



Los Alamos County

Community Development Department

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Public Hearing Date: January 8, 2025
Subject: Case No. SIT-2024-0070, Major Site Plan Adoption
Applicant/Owner: Will Gleason, Dekker Designs, on behalf of Ocean Rock Capital Partners and Grand Mesa Partners, LLC.
Case Manager: Desirae J. Lujan, Senior Planner

Professional Background:

Associates Architectural & Civil Drafting; 16 years in Planning and Land Use, Local Government, with five years in Case Management of Development Applications.

Case No. SIT-2024-0070: Will Gleason of Dekker Designs, agent on behalf of Ocean Rock Capital Partners and Grand Mesa Partners, LLC., property owner, requests site plan approval of a three-story, 60-unit hotel (40,786 sq. ft.) intended for both short- and extended-stay accommodations, including conference space. The development site is located at 400 Trinity Drive, Los Alamos, NM, within the Eastern Area 2 Subdivision and the Downtown Los Alamos (DTLA) Zone District.

See Attachment A: Application Submittal.



Figure 1: Vicinity Map, Google Earth Airbus, May 2023

BACKGROUND

The development location, 400 Trinity Drive, Los Alamos, NM, is located west of the NM502 roundabout, and divides the arterial roads of Central Avenue (north), and Trinity Drive (south). It is accessed by either of these two main roads and sits east, approximately 2-ft lower than the abutting property known as Mari-Mac Village. The lot is within the Eastern Area 2 Subdivision and the Downtown Los Alamos Zone District (DTLA), which provides convenient access to local businesses, restaurants, and government offices.

The vacant 1.84-acre lot was previously the site of the “Hilltop House Motel”, which was constructed in the mid-1970s. The motel and its restaurant operated until 2013 and remained vacant until its demolition in 2022.

Figure 2: Location Area Map (Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Facebook, Inc. and its affiliates...)

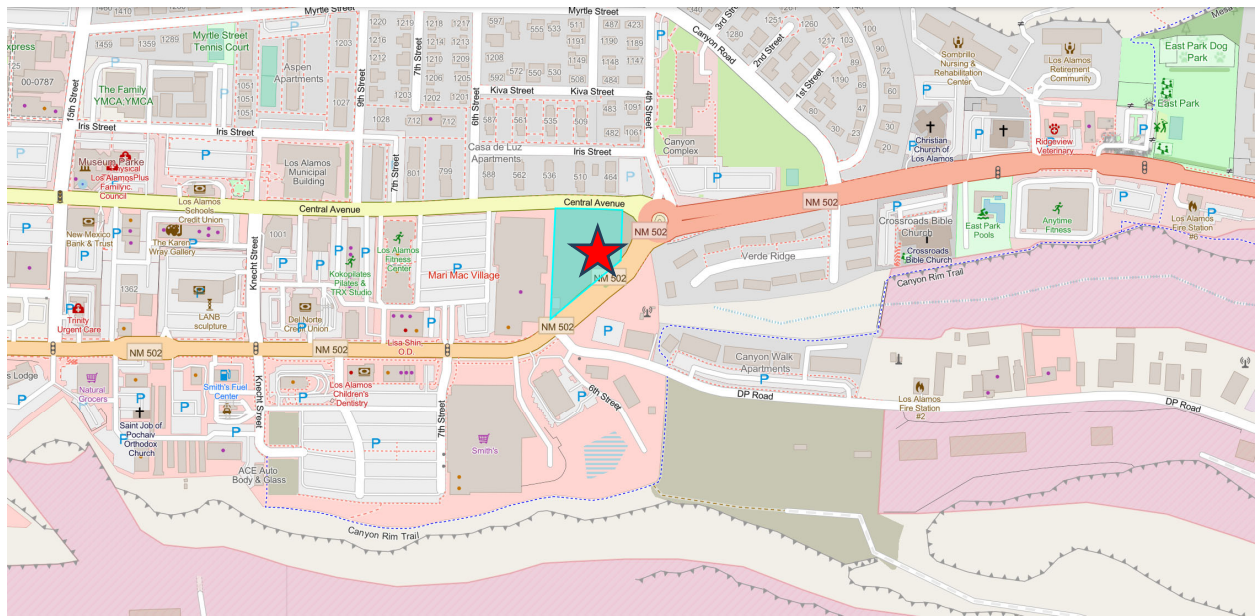


Image 1: The Hilltop House in the winter of 1983-1984. Waterman Collection, Los Alamos Historical Society



SUMMARY

Ocean Rock Capital Partners and Grand Mesa Partners, LLC (“Property Owners”) propose developing the vacant site with a three-story hotel designed for both short- and extended stays. The 40,786 sq. ft. building will feature 60 units, and two 966 sq. ft. conference rooms. The development, as proposed, complies with the site design, minimum setbacks, parking requirements, and height and lot coverage maximums for the DTLA Zone District.

