

Update on Council Strategic Goal: Economic Vitality



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June 18, 2024

ATTACHMENT A

2024 Strategic Leadership Plan



ATTACHMENT A

Economic Vitality

- Increase the capacity for new housing development and the amount and variety of housing types to meet the needs of a changing and growing population, particularly middle and lower-income households.
- Encourage the retention of existing businesses, facilitate the startup of new businesses, and assist in opportunities for business growth.
- Revitalize the downtown areas of Los Alamos and White Rock by facilitating development opportunities in accordance with the downtown master plans.
- Sponsor special events, support major employer and community events, and promote tourism by enhancing amenities, utilizing facilities and contract services, and encouraging overnight stays.
- Provide community broadband as a basic essential service that will enable reliable high-speed internet services throughout the County at competitive pricing.

Housing

Goals

- Continue to implement the Home Renewal and Home Buyer programs and report use statistics annually
- Update the Affordable Housing Plan by December 2024
- Solicit partnership opportunities that will produce new workforce, senior and/or student housing unit residential or mixed use developments for the 20th Street and DP Road (A-8-a) properties
- support the public schools in evaluating their land for potential workforce housing and mixed-use development opportunities with a priority focus on North Mesa property

Actions

- Finalizing RFP for housing program services, planning fall of 2024
- Affordable Housing Plan draft complete, next steps include finalization, MFA approval, council approval
- 20th street draft PSA in negotiation; A-8-a to be solicited by end of year 2024
- North Mesa project in traffic and utilities impact analysis stage due Sept 2024

Local Business

Goals

- Distribute ARPA funds to eligible local businesses and complete award of funds by September 2024
- Construct DP Road and utility infrastructure project in 2024
- Engage with local business owners and connect business needs with potential funding opportunities and support
- Engage, support and provide opportunities for concessionaires on county-owned property

Actions

ARPA – total budget \$1.4 million

- \$966,063 expended to date
- \$245,509 encumbered and being paid out to businesses
- \$165,795 remaining with sufficient projected need to obligate and spend full balance by September
- DP Road construction to begin in June
- Made approx. 61+ business outreach contacts
- Provided support to \$100k grant award for local business
- Mobile Food Vending Friendly Spaces
- Development Handbook
- Pre-application meetings

Downtown Revitalization

Goals

- Update sign code
- Support redevelopment with the White Rock Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) through Private Public Partnerships and public infrastructure development
- Design and construct Deacon Street project in coordination with adjacent property redevelopment
- Encourage redevelopment of vacant or underutilized properties in accordance with the Downtown Master Plans and 2022 adopted Development Code

Actions

- Sign code updated as part of Chapter 16 Adoption – some cleanup required by end of 2024
- Mari Mac site owners looking at possible partnership financing opportunities with County
- Hilltop site now the UC Guesthouse project
- MRA- LA East Designation underway
- Planning and Zoning Application for extension of LA downtown zoning in progress

Tourism

Goals

- Partner and support ongoing annual and new seasonal events such as ScienceFest, summer concert series and recreation tournaments
- Increase camping and ski tourism by constructing a new water line to the Pajarito Mountain in 2025
- Promote the Fuller Lodge Historic District and walking tour (public) access long-term to the Manhattan Project National Historical Park Sites
- Make progress implementing the Tourism Plan - specifically wayfinding and White Rock Visitor Center improvements

Actions

- Launched redesign of VisitLosAlamos.org in June 2024
- Generated organic news stories through press releases
- Pajarito Mountain project estimated to begin
Created a variety of advertisements, advertorials, and articles including the following publications:
 - Arizona Diamondback Yearbook
 - Texas Rangers Yearbook
 - New Mexico Magazine
 - ABQ Journal 101 Things to Do This Summer
- Historic walking tour in progress (Aug 2024)
- WRVC improvements in progress

Metropolitan Redevelopment Area

- Establishes the boundary of a specific area that meets certain criteria that allows for public private partnerships for redevelopment projects
- A revitalization strategic plan that identifies the municipality intent to focus or provide access to redevelopment tools within a specific area – provides for public input
- Requires a partner (private sector) that has financial resources to contribute
- Projects or activities that the County would participate in would have to show a public benefit, e.g. demolition of dilapidated buildings, modernization of public infrastructure
- The criteria that the plan utilizes when establishing the boundaries includes:
 - **Vacant and Underutilized Properties:** High levels of vacant storefronts, especially in the former Mari Mac Shopping Village, inhibit growth.
 - **Low Commercial Activity:** Persistent challenges in attracting and retaining tenants has negatively impacted downtown economic vitality.
 - **Deteriorating Structures:** Many buildings are in poor condition and need updates to attract new tenants and investments.
 - **Deteriorating Infrastructure:** Issues include outdated narrow sidewalks, unmaintained pavement and landscaping, and deficient access to commercial properties.

MRA

As a tool to support development – dependent on the particular project:

- Issuance of Revenue Bonds
- Programs that address blight, such as façade improvements
- State/Federal Brownfield funding opportunities
- NMMFA Low Income Housing Tax Credits bonus points
- Property Tax deferrals or credits
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts

What it is not:

- Superseding of existing zoning laws
- A mechanism for raising or lowering taxes
- An obligation for the County to participate or partner with any proposed projects within the district
- Negatively impact property values
- Enable eminent domain
- A financial “silver bullet” without obligations for the county or its partners

MRA LA East Process

- Feb 2024 – Council directed staff to prepare resolution to start the process of establishing MRA in Townsite
- May 2024 – Presentation, Q&A Meeting with MRA area and adjacent property owners
- May 2024 - MRA Designation Report presented to Council
- June 27 – Public Meeting at Fuller Lodge
- TBD – Public Hearing with County Council and Adoption

Broadband

- **Community Broadband Network (CBN) Project**
 - RFP for Design/Build and Operate a CBN in final stages; negotiating final agreements for Council Consideration Summer 2024
- **Middle-Mile**
 - Council authorized \$2M matching funds for San Ildefonso Services BEAD grant; awaiting grant award recipients announcements (anticipated end of June)
 - Provided draft agreement for San Ildefonso Services to add fiber conduits and handholds as part of the SR4 waterline replacement project (Summer/Fall 2024)

Questions?