



DRAFT **EAST** **DOWNTOWN** **LOS ALAMOS** **METROPOLITAN** **REDEVELOPMENT** **AREA PLAN**

JULY 2025



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EAST DOWNTOWN LOS ALAMOS METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA (MRA) PLAN

DRAFT

PREPARED FOR:

LOS ALAMOS

PREPARED BY:



JULY 2025



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INTRODUCTION

The East Downtown Los Alamos MRA Plan is a project of Los Alamos County and Los Alamos MainStreet, a program of the Los Alamos Commerce and Development Corporation, with support from New Mexico MainStreet. The plan provides guidance for future redevelopment within the East Downtown Los Alamos Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA). The plan outlines actions the County can take, such as entering into public private partnerships, to support revitalization of the eastern portion of downtown Los Alamos and realize the vision of the Los Alamos Downtown Master Plan. The plan incorporates community identified goals and strategies to address challenges that have faced downtown Los Alamos for years.

The designation of the MRA and adoption of the MRA Plan enables specific tools such as the creation of an MRA fund, the establishment of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District, and the ability to enter public private partnerships. These tools make it easier to pull resources and partnerships together for the successful implementation of projects within the MRA.

Purpose of the MRA Plan

1. Support the County and community to address challenges in downtown Los Alamos
2. Develop strategies to achieve community-identified goals
3. Leverage financial tools enabled by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code

ALIGNMENT WITH DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

The MRA Plan is designed to support achievement of the vision and goals identified in the Downtown Master Plan which focus on the benefits of mixed-use, transit-friendly, pedestrian-oriented development. The Master Plan Development Framework includes elements such as development of a parking district, catalytic redevelopment of the Mari Mac Shopping Center, road realignment, pedestrian improvements, and a comprehensive placemaking strategy, many of which could be supported within the MRA boundary.

MRA CODE

The Los Alamos East Downtown MRA Plan was developed in compliance with the legislation provided under the New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (NM Stat § 3-60A-1 to 3-60A-48). This plan follows the adoption of the East Downtown Los Alamos MRA Designation Report (Resolution 24-08 adopted May 7, 2024) and the designation of the East Downtown Los Alamos MRA.

The powers granted to municipalities through the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code are intended to enable municipalities to promote economic activity in areas designated as MRAs, where growth and development are hindered by physical, economic, and other detrimental conditions. These powers are designed to help reverse an area's decline and stagnation.

The code establishes the processes and powers of local government to designate an MRA, develop an MRA Plan, and undertake and carry out projects within an adopted MRA boundary. Importantly, this allows for the contribution of public funds to support private redevelopment for the purpose of economic development and community benefit. This enables unique public/private partnerships within metropolitan redevelopment areas with the understanding that the public benefit provided by the elimination of blight conditions outweighs the private benefit of a specific project. "Activities authorized and powers granted by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code are hereby declared not to result in a donation or aid to any person, association or public or private organization or enterprise. The necessity for these provisions and the power is declared to be in the public interest as a matter of legislative determination" (§3-60A-2.C. NMSA 1978).

Any contribution of public resources to MRA projects must meet the objectives of the MRA Plan, provide tangible community benefit, and are subject to public hearing and approval of the County Council.

MRA-ENABLED TOOLS

The NM Metropolitan Redevelopment code enables specific tools that the County can leverage to realize the vision and objectives laid out in the MRA Plan. MRAs allow local governments to contribute public resources to private redevelopment projects as long as they provide tangible community benefit and align with the goals and strategies set forth in the MRA Plan. The following tools will be essential to the pursuit of the priority strategies laid out in this plan.

MRA COMMISSION

To ensure community benefit, the County may create an MRA Commission. An MRA Commission is responsible for overseeing the implementation and funding of MRA Plan projects. A commission is established by local ordinance and board members are appointed by the County Manager. For smaller MRA districts it is appropriate for oversight to be handled by the County Council.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) & MRA FUND

TIF is a public financing method which uses future tax revenue increases within a designated district to fund public and private projects. Once a TIF district is established, the incremental rise in property taxes and/or a percentage of the incremental increase in local or state Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) is captured. The collected funds are held in a dedicated MRA fund and used to support MRA project implementation. For more information about Tax Increment Financing see page 25.

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (P3'S)

A P3 is a cooperative agreement between the local government and one or more private sector entities. These partnerships enable the implementation of projects that are too costly for either sector to pursue on their own.

DIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS & DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

The MRA enables the contribution of public resources to private redevelopment projects and business improvements that provide community benefit. Contributions and incentives include but are not limited to sale or lease of County-owned property, redevelopment tax abatements, and storefront and building infrastructure improvement grants. Not all of the tools may apply.

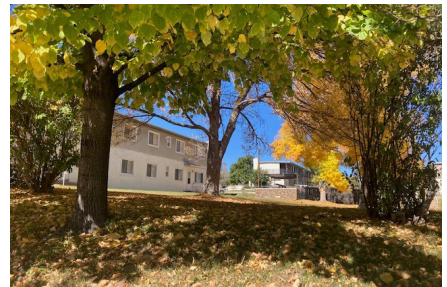
THE PLAN AREA

The East Downtown Los Alamos MRA boundary was adopted on May 7th, 2024, by Resolution No. 24-08. The area is approximately 29 acres, made up of 19 parcels, all privately owned. The boundary was selected to include the greatest concentration of vacant and distressed commercial properties within the downtown boundaries identified in the 2021 Downtown Los Alamos Plan.

The legal description of the MRA boundary, inclusive of ROW is:

1. Follows parcel lines South along 4th St to the roundabout at Central Ave. and Trinity Dr.
2. From the roundabout, follows parcel lines south to intersect DP Rd.
3. From DP Rd., follows Canyon Rim Trail and Beech St. to the south and west
4. From Canyon Rim Trail and Beech St., follows parcel lines north to 7th St.
5. Runs north along 7th St. to meet Trinity Dr.
6. Runs West along Trinity Dr.
7. Follows parcel lines north through the parking lot, from Trinity Dr. to Central Ave.
8. From Central Ave, follows the parcel lines from just west of 9th St. North to Iris St.
9. Follows parcel lines East along Iris St., intersecting 7th St. and 6th St.
10. Concludes at Iris St. and 4th St.

The East Downtown Los Alamos MRA centers around the Mari Mac Shopping Village and includes additional commercial properties to the south of Trinity Drive and apartments to the north of Central Avenue. It should be noted that participation in MRA projects and partnerships is elective. Inclusion in the MRA boundary gives property and business owners the opportunity to improve their properties for projects that further the goals of this plan and demonstrate community benefit.





Adopted East Downtown Los Alamos MRA Boundary



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PLANNING PROCESS

The East Downtown Los Alamos MRA Plan utilized the following methodology:

1. **Plan Review:** Review of key plans and reports to gain a contextual understanding of community concerns and goals, and previous recommendations for the downtown.
2. **Existing Conditions & Asset Inventory:** Inventory of the physical conditions of the MRA District builds on the findings of the East Downtown Los Alamos MRA Designation Report
3. **Community Profile & Market Analysis:** Community profile and market analysis utilizing data and information from various sources including the U.S. Census, past plans, regional reports, and community and business surveys.
4. **Community Engagement:** Community input was sought through a series of community meetings and multiple online surveys.
5. **Downtown Vision, Goal, & Strategy Development:** Vision, goal, and strategy framework based on the plan review, existing conditions assessment, community profile, market analysis, and community engagement process.

PLAN REVIEW

A review of previous planning documents provides a foundation for the MRA plan recommendations. These plans provide valuable insight into the community's values, vision, and goals for the downtown, as many were conducted with extensive engagement and include detailed documentation of community input. The MRA Plan enables tools that can help to further recommendations from past plans.

- Downtown Master Plan, October 2021
- Los Alamos County Comprehensive Plan, 2016
- Los Alamos Tourism Strategic Plan, 2018
- Land Development Standards, 2023
- National Community Survey 2024
- Los Alamos Affordable Housing Plan, 2024
- Housing Market Needs Analysis 2019

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the MRA designation and planning process, the planning team sought to provide robust opportunities for public participation. Community members were kept informed of the project and invited to engage through a project website, online surveys, letters to property owners, County Council presentations, and Town Halls. The engagement process took place between February to December of 2024.



The *Los Alamos Downtown Master Plan* provided the foundation for this MRA Plan.



Town Hall

OUTREACH APPROACH

Outreach Tools

1. Website with FAQ
2. Letter to property owner
3. Online survey – 197 respondents
4. “Have Your Say” Survey - 73 respondents

Presentations

1. Chamber Presentation – March 20, 2024
2. County Council Presentations – February 20, 2024; May 7, 2024

Community Meetings

1. Presentation at LAMSCD and Chamber of Commerce business breakfast – February 2024
2. MRA Property Owners Zoom Meeting – May 2024
3. Town Hall – June 27, 2024
4. Town Hall - Draft Recommendations Presentation – December 16, 2024



Town hall - June 27, 2024

HOW ENGAGEMENT INFORMED THE PLAN

The goals and strategies outlined in this Plan build upon the vision, recommendations, and development framework from the Los Alamos Downtown Master Plan. That planning process was the culmination of extensive public engagement which helped to identify opportunities and challenges facing the Los Alamos community. The MRA planning process provided opportunities for community input which helped to clarify the goals and strategies identified within the Downtown Master Plan that are relevant for the East Downtown MRA and would provide community benefit.



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EXISTING CONDITIONS

The East Downtown Los Alamos MRA is located on the eastern end of downtown Los Alamos where Trinity Drive and Central Avenue split. The approximately 29 acre area, made up of 19 parcels, includes the Mari-Mac shopping center, apartment buildings north of Central Avenue, and commercial properties along Trinity drive. All parcels within the MRA are privately owned. The area was chosen for MRA designation in part due to its potential to serve as a visually impactful gateway that could enhance the Downtown identity, image, and sense of place.

The area has exhibited conditions of decline and stagnation for many years. A concentration of vacant commercial properties and large swaths of surface parking have a significant impact on the downtown experience and character. The Downtown Master Plan identified redevelopment of underutilized property as key to the creation of a livable downtown and provided recommendation to the County to implement redevelopment tools and incentives such as those enabled through the designation and adoption of an MRA plan to move beyond current barriers to redevelopment.

MRA DESIGNATION REPORT FINDINGS

Los Alamos County designated a portion of Downtown Los Alamos as a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) on May 7th, 2024 (Resolution 24-08). The associated resolution and designation report examined the condition of existing buildings, the location of vacant and underutilized properties, infrastructure and transportation conditions, as well as housing and business conditions. Existing conditions met the criteria for a “blighted” area as defined by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (§3-60A-8NMSA 1978).

HIGH LEVELS OF VACANT OR UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTIES

There are numerous vacant storefronts within the proposed East Downtown Los Alamos MRA. These include grocery, restaurant, and retail and service-oriented commercial spaces. Vacant properties are found in the highest concentration in the former Mari Mac Shopping Village.

LOW LEVELS OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY AND REDEVELOPMENT

Stakeholders report that, for years, commercial properties throughout the Mari Mac Village Shopping Center have had persistent challenges attracting and retaining tenants. In 2014, the shopping center’s anchor business, Smith’s Food and Drug, owned by Kroger, relocated to a larger building across Trinity Drive. Rental or sale of the building to tenants perceived as competing with Smith’s has historically been disallowed. Neighboring businesses have been detrimentally impacted by the continued presence of vacancies and majority empty parking lots.

DETERIORATING BUILDINGS

Many of the buildings in the proposed MRA are in poor condition, out-of-date, or otherwise in disrepair and will need improvements and infrastructure updates to attract new tenants. The poor condition of these buildings contributes to ongoing, low levels of commercial activity, and creates a disincentive for private investment. Multifamily housing constructed in the 1950s is included in the Northern segment of the proposed MRA.

DETERIORATING INFRASTRUCTURE

Within the proposed MRA, there is a general deterioration of infrastructure. This includes poor pavement conditions on side streets and surface parking lots, narrow sidewalks not in compliance with ADA requirements, unmaintained landscaping and amenities, and drainage issues.



Examples of deteriorating infrastructure on private property.

COMMUNITY & MARKET PROFILE

POPULATION GROWTH & HOUSING SHORTAGE

The population and household base of Los Alamos County has grown modestly between 2010 and 2020, adding 1,424 residents and 486 households. About two-thirds of the growth was in the Townsite which added 438 residents and 245 households.

According to the Los Alamos Affordable Housing Plan completed in 2024, “the largest employer in Los Alamos, the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), added more than 4,000 jobs between 2019 and 2023 but the population over the same time period is estimated to have only increased by around 400. This reflects the high percentage of commuters into the County, a limited supply of available housing, and the potential displacement of families with less financial resources by those with more.”

The limited amount of new housing development in Los Alamos County combined with declining vacancy rates is resulting in a tight housing market and increasing housing costs. The Los Alamos Affordable Housing Plan identified an immediate need for 2400 new units to satisfy housing demands, achieve higher levels of affordability, and spur economic and community growth. The Downtown Master Plan identifies the downtown area as the best location to add housing units.

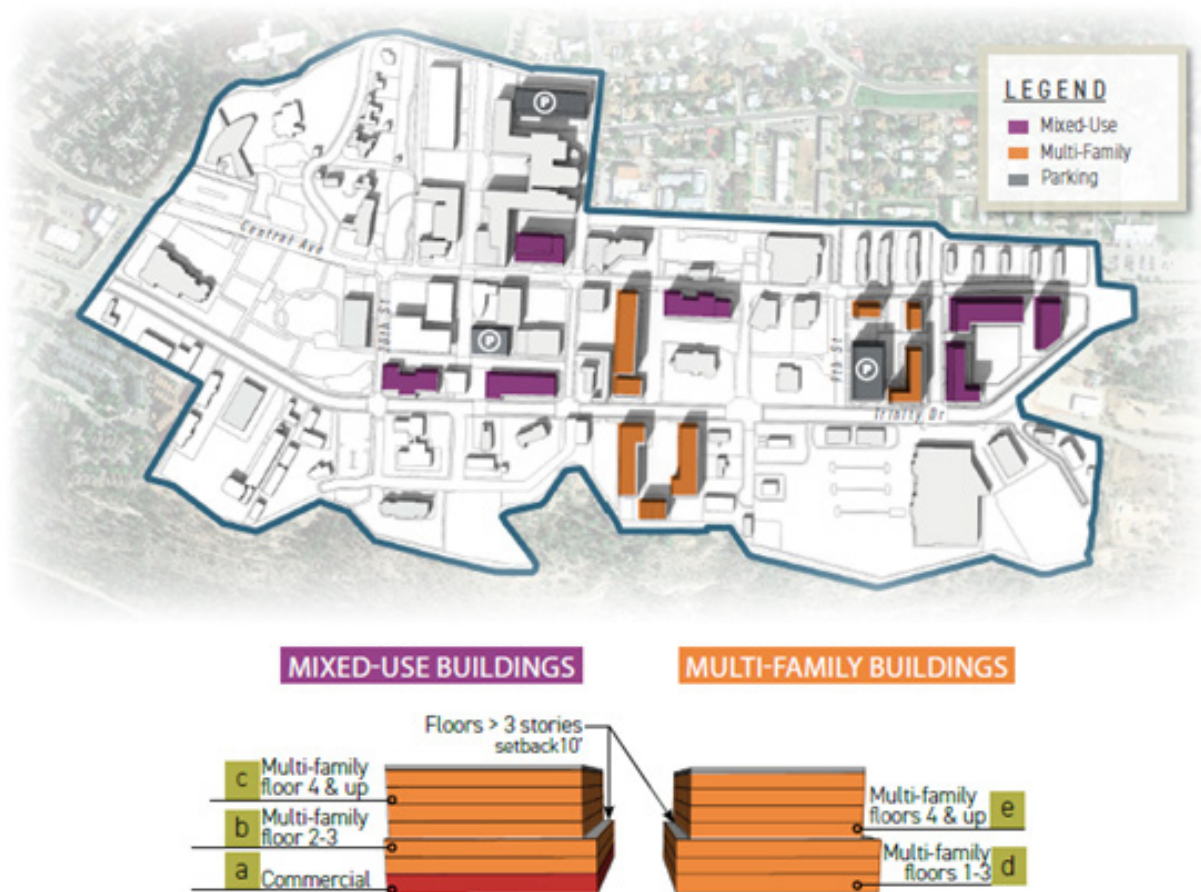
COMMERCIAL VACANCY

In 2021, Los Alamos MainStreet analyzed the small business ecosystem downtown and found that many businesses were struggling with staffing and various challenges associated with the Covid-19 pandemic including supply chain issues, and rising costs. Additionally, the survey found that one-third of respondents pay more than 10% of their gross sales per square foot on rent, which is above market average. The study also found an increasing concentration of vacant storefronts, many of which are within the East Downtown Los Alamos MRA. High concentrations of vacant storefronts can make it difficult to attract and retain tenants. As discussed in the Downtown Master Plan, a critical redevelopment area is the Mari Mac Village Shopping Center.

REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Downtown Master Plan identified the area where the East Downtown Los Alamos MRA is located as a prime location for mixed-use development that could combine commercial and high-density housing uses along with public space amenities. The plan illustrated the infill development opportunities within the Mari Mac Shopping Village.

In addition to the redevelopment opportunity, this gateway to downtown provides an important opportunity to share the history and identity of Los Alamos, reinforcing community pride and encouraging visitors to park once and explore.



Infill Opportunities. Source: Los Alamos Downtown Master Plan (2021) - Dekker/Perich/Sabatini



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RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2021, The County adopted the Los Alamos Downtown Master Plan which provides vision and guidance regarding the future of Downtown Los Alamos. The Master Plan and supporting development framework focus on the benefits of mixed-use, transit-friendly, pedestrian-oriented development.

The Master Plan addresses many of the essential elements of an MRA Plan providing analysis of physical and market conditions as well as a vision and development framework for the downtown area. The vision and development framework from the Master Plan serve as the foundation for the East Downtown MRA Plan. The MRA Plan identifies challenges specific to the designated MRA boundary, highlights relevant redevelopment goals, and recommends strategies.

The redevelopment tools enabled by the MRA Plan increase the ability of the County to partner with private property owners to achieve the goals of the Downtown Master Plan.

Downtown Vision Statement

"A Downtown that is walkable with attractions for young and old, envisioned as a thriving community hub with a vibrant and balanced mix of residential, retail, and office development, inspired by the unique history of Los Alamos and the connection to the surrounding natural landscape, with attractive housing, shopping, and public spaces and is a great place for residents to live and visitors to explore."

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

To achieve the downtown vision, the Downtown Master Plan outlines a development framework which focuses on the benefits of mixed-use, transit-friendly, pedestrian development and illustrates potential improvements such as infill development, parking structures, streetscape improvements, and street extensions. Additionally, the framework incorporates national best practices related to downtown placemaking, housing, transportation, and the formation of a livable downtown center. The MRA Plan is intended to provide tools for the implementation of elements of this development framework within the MRA district.

Key elements of the development framework that are located in the MRA include the catalytic redevelopment of the Mari Mac Village Shopping Center, comprehensive placemaking strategies that create a unified urban form and identity, and street extensions of 6th and 9th streets.



Development Framework. Source: Los Alamos Downtown Master Plan (2021) - Dekker/Perich/Sabatini

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS & MRA PLAN GOALS

The Master Plan outlines seven major elements, each with associated goals and recommendations which are designed to achieve the downtown vision. The MRA Plan has built upon relevant goals and strategies from the Master Plan and organized them in relationship to the elements of Economic Vitality, Housing, Urban Form/Identity, Transportation, Public Space/Streets, and Infrastructure.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Goal - Facilitate strategic public investment in the redevelopment of properties within the MRA, creating a vibrant mixed-use district where local businesses can thrive.

Strategies

1. Incentivize the development or renovation of street-level spaces to be configured for community-serving business and retail-type uses.
2. Incentivize projects that incorporate spaces for small business incubation and start-ups, such as storefronts with smaller footprints and multi-tenant food halls
3. Incentivize projects that incorporate space for mobile food vending, food trucks, and greater use of outdoor spaces with restaurants.
4. Provide strategic support to projects by way of demolishing dilapidated and vacant structures, with the exception that MRA public/private partnership projects shall not be used to demolish occupied residences.
5. Promote tourism as an economic driver through the incentivization of new hotel rooms, new retail or hospitality jobs, and new business or existing business expansion, filling the spending leakage gap.

HOUSING

Goal - Create quality housing options that are attainable to residents within all age groups and abilities, with a focus on affordable and workforce housing, while preserving existing attainable housing units.

Strategies

1. Incentivize projects that include higher-density residential development as allowed under the new Development Code.
2. Incentivize projects that will include mixed-use, apartments/condos, live/work, micro-units, and short-term or temporary

URBAN FORM/IDENTITY

Goal - Enhance Downtown identity, image, and sense of place, while creating a welcoming entryway to the downtown.

Strategies

1. Create a signature gateway feature at the intersection of Trinity Drive and Central Avenue.
2. Provide grant funding for façade, storefront, and landscaping improvements that front the public right-of-way.
3. Fund or incentivize memorable placemaking elements such as string lights, seating, and landscaping.
4. Help fund new art within the public right-of-way, or artistic enhancements public amenities within the public right-of-way, that are eligible uses of the Art in Public Places Fund.

PUBLIC SPACE/STREETS

Goal - Create a welcoming, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly Downtown that includes public gathering spaces.

Strategies

1. Incentivize diverse public spaces including parklets and mini plazas that provide spaces for outdoor dining, food trucks, pop-up businesses and entertainment events.

TRANSPORTATION

Goal - Create safe, efficient, and convenient pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and convenient parking options.

Strategies

1. Develop new amenities for walking, biking, public transit, or public electric vehicle chargers.
2. Incentivize projects that account for centralized public parking structures.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal - Improve and promote access to public infrastructure and utilities within the MRA area that encourages private investment and enhances quality of life downtown.

Strategies

1. Develop public infrastructure such as utilities, streets, sidewalks, and lighting that will be owned and maintained as public infrastructure within a public right-of-way or easement
2. Fund ADA improvements for existing buildings that are not slated for demolition.
3. Develop and offer access to public utilities such as power outlets that support community events, pop-up businesses, and food trucks.



Source: Los Alamos Downtown Master Plan (2021) - Dekker/Perich/Sabatini



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MRA IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the Los Alamos East Downtown MRA Plan will require proactive effort, financial resources, and significant organizational capacity to see projects through to completion. This section of the plan provides a roadmap to guide MRA Plan implementation.

Implementation of the plan will primarily be the responsibility of Los Alamos County with support from Los Alamos MainStreet. However, one of the overarching purposes of the MRA Plan is to facilitate greater collaboration between the public and private sectors and to encourage partnerships that boost the County's capacity for implementation.

What an MRA does not do

- Change the historic nature of the downtown: MRA projects are subject to oversight from the Historic Preservation Advisory Board
- Force business or property owners to participate in redevelopment: Participation is voluntary
- Grant the County the powers of eminent domain
- Grant the County the powers to raise taxes within the MRA district
- Allow public contributions to private projects without tangible community benefit

MRA ADMINISTRATION

“A local government may directly exercise its metropolitan redevelopment project powers, or it may, by ordinance if it determines such action to be in the public interest, elect to delegate the exercise of such powers to the metropolitan redevelopment agency created pursuant to the Redevelopment Law. If the local government so determines, the agency shall be vested with all of the powers in the same manner as though all the powers were conferred on the agency or authority instead of the local government.”

Universal Citation: NM Stat § 3-60A-15 (2023)

Whether the County elects to exercise its metropolitan redevelopment project powers directly through the County Council or establish an MRA Commission, the purpose will be to eliminate blight, stimulate economic development, and improve quality of life within the East Downtown Los Alamos MRA. This will involve partnering with community leaders, private developers, property owners, and business owners on revitalization projects. The approval body will be responsible for securing funding, managing incentive and grant programs, overseeing MRA projects, and administering Public-Private Partnerships.

PROJECT FINANCING

The projects outlined in this, and previous sections of the plan may support transformative change and revitalization downtown. However, they will only be successful if the County and partners secure sufficient funding. Many of the concepts identified in the Los Alamos East Downtown MRA Plan will rely on both the funding tools enabled by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code as well as complimentary tools. For funding sources, see Appendix D.

MRA FUND

The Metropolitan Redevelopment Code allows for the creation of an MRA Fund to hold redevelopment funds until they are needed for project planning and design, project financing, bond capacity, or investments.

The redevelopment fund can hold general fund contributions, capital outlay, TIF funds, or other

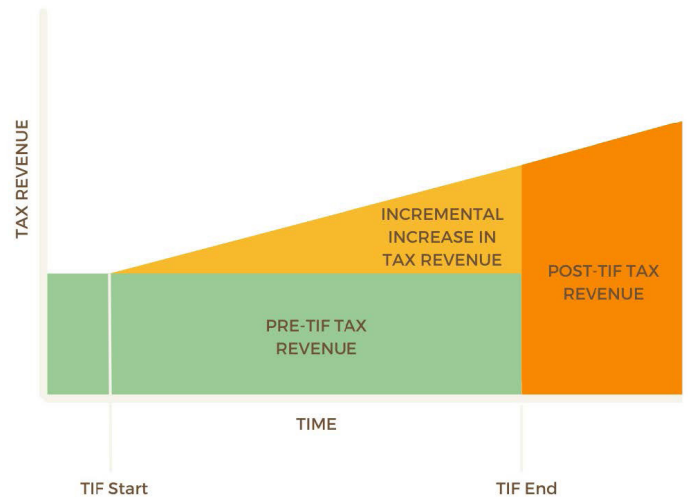
revenue for MRA projects. Establishing an MRA fund is something that the County should consider to ensure that project funds specific to the MRA District remain consistently available regardless of shifting political priorities or budget constraints.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) DISTRICT

Tax Increment Financing is an economic development tool enabled by the MRA and detailed in NMSA 3-60A-20 to 23). TIF districts raise funds by collecting the difference between the existing tax base and the incremental increase from newly generated property and gross receipts tax over the course of a 20-year period. As the County invests public dollars in MRA projects, the value of properties which were once vacant or underutilized increases. Support of new and existing businesses stimulates expanded economic activity. Consequently, the tax base increases and the County can capture this incremental value to support projects which provide community benefits such as increased jobs and housing downtown.

TIF Bond & Feasibility Study

The Redevelopment Code allows TIF bonds to be issued to pay for MRA projects based on the bonding capacity created by TIF revenue (3-60A-23.1). Once a TIF District and MRA Fund are established, the Town should explore this option to help finance public improvements. Bond feasibility studies help to evaluate how much revenue (tax increment) could be generated over the life of the TIF and whether the TIF would have the ability to repay the debt service if the Town were to issue bonds. Feasibility may be limited due to the small geographic area of the East Downtown Los Alamos MRA.



Senate Bill 251 - Expansion of TIF mechanism

Senate Bill 251 amends the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code to expand the TIF mechanisms for funding MRA projects. The bill would allow the local government to dedicate up to 75 percent of the municipality or county's local option gross receipts and up to 75 percent of the state GRT increment (with legislative approval) over the current tax base to fund projects, either directly or through bond. Prior to the bill's adoption, TIF districts could only capture the property tax increment for the district, which limited the potential for fund generation. This bill dramatically increases the TIF's ability to generate revenue. The effective start date of the changes introduced in SB251 was January 1, 2025.

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Although some County funds will need to be used for MRA Plan implementation, a bulk of funds will ultimately have to come from private investors and developers. This will come in the form of private equity as well as private loans and tax credits in the context of public-private partnerships (P3s).

A P3 is a cooperative agreement between the local government and one or more private sector entities. These partnerships enable the implementation of projects by leveraging the strengths of both the public and private sectors to revitalize and redevelop underutilized and blighted areas. They can bring together a variety of funding sources including private capital, County funds, state and federal funds, as well as various grants and tax credits.

A P3 may be initiated when a developer envisions a project that will meet MRA Plan goals but can't realize the vision without support from the County. The developer may need assistance with costs associated with redevelopment such as demolition, remediation, public facilities, and/or construction of utilities, roads, and parking infrastructure.

The County may enter into a development agreement and offer various types of incentives and support to a development project which will provide tangible community benefits. These partnerships often result in mixed-use and transit-oriented development, affordable and workforce housing, and community-building amenities such as plazas, parks, bikeways, and public art.

P3 PROCESS

1. **Project Idea** – The County or partner identifies an opportunity site and potential redevelopment ideas which achieve one or more MRA Plan goals.
2. **Project Proposal** – A developer, property owner, or business owner can submit a proposal and qualifications to enter a P3 for implementation of an MRA Plan goal.
3. **Project Proposal Evaluation** – The County Council evaluates proposals using a community benefit matrix or other evaluation tool to ensure projects meet various community benefit requirements (see Appendix E for sample matrix).
4. **Development Agreements** - Holds developers accountable for the use of public funding in their projects. Types include purchase, lease, and owner participation agreements. Claw back provisions must be included.

Prior to entering into development agreements, the County must issue two public notices which outline the proposed projects and selection criteria. This should be followed by a public hearing to provide an opportunity for public comment, although this is not specifically required by statute.

EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY BENEFIT

All projects proposals within the MRA will be evaluated to ensure that projects that receive public funding meet the goals of the MRA Plan and provide tangible community benefits. A Community Benefit Matrix is a tool that can be used to gauge project alignment to Los Alamos County and Metropolitan Redevelopment Area priorities relating to Economic Vitality, Housing, Urban Form/Identity, Infrastructure, and Placemaking. A sample matrix is shown in the Appendix.

COUNTY INVESTMENT IN PRIVATE REDEVELOPMENT

Direct investment of County funds in MRA projects is one way the County can help finance MRA Plan implementation. The powers granted by the Redevelopment Code provide powerful tools to encourage and incentivize private investment in the designated East Downtown MRA. The Metropolitan Redevelopment Code enables the direct contribution of County assets and resources to private redevelopment projects.