A hotel is permitted within the DTLA Zone District which is intended to accommodate a vertical or horizontal mix of medium- to high-density residential, office, and commercial land uses. Its standards outlined within Exhibit 1: Section 16-6(c), are to implement the vision of the Los Alamos downtown established within the Master Plan.

The site will have one vehicular entrance/exit on Central Avenue and two on Trinity Drive. According to the Site Plan (Attachment A, Sheet ASP1), the project will include 69 parking spaces and 10 bicycle spaces. Based on the Development Code's Off-Street Parking Standards, the required number of spaces, after a 20% reduction for transit proximity, is 61.

The DTLA Streetscape Design Standards specify that streetscapes along Central Avenue should, to the maximum extent feasible, include a 22-ft frontage zone consisting of a 6-ft curb zone, a 6-ft landscape strip, and a 10-ft sidewalk, as shown in Exhibit 1: Figure 6. For all other DTLA Zone District streets, the standards recommend, where feasible, a 6-ft landscape strip and an 8-ft sidewalk, as depicted in Exhibit 1: Figure 7.

Figure 6: Preferred Downtown Los Alamos

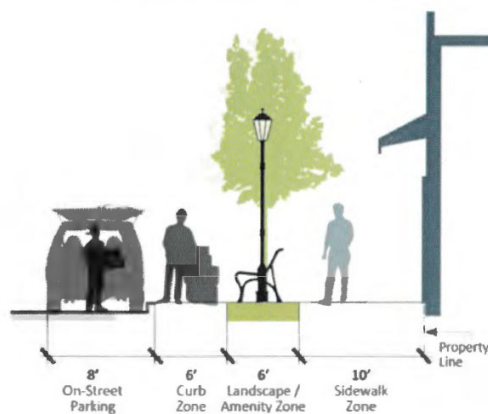
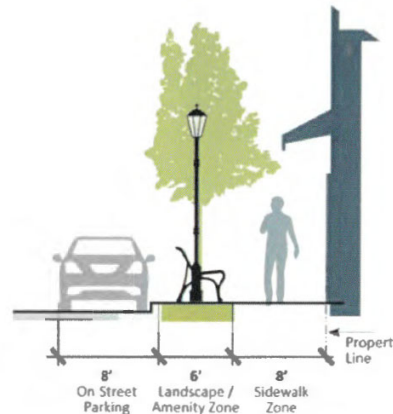


Figure 7: Alternative Downtown Los Alamos



The applicant has stated that meeting the preferred standards is not feasible for this project. As an alternative, they propose using a variation of Figure 7: Alternative Downtown Los Alamos standards along Central Avenue, which includes a 6-foot landscaping strip within public right-of-way, and an 8-foot sidewalk within the property line and along the building. This design replaces the old sidewalk and adds a new sidewalk and landscape buffer along Central Avenue and ties into the existing 6-foot sidewalk constructed as part of the NMDOT improvements, exceeding the minimum required by Public Works Development Standards. It also provides a smooth transition to the preferred standards as pedestrians move deeper into the downtown district. Because the sidewalk will be located within private property, Public Works is requiring it to be dedicated to the county as public right-of-way prior to building permit submittals.

Considering NMDOT's recent upgrades, a 6-foot sidewalk along Trinity Drive is deemed reasonable for this project and is preferred by the County Engineer. This approach balances practical constraints with efforts to align with broader downtown development goals.

The development proposes two water quality ponds shown on the Grading and Drainage Plan (Attachment A, Sheet CG-101) to be constructed within county property, Eastern Area 2, Tract T1. Use of the county property will require a Development Agreement, and possibly an Encroachment Permit, to be approved prior to the building permit submittals.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (IDRC) REVIEW

The Interdepartmental Review Committee (IDRC) reviewed the site plan and application on November 14, 2024. After discussing submission and decision criteria, the committee identified coordination issues and agreed to provide written recommendations. The IDRC initially voted to advance the application to the December 11, 2024, meeting but later postponed it to January 8, 2024, after further review.

