-term solution at this time. The cost for this relocation is a prime criterion for evaluating options. Without having a sense of budget available, options cannot be evaluated.
- **Lack of Customer ("Visitor") Discovery Data.** While the current Visitor Centers track visitor counts, no quantitative (or qualitative) data exists about visitor needs and desires when traveling within the County and surrounding areas. This data will presumably help dictate the programming needed within a long-term Los Alamos Visitor Center in order to optimize the visitor experience and spending in our community, and as a result, help us determine the most desirable facility requirements. With the absence of such data, as well as without a Visitor Center subject matter expert, the Task Force has been operating under some assumptions of best practices; it recommends more data be extracted from visitors as part of an overall study of the possible long-term relocation of the Visitor Center.
- **Other Unknowns** such as impact of Deacon Street redesign and as yet undetermined function of the Visitor Center that will define the necessary size of the space.

With these considerations in mind, the Tourism Implementation Task Force would like to offer a deferment on the recommendation for a long-term possible Visitor Center re-location until it has more guidance and insight into the aforementioned concerns.

As the current services agreement for the operation and management of the Visitor Centers expires on December 31, 2018, some type of action needs to be taken. In the interim, the Task Force offers the following list of **short-term solutions** for the possible Visitor Center re-location, in no particular order, and suggests using this as a guide for exploring what is most feasible based on timing and existing budget for the Los Alamos Visitor Center lease.

- Former Otowi Bookstore
- Current Visitor Center Location

- Former Fusion Sports
- Current CB Fox Mattress showroom
- Cooperative Extension office in Community Building

The group initially identified a list of 28 possible Los Alamos Visitor Center locations, narrowing it down to these 5 recommendations as the result of a diverse subset of community professionals consulting over 20+ hours, 8 meetings of the Task Force, as well as 4 additional meetings by a Visitor Center Work Group. The Work Group used a comprehensive, objective scoring rubric and toured the top-ranking sites to assess the more qualitative aspects of each location. This list was turned over to County staff to further investigate the feasibility of each site, as well as costs (both one-time and on-going).

The Task Force is recommending Council and County staff explore one of these short-term solutions now and defer the long-term solution until more budget and visitor data is obtained.

The Task Force will continue to work on the implementation of the Tourism Strategic Plan and offer recommendations.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Feel free to contact Chair David Jolly at 505-819-8287 or at djollyjr@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Tourism Implementation Task Force