APPLICATION OF INCENTIVES

Any contribution of public resources to MRA projects must demonstrate community benefit. MRA tools utilized by Los Alamos County must both:

1. Reduce or eliminate the problems and conditions identified in the East Downtown MRA Designation Report.
2. Achieve or be consistent with the vision, goals, and strategies of the Los Alamos Downtown Master Plan and meet the goals of the MRA Plan
 - Facilitate strategic public investment in the redevelopment of properties within the MRA, creating a vibrant mixed-use district where local businesses can thrive.
 - Create quality housing options that are attainable to residents within all age groups and abilities, with a focus on affordable and workforce housing, while preserving existing attainable housing units.
 - Enhance Downtown identity, image, and sense of place, while creating a welcoming entryway to the downtown.
 - Create a welcoming, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly Downtown that includes public gathering spaces.
 - Create safe, efficient, and convenient pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and convenient parking options.
 - Improve and promote access to public infrastructure and utilities within the MRA area that encourages private investment and enhances quality of life downtown.

TOOLS AND INCENTIVES	GENERAL CAPABILITIES
TAX ABATEMENT	The local government can offer property tax abatement for up to 7 years on properties within the MRA by freezing property taxes at pre-development levels for the first 7 years of operation, helping to reduce costs during this time. The purpose of this tool is to attract and stimulate high quality development projects that provide tangible community benefit.
FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT OR STOREFRONT ACTIVATION GRANT PROGRAM	The local government may create a grant fund program to support the redevelopment or updating of storefronts, buildings, and landscaping within the MRA. The purpose of this tool is increase the vitality of commercial areas, enliven the street for pedestrians, and boost economic activity.
INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS	The local government may invest in public infrastructure that incentivizes private investment, including covering the costs of infrastructure improvements that would typically be the responsibility of the developer.
FEE WAIVERS AND REBATES	The local government may wave building permit fees and utility connection fees during property redevelopment.

COMPLEMENTARY TOOLS

In addition to the tools enabled through the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code, there are several complementary tools that can be used to support the MRA. Integrating the benefits, partnership opportunities, and additional funding made available through these tools could support MRA Plan implementation.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)

A BID is a defined area within which businesses elect to pay an additional fee which helps fund supplemental public services and maintenance of the district. This could be particularly helpful in supporting the regular cleaning of streets and public restrooms and the activation of public spaces through public entertainment and events.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACT (LEDA)

As with the MRA, LEDA allows local governments to contribute to private projects that assist in expanding or attracting businesses to stimulate economic development and produce public benefits. LAC has a LEDA ordinance

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN & ORDINANCE

In New Mexico, a local government must have an approved Affordable Housing Plan and Ordinance to make donations to affordable housing. The Los Alamos Affordable Housing Plan adopted in 2024 can provide important guidance for housing development within the MRA.

INDUSTRIAL REVENUE BONDS

Industrial Revenue Bonds are a tool that private developers can use to secure tax exemptions for larger-scale economic development projects. It is a complex, but effective tool for incentivizing redevelopment that involves the IRB project site being deeded from the benefiting company to the IRB issuer (the County). The County then leases the project property back to the company for the term of the bond at which time the company is required to purchase the property. This allows for tax abatement during the life of the bond.

VACANT BUILDING ORDINANCE

A vacant building ordinance outlines the penalties, inspection procedures, standards for maintenance, and enforcement procedures for vacant properties.



APPENDICES

A. Plan Review

B. Community Questionnaire: Input Summary

C. “Have your say” Survey: Input Summary

D. Funding Sources

E. Sample Community Benefit Matrix

A. Plan Review

PLAN REVIEW

Downtown Master Plan, October 2021

GOALS

- Revitalize the downtown areas of Los Alamos
- Support and retain LANL as the best wealth-producing employer
- Diversify the community's economic base
- Attract new tourism-related business
- Significantly improve the quantity and quality of retail business
- Promote economic diversification by building on the existing strengths of the community: technology, innovation, and information, as well as natural resource amenities

Los Alamos County, NM: The National Community Survey, 2024

Key Findings

Highest-performing areas

- Feelings of safety
- Natural environment, cleanliness, and air quality
- Recreational opportunities

Lowest-performing areas

- Quality and variety of business and service establishments
- Vibrancy of downtown/commercial area
- Affordability – cost of living, health care, health services, and food
- Community design

Los Alamos County Comprehensive Plan, 2016

In 2016, Los Alamos County adopted a new Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to guide the physical development of the County through goals and policies established to implement the shared community vision. The Plan emphasizes three key areas or core themes:

1. Housing, Neighborhoods and Growth
2. Development, Redevelopment and Downtown; and
3. Open Space, Trails and Mobility.

The Development, Redevelopment and Downtown goals include strategies for redeveloping vacant and blighted areas, focusing development priorities Downtown, and guiding development to property in and around the current Downtown boundaries. There is strong community support for addressing blighted properties to improve overall appearances and to promote economic development within Downtown. The Plan identifies several properties such as the Mari Mac Center that are in need of significant improvements to contribute to revitalization of the Downtown areas. The Plan envisions a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly Downtown that includes a central gathering place, nighttime entertainment, and more retail stores and restaurants while enhancing the historic, small-town character by focusing commercial activity in Downtown.

The Housing, Neighborhoods and Growth goals include planning for modest growth, providing more housing choices and protecting the character of existing residential neighborhoods. The Plan emphasizes the need for new and varied housing types.

Los Alamos Affordable Housing Plan, 2024

The Los Alamos Affordable Housing Plan, adopted in 2024 provides the necessary data to justify public assistance and donations that achieve affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households (up to 120% Area Median Income). Additionally, the plan recommends goals and strategies that could be effective in addressing affordable housing needs. The plan identifies an acute shortage of housing, rising housing costs, and other conditions which inhibit community economic resiliency. Importantly, a loss of essential service workers due to the lack of available housing threatens the viability of small and local businesses and inhibits the provision of services. The plan recommends encouraging “missing middle” development types and targeting development densities starting at 10-15 dwelling units per acre. The plan indicates that Los Alamos should add 1,300-2,400 new

housing units between 2024-2029, which equates to an average of 260-480 units annually. The plan initially recommends producing 150-250 units per year and reserving at least 10% of those units for low- and moderate-income households. The plan suggests that the County pursue collaborations, partnerships, and incentives to achieve more housing proposals.

Los Alamos Housing Market Needs Analysis, 2019

The Housing Analysis identified an immediate need for 1,310 units of rental housing and 379 units for homeownership. The need is distributed among all income ranges but is particularly acute for middle and low-income households. The Housing Analysis recommends a wide range of policy and implementation measures to increase the supply of housing including encouraging Downtown infill through zoning incentives and encouraging residential development and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties. The Housing Analysis notes that Downtown is the logical location for higher density housing, including mixed-use and multi-story apartment buildings. In addition to housing, those surveyed also identified the desire to see more shopping and entertainment options in Downtown which would support the additional density.

Los Alamos Tourism Strategic Plan, 2018

The Tourism Plan suggests making Downtown Los Alamos aesthetically pleasing and welcoming to visitors by encouraging infill and beautification in core areas to create a vibrant and walkable experience. Additional strategies include maximizing Main Street and Creative District program opportunities and services and expanding eating and shopping options to meet visitor and resident expectations.

More specific references to projects in Downtown Los Alamos include the following:

A downtown circulator trolley between LANL and downtown Los Alamos that runs during weekdays could expand service to weekends when most visitors are in the area.

LAND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS, 2023

The County’s Development Code includes specific standards for the downtown districts. Downtown standards are defined through a Downtown District Overlay. The purpose of the overlay zone is “to promote land use, site planning, and design criteria to implement the urban form and character envisioned by the Los Alamos Downtown Element, adopted as a part of the Incorporated County of Los Alamos Comprehensive Plan.”

The overlay includes four subzones —Neighborhood General Overlay Zone (DT-NGO), Neighborhood Center Overlay Zone (DT-NCO), Town Center Overlay Zone (DT-TCO), Civic/Public Open Space Overlay Zone (DT-CPO) — which are used to further tailor the intended character of the downtown districts. Both uses and dimensional standards are customized for each subzone. More general parking and architectural standards apply to all downtown development.

B. COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE: INPUT SUMMARY

Los Alamos East Downtown MRA Plan

Community Input Summary

The following document provides a summary of community input from the Los Alamos MRA Plan Community Questionnaire conducted in July 2024. 197 people responded to the survey. The survey was conducted to identify whether the goals and strategies from the Downtown Master Plan felt relevant to the existing planning process, and to identify priorities and concerns for downtown redevelopment.

Community Input Overview

Top 3 goals from the Downtown Master Plan

- Expanded local businesses and a strong economy
- A pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use downtown with retail, residential, and office development
- A variety of housing options at increased densities

Additional Goals Identified

- Promote a welcoming and livable downtown with businesses, services, and attractions geared towards residents and visitors
- Prioritize diverse, small local businesses
- Support affordable housing downtown
- Preserve and expand green space, open space, and public space

Top 3 Strategies from the Downtown Master Plan

- Enable, foster, and direct quality downtown development to address vacant and underutilized structures and land
- Expand opportunities for financial assistance to local business, such as grants and façade improvement programs
- Improve street life and walkability. Examples: widened sidewalks, increase pedestrian lighting, expanded roadway crossing

Additional Strategies Identified

- No new strategies identified, review list on pages 5-6 for additional supporting actions the County could take to support previously identified strategies

Top types of development that would make the downtown more beautiful, welcoming and accessible

- Entertainment options
- Retail options
- Affordable housing development
- Increased housing availability
- Open spaces and parks
- Sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, or paths

Top businesses and services that would complement existing business downtown

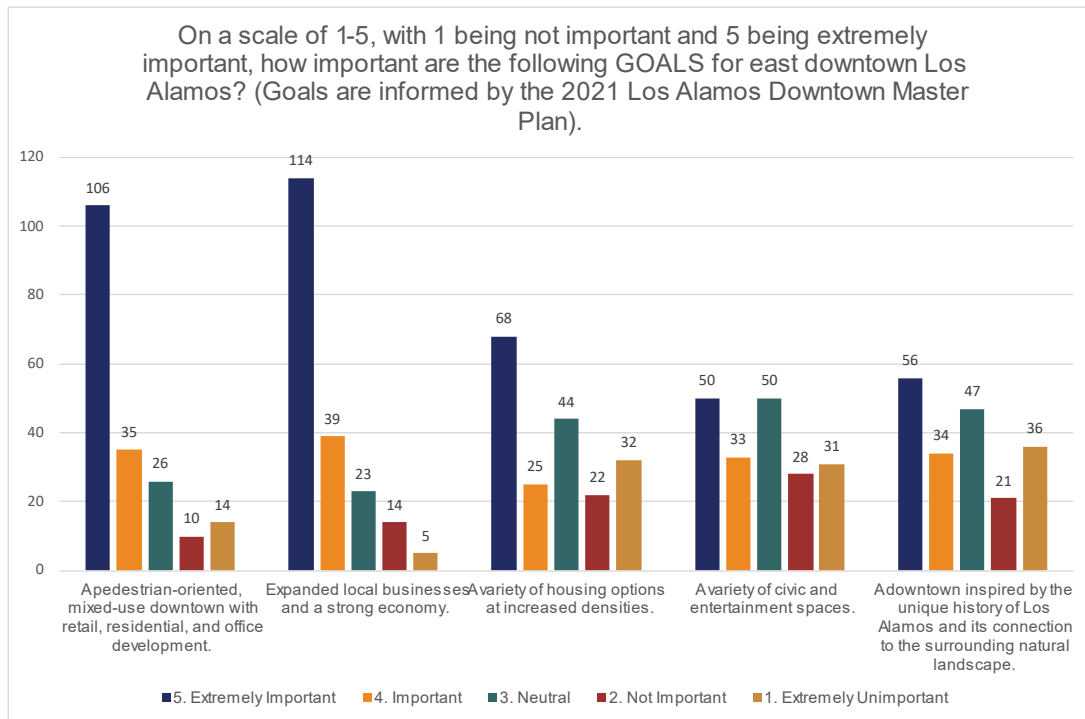
- Restaurants
- Entertainment – theaters, music venues, bowling, etc.
- Clothing/gift stores
- Outdoor stores and rentals
- Bookstores
- Bike shop and repair

Top Concerns

- Rent Affordability, barriers to development, and viability of small, local businesses
- Need for additional housing particularly higher density and affordable housing
- Transparency, public accountability, MRA administration, and County process
- Use of property for LANL office space
- Lack of clarity and vague language used in goals and strategies
- Parking garage development
- Protection of scenic and natural beauty

Data

How important are the following GOALS for east downtown Los Alamos



Are there any goals missing?

Survey participants shared additional goals that they felt were missing from the Downtown Master Plan goals listed in the survey. The missing goals identified speak to a desire for a livable community which is welcoming to visitors, prioritizes small local businesses, and preserves the scenic and natural beauty of Los Alamos.

Promote a welcoming and livable downtown with businesses, services, and attractions geared towards residents and visitors

- “More entertainment shops and things to do”
- “Non-customer facing office space should not be allowed on the ground floor. It's good for pulling a rent check but bad for revitalization.”
- “The development of the Merrimac/Hilltop needs to be a priority, and the Lab can't be its primary tenant in order to increase a sense of community. Rank: 5”

- “Nightlife for kids, teens and young adults”
- “Improved retail options...”
- “A place for young adults. 5”
- “Think of the youth as you make development plans. Kids 10-17 should be thought of when designing spaces.”
- “Do NOT let LANL take over any more properties in the Town Site! Scale of 0 to 5, this would be a 10. Stay on your own side of the bridge, LANL!”
- “Something special for children”
- “Livability for current residents”
- “Provide a space for older teens/young adults to hang and enjoy time with friends. More food options would be nice.”
- “Attract more stores that sell clothing and shoes, etc. Establish more restaurants!”
- “Think of the residents who currently reside and make the focus be related to the current needs of current residents.”

Prioritize diverse, small local businesses

- “...protect existing small businesses”
- “... diverse local ownership”
- “1. Small spaces for businesses to rent to make rent more affordable. Importance: high”
- “Protect existing small businesses”
- “...helping existing small businesses to thrive....”
- “Small business is at a crisis point in Los Alamos. Create a Small Business Advocate who can assist small business with county red tape without fear of reprisal”
- “Provide financial incentives for non-government/lanl small businesses”
- “#1 goal -Promote & Incentivize small businesses with affordable rental rates”

Support affordable housing

- “Keeping SOME downtown rental housing affordable for the poor (like me). #5”
- “Protect existing low-income housing”
- “Less expensive housing — particularly for lower-income residents,
- “Affordable condos and apartments”
- “Low-income housing”
- “Affordability”
- “Retain affordable housing if apartments inside the orange zone are removed. Rank it highly important.”