See Attachment B: IDRC Minutes and Memorandums

PUBLIC NOTICE: The *Los Alamos County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 16 – Development Code, Sec. 16-72(c) Notifications*, sets forth the requirements for proper notice to the public for a public hearing:

- Published and Posted Notice [16-72(c)(4)]:
 - Notice published in a newspaper of general circulation within the County at least 14-calendar days before the meeting or hearing. **Published December 19, 2024**
 - The posting of at least one sign on a street abutting the property that is the subject of the application – visible from the street – for at least 14-calendar days before the public meeting or hearing. **Posted December 20, 2024**
- Mailed Notice [16-72-(c)(5)]:
 - Mailed notice 14 days prior to the public hearing to all owners of record as identified in the records of the County Tax Assessor or occupants of properties within 300 ft., excluding public rights-of-way, of exterior lot lines of the subject property. **Mailed December 17, 2024**

See Attachment C: Public Notices

SITE PLAN ADOPTION DECISION CRITERIA: Section 16-74(i) of the Los Alamos County Development Code states that a Site Plan shall be approved if it meets all the following criteria:

- a. **The Site Plan substantially conforms to the intent and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and other adopted County policies and plans.**

Applicant Response: The proposed development advances multiple Comprehensive Plan Core Themes and their associated goals as outlined below.

Core Themes:

HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOODS and GROWTH

- Providing more choices in housing, especially downtown

DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT and DOWNTOWN

- Focusing development priorities downtown

- Guiding development to property in and around current boundaries

The Guest House project aligns with the Housing, Neighborhoods, and Growth theme by expanding lodging options that support more varied short-term housing choices in downtown Los Alamos. By introducing a hotel with short and long-term stay options in a key downtown location, the development enhances flexibility for visitors and business travelers, while preserving the established character of existing downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. It aims to help lessen the demand for short-term rentals across the County, thereby freeing up more inventory in the existing Los Alamos housing stock for renters. This project helps meet the demand for accessible, convenient lodging that aligns with community growth objectives and maintains a balanced, welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike.

Under the Development, Redevelopment, and Downtown theme, the project prioritizes downtown revitalization through targeted infill development on an underutilized, prominent location. This approach directs growth where infrastructure is already established, reinforcing the downtown core as a focal point of economic activity while preserving the community's surrounding areas. Additionally, the project's design supports the downtown's walkability, advancing the community's goal of creating a lively, accessible downtown space that enhances the area's unique character.

Growth Goals:

9. Revitalize and eliminate blight in the downtown areas of Los Alamos and White Rock
10. Promote growth in the downtown
11. Enhance community pride

The subject property, positioned at the prominent eastern gateway into Downtown Los Alamos where Trinity Drive meets Central Avenue, holds a unique role in enhancing community pride and vitality. This infill development revitalizes a long-vacant and deteriorated parcel, previously home to the Hilltop House, which had been left in an unsightly and potentially unsafe condition for some time. Redeveloping this blighted site will be transformative for the entrance to Downtown Los Alamos, creating an inviting and vibrant gateway.

The proposed project places hotel guests within walking distance of downtown shops and restaurants, offering a chance to connect to local culture and commerce. With thoughtfully designed architecture inspired by northern New Mexico, the project will foster a sense of pride for the community, turning a former eyesore into a downtown asset. Visitors will experience a lively, welcoming entrance into Los Alamos that celebrates its heritage and community spirit, showcasing what Downtown has to offer. This gateway project marks a significant step in promoting growth, revitalizing the area, and celebrating the vibrancy of Los Alamos' downtown district.

Development Goals:

1. Keep the focus of development primarily within current development boundaries
3. Enhance and maintain a vibrant downtown while keeping a small-town character and feel

The proposed development aligns with Development Goal 1 by focusing on infill within the existing DTLA zone district boundaries. By revitalizing a currently vacant gateway parcel, this project supports efficient land use within established development limits, reinforcing the commitment to concentrate growth within defined downtown boundaries. In line with Development Goal 3, the project contributes to a vibrant downtown while respecting and preserving its small-town character. The scale of the development complements the surrounding medium-density

residential areas, providing a gradual transition to the denser urban center planned for the neighboring Mari Mac site. Its design is well-suited to the relatively small parcel, accommodating essential parking and providing additional on-site amenities. The architectural design reflects the northern New Mexico style, seamlessly connecting outdoor spaces with the building. This approach fosters a cohesive and welcoming atmosphere, invigorating downtown Los Alamos while maintaining its distinct small-town feel.

