



LOS ALAMOS
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FY20 Work Plan for Los Alamos County Boards and Commissions

(Fiscal Year 2020: July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)

Board and Commission Name: Lodgers' Tax Advisory Board (LTAB)

Date prepared: April 2, 2019

Date approved by Council: June 11, 2019

Prepared by: Kelly Stewart

This work plan will be accomplished in the following time frame:
July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020

Chairperson: Linda Deck

Members and terms:

Member	Start/End Dates	Term
Linda Deck	12/2/2016 – 12/1/2019	1
Katie Bruell	12/2/2018 – 12/1/2021	2
Stacy Baker	12/2/2018 – 12/1/2021	1
Catherine Mockler	12/2/2016 – 12/1/2019	1
Jacqueline Shen	12/2/2017 – 12/1/2020	1

Department Director: Linda Matteson, CMO and Joanie Ahlers, EDD

Work plan developed in collaboration with Department Director? (Y/N?) Y

Staff Liaison: Kelly Stewart

Administrative Support provided by: Barbara Lai

Council Liaison: James Robinson

Reviewed by Council Liaison? Yes

1.0 Provide a brief Summary of your Board or Commission’s activities over the past twelve months. Please describe your Board or Commission’s accomplishments and identify constraints. List any “lessons learned” and identify the greatest challenges faced by the Board or Commission.

The attached FY19 Tourism Marketing Plan reports on the FY18 tourism marketing efforts, and provides the strategy and road map for FY19 campaigns and activities currently in progress. Listed below is a summary of progress made by LTAB on the specific focus areas identified in the FY19 LTAB Work Plan.

- LTAB solicited and received monthly updates on the implementation activities of the Wayfinding, Brand Action and Tourism Strategic Plan to ensure that LTAB’s focus areas were considered.
- The County solicited bids for tourism marketing services and visitor center services. Griffin and Associates partnered with HK Advertising and Once a Day Marketing (the Brand Implementation consultants) and was awarded the contract. In January 2019, Griffin and HK announced their strategic partnership known as Sunny505. The Los Alamos Commerce and Development Corporation’s Discover Los Alamos meeting and visitor bureau (LACDC/DLA) was awarded the visitor center services contract. LTAB provided input to the two RFPs and how they would cover essential tourism marketing work.
- LACDC’s decision to move their functions to a smaller space triggered pursuit of the Tourism Strategic Plan’s recommendation to move the Los Alamos Visitor Center to a more visible, centralized location. During the first half of FY19 (July-Dec 2018), the County executed a 6-month contract amendment with LACDC to remain in the space at Central Park Square while the Tourism Task Force researched new visitor center locations. In the interests of time, County-owned space in the Community Center was selected. In January, the County entered into a new visitor center services contract with LACDC which focuses visitor center services to the White Rock location until the opening of the new space in April. LTAB has been and continues to monitor these changes, the transition and perceived impacts.
- LTAB directed staff to inquire about New Mexico Tourism Department services and grants to pursue development of data metrics processes and applications, as well as campaigns for compelling Bandelier visitors to extend their visit or return to attractions and businesses on Los Alamos Townsite.
- At the August and September 2018 meetings, LTAB hosted tourism partner forums to research the following topics: Data Collection, Interpretation & Reporting and Assessment & Consolidation of Tourism Marketing Materials.
- At the December 2018 meeting LTAB hosted Valles Caldera National Preserve ranger Kimberly DeVall for a presentation on current status of visitation, access, and metric gathering at the VCNP.
- LTAB hosted New Mexico Tourism Dept. Research Director, Victoria Gregg to the February 2019 meeting to discuss tourism data sources and collection/assessment mechanisms and data management recommendations for Los Alamos.
- Staff obtained from the Town of Taos, a digital packet documenting Taos’ process for implementing Voluntary Collection Agreements (VCAs) with their booming vacation rental

market. LTAB intends for this template, combined with the passage of Senate Bill 106 to inform the board's recommendations for Los Alamos' approach to short-term lodging.