- “Affordable housing”

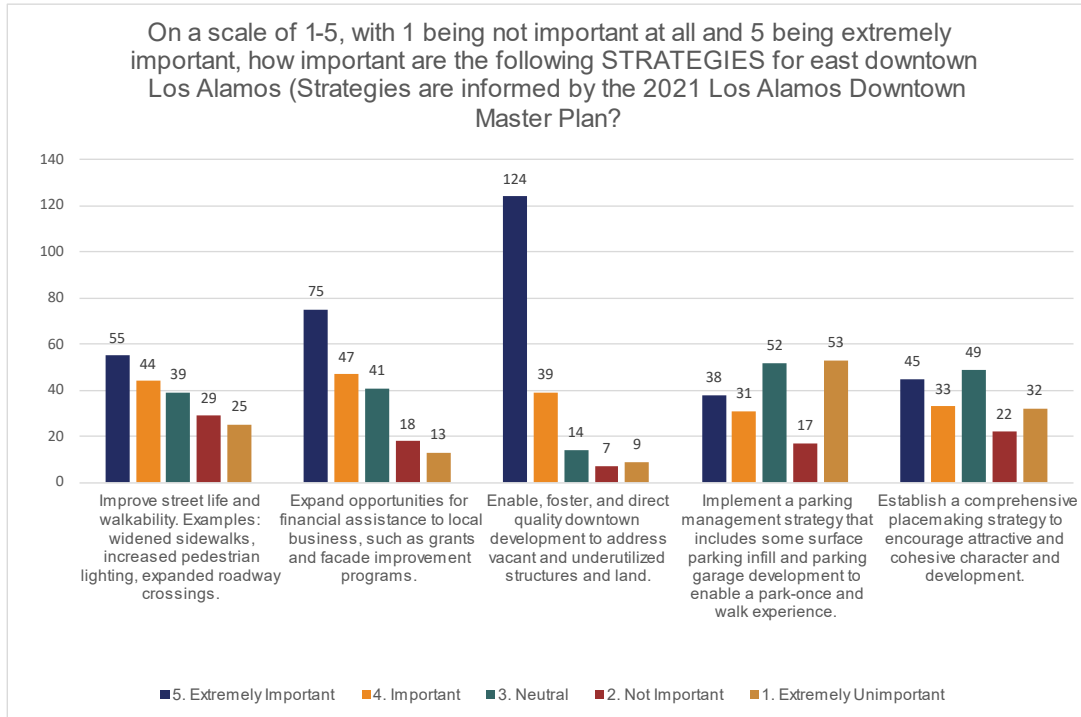
Preserve and expand green space, open space, and public space

- “Additional green spaces. Extremely important (5).”
- “Park space”
- “Preserve our open spaces”
- “Parks & Greenspaces”
- “Parks and rec only or green belt”
- “Public parks, outdoor county pool”

Promote quality and aesthetically pleasing development which preserves the scenic and natural beauty of Los Alamos

- “In Los Alamos we give little thought to the esthetics of what we do. Let's make it a goal to avoid building things that are hideous (see the construction at the old Black Hole site) and avoid impairing our beautiful vistas and site lines. I think this is a number 1.”
- “Enhance the ski vibes - build on the nature and scenery. Too many vacant buildings and same landlords”
- “Attractive entrance to downtown”
- “Priority 1: An attractive entrance to town to welcome visitors and residents alike”
- “Utilize and incorporate the natural views and scenery. 5”
- “Not destroying even more of the mountain views with tall buildings.”
- “A welcoming entrance to our community”

How important are the following strategies for east downtown Los Alamos?



Additional Strategies Identified

Survey participants wrote-in strategies that they felt were missing from the list of Downtown Master Plan strategies shared in the survey. Many of the strategies shared are reflected in the strategies from the Downtown Master Plan. It is worth noting that there are specific actions such as creating a Small Business Advocate program that the County could consider in support of previously identified strategies.

Expand opportunities for financial assistance to local business, such as grants and façade improvement programs

- “I would like to see the county own commercial spaces that are available for a fair rate to local businesses.”
- “Small business is at a crisis point in Los Alamos. Create a Small Business Advocate who can assist small business with county red tape without fear of reprisal”
- “Mix of businesses that appeal to residents and tourists (5)”

- Help local businesses with rent

Enable, foster, and direct quality downtown development to address vacant and underutilized structures and land

- “Downtown LA is filled with unsightly (ugly) and empty parking lots. Businesses need to reduce them and create green spaces that employees and the general public can enjoy. be encouraged to either”
- “Reduce current large, underused parking lots. For example, at some banks and credit unions. Rated as a 4.”
- “Fee or assessment on run-down and poorly managed properties.”
- “Multi purpose zoning”
- “Attract national chains”

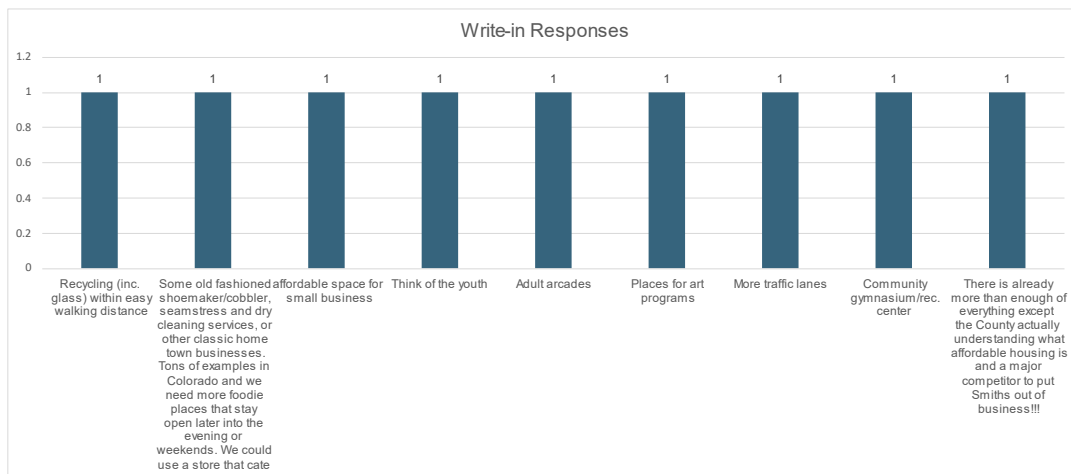
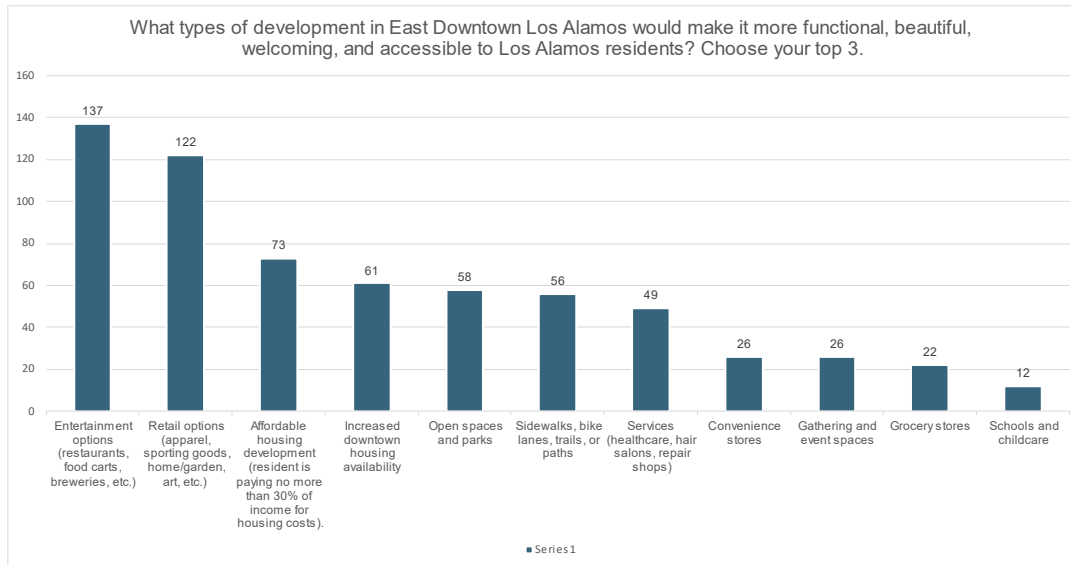
Improve street life and walkability. Examples: widened sidewalks, increase pedestrian lighting, expanded roadway crossing. ADDITIONAL: public transit

- “Improving public transportation to it, especially on weekends. Ranked 5.”
- “Transit improvement to Los alamos. Frequent busses up and down trinity and central to facilitate walkability and reduce the need for single use cars”
- “Incorporate existing public transit to make the space accessible to town residents without having to drive”
- “East LA should be tied to the westside more distinctly and the development should be intensified down Central Ave rather than Trinity, for the better pedestrian experience.”
- “Most important would be the development of mixed-use commercial-residential areas that within a walk-only zone. Parking may be nearby, but no street runs directly next to the building. See the German Fussgangerzone.”

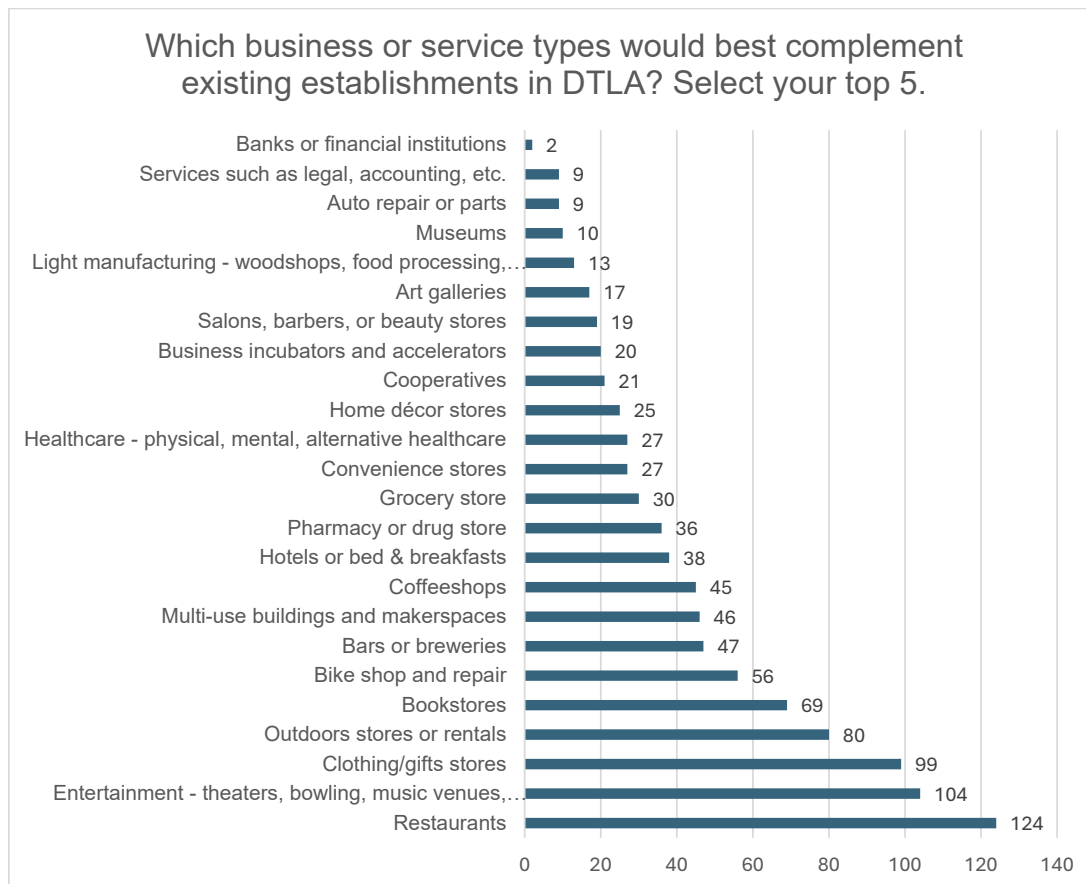
Protect scenic and natural beauty

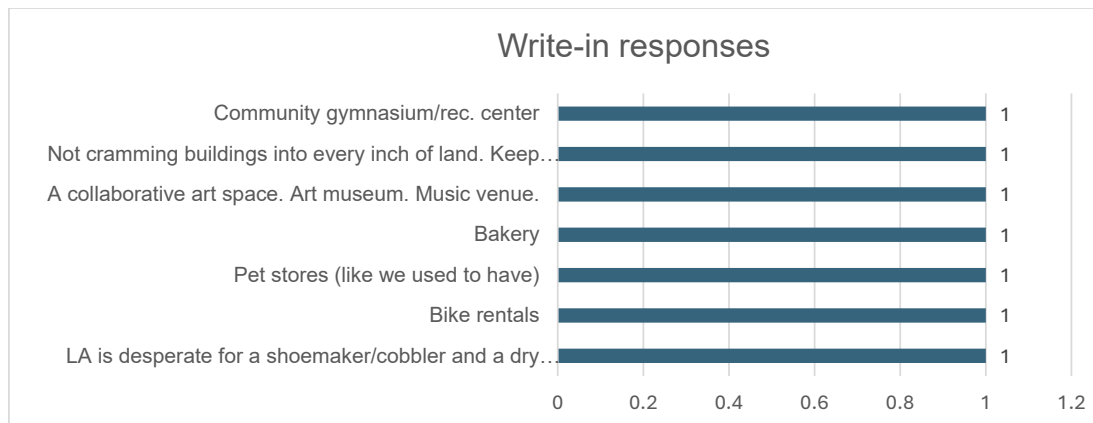
- “Priority 1: Add green space and minimize pavement, add more shade/sun protection”
- “Lighting that doesn't pollute the night sky views. 5”
- “Establish designed vegetation landscaping with designed pathways, perennials, mulching and regularly scheduled county maintenance.. Importance = 5”
- “Priority 1: Add green space and minimize pavement, add more shade/sun protection”

Types of development that would make the downtown more functional, beautiful, welcoming and accessible



Businesses or services that would best complement existing establishments





Priorities and Concerns Identified

Survey respondents shared concerns about and priorities for the redevelopment of downtown.

Rent Affordability, barriers to development, and viability of small, local businesses

- “Small business is at a crisis point in Los Alamos. Create a Small Business Advocate who can assist small business with county red tape without fear of reprisal”
- “Provide a climate for businesses to thrive and let free enterprise work.”
- “Make the spaces affordable for businesses to come revitalize the downtown area. At this point any business is better than empty buildings. I don’t think adding more stores or restaurants would make Los Alamos less “historic” either. Many times we would like more options to stay closer to home than having to drive 45 minutes or more away.”
- “None of this works if the county is not willing to work with small businesses to be successful and if current commercial property owners don’t make rent more affordable. The county seems to actively work to make it difficult for small businesses to stay in business and commercial property owner arr charging too much. Our little town has the potential to be an awesome mountain town like Pagosa or Durango...if the county council can actually work toward helping the community.”
- “Why not encourage diverse, small, local ownership to facilitate development in Los Alamos that is sustainable and resilient against by eliminating taxes and unnecessary codes or streamlining permitting and inspection processes on productive activities like working for and running local small businesses or developing and improving local property? Why not discourage destructive activities

like land speculation and hoarding by replacing all other taxes with a single land value tax and using such revenues to foster economic vitality through a Citizen's Dividend?”