Redevelopment Goals:

1. Redevelop vacant blighted areas and underutilized properties
2. Encourage infill development on underused or blighted areas

The proposed development aligns closely with Redevelopment Goal 1 by transforming a previously vacant, blighted lot at the entrance of Downtown Los Alamos into a productive and visually appealing site. By redeveloping this underutilized parcel, the project addresses blight directly, converting an eyesore into a vibrant gateway that enhances the overall appeal of the downtown district. In support of Redevelopment Goal 2, the project exemplifies strategic infill development by utilizing this vacant parcel to introduce a hotel and extended stay accommodations. This new development provides amenities and creates engaging spaces with outdoor seating, a fire pit, and a bocce ball court. The inclusion of these communal features not only activates the area but also revitalizes a long-neglected portion of downtown, breathing new life into a critical entry point and enriching the downtown experience.

Downtown Goals:

1. Create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown that includes a central gathering place, nighttime entertainment, and more retail stores and restaurants
2. Focus development priorities downtown
4. Enhance the vibrant, historic, smalltown character of the County by focusing commercial density increases in the downtown areas

The proposed Guest House development supports Downtown Goal 1 by introducing a vibrant hotel and short-term stay option in a key downtown location, transforming a vacant lot into an active space where visitors can easily access local shops, restaurants, and entertainment. The pedestrian-friendly design includes safe, streetscaped sidewalks that encourage guests to explore the area on foot, adding vitality to the downtown atmosphere. The development also offers a conference room, lounge, and outdoor gathering spaces, providing an additional venue for community events and reinforcing downtown as a central hub for social interaction and nighttime entertainment.

In alignment with Downtown Goal 2, the project prioritizes infill development within the DTLA zone, concentrating growth in downtown Los Alamos on an underutilized lot. This infill approach strengthens the downtown economy and preserves surrounding residential neighborhoods from the impact of short-term stay oversaturation, focusing hospitality and commercial density in the heart of downtown.

Consistent with Downtown Goal 4, the architectural style and scale of the Guest House support Los Alamos' historic, small-town character by creating an adequate transition between the medium-density residential development surrounding the site to the higher-density development planned on the adjacent Mari Mac site. The project also advances priorities outlined in the Los Alamos County 2022 Strategic Leadership Plan and Los Alamos County Economic Vitality Strategic Plan, both of which emphasize the importance of downtown revitalization and the need

for competitive, high-quality lodging options. The Guest House will provide ongoing benefits to the County further supporting the local economy without compromising public health, safety, or welfare.

Downtown Master Plan Goals: The proposed Guest House hotel aligns well with key goals of the Los Alamos Downtown Master Plan (Master Plan), addressing aspects of urban form, housing, transportation, economic vitality, public spaces, and sustainability:

1. **Urban Form/Identity:** The location within the Downtown zoning district encourages pedestrian-friendly development and improves adjacent streetscape through provisions for street trees that create a more welcoming pedestrian environment to access nearby shops and entertainment. Additionally, its central downtown placement complements broader placemaking efforts and is consistent with the Master Plan's branding goals to create an inviting and vibrant environment.
2. **Housing:** The development aligns with goals to diversify downtown housing, providing short-term accommodations to attract tourists and business travelers. By offering an urban lodging option, the Guest House supports the area's need for varied housing and lodging types and complements nearby residential areas without over-saturating established residential neighborhoods.
3. **Transportation:** With its emphasis on pedestrian access, the project contributes to the master plan's goals of enhancing pedestrian infrastructure downtown. Its proximity to transit options allows visitors to move easily around Los Alamos, encouraging a connected, low-impact approach to transportation in this increasingly dense downtown area.
4. **Economic Vitality:** The Guest House hotel is a new lodging facility that is needed within the county. Additionally, it furthers retail development and tourism by driving foot traffic to nearby businesses, aligning with the Master Plan's focus on recruitment of tenants that stimulate local commerce. The proposed development provides event and conference spaces that offer additional amenity spaces for the greater community. The project also aligns with strategic goals to support affordable commercial rents by utilizing an underutilized site and revitalizing the downtown area.
5. **Public Space/Streets:** The project contains quality public spaces, including a 3rd floor terrace with scenic views, a bocce ball court, fire pit, and inviting outdoor seating and gathering areas that provide open space amenities for the downtown. The project also provides street trees for adjacent sidewalks thereby supporting the concept of streets as vibrant public spaces where residents and visitors can safely gather and explore the area on foot.
6. **Sustainability and Infrastructure:** Future site planning could incorporate green infrastructure elements, such as native landscaping and electric vehicle charging stations, which would align with goals for low-impact development and sustainable urban growth. The project also supports infrastructure improvement efforts as the area expands.

