

Introduction to Economic Development

Planning & Zoning Commission
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Econ Devo- Objectives: Promote Healthy Economy

- Job (and industry) Diversification
- Job Retention
- Wealth Creation
- Quality of Life- (advancing County Council's goals)



Eco Devo- Methodology

- Study historical growth and decay cycles of the community over time
- Discern critical strengths and weakness, opportunities and challenges
- Understand existing businesses and business culture
- Identify existing resources that can be leveraged
- Build strong relationships with stakeholders AP1



Eco Devo- Players

- Local Governments
- State Government
- Federal Government
- Public Private Partnerships
- Universities and other Workforce Development organizations
- Chamber of Commerce & other business organizations
- Utilities and Public Works
- Financial Institutions
- Developers and Business Entities



Eco Devo- Role of ED Professional

- Analyst
- Catalyst
- Gap Filler
- Advocate
- Educator
- Help execute the community vision
- Ethics Champion
- Strategic Planner



Elements of a Development Project

- Cost of land
- Market growth potential
- Cost of construction
- Labor cost
- Size of community
- Entitlements (Planning and Zoning)
- Local gov't
- Impact fees
- Financing (see all above)



Development Project “Players”

- Developer – often bringing personal guarantees to the table
- Design Professionals
- Financiers, e.g. banks, investors
- Gov’t programs, e.g. LEDA, tax credits, other state and federal programs



Development Challenges in Los Alamos

- Developer capacity
- Scarcity of land (cost)
- Geological considerations and import needs
- Labor and trades
- Waste management (landfill)
- Bank financing (size of community)



Eco Devo Considerations for P&Z

- Projects are brought forward as supported by the:
 - Comp Plan
 - Council Goals
 - Economic Vitality Strategic Plan
- Zoning can play direct (and affirmative) role as a tool for Economic Development (e.g. Mixed Use)
- P&Z provides oversight of County staff when reviewing criteria (checks/balances) – ensures development code is followed
- Recognize that subject matter experts are involved within the county and on the development team, e.g. engineers, financing, architects, etc.
- P&Z provides a public forum for comment from Affected Parties
- Make a decision based on the criteria



Considerations for P&Z

- Projects are evaluated based on the code, not on popularity or the perceived capacity of developer/applicant
- Unforeseen conditions can cause a project to fail anytime up to and during construction
- Issues introduced to a project such as imposing conditions that are not required by code can create uncertainty, increase costs (and risk)
- It may trigger appeal and potentially place an undue burden on a project



Chapter 16: Development Code

- Based in the tradition of Euclidian Zoning
- Much of the townsite existing prior to zoning
- Did not contemplate growth, infill, development of our current era
- Is restrictive to new development and redevelopment projects
- Could require more projects to include waiver requests – particularly infill



Questions???