- “Los Alamos city council and leadership have to commit to either a rent free zone or a scenario where local commercial real estate owners don’t get to control and raise rents at will and have no recourse. The city also needs to do more with promotion g local business districts, classy signage to capture tourist traffic coming through town and have a downtown CBD that f Les more like a Breckinridge or Evergreen or Morrison, CO. Study those plans and how their city leadership has made those local shopping districts thrive and we might have a chance to succeed.”
- “Unless you can figure out how to offer lower rents or affordable rents for businesses, none of this will matter. Why aren’t we focusing on helping businesses fill the empty and already existing retail spaces?”
- “1. We need a pot of money businesses can apply for. 2. Spread the word: we know developers in Albuquerque who are interested but have heard nothing about LAC's efforts. 3. The county needs to please, please reduce bureaucracy and legal obstructionism.”
- “You have to get ride of the real estate mafia and apply some serious rent control ok so local entrepreneurs can actually make a long term investment and be able to make a profit and live local.”
- “Make Los Alamos County Development be less obstructionist- 100”
- “Kick out the slumlords that own the commercial real estate and don’t live in New Mexico”
- “County support of local businesses”

Use of property for LANL office space

- “Keep LANL out of the townsite! I cannot stress this enough!”
- “Block LANL or any of its contractors from ever leasing space in this area.”
- “Less space leased by LANL – 5”
- “Do NOT let LANL take over any more properties in the Town Site! Scale of 0 to 5, this would be a 10. Stay on your own side of the bridge, LANL!”
- “We do not need anymore office space for LANL, that is the bane of commercial real estate in Los alamos”

Need for additional housing particularly higher density and affordable housing

- “The housing currently in this location is some of the lowest priced housing in Los Alamos. I do not want to see "improved" housing that raises the price of those units.

I feel like you are trying to fix something that isn't broken here. The only part of this area that is "unused" or abandoned is the property that belonged to Smith's-- focus on that property."

- "I'm mainly concerned that I'll be able to continue to afford to live/rent in the MRA, and that, during demolition/construction in Meri-Mac, I can still walk through (Meri-Mac) to get to Smith's."
- "Please for the love of all that is good, include affordable housing that people who will need to work at all these new businesses can afford to live in!!"
- "Given the dire need for housing due to the surge of positions at LANL, building additional housing should be the number one priority here. Far too much of Los Alamos is low-density "R1" zoning. The downtown area should be much denser. If the building code only allows for 5-over-1s to be built, well that's better than nothing, but the need is much greater than that. I want to highlight that the downtown area as a whole has far too much parking. I have to walk through the empty Mari-Mac parking lot nearly every day, and it is just a complete wasteland. Land needs to be used productively given the dire need for housing and other services here. All parking minimums in the entire downtown area (including the proposed MRA) should be removed. We need to prioritize density and housing. I take the bus most days and I imagine many people are willing to live without a car if they get to live close to work. Parking minimums only waste land and raise the cost of development. Get rid of them!"
- "We are extremely limited on land that housing can be built on, especially low-income housing. If you want any graduates from LAHS to be able to stay in town or entry-level workers to be able to live near the lab, we need low-income housing near the lab."
- "We are extremely limited on land that housing can be built on, especially low-income housing. If you want any graduates from LAHS to be able to stay in town or entry-level workers to be able to live near the lab, we need low-income housing near the lab."
- "Affordable housing"

Transparency, public accountability, County capacity/process

- "Public accountability"
- "Going forward, find more ways to communicate with folks within the MRA and our community about planning sessions and meetings. More community involvement is needed than was evident at the Fuller Lodge meeting."

- “Who decides what's quality downtown development? How about tax abatements on development and improvements?”
- “Need to ensure chains (+ non-local franchises) are not allowed in and keep non-public facing offices out of first-floor spaces. Make sure there is accountability! Codify that if funds are not used promptly, they will be reclaimed and repurposed. The long list of failed LEDA projects and situations like the WR DNCU are not a good track record to start from, so formal protections must be in place. Consider businesses that support a diversified tourist economy, such as outdoor gear/rental, B&B, etc. Avoid undermining existing businesses (i.e., bookstore would be great but don't hurt Samizdat)”
- “The County needs to address the issue that they created this blight by entering into an agreement with Kroger that has been debase to the residents of Los Alamos. The County should investigate the possibility of revising the agreement and pressuring Kroger in other ways so this community can have a choice of major grocery stores and other business types that compete with Smiths. This monopoly is the cause of the blight and the County needs to own it and fix it.”
- “The perception of greed of those owning large retail areas not buying into the strategy and investing in improvements almost needs to be a strategy in itself (rank 5)”
- “Not wasting more money on plans”
- “Spend money on business not plans”
- My understanding is that the city/county has some agreement with Smiths' which restricts development in and around downtown. I think any restriction of this sort is a major detriment to our community and removing said restriction would be a significant boon to our town. Importance – 5
- “Keep the government out of our sh*t”
- “Quit messing with stuff you know nothing about and let the current system correct itself.”
- “How were the choices for answers determined? Why was the MRA designated by an outside consultant who doesn't have an intrinsic understanding of the area and why were local residents who have been in the area for decades ignored when they expressed a desire to be removed from the designation?”
- “Was the MRA designed to assist Columbus Capital? Is Columbus Capital \$30M short for their redevelopment plans?”
- “Don't lose sight of the bigger picture - "east downtown" is underutilized, but attention, effort, and support is needed throughout the entire downtown. Don't subsidize projects unless they contribute to improved retail options, and less

expensive housing — particularly for lower-income residents, and helping existing small businesses to thrive. Can the County avoid getting so enamored with the new MRA discussion that the don't lose site of the broader picture? There is one predominant property owner in the area indicated - Columbus Capital. What have been any discussions with Columbus Capital about how and whether the MRA can help their plans? If they get help, will they tilt their plans toward achieving community needs for improved retail options, and less expensive housing — particularly for lower-income residents, and helping existing small businesses to thrive. Presumably the County has had these discussions with CC - it would help to understand the CC position and I would ask that the public be informed. Will the County publish the inputs being given through this survey? It would be helpful to publish the raw inputs together with the County's take-aways from the collective responses. The County generally does poorly with acknowledging input they have requested and sharing the input they receive.”

- “My worry is that, as usual, the survey responses won’t mean anything or be taken into consideration. A decision has more than likely been made already and this is a way to mask that.”
- “Please don’t screw this up. The county has decimated the downtown areas over The last 25 years thanks to a democrat run council that is more interested in regulations than it is in community and business development.”
- “I thought non affordable condos or apts were being built at Mari Mac. Lisa Shin is angry about this project. Since owners can choose to participate or not, please clarify that in advertising”
- “The county has to take into account the feedback from 800 Trinity and their wishes not to be included in these section. I don't like that one developer is the sole benefactor of any state-sponsored program. This developer has already taken advantage of our county counselors and the county itself. I don't want them to benefit even further. The county should then hold them accountable for what they said they would do.”

Lack of Clarity/Vague Language

- “What's missing is clarity. The last two ("placemaking strategy" and "surface parking infill" are too vague/jargony - what do those mean?”
- “What does the following mean? Establish a comprehensive placemaking strategy to encourage attractive and cohesive character and development.”
- “Don't like "comprehensive place marking strategy" sounds like an HOA, and the county is already waaaay too intrusive and controlling”

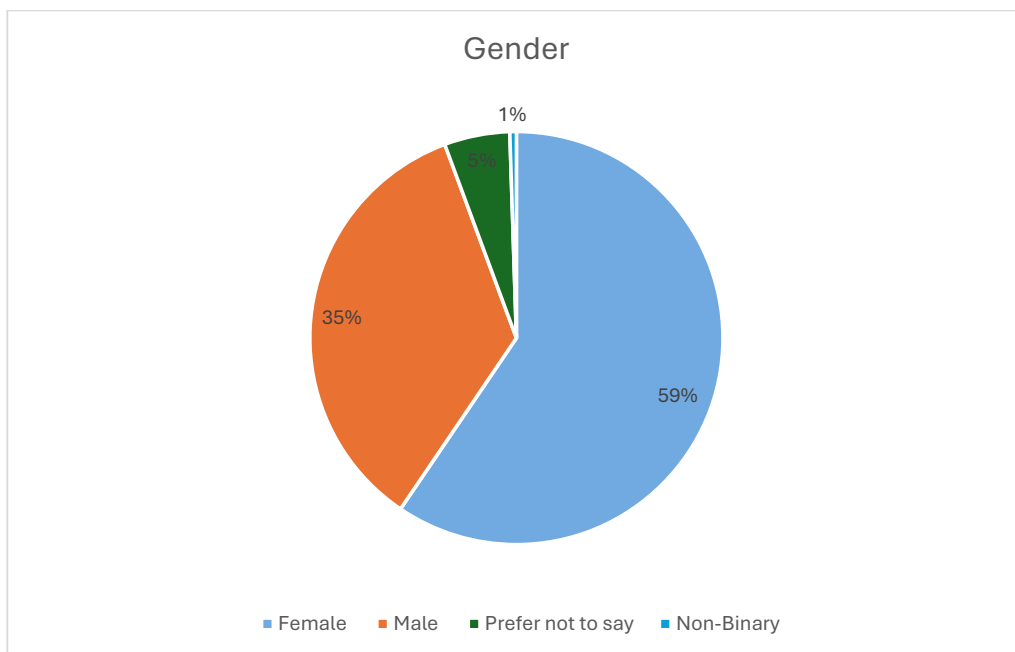
Parking Garage

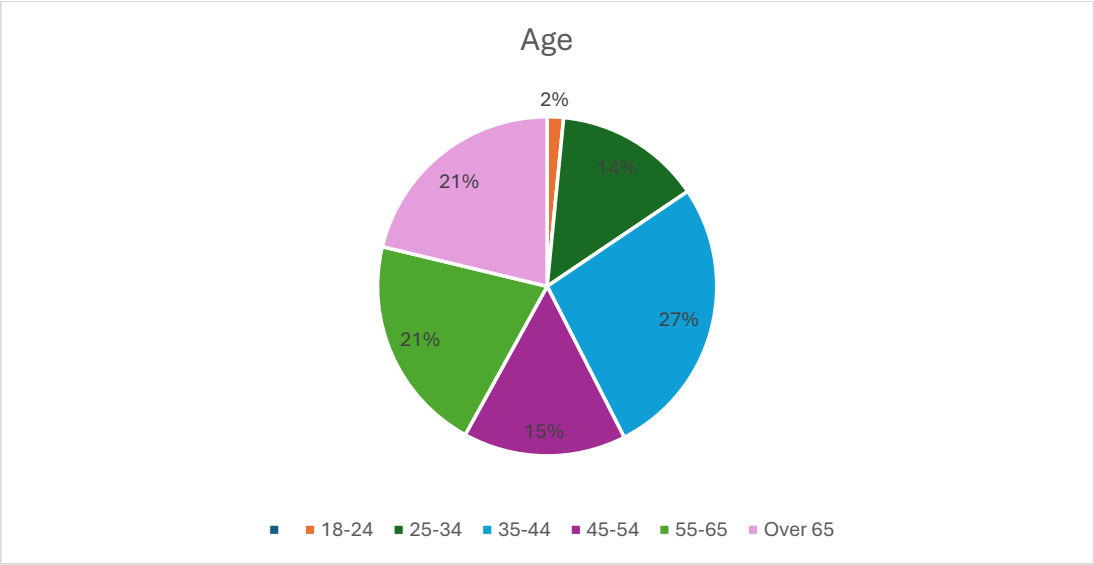
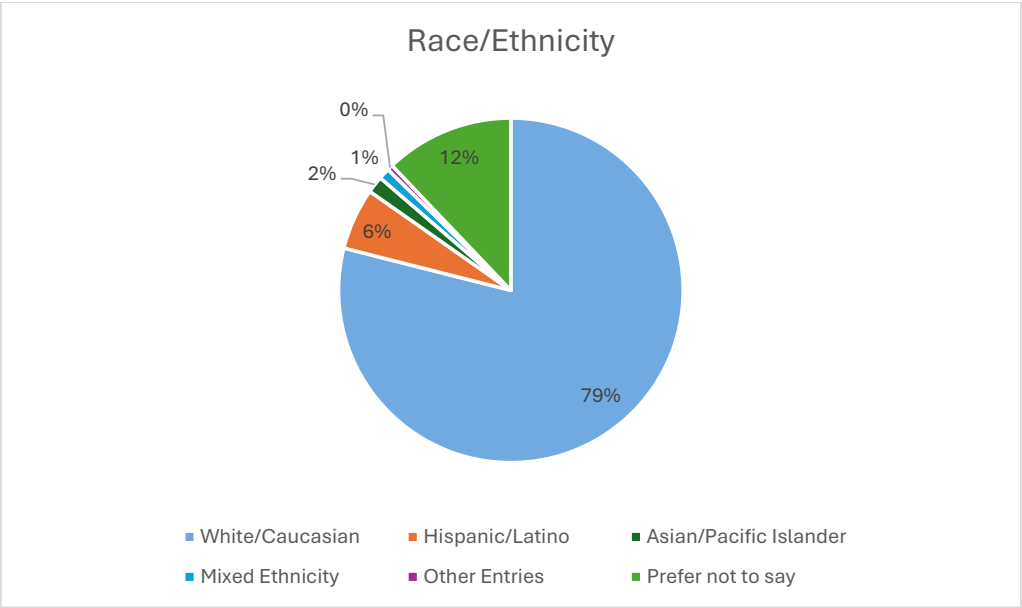
- “How can you consider having a parking garage when there is no reason to park, no shops nothing to see here?”
- “We do NOT need a parking garage”
- “No parking garage. Los Alamos, unless you start to actually MARKET IT AS A MOUNTAIN TOWN, there is little need for multistory parking and funds could be utilized more for amenities for the residents.”