- LACDC pursued and received a grant from LANL contractors to develop the Visitor Journey A2D customer service/ambassador training for Los Alamos. Training is in development and anticipated to launch in April 2019, with a planned minimum of one training session per quarter. LTAB is tracking this essential initiative for visitor satisfaction.

<p>2.0 Describe the future work plans for this Board or Commission using the following items and showing the relationship to those items: <i>(Please remember that Council approval of this work plan does not constitute official Council approval of proposed projects, assignments, or anticipated recommendations included in this work plan that have budget implications.)</i></p>

While LTAB will continue to monitor the marketing reports and visitation statistics reported by the County's tourism marketing services and visitor center services contractors, the Board will take the lead in researching, educating, vetting and recommending specific actions to advance the following three priorities in FY2020:

1. **Tourism Marketing Metrics (Identification, Collection, Analysis, Reporting, Application).**

Pursuant to LTAB's mission, in order to effectively "advise on the expenditure of funds used for advertising, publicizing and promoting tourist attractions and facilities in and around the county," LTAB has determined that the number one priority is to identify and apply metrics that accurately assess the performance and effectiveness of Los Alamos' tourism marketing and orienting products and campaigns. The metrics must be gathered in the same way at all possible visitor interfaces, and reflect the visitors' experiences, from the decision to visit Los Alamos, to which attractions they visited, how long they stayed (overnight), would they recommend Los Alamos to a friend and do they intend to return. Analysis of this qualitative data will inform tourism marketing content, visitor satisfaction, and media investments.

2. **Short-Term Rentals (a.k.a., "Alternative Lodging" like Airbnb, VRBO)** LTAB will take the lead in preparing Los Alamos to leverage the power of the growing short-term lodging industry under new laws and provisions. The February 2019 passage of Senate Bill 106 has changed the Lodgers' Tax Statute (Section 3-38-16 NMSA 1978), enabling municipalities to collect Lodgers' Tax from private property owners who offer short term rental of their homes via on-line booking platforms like Airbnb and VRBO. While Los Alamos lags behind surrounding communities in the number of residents who participate in this practice, it is anticipated that these numbers will increase, providing needed lodging options for tourists, business travelers and LANL summer students. With a six to nine month window before the law goes into effect on January 1, 2020, LTAB intends to work with organizations like the New Mexico Hospitality Association and the New Mexico Tourism Department, as well as cities that are already collecting Lodgers' Tax from the "alternative lodging" industry to recommend best practices, ideal experiences at these rentals, and policies and processes that benefit short term rental participants while generating additional revenues for promoting Los Alamos for the purpose of travel.

3. **Hospitality Best Practices (e.g., customer service training)** Hospitality products, services and, most importantly—staff—are the essential glue that can seal a positive visitor experience. By gathering readily available data from review sites like Trip Advisor and Yelp, as well as advice from organizations like the New Mexico Hospitality Association, LTAB will seek to recommend standards, best practices and feedback systems for the front line managers of Los Alamos' hospitality industry.

2.1 List any special projects or assignments given to this Board or Commission by Council or the Department director:

TBD

2.2 List the guiding documents/plans (with approval or revision dates listed) used by this Board or Commission.

- FY18 Tourism Marketing Services Marketing Plan
- Lodgers' Tax Fund Accrued and Actual Revenue reports (Los Alamos County Finance Department)
- P.R./Social Media Data reports (Griffin and Associates/Sunny505)
- Visitor/Attraction Trends reports (LACDC-Meeting and Visitor Bureau Program, visitor center operations and management contractor)
- Recreation Division monthly reports
- Reports from interactions with Arts In Public Places Board, Historic Preservation Board, Library Board, Parks and Recreation Board, Planning and Zoning Board and Transportation Board
- Tourism Strategic Plan, including Wayfinding Plan
- Brand Action Plan

2.3 Other projects/assignments proposed by the Board or Commission: (Any projects or activities proposed in this section should be discussed with the Council Liaison prior to listing it in this work plan.) To assist with Council review of the work plans, please list the B&C's proposed projects or assignments in priority order.

Consider allocation of Lodgers' Tax revenues to fund the small project grant program (\$10,000-\$15,000).