By meeting these goals, the Guest House hotel reinforces the Downtown Master Plan's vision for a vibrant, sustainable, and economically resilient Los Alamos.

Staff Response: In the staff's expert opinion, this criterion has been met because "The Guest House Hotel" development aligns closely with the Comprehensive Plan's intent and policies

(Exhibit 2). It conforms substantially to key themes, goals, and the Los Alamos Downtown Master Plan, as outlined in the applicant's response.

Positioned at a prominent downtown gateway, the infill development revitalizes a long-vacant, blighted site while complying with existing zoning regulations and utilizing current infrastructure. Guided by the Comprehensive Plan, it fosters focused growth, enhances economic vitality, increases walkability, and preserves the character of downtown Los Alamos — making it more accessible and welcoming for both residents and visitors.

The hotel's pedestrian-oriented design and inclusion of public amenities further align with the community's vision detailed in the Downtown Master Plan. These features contribute to creating a welcoming and visually appealing downtown environment that reinforces Los Alamos as a vibrant and connected community.

b. If the subject property is within an approved Master Plan, the Site Plan is in conformance with any relevant standards in the Master Plan.

Applicant Response: The subject property is within the Downtown Los Alamos Master Plan area. While the Master Plan itself does not establish specific development standards, its Goals and Policies for Urban Form/Identity, Housing, Transportation, Economic Vitality, Public Space/Streets, Infrastructure, and Sustainability guide the broader vision for the area and inform zoning code recommendations. The proposed Guest House hotel development aligns with this vision of the Master Plan as outlined above. The project also complies with the DTLA zone district standards outlined in the Los Alamos County Development Code, which directly implements the goals of the Downtown Master Plan. Through this compliance, the project contributes to the plan's objectives and supports a vibrant, sustainable downtown Los Alamos.

Staff Response: In the staff's expert opinion, this criterion has been met because the DTLA Zone District Development Standards adopted within Exhibit 1: Development Code implements the Downtown Master Plan's vision (Exhibit 3). The proposed development conforms to the Dimensional Standards and the Development Standards to the maximum extent feasible. Its design aligns with the Master Plan's goals of creating a welcoming environment for all and creates a visual appeal at the town's gateway to the downtown.

c. If the subject property is within an approved PD zone district, the Site Plan is consistent with any applicable terms and conditions in any previously approved PD zoning covering the subject property and any related development agreements and/or regulations.

Applicant Response: The subject property is not within an approved PD zone district.

Staff Response: In the staff's expert opinion, this criterion has been met because the property is not within an approved PD zone district.

d. The Site Plan is in conformance with all applicable provisions of this Code and other adopted County regulations.

Applicant Response: The zoning for this property is DTLA, Downtown Los Alamos. The proposed Guest House hotel site plan complies with the following regulations:

DTLA Zone District	Requirement	Proposed
Front yard setback	0 FT, minimum 100 FT, maximum abutting Trinity Drive and 15 FT, maximum in all other cases	South Side abutting Trinity Drive: ±83 FT
Side yard setback	0 FT, minimum interior 15 FT, minimum street-side	East Side: ±22 FT West Side: ±87 FT
Rear yard setback	0 Ft, minimum	North Side abutting Central Avenue: ±12 FT
Building Coverage	100%, maximum	±22%
Building Height	54 FT, maximum south of Trinity Drive within 150 FT of a property line abutting Los Alamos Canyon 86 Ft, maximum everywhere else	±40 FT
Parking Spaces	Hotel use: 1 space per sleeping unit 60 units x 1 = 60 spaces required	50 standard spaces 1 tandem space = 2 spaces 3 ADA spaces 5 EV spaces = 10 spaces 4 EV capable spaces
	Meeting, Banquet or Event Facility: 1 space per 4 persons design capacity = 966 SF Conference Room at 1 person per 15 SF maximum capacity = 65- person capacity / 4 = 16 spaces required	
	Transit Proximity Reduction: 20% 76 spaces x 0.20 = 15 space reduction	
	Electric Vehicle Credit: for each 1 space provided, a 2-space parking count shall apply	
	Total Required = 61 spaces	
		Total Provided = 69 spaces

Site grading would comply with the requirements of the Los Alamos County Public Works Design and Construction Standards, revised September 2008.