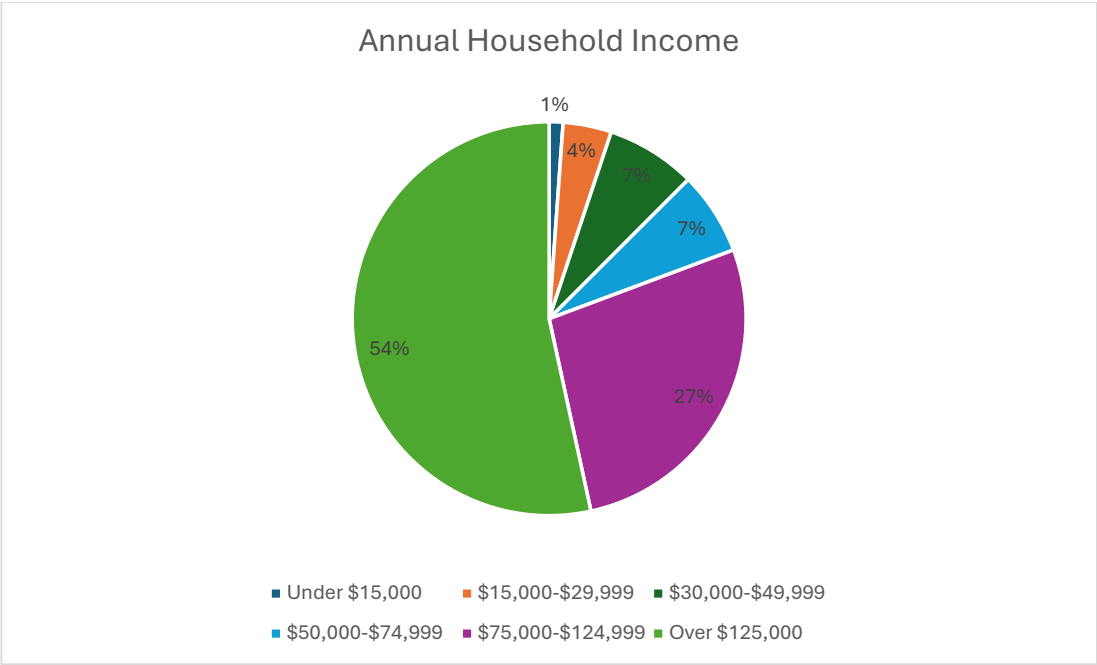
Impacts on scenic and natural beauty

- “Stop cutting down trees for all the county projects. Stop trying to please people who don’t even live here. Keep the rural nature of this town intact, and stop hiring outside contractors who don’t know the area, the area’s vegetation. We need service people and staffing more than we need yet another coffee spot.”
- “This will ruin so much about Los Alamos. Please consider putting back parks and more natural beauty”

Survey Participants







C. "HAVE YOUR SAY" SURVEY - INPUT SUMMARY

Los Alamos East Downtown MRA Plan

"Have your say" Survey: Input Summary

The following document provides a summary of community input from the Have Your Say survey conducted from December 2024-January 7, 2025. 73 responses were submitted. The survey was conducted to identify whether the community was in support of the proposed goals from the draft Los Alamos East Downtown MRA and identify additional community concerns that could be addressed in the update of the draft plan.

Community Input Overview

Based on the feedback from the Have Your Say survey, respondents are largely supportive of the MRA Plan and/or the goals and strategies identified in the plan. While there is strong support, many also have concerns about transparency, community oversight, and evaluation of community benefit for projects seeking public funding. Of the responses, 19 expressed support for the MRA Plan, 4 expressed opposition to the MRA Plan, 27 shared priorities or expressed support for one or more of the goals and strategies of the plan, and 29 shared one or more questions or concerns. Survey responses are organized below.

Key word/themes



Figure 1: Word cloud showing top 50 words from survey responses. The top words include housing, affordable, community, businesses, public, buildings, and local

Support of the MRA Plan

1. "The Los Alamos Local Business Coalition supports the MRA initiative for East Downtown Los Alamos...."
2. "I love the MRA plan. I am excited to see more local businesses such as restaurants, coffee shops, and breweries in a walking-friendly setting. I also love the idea of more concentrated and affordable housing in this area. Thank you!"
3. "I see no problem with the MRA unless it causes the County to take its eye off the ball on the broader commercial community or burn resources on things that aren't community priorities...."
4. "I think this is a good idea and the county should proceed with the MRA plan. I've lived here for about 20 years...."
5. "The Los Alamos Local Business Coalition supports the MRA initiative for East Downtown Los Alamos...."
6. "Seems to me like this is what the community has wanted for years. I don't have a problem with it."
7. "Go for it"
8. "I think this is a good idea and the county should proceed with the MRA plan..."
9. "I agree with the goals and strategies in the East Downtown MRA plan, including the implementation of an MRA"
10. "I would like the county to form an MRA for the east downtown area in order to facilitate its productive redevelopment...."
11. "...I live adjacent to the MRA and its designation (and plan, etc) appears to be a good strategy to help transforming the area."
12. "I support the East Downtown Los Alamos MRA initiative as a practical tool to address long-standing development challenges in our gateway corridor. The success of MRAs in other New Mexico communities, particularly Las Cruces, demonstrates how this designation can revitalize stagnant areas while protecting public interests through required demonstrations of community benefit."
13. "I think it's an absolutely great idea that might help revitalize this eyesore without incurring any risk at all for the County or for the business owners. It's a great and legal way of mitigating some key problems associated with the Anti-Donation Clause. Virtually every community in New Mexico that has MRAs has welcomed them. It's bizarre that it's caused any controversy at all here. My only concern is that there may not be much impact because of other problems like financing costs and labor shortages. Either way, though, there's no reason not to try it."
14. "The new plan is good. Get started and even more important... finish. Ty for all you do."

15. "I support the East Downtown MRA plan. Los Alamos needs help revitalizing downtown. Our current situation will not change without assistance and a vision. The status quo is not working. This plan gives me hope that our town can improve and be better."
16. "I think it's a great idea!"
17. "Strongly support. Would like to see it move faster."
18. "I agree the selected area could benefit from some revitalization planning....."
19. "I live at 1208 9th street, very close to the edge of the MRA so I am greatly concerned with what happens there. I heartily support the MRA to the extent that it makes the redevelopment of Mari-Mac and adjoining commercial properties more feasible because in my mind this redevelopment, as it was proposed by the current owners to be mixed-use, is the key to economic development of the entire downtown. Experience over the nation has shown that economic development of downtown areas hinges on mixing lots of residential with retail."

Opposition to the MRA Plan

1. "Not a good idea for Los Alamos"
2. "This is a bad idea. Just a way for the County to circumvent the anti-donation state law. The County should stay out of the private sector. They have a bad track record when they meddle with the private sector (subsidizing a hotel that failed, trying to over pay for Metzger property, etc.)."
3. "Don't do it"
4. "This is an awful idea being pushed by a bunch of communists at the chamber"

Community priorities

The top priorities shared included affordable housing, mixed use development and support of small local businesses all of which have been identified as goals of the MRA Plan.

1. "Make **affordable workforce housing** a central focus of any incentives provided within the MRA and ensure project proposals include a significant number of affordable units (commensurate with the magnitude of the incentives) targeting a relevant range of income levels. I reviewed the County Affordable Housing Plan, and it provides helpful context. It establishes the existence of the affordability problem. However, it doesn't quite get to a practical guideline for evaluating housing in the context of project proposals in the MRA or other commercial areas. The Plan does discuss "core and essential service workers" as a broader category to what we refer to as "affordable workforce housing. Housing targeted to achieve \$800/month rent

rate for a 1 bedroom or \$1200/month for a two bedroom is affordable workforce housing in our community.”

2. “Prioritize policies and incentives that support the growth and viability of existing and new **small, diverse, and locally-owned businesses** applicable throughout all commercial areas in the community. This could include public-private partnerships, expedited permitting, grants, low-interest loans, and other programs. Engage with the local business community to work together to develop and streamline improved processes for permitting and accessing incentive programs.”
3. “Incentives for projects need to be narrowly focused on community priorities of **affordable workforce housing and supporting local businesses.**”
4. “The specific priorities should be increasing affordable workforce housing, supporting the retention and sustainability of local businesses, and improving retail, dining, and entertainment options available to the community. **Equitable Investment:** Distribute resources giving equal attention to all commercial areas in Los Alamos and White Rock. It should be clear that the East Downtown MRA doesn't create a priority or preference for projects in that area. MRA Goal 1 - **Local Business Support:** Prioritize existing small businesses over large developers; simplify permitting and offer incentives. - MRA Goal 2 - **Mixed-Use & Affordable Workforce Housing:** Focus incentives on walkable commercial areas and affordable workforce housing that directly address community priorities. - MRA Goal 3 - **Transparency & Communication:** Provide a draft MRA Plan for review and meaningful public input before scheduling a decision to adopt the plan. Provide clear updates on progress, funding mechanisms, and community impacts.
5. “I would love to have some **multi use buildings** downtown, that have housing as well as **small businesses**. Also making Central Ave a **pedestrian area** only would be nice.”
6. “I love the MRA plan. I am excited to see **more local businesses** such as restaurants, coffee shops, and breweries in a **walking-friendly setting**. I also love the idea of more concentrated and **affordable housing** in this area. Thank you!”
7. “Focus should be drawn on **Local business** and providing means for **existing business** to continue. Next concern is the **parking lot condition** and **affordable housing**. Laboratory space should be of least concern”
8. “This first focus should be to supply the current businesses with staff, which they are in desperate need of. To do this, **staff need affordable housing**, which Los Alamos does not currently have. Only after that hole is patched, should we think about new businesses. Eventually, if Los Alamos does get enough workers, I would like to see **more entertainment like bowling** or similar.”

9. “Los Alamos county needs **housing on the 2nd and higher floors above retail space** on the first floor. This has been shown over and over again elsewhere to be a maximum solution to the need for both livability/vibrancy as well and economic vitality. My challenge to you is this; name at least one and up to three examples of this design in Los Alamos county to date. (I'm at a loss myself) Expanded **local businesses** and a strong economy • **A pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use downtown** with retail, residential, and office development • **A variety of housing options** at increased densities
10. “I like the classic and long-sought **work-live options: retail, ground floor; office space or housing 2nd and 3rd floors**. There are millions of dollars available for investors (or there were under the Biden administration.) We simply need to sell the idea to them....”
11. “...**Food, kids clothing, sporting goods and a bike store are needed**. Make walking a priority, but keep parking for the rest. Thanks for your consideration.”
12. “Winter is a hard time for many of us to participate in the outdoor sports and activities that mean so much to both our physical and mental health. I suggest **putting an indoor recreation area at the top of your list**.”
13. “We don't necessarily need to emphasize "affordable" housing in this plan, that will kill it and won't bring actually good investment into the area. Instead, **we need housing, simply put, any kind of housing**. If the private developer makes it a great place to live, then they'll be able to charge higher rent because of the demand. And guess what, that will open up affordable housing elsewhere in town that may not be as hip and cool as the downtown area.”
14. “I would love to see a lot of **mixed-use buildings** (e.g., retail shops on first floor, offices on second floor, and apartments on 3rd floor; loft-style units where someone could house their small business on part of the first floor but use the rest of the unit as their home; etc. would love to see a **real commitment to "pedestrian friendly"** and walkability. Wider sidewalks are nice, but who makes a decision whether to walk or drive based on the width of a sidewalk? So, we'd need to do things like have **LESS parking**: everyone will continue to just drive even if it's just a few blocks if driving/parking remains too easy and, besides, a smaller parking lot foot print means either a larger footprint for the useful buildings (increased economic incentive for investors) and/or park space. Of course, this should also be dovetailed with other ways to incentivize no driving that are out of scope of just this MRA (examples include rentable e-bikes/scooters, expanded Downtown Circular trolley stops/hours/days, etc.) that the Council will also need to keep in mind.
15. “This MRA should **consider lessening/removing parking requirements** for the buildings because of the “high cost of free parking”. It also should allow for **less**

- restrictive mixed used zoning** that allows/encourages residential near commercial (e.g. residential on 2-5 floor on top of commercial) this would help revitalize downtown if there was residential on top of the main floor shops.”
16. “Encourage and support **more small businesses** - shopping, dining, services. The County seems to set up road blocks.”
 17. “I like the ideas of having **pedestrian upgrades and more housing**. Los Alamos is growing as a tourist stop for those visiting the region and I enjoy the downtown as a local. The county struggles with staffing of essential businesses because the staff can't afford to live here. Any multi family housing plans should **require a percentage of affordable units- affordable meaning able to live there on a \$16 an hour salary**. I hope the county approaches this with transparency about any land deals. I also hope permitting issues/red tape don't overwhelm this project, derailing small business opportunities. Los Alamos doesn't have a great track record with either of these. Prove me wrong on this, Los Alamos government!”
 18. “Leases should be made available at **fair prices to local businesses** without undue red tape. Corporate franchises or big boxes should be allowed but not with the kind of competition inhibiting clauses in their contracts as the Smith’s near-monopoly deal. Long term vacancy should be penalized. Out of town owners simply waiting for price inflated lab rentals that are unlikely to ever come are not helpful nor reasonable. **Housing should be prioritized or at least included in mixed use plans**. Available acreage should be developed with multi-story, mixed use spaces. There are currently far too many small buildings on large lots that dilute the fabric of the downtown and waste space for needed commercial and residential units. Tiny apartment buildings with open space around them are inferior to large multi-story mixed use buildings that maximize square footage per lot size. Single story “strip mall” developments are the bane of American urban existence. Do not continue that trend.”
 19. “I hope that support for **local businesses** is strongly considered in any development proposals...”
 20. “We REALLY miss CB and Fox. We suggest that a major focus in the MRA be a **department store and other stores at ground level and apartments on the second floors**.”
 21. “This east downtown area is pretty ugly, now. Would be nice to **incentivize local small businesses, or high-density housing, and disincentivize empty parking lots**, vacant building or buildings that are leased to the lab for storage space. It's even a little scary to walk through this area at night - though I think at least a few lights have been installed or fixed in the last couple months. Much of this land is a huge waste of (perceived) valuable real estate, right now.”

22. "...The specific priorities should be increasing **affordable workforce housing**, supporting the **retention and sustainability of local businesses**, and improving retail, dining, and entertainment **options available to the community....**"
23. "I read the Los Alamos Local Business Coalition input that they indicate was submitted to you today. I fully support their recommendations and ask that you incorporate them into the plan draft and process moving forward.
24. **The Los Alamos Local Business Coalition supports the MRA initiative** for East Downtown Los Alamos. Our key recommendations are: - **Equitable Investment:** Distribute resources giving equal attention to all commercial areas in Los Alamos and White Rock. It should be clear that the East Downtown MRA doesn't create a priority or preference for projects in that area. - MRA Goal 1 - **Local Business Support:** Prioritize existing small businesses over large developers; simplify permitting and offer incentives. - MRA Goal 2 - **Mixed-Use & Affordable Workforce Housing:** Focus incentives on walkable commercial areas and affordable workforce housing that directly address community priorities. - MRA Goal 3 -Transparency & Communication: Provide a draft MRA Plan for review and meaningful public input before scheduling a decision to adopt the plan. Provide clear updates on progress, funding mechanisms, and community impacts. For our full recommendations and rationale, please see the expanded document here: <http://bit.ly/Coalition-MRA-Input>. We appreciate your incorporating our comments in drafting the MRA plan and look forward to collaborating on a thriving future for Los Alamos and White Rock.
25. "the far south end appears to include the retention basin, I believe owned by Smiths, that's there to control water so DP road does not flood during heavy rain and snow melt from Smiths parking lot. Zoning and plan approvals, as well as immanent domain, should be tools that can be used to accomplish public benefit goals like a **convention center and park**. what goes in the far east end is in actuality **the entrance to Los Alamos and giving visitors as well as residents a good impression** should be paramount for that property.
26. The County needs to decide whether they want more "housing" for cars or more housing for real people. I prefer **more housing for people**. I reject the "auto-normative" framing that requires more parking spaces as more people move into an area. It is possible to have **high-density housing without providing any parking** at all. I lived that way in Los Angeles and it was fine. I suggest that the County investigates this further and questions their own assumptions when it comes to parking. I repeat again that there is **no need for more parking**.
27. "Start **charging extra tax for vacant buildings** that are sitting around and doing nothing besides contributing to a monopoly of the 3 families that own most of town. Start charging them for ugly buildings and causing depreciation on other buildings,

next thing you know they'll be up for sale, a couple businesses will be able to afford them, and suddenly we have more options for businesses, restaurants, and shops.”