3.0 Identify any interfaces for the goals/tasks in this work plan with County Departments and other Boards and Commissions. Specify the coordination required.

- LTAB to identify the entities whose activities best inform LTAB's focus areas of Data Development, Short-Term (Alternative) Lodging Program and Hospitality Best Practices.
- LTAB will also seek regular briefings from County Departments, Boards and Commissions, and outside interests to inform the key focus areas.

4.0 List any special public information or involvement meetings or efforts to be conducted by this Board or Commission:

Based upon the needs and strategies that are determined by the LTAB as the work plan is developed for each of the above referenced topics, with adequate budget, staff and resources for advertising and community or business outreach, this section's tasks will be determined in consultation as needed with the PIO as the year progresses.

5.0 List the current subcommittees for this Board or Commission.

**5.1 For subcommittees with members that are not members of the parent board or commission:
List the subcommittee members and their terms.
Explain how sub- committee members are selected or appointed.
Provide a description of each subcommittee's charter or purpose.
Describe the expected duration for the subcommittee and their work plan(s) demonstrating how they support the Board or Commission:**

N/A

Attachment A: Provide a copy of your Board or Commission's "Purpose" and "Duties and Responsibilities" from Chapter 8 of the County Code:

Attachment B: Using the chart below, place an X in the column on the right if the Council Goal is related to the work of the LTAB Board or Commission:

Mark all that apply on the chart on the following page.

(From 2019 Strategic Leadership Plan)

Attachment C: FY19 Tourism Marketing Report

Sec. 8-101. Purpose

A lodger's tax advisory board is established to advise the county manager and council on the expenditure of funds authorized by NMSA 1978, § 3-38-22 for advertising, publicizing and promoting tourist attractions and facilities in and around the county. (Ord. No. 02-078, § 2, 10-3-2006)

Sec. 8-102. Membership, terms and qualifications.

The lodger's tax advisory board is established and its members shall be appointed in accordance with NMSA 1978, § 3-38-22. Only the member representing the general public must be a resident of the county. The term of each member of the lodger's tax advisory board shall be three years beginning on December 2 and ending on December 1. (Ord. No. 02-078, § 2, 10-3-2006)

Sec. 8-103. Duties and responsibilities. (Ord. No. 02-078, § 2, 10-3-2006)

The lodger's tax advisory board shall serve in an advisory capacity to the county council and shall have the following functions, responsibilities and duties:

- 1) Provide citizen input to staff and council on ways and means for improving the county's use of lodger's tax funds. For this purpose, the board shall gather public input in ways appropriate to the circumstances, which may include public hearings dedicated to specific topics.
- 2) Review and act upon all lodgers' tax related matters submitted to the board by council.

Communication and Transparency	
Ongoing Improvement in Communication and Transparency in County Policy Setting	
Increasing the Amount and Types of Housing Options	
This includes a variety of housing options for all segments of the community, from affordable, entry level, and live-work housing to new options for those interested in downsizing or moving closer to central areas of the community.	
Enhancing Support and Opportunities for the Local Business Environment	
This includes appropriate support for existing businesses, growing new businesses, and supporting technology start-ups and spin-offs.	X
Addressing Long-Term Building Vacancies in Key Areas of Our Community	
Land availability in Los Alamos County, and in particular the downtown areas, is limited and there is a desire to work towards better utilization, opportunities for new businesses, and improved aesthetics.	X
Protecting and Maintaining Our Open Spaces, Recreational, and Cultural Amenities	
Los Alamos County open spaces and cultural attractions are greatly valued by the community provide opportunities for recreational and economic growth; appropriately allocating resources to ensure their health and sustainability is important to our citizens.	X
Supporting Social Services Improvement	
Behavioral, mental and physical health and social services are important quality of life components; there are key areas where appropriate types and levels of county support could help address current needs.	
Investing in Infrastructure	
Appropriately balancing maintenance of existing infrastructure with new investment in county utilities, roads, facilities and amenities will help improve environmental stewardship, sustainability, and quality of life.	
Planning for Appropriate Levels of County Services	
Making sure we understand the level of services our citizens want will allow us to make appropriate investments in processes and staff to achieve them.	