The site plan establishes a circulation layout that minimizes conflicts among vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists, promoting safety for all travel modes. The property's main entrance is located on the north side along Central Avenue, with one combined entry/exit point and an exit-only point. Trinity Drive, situated on the south side, includes an additional entry/exit point. By limiting drive cuts, the design reduces pedestrian conflict points along these downtown streets, while enabling smooth vehicular circulation around the property's north rear yard and south front yard, with primary traffic flow directed along the west and south sides. The building is positioned on the east side of the property which hides the parking and site circulation behind the building and creates an attractive gateway frontage into the greater downtown district.

Pedestrian circulation is comprised of a foot path along the east side parking lot connecting to the porte-cochere, building, and open space areas. These internal pathways connect to public sidewalks to both Trinity Drive and Central Avenue. An accessible pathway is provided abutting ADA accessible parking spaces. Along with access to these sidewalk facilities, accommodations for bicyclists include bike racks with the required amount of bicycle parking spaces. This intentional circulation design provides site circulation patterns that aid safe pedestrian movement from public sidewalks and parking spaces to the building while reducing opportunities for conflict with vehicles to the greatest extent feasible.

Outdoor lighting on the site is limited to that which is useful, targeted, and not brighter than necessary. The subject property is within Lighting Zone 2 (LZ-2). The allowable total site lumens and will not exceed site lumens detailed in the table below:

<i>Allowable Lumens</i>	<i>Proposed Lumens</i>
<i>20,000 lumens X 1.8 acres = 36,000 lumens</i>	<i>27,977 lumens</i>

Parking lot lighting shall be provided by 12 light poles at 22.5 feet and 4 light poles at 12 feet. All lighting fixtures will be fully cut-off and Dark Sky compliant. The property line light trespass illuminance meets the requirements of Los Alamos Code of Ordinances Table 39.

Landscaping coverage more than meets the minimum 10% net site area; it is designed to enhance the outdoor spaces as well as adjacent street frontages. Due to constrained rights-of-way, street trees are provided on-site adjacent to the sidewalk edge to enhance the character of Trinity Drive. Along Central Ave, street trees are provided outside the property line along the street edge to enhance pedestrian experience and the DTLA urban environment.

Staff Response: In the staff’s expert opinion, this criterion has been met because the plans submitted demonstrate to comply with the DTLA Zone District and Los Alamos County Development Standards as follows:

DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

The structure is oriented and designed to meet the minimum setbacks, and lot coverage maximums, and the building height is below the permitted 86-ft, max.

ACCESS & CONNECTIVITY

The development prioritizes enhancing connectivity for multi-modal travel by ensuring adequate access to the property from both Central Avenue and Trinity Drive. Access from Central Avenue has been approved by the County Engineer, who also recommends that the Applicant continue coordinating with the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) regarding Trinity Drive (NMSR 502).

The project design includes replacing the old sidewalk and adding a new sidewalk with a landscaped buffer along Central Avenue. This connects seamlessly to the existing 6-foot sidewalk constructed as part of previous NMDOT improvements. The 6-foot sidewalk along Trinity Drive, installed during the NMDOT project, will remain unchanged.

OFF-STREET PARKING

Off-Street Parking standards applies to all new construction to ensure adequate, convenient, and safe off-street parking and loading areas. Per Exhibit 1: Section 16-28(c), Table 27 (Minimum Off-Street Parking Requirements), Section 16-29 (Accessible Parking), Section 16-30 (Parking Alternatives and Reductions), and Section 16-32 (Bicycle Parking), the development exceeds the requirements as shown on the Site Plan, (Attachment A, Sheet ASP1), and stall dimensions comply accordingly.

LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING

Landscaping and screening requirements apply to all new construction to ensure attractive, sustainable landscapes. At least 10% of the net site area must be landscaped. The Landscape Plan (Attachment A, Sheet LP1) shows the site will exceed this by landscaping 37% of the area. Plant selections comply with Exhibit 1: Section 16-39(b), and a controlled drip irrigation system will be installed to support plant survival and growth.

NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION STANDARDS

Neighborhood Protection Standards do not apply because the lot does not abut, and is not adjacent to, a protected lot zoned as Residential-Agricultural (RA), Residential-Estate (RE),

Single-Family Residential (SFR), Residential-Mixed (RM), nor is it within a Historic Protection Overlay Zone District.

OUTDOOR LIGHTING

The lighting Los Alamos seeks to achieve in the DTLA zone district is that of ambient (Lighting Zone 2). The proposed Lighting Plan (Attachment A, Sheet EP100-102) conforms with that goal and all applicable lighting standards of Exhibit 1: Division 6.