Questions or Concerns

The top questions or concerns are related to transparency, community oversight, evaluation/guarantee of community benefit, the size and location of the MRA boundary, and impacts on existing housing within the MRA.

Transparency, community oversight, public process

1. “The meeting should be held again after the draft recommendations can be commented on by the public before they are presented to the council.”
2. “Please clearly respond to all questions asked by the public to address community concerns and help dispel misinformation and misunderstandings. **Publish all questions asked and the answers to them.**”
3. “**Please establish a robust community engagement process** for proposed MRA projects that includes meaningful opportunities for feedback, input, and support for decision-making throughout the project lifecycle.”
4. “**Please proactively disclose ALL information related to the MRA planning process**, including project proposals, funding requests, and discussions with property owners and developers in the MRA. Make all documents easily accessible online.”
5. “The County needs to provide for **meaningful public engagement** on a draft MRA Plan once one can be shared. Input is being gathered presumably to use in drafting a plan. The plan should be shared for public review, comment, and adjustment prior to any action being scheduled to approve it.”
6. “Without a **formal ongoing community engagement board, similar to what other NM communities have used when implementing an MRA, there will be resistance**, suspicion, uncertainty, and lack of accountability when it comes to distributing funds, especially with a single owner (Columbus Cap) holding such a large portion of the covered properties. The lack of transparency creates a perception that the county is concealing their dealings, even if that is not the actual situation.”
7. “Specify in the plan **WHO specifically, which department and agency, will be responsible for leading the charge to activate the MRA funding tools**. Include a **timeline of WHEN recommendations to enable MRA tools will happen** (to avoid the MRA sitting inactive for years, like White Rock). For example, which tools can be activated immediately, which tools will require x-y-z to happen. When will the MRA Agency form? Target time for the creation of a MRA Fund? Include as part of the

Vision examples of HOW the MRA will create opportunities for existing “small business to thrive” as stated as a MRA Plan Goal. For example, will small business owners have the opportunity to purchase or rent property at a reasonable rate based on MRA activation? The public wants “**accountability**”, as stated as one of the Concerns.”

8. “I attended the “information session” with the consultant in December 2024. I was surprised that it didn’t actually offer real information about WHY the county wants to create THIS MRA for THIS area. **I had hoped that I would hear about the actual proposed benefits to the community for the requested 31 million dollar investment the county is being asked to give to Columbus capital.** Instead, there were generalities and ideas of ways an MRA could benefit a town, any town. There was also misinformation given; saying that the property is blighted because it is unrented is unfair. Those properties are empty because the property owner has made no secret of its intentions to tear buildings down and they refuse to upgrade the properties to make them usable in the meantime. By calling it blight, and thus allowing them to be considered for an MRA, you are incentivizing other landowners to kick out their tenants, let their buildings fall into disrepair and then asking for public money to fix them up. That is not a good precedent for our town.”
9. “...There is nothing special about the part of the downtown that has been designated as an MRA compared to the need to incentivize projects throughout the downtown and other commercial areas. I am concerned though about transparency in County actions. There needs to be a way that goes beyond a County Council rubber stamp session to give the community a chance to understand and engage on any suggestion that the County should incentivize projects.”

Defining/evaluating/guaranteeing community benefit

10. “Please **clearly define and prioritize community-driven public good outcomes** as the objectives in the MRA plan, moving beyond vague language and establishing measurable objectives for the priorities identified through public input. The specific priorities should be increasing affordable workforce housing, supporting the retention and sustainability of local businesses, and improving retail, dining, and entertainment options available to the community. The proposed priorities presented at the December Forum are way too vague - nearly anything could be rationalized to address those vague goals.”
11. “**The benefits of the east MRA seem limited** and at this point the planning and financing are not clear. The area indicated as the MRA is not readily accessible and I wonder if this is the best area to focus on given that the general remoteness of the site relative to other Los Alamos businesses. I have to wonder if focusing on

improvements and accessibility for the main downtown area would be more beneficial. Connectivity and concentration of businesses would provide a more vibrant downtown district. Los Alamos has empty buildings on main street (former CB Fox) which are in a prime location and do not seem to get much attention from the county”

12. **“The plan seems to focus too much on the legal processes to achieve something but does not focus enough on what to achieve.** I looked into the various slide decks and was dismayed that there was no discussion as to how many housing units should be built and whether this would satisfy current needs or projected demand. There is a housing crisis in Los Alamos and I do not know how this plan hopes to address it at all. The slides seem to focus more on abstract legal matters and not on what needs to be done concretely to solve many of the issues here in Los Alamos....”

Location/boundary of the MRA

13. **“Adopting an MRA plan should not prioritize the East Downtown over other MRA’s or commercial areas throughout the County** when it comes to inviting and engaging with proposals to achieve community priorities.”
14. **“Much of downtown is in poor shape. How was this boundary determined?** Can all of downtown be included in the MRA?
15. **“Why is the area where the hotel was not included?** Has that been sold and, if so, for what purpose? How does the redevelopment the County wants to do dovetail with Columbus Capitol, who bought the old MeriMac Center? Why isn’t the County collaborating in this way with Kroger so the other lots in that parcel can be developed? Soon, you will just end up with another MeriMac.”

Benefit to private developers

16. **“Please share what has actually been done to converse with the current vacant property owners** and require them to do something about the properties included in the proposed MRA boundaries. **Itv seems that the property owners are just waiting to see what \$ will be given to them as part of the MRA in order to incentivize them to do anything...**There must be other ways for the County administration and Council to deal with these owners who are, what - out of town, lazy, too wealthy to need to do anything with these properties in order to turn them into income producing enterprises? The same seems true for the White Rock area that is proposed for MRA. Companies, Investors, and Development Property owners should not be allowed to purchase property and sit on it for lengthy periods of time.

No matter if they paid for it with personal funding, donated funding from a government agency, or from a grant. What is the mechanism that allows this to happen? Share info regarding my questions on the LAC website, the Daily Post, and at informational meetings, please. Thank you!”

17. “In addition, **restrictions or conditions need to be considered to avoid the continuing trend of a commercial real estate oligopoly in this town.** If the county invests in the area, only to be purchased by an investor that will have control over the area, and chooses not to follow through with phases of a plan, or sets lease rates too high, the community would be in no better position than today.”
18. “Councilor Derkacs and Jacqueline Connolly suggested that the MRA was in place BEFORE Columbus purchased the properties. However, the MRA boundaries for East Downtown were approved on May 7, 2024. Columbus purchased the properties in May 2023 & their funding request was submitted to County staff on April 10, 2024. So YES, **it appears that the County is setting up the MRA, specifically to give millions of public funds to Columbus Capital, a private entity. Is this not a violation of the anti-donation clause?** County Manager Anne Laurent suggested that Columbus Capital's public funding request was "speculative" and that there was no "formal request," although the documentation proves otherwise. There are many emails that indicate the County is promising funds & whatever assistance is necessary to Columbus. Further, Columbus submitted a lengthy & detailed "public funding request" to Los Alamos County. She said that there is an updated version of the public funding request. Will she share this with the public? What about the many Zoom meetings between Anne Laurent, County Staff, Columbus Capital? What is being discussed at these meetings? Why are they not being recorded so that the public can view them? The public deserves to know. **The County's lack of transparency** and openness with citizens regarding East Downtown redevelopment is troubling. Columbus Capital said that they will apply for MRA funds for stucco & landscaping to 800 Trinity building.
<https://losalamosreporter.com/2024/10/29/columbus-capital-co-owner-jeff-branch-chats-with-los-alamos-reporter-about-mari-mac-project-and-arbolada/>
800 Trinity condo association has a \$89,785.32 annual budget that includes stucco & landscaping costs, so it is inappropriate for Columbus Capital to apply for public funding to cover these costs. Los Alamos County included buildings (both 800 Trinity & Iris Street Apartments) that are fully occupied and in good condition in the MRA boundaries. 800 Trinity does NOT meet the criteria for MRA, it is NOT blighted or vacant. For future MRA town hall meetings, please include Columbus Capital's specific plans & all public funding requests for Mari-mac redevelopment.”

Impacts on current housing within the MRA

19. **“What worries me is the inclusion of the row of apartments immediately north of Central in the MRA.** I understand that the authors wanted it to coincide with certain boundaries in the downtown plan, but the inclusion of these properties may imply that they are considered "blighted," which is one the first criteria listed for inclusion in an MRA. These properties date from the fifties, but they have been updated and are well maintained and certainly not even close to "blighted." I think the recommendations and findings of the Council should explicitly state which properties are considered blighted and that there is no finding that the apartments north of Central are blighted. These apartments represent an important part of the supply of "naturally affordable housing" in Los Alamos and they should be protected from redevelopment.”
20. “The apartment buildings currently included in the boundary (and those just adjacent) offer some of the only high-density housing in the downtown area (and in the entire county). I have a family member living in one of these buildings who benefits greatly from the affordability and location; **if these apartments disappear and are not replaced with something similar in terms of density and affordability, then I know that many residents will be displaced**, likely from the county as a whole. This includes senior citizens, young families, and young professionals new to Los Alamos. If any buildings in this area are in need of updates to be livable, that should be addressed, but I strongly oppose razing these properties "just because" so that newer, more expensive, and likely less dense (e.g., larger) apartments could be built, as those types of housing would not serve the residents who currently call this area home.”
21. **“The apartments north of Central should not be slated for redevelopment.** They need to be preserved as affordable housing, For example, they are about the only apartments that single entry level Bandelier’s National Park personnel can afford. Please remove that area from the MRA.”
22. **“I have concerns about the design of the MRA as it includes housing established on Iris and 6th and 7th Street that is already existing and inhabited. Where will those people go if those buildings are repurposed?** Also, how long would construction take? The peaceful nature of the neighborhood will be affected during any repurposing plans, yes, but for how long? The old Smith's at present is currently a lab storage facility. What are the plans for the existing businesses in the Merrimack center? How will they be taken care of? And will the spaces be offered again to businesses who had originally vied for space in that center, but were told no? There's a lot to be considered aside from land.”

General questions or concerns about the MRA purpose/process

23. "I have watched the presentation, read the comments in both online news sites, and the longer article in the paper. **I am still lwft with the question of WHY is this being looked at. What has having a MRA in White Rock accomplished?** Are there new businesses there? Better transportation? improved infrastructure? increased gousing within the MRA? Any public/private partnerships? If the answer to all these questions is no, then perhaps the County's efforts would be better served working on implementing the current MRA as opposed to starting another one."
24. "Explain clearly what a MRA even is?! I looked through a powerpoint, watched a hour and half long presentation, and even read the "What is an MRA" section here: <https://www.losalamosnm.us/Have-Your-Say/East-Downtown-Los-Alamos-MRA-Feedback>"
25. "**The map you're using on the front page is confusing** - makes it seem like just the Knights of Columbus property may be part of this. There is another map buried somewhere that simply shows the outline of the MRA - start with that. Also, the **StoryMap is buried but is very effective in communicating the main points** - put that out front somewhere. You'll get more feedback if you communicate more simply and clearly. Finally, I live adjacent to the MRA and its designation (and plan, etc) appears to be a good strategy to help transforming the area. Thanks."
26. "**Please start, and finish, White Rock before upgrading Los Alamos.** Please update our community on the start date that work will begin in White Rock based on the recent surveys that we have submitted to upgrade that neighborhood. It feels as if White Rock has been forgotten, even if you're moving forward with it."

Other Questions or Concerns

27. "**The County should stay out of the private sector.** They have a bad track record when they meddle with the private sector (subsidizing a hotel that failed, trying to over pay for Metzger property, etc.)."
28. "It is past time for the County to stop wasting money on "consultants" (who simply provide the answer that the County Staff had indicated they were seeking) and **stay out of private development.** No one wants the County to operate a semi-functional, military base where they control all of the services and amenities. Why would private businesses invest here when the County wants to own/control all of the property and facilities? The Lab-leased properties should be paying a premium for town site operations. Let the Lab release land for workforce housing. Let the Lab rehab their buildings on their side of the bridge. Los Alamos County needs to work for the citizens - not the Lab."

29. **“The Los Alamos County cannot raised GRT again** if the goals of building and restoring economic health to the town and businesses. I read that there is a desire for small businesses but several small businesses (including bike shops, which were cited as desired by the community) could not afford to stay in Los Alamos. Rents went up as property was reassessed, up by hundred and hundreds of dollars. GRT drove doctors out of this town which has forced many community members to leave Los Alamos. For the benefit of the MRA area and the rest of the town, do not raised GRT again. The Los Alamos County local government is weathly already and does not need to continue bleeding the economy not associated with the lab out of greed.”

D. FUNDING SOURCES

Funding Sources

This section provides a list of local, state, and federal funding sources available to aid in the implementation of MRA projects.

Funding Source Databases

1. Creative Finance for Smaller Communities – Urban Land Institute <http://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/Creative-Finance-forSmaller-Communities.pdf>
2. Kellogg Foundation Grants List - <https://www.wkkf.org/grants#pp=10&p=1&f3=new-mexico>
3. FUNDIT – New Mexico Economic Development Department
<https://gonm.biz/businessresource-center/edd-programs-for-business/finance-development/fundit/>
4. Federal Grants Search <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html>
5. Statewide Grant Opportunities Search
<https://www.centerforprofitexcellence.org/grantmakers-directory?keys=&page=1&order=field does the grantmaker accept&sort=desc>
6. The Grant Plant List of Upcoming Grants
<https://www.thegrantplantnm.com/upcoming-grants/>

County Taxation & Bonding Authority

General Obligation Bonds/General Funds

Agency: Los Alamos County

Type: Capital Outlay

Description: The County may choose to fund land acquisition and infrastructure costs using the County's existing general fund or by issuing new bonds to pay for capital improvements.

Lodgers Tax

Agency: Los Alamos County

Type: Tax Funds

Description: The County may use the existing lodger's tax for promotion of downtown attractions and events for visitors. The tax may also be used to acquire, establish, and operate tourist-related facilities.

Local Options Gross Receipts Tax (LOGRT)

Agency: Los Alamos County

Type: Additional Tax Funds

Description: As part of the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA), residents in Los Alamos County may vote to raise the local gross receipts tax to help fund additional economic development projects within the County. The tax is collected by the State as part of the statewide gross receipts tax and redistributed to the community for local projects. In general, LOGRT provides the community with a source of additional revenue to fund additional services or projects related to arts and cultural activities as well as district revitalization

CAPITAL OUTLAY

Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan (ICIP)

Agency: Los Alamos County

Description: The County may fund infrastructure projects through the existing County budget and its infrastructure capital improvements plan. County funds may be used as matching funds to secure larger grants and/or loans by outside agencies (e.g. matching road funds for a street reconfiguration on a state highway).