WALLS, FENCES, AND GATES

During the permit application process the construction of any proposed fence, wall, or retaining wall must show compliance with the requirements of Exhibit 1: Division 7, Walls, Fences, and Gates.

SIGNAGE

A monument sign is proposed on the Site Plan (Attachment A, Sheet ASP 1, Note 15) within the development and near the main entrance. A Sign Permit must be submitted and demonstrate to comply with Exhibit 1: Division 8, Signage, standards prior to construction and installation.

- e. **The County's existing public infrastructure and services, including but not limited to water, sanitary sewer, electricity, gas, storm sewer, streets, trails and sidewalks have adequate capacity to serve the proposed development, and any burdens on those systems have been mitigated in compliance with the County's construction standards to the maximum extent practicable.**

Applicant Response: Public services and facilities required to serve the proposed development have adequate capacity and would conform with the requirements of the County's construction standards. Pre-application meetings with relevant County Departments occurred on May 7, 2024, and October 15, 2024.

Stormwater control measures adhering to the requirements of the Los Alamos County Public Works Design and Construction Standards, revised September 2008, are provided on site, as described in the drainage report included in the application package.

A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) was completed and approved by the Los Alamos County Engineer, in accordance with the requirements of the Los Alamos County Public Works Engineering Division.

Staff Response: In the staff's expert opinion, this criterion has been met because the applicant has coordinated infrastructure services and improvements with the Los Alamos County Department of Public Utilities (DPU), who have approved the proposed Utility Plan.

Coordination with the County Engineer, and NMDOT, has been made to meet respective design standards accordingly. During IDRC's review, the County Engineer relayed conditions appropriate prior to building permit and/or construction as documented within Attachment B, IDRC Minutes and Memorandums, dated November 19, 2024.

- f. **The Site Plan mitigates any significant adverse impacts to properties within the vicinity to the maximum extent practicable.**

Applicant Response: The site plan effectively mitigates any potential adverse impacts on adjacent properties through thoughtful building placement, screening and shielding of light fixtures, mechanical equipment, and parking areas. The building is positioned on the east side of

the property, with the parking lot located behind it, establishing a welcoming gateway frontage into downtown. The proposed three-story structure aligns with the development intensity of nearby moderate-density residential properties. Although neighborhood protection standards are not required, the proposed 40-foot height meets the intent of these standards, offering a scale that accommodates site needs like on-site parking while providing a suitable transition to denser developments planned for the downtown area, including the nearby Mari Mac site. While the site is not intended for subdivision, it has been delineated into two "lots" to accommodate current and potential future development needs. The parking area is screened from adjacent properties and meets the Development Code's minimum requirements, ensuring adequate on-site parking that prevents overflow into nearby residential areas. Landscaped areas are incorporated throughout the site, particularly along the edges and near amenity spaces, enhancing the site's visual appeal from public streets. The southern parking lot adjacent to Trinity Drive is screened by an approximately 7-foot buffer featuring street trees and shrubs, providing additional privacy and aesthetic appeal. The northern property line complies with the DTLA Central Ave alternative frontage zone to the greatest extent feasible. A 6-foot landscape buffer is located along the street edge to enhance the pedestrian experience with a buffer between persons and street traffic. The sidewalk is 6 feet wide on the east side of the property widening to the DTLA preferred 8-foot size on the western side of the property flowing deeper into the DTLA zone. This transitions smoothly into future planned development west of the subject property while maintaining newly constructed sidewalks on the eastern side toward the round-about.

Outdoor mechanical equipment and service areas, such as the dumpster, will be concealed with landscaping and enclosed structures. All light fixtures will be properly shielded to minimize light spill onto adjacent properties to the maximum extent feasible, further reducing any potential impact on the surrounding area.

Staff Response: In the staff's expert opinion, this criterion has been met because the use and scale of the development are appropriate for the location and zoning district. The development is thoughtfully designed to minimize impacts on the multi-family residents to the north by positioning parking and other site elements toward the south, adjacent to commercial uses. A sight distance analysis for the entrance and exit has been completed and demonstrates no adverse impacts. Additionally, a Site Threshold Analysis (STA) was submitted, confirming that no further traffic analysis is required.

A Drainage Report and Grading and Drainage Plan have also been provided, showing that off-site flows will not exceed existing conditions. The County Engineer confirms that requirements have been met with the proposed two water quality ponds.

- g. Provisions shall be made to serve the development with tot lots and/or neighborhood parks in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. A fee may be paid as approved by County Council to accomplish the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan in lieu of the development of tot lots or neighborhood parks.**

Applicant Response: The proposed site plan includes on-site recreational amenities, which substantially meet the requirement to serve the development with recreational facilities. These amenities include both indoor and outdoor gathering areas. Key on-site amenities include conference rooms, open space with outdoor seating and gathering areas, a fire pit, a 3rd floor terrace, and a bocce ball court. The primary indoor amenity spaces planned for building guests include a fitness space, bike racks, lounge spaces, and a common 3rd floor terrace offering views of Los Alamos.

Landscaped areas with native and adaptive plantings will also contribute to the aesthetic and ecological value of the development's outdoor gathering area, providing visual interest and supporting the downtown aesthetic.

The site's pedestrian pathways connect to both Central Avenue and Trinity Drive, reinforcing multi-modal access to downtown Los Alamos and advancing the goal of a walkable, park-once district.

In addition to these on-site amenities, the site is within a one-mile walkable radius of numerous community amenities and recreational opportunities including shopping centers, banks, grocery stores, coffee shops, restaurants, the SALA Event Center, the Manhattan Project National Historical Park, Los Alamos Visitor Center, the East Park Trailhead, and more. This combination of on-site and nearby amenities aligns with the Comprehensive Plan's goals for creating well-connected, recreation-rich environments for residents and visitors.

Staff Response: In the staff's expert opinion, this criterion has been met because the proposed development includes numerous amenities for its guests, as described in their response and noted on the Site Plan (Attachment A, Sheet ASP1). Walking paths from the street and through the site feature landscaped areas that encourage gatherings and provide aesthetic appeal to the beginning of Los Alamos' downtown.

DRAFT MOTION

Motion Option 1:

I move to **approve** Case No. SIT-2024-0070, a request for the adoption of a site plan for a three-story, 60-unit hotel (40,786 sq. ft.) designed for both short-term and extended-stay accommodations, including conference spaces. The development site is located at 400 Trinity Drive, Los Alamos, NM, within the Eastern Area 2 Subdivision and the Downtown Los Alamos (DTLA) Zone District.

Approval is based on the Findings of Fact established at the hearing and the conclusion that the Applicant has satisfied the decision criteria for site plan adoption as outlined in Section 16-74(i)(4) of the Los Alamos County Development Code. The Commission is acting under the authority granted by Section 16-72(f)(2)(a) of the Development Code.

I further move to authorize the Chair to sign a Final Order approving the application, as well as the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law for this case. This document will be prepared by county staff based on this decision.

Motion Option 2:

I move to **approve** Case No. SIT-2024-0070, a request for the adoption of a site plan for a three-story, 60-unit hotel (40,786 sq. ft.) designed for both short-term and extended-stay accommodations, including conference spaces, with the following condition(s):

1. The developer shall coordinate this development with NMDOT ***prior to issuance of building permits*** and shall comply with NMDOT State Access Management Requirements including preparation of Traffic Studies, access permits, temporary traffic control, and work permits.
2. All necessary permits shall be obtained by both NMDOT and Los Alamos County right-of-way ***prior to construction***.
3. A Development Agreement and Encroachment Permit, as applicable, shall be approved by Los Alamos County for the construction of two water quality ponds shown on the

Grading and Drainage Plan (Attachment A, Sheet CG-101) **prior to the submittal of a building permit.**

4. **Prior to the issuance of a building permit,** the 8-ft sidewalk located on the private property, must be dedicated as public right-of-way and approved by Los Alamos County.

The development site is located at 400 Trinity Drive, Los Alamos, NM, within the Eastern Area 2 Subdivision and the Downtown Los Alamos (DTLA) Zone District.

Approval is based on the Findings of Fact established at the hearing and the conclusion that the Applicant has satisfied the decision criteria for site plan adoption as outlined in Section 16-74(i)(4) of the Los Alamos County Development Code. The Commission is acting under the authority granted by Section 16-72(f)(2)(a) of the Development Code.

I further move to authorize the Chair to sign a Final Order approving the application, as well as the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law for this case. This document will be prepared by county staff based on this decision.

Motion Option 3:

I move to **deny** Case No. SIT-2024-0070, a request for the adoption of a site plan for a three-story, 60-unit hotel (40,786 sq. ft.) designed for both short-term and extended-stay accommodation, including conference spaces. The development site is located at 400 Trinity Drive, Los Alamos, NM, within the Eastern Area 2 Subdivision and the Downtown Los Alamos (DTLA) Zone District.

Denial is based on the Applicant failing to demonstrate that the application meets the Site Plan adoption decision criteria within Section 16-74(l)(f) of the