NM MainStreet Capital Outlay Fund

Agency: New Mexico MainStreet

Website: <http://nmmainstreet.org/>

Description: New Mexico MainStreet receives money from the State Legislature each year that may be requested by MainStreet Communities to implement identified priority catalytic projects in a MainStreet district. Program funds are competitive and are ranked using an objective scoring system. Applying for these funds for fully developed projects (such as a district wayfinding system), is also a great way to highlight Los Alamos MainStreet's commitment to implementing district-wide projects.

LEDA Capital Outlay Requests

Agency: New Mexico Economic Development Department

Website: <http://gonm.biz/business-resource-center/edd-programs-for-business/finance-development/leda/>

Description: The New Mexico Economic Development Department administers Local Economic Development Act capital outlay (LEDA CO) funds to local to help stimulate economic development efforts. LEDA funds are provided on a reimbursable basis only and must be used to fund those projects that create “stable, full-time, private sector” jobs in targeted industries.

Transportation Alternatives Program

Agency: NMDOT

Website: <http://dot.state.nm.us/en/Planning.html>

Description: The New Mexico Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a Federal-Aid funding program. TAP funds can generally be used for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and activities, in addition to other projects related to economic development, increased safety, and increased accessibility. The New Mexico Department of Transportation has a competitive process to afford TAP funds, based on how well each project proposal addresses the goals of the program.

Cooperative Agreements Program (COOP) Local Government Road Fund

Agency: NMDOT

Website:

<http://www.torcnm.org/downloads/Final%20Approved%20TorC%20Downtown%20Master%20Plan%2010.2014.pdf>

Description: The New Mexico Department of Transportation sets aside money each year for local government road improvements. This program assists local governments to improve, construct, maintain, repair, and pave highways and streets with matching funds from NMDOT.

COMMUNITY GRANTS & LOANS

Small Cities Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

Agency: New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration

Type: Community Grant

Website: http://nmdfa.state.nm.us/CDBG_Information_1.aspx

Description: Community Development Block Grants can be used to fund planning projects and the construction of public buildings, community facilities, infrastructure, and housing. Funds are administered by the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration, with a \$500,000 grant limit per applicant. Five percent of matching funds must be provided by the applicant.

Rural Business Development Grants (RBDG)

Agency: USDA

Type: Community Grant

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programsservices/rural-business-development-grants>

Description: Rural Business Development Grants are available to rural communities under 50,000 in population. Grant funds may be used to finance and facilitate the development of small, private business enterprises which includes any private business which will employ 50 or fewer new employees and has less than \$1 million in projected gross revenues. Programmatic activities are separated into enterprise or opportunity type grant activities.

NM Community Development Loan Fund (The Loan Fund)

Agency: The Loan Fund

Type: Business/Organization Loan

Website: <http://www.loanfund.org/>

Description: The Loan fund is a private, non-profit lender that provides \$5,000 - \$500,000 loans to small businesses and non-profits. The Loan Fund will finance equipment, inventory, building renovations, operating capital and business expansion expenses. As a private lender, the Loan Fund seeks to support low-income individuals and communities that need additional “bridge funding” to establish or expand their organizations.

ACCION New Mexico

Agency: ACCION New Mexico

Type: Business/Organization Loan

Website: <http://www.accionnm.org/>

Description: ACCION is small-scale micro-lender that makes loans to small businesses that may not qualify for traditional bank loans and provides business support services.

Loans are primary intended for low-income borrowers and minority entrepreneurs. Since being founded in 1994, ACCION has financed the start-up or expansion of more than 2,300 new businesses in New Mexico with loans totaling more than \$23 million.

The Public Project Revolving Fund (PPRF)

Agency: New Mexico Finance Authority

Type: Community Loan

Website: <http://www.nmfa.net/financing/publicproject-revolving-fund/about-the-pprf-program/>

Description: The PPRF is an up to \$200,000 revolving loan fund that can be used to finance public infrastructure projects, fire and safety equipment, and public buildings. Both market rate-based loans and loans to disadvantaged communities at subsidized rates are made from PPRF funds. Such funds could be used for larger infrastructure projects in the future, including upgrades to the existing public safety buildings downtown.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

The New Mexico State Affordable Housing Tax Credit (Rental)

Agency: MFA

Website: <http://www.housingnm.org/developers/new-mexico-state-affordable-housing-tax-credit>

Description: This program provides charitable state tax credit for up to 50% of the value of donations (cash, land, buildings or services) for affordable housing projects approved by the MFA, or for donations made directly to the NM Affordable Housing Charitable Trust.

The BUILD IT! Loan Guaranty Program

Agency: MFA

Website: <http://www.housingnm.org/>

Description: This program was created to encourage other lenders to provide interim financing for “high risk” or unconventional projects when they might not otherwise do so for “high risk” or unconventional projects, unfamiliar types of borrowers or unfamiliar markets. The program offers MFA guaranties of up to 50% of the risk of loss in the underlying loan. BUILD IT! Loan guaranties can be used for owner-occupied or rental developments or special needs facilities. Sites must be responsive to demonstrated community needs, and

zoning must be pending or completed. Commitments for matching contributions from other public sector entities, equal to 10% of the total development costs, must be in place. Finally, at least 40% of the units in the development must be affordable to households earning no more than eighty percent of adjusted area median income.

The NM Housing Trust Fund

Agency: MFA

Website: <http://www.housingnm.org/developers/nm-housing-trust-fund>

Description: This program provides flexible funding for housing initiatives that will provide affordable housing primarily for persons or households of low or moderate income. Non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, governmental housing agencies, regional housing authorities, governmental entities, governmental instrumentalities, tribal governments, tribal housing agencies and other entities as outlined in the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). Costs of infrastructure, construction, acquisition, and rehabilitation necessary to support affordable single family or rental housing as outlined in the NOFA. MFA mortgage may be in first or junior lien position on the property. Rental projects must serve households earning 60% or less of AMI

The MFA Primero Loan Program

Agency: MFA

Website: <http://www.housingnm.org/developers/primero-loan-program>

Description: This program is a flexible, low-cost loan program created to finance the development of affordable rental or special needs residential facilities in New Mexico that would be considered “high risk” by traditional lenders. Its goal is to leverage other public and private funds, and to expand the housing development capacity of New Mexico’s nonprofit, tribal and public agency housing providers. The program can be used to finance all types of projects that cannot be accommodated by existing sources. Funding may be approved for specific housing developments, or for programs to be operated by agencies to meet local housing needs. Rental, owner-occupied and special needs projects of any size maybe financed under this program, during any stage of the development process. New construction, conversion, and acquisition/rehabilitation projects may be financed.

TAX CREDITS/INCENTIVES

The State Income Tax Credit for Registered Cultural Properties

Agency: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division

Type: Tax Credit

Website: <http://www.nmhistoricpreservation.org/programs/tax-credits.html>

Description: The State Income Tax Credit for Registered Cultural Properties program was established in 1984 to encourage the restoration, rehabilitation and preservation of cultural properties. Since then, more than 800 projects have been approved for New Mexico homes, hotels, restaurants, businesses and theaters that benefited from one of the few financial incentives available to owners of historic properties. In a recent five-year period, the statewide program saw approved rehabilitation construction projects totaling \$7.4 million, spurred by the catalyst of \$1.4 million in taxpayer-eligible credits. To be eligible, buildings must be individually listed in or be listed as contributing to a State Register of Cultural Properties historic district. The maximum amount of project expenses eligible for the tax credit is \$50,000. The total cost may exceed this amount. Maximum credit is 50% of eligible costs of the approved rehabilitation or 5 years of tax liability, whichever is least. The credit is applied against New Mexico income taxes owed in the year the project is completed, and the balance may be carried forward for up to four additional years.

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program

Agency: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, National Park Service

Type: Tax Credit

Website: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm>

Description: The National Park Service administers the Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program in cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Office. It is a three-part application process. Participation in the program is initiated with the State Historic Preservation Office. The building must be individually listed in or contribute to a historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In some cases, the property may be determined eligible for listing, but has not yet been listed at the beginning of the rehabilitation project. The eligible expenses of a rehabilitation project must be at least equal to the adjusted basis of the building (value of building minus value of land). The project must be an income producing property and expenses for any portion used for personal residence do not qualify. The program generally allows up to 20% of the eligible costs of rehabilitation work to be credited against Federal income taxes. The credit is applied against federal income taxes owed in the year the project is completed and can be carried backward 1 year and forward 19 years. Some provisions of the Internal Revenue Service Code may affect a taxpayer's ability to utilize the full credit. Taxpayers should seek professional tax advice concerning their specific circumstances.

New Markets Tax Credits

Agency: New Mexico Finance Authority

Type: Business Loan

Website: <http://www.nmfa.net/financing/new-markets-tax-credits/>

Description: The New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) is designed to increase private investment to businesses and low-income communities with poverty rates higher than 20% by providing a tax credit to investors in business or economic development projects. By making an equity investment in a Community Development Entity (CDE), an investor receive a tax credit against their federal income tax worth 39% of the total equity contribution. Community Development Entities are certified by the CDFI Fund. New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC) loan funds are intended to help business investment in low-income census tracts. The fund will help finance the development of commercial, industrial and retail real estate projects (including community facilities), and some housing projects. Loans for up to 25% of the project are available at low interest rates. NMTC loans are combined with other sources of funding that is secured by the applicant and managed by Finance New Mexico.

CHARITABLE GRANTS & LOANS

New Mexico Clean and Beautiful Program

Agency: NM Tourism Department

Type: Small Scale Grant

Website: <https://www.newmexico.org/industry/work-together/grants/clean-and-beautiful/>

Description: by providing funding and technical assistance to municipalities, counties, Tribal Governments, and units of government on litter eradication, waste reduction, and community beautification initiatives. The Clean and Beautiful Program is a competitive grant, whereas applications are subject to be funded in whole, in-part, or not at all. Eligible entities for the Clean and Beautiful Grant include municipalities, counties, Tribal Governments, and units of government.

Destination Forward Grant Program

Agency: NM Tourism Department

Website: <https://www.newmexico.org/industry/work-together/grants/destination-forward/>

Description: The purpose of the Destination Forward Grant Program is to support the

development and implementation of tourism infrastructure projects throughout New Mexico. The Destination Forward Grant (DFG) is a competitive grant that supports the long-term destination development and rejuvenation of community-based, sustainable tourism infrastructure projects across New Mexico. The DFG helps to empower New Mexican communities to become viable, welcoming, and high-quality destinations, as well as to enhance existing destinations, for tourism.

McCune Foundation Grants

Agency: McCune Charitable Foundation

Type: Community and Organization Grants

Website: <http://nmmccune.org/apply>

Description: The McCune Charitable Foundation awards grants to communities, non-profits, public schools, and government agencies that are engaged in community-based projects related to the Foundation's nine foundational priorities. This includes projects that build capacity in the non-profit sector, promote economic development, education and childhood development, healthcare, local food, the arts and community engagement, natural resources, urban design, and rural development are all considered. The average grant award is \$15,000, with some as large as \$25,000.

National Endowment for the Arts Our City Grant

Agency: National Endowment of the Arts

Type: Community and Organization Grants

Website: <http://arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-City/introduction>

Description: The National Endowment for the Arts offers the "Our City" Grant to fund creative placemaking projects that showcase the distinct identity of their community. The grant will pay for cultural planning efforts, design of projects, and arts engagement efforts. The grant will not fund construction, renovation, or purchase of facilities. Projects must involve a partnership with a local non-profit organization. Grants range from \$25,000 to \$100,000

E. SAMPLE COMMUNITY BENEFIT MATRIX

Community Benefit Matrix

Development Proposal Evaluation Tool

The intent of the Community Benefit Matrix is to gauge project alignment to Los Alamos County and Metropolitan Redevelopment Area priorities relating to Economic Vitality, Housing, Urban Form/Identity, Infrastructure, and Placemaking.

Total Points

Out of X Total Points Possible

Economic Vitality	Potential points	Points earned by applicant	What to submit with application and at building permit if qualifying for these points
Contributes to the revitalization of downtown areas of Los Alamos	<i>Can receive points for all line items. Maximum of 65.</i>		
Diversifies the community's economic base	20		
Significantly improves the quantity and quality of retail and food & beverage based business	20		
Generates Gross Receipts Taxes (Includes Retail)	15		
Contributes on-site public spaces that contribute to economic vitality including: outdoor dining, food trucks, pop-businesses & entertainment spaces	10		
	0-65 points		
Contributes to vibrant mixed-use district	<i>can receive points for all line items. Maximum of 85.</i>		
Development provides spaces for local businesses and new businesses and/or expansions	25		
Incorporates spaces for small business incubation & start-ups including: storefronts with smaller footprints, multi-tenant food halls, shared facilities to reduce upfront renovation costs for tenants	15		
Incorporates space for mobile food vending, food trucks, and/or provides commercial spaces for restaurants with outdoor dining	15		
Generates spaces that are populated with businesses in new, desired industries that fill spending leakage gap	5		
Provides new hotel rooms and hospitality jobs	5		
	0-65 points		
		Total for category	

Housing & Commercial Space	Potential points	Points earned by applicant	What to submit with application and at building permit if qualifying for these points
Encourages a diversity of housing types including townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, and apartments	20		
<i>Can receive more points for detail, innovation, aesthetics, etc.</i>	0-20 points		
New Housing Units Added	<i>can only receive points in one line item.</i>		
2 - 10 units	5		
11 - 21 units	10		
21 - 50 units	15		
Additional Points: Maximizes higher density housing that meets code threshold	10		
	0-40 points		
Affordable housing	<i>can only receive points in one line item.</i>		
Mix of LIHTC and market-rate housing	20		
Mixed-use including affordable housing	30		
	0-50 points		
Commercial projects	<i>can only receive points in one line item.</i>		
350 - 10,000 interior square feet	10		
10,001 - 25,000 interior square feet	15		
25,001 - 50,000 interior square feet	10		
Additional Points: Offers mixed-use style development with retail/F&B businesses on ground floor, office spaces on 2nd floor and above, and housing	20		
	0-55 points		
	Total for category		
Urban Form/Identity/ Placemaking	Potential points	Points earned by applicant	What to submit with application and at building permit if qualifying for these points
Urban Form/Identity	<i>can receive points for all line items. Maximum of 45.</i>		
Opportunities for community to be involved in design	15		
Opportunities for community to be involved in programming	15		
Promotes/encourage infill development	15		
	0-45 points		
Eliminates blight in the downtown areas of Los Alamos and White Rock	<i>can receive points for all line items. Maximum of 70</i>		
Upgrade infrastructure, including streetscapes, green spaces, and entrances to the County, to reflect civic pride in the community	15		
Enrich the vibrancy of business districts through placemaking elements that include thoughtful integration of design, public art, and/or historic & cultural references	10		
Demolition of dilapidated and vacant structures	10		
Incorporates public spaces including: parklets/pocket parks, plazas, play structures, and gardens	10		
Potential to activate spaces and attract people at a range of times for a range of activities	5		
Site design significantly increases land utilization	5		
Adds street furniture and/or public art	5		
Pedestrian scale lighting	5		
Incorporates local wayfinding design elements & signage	5		
	0-70 points		
	Total for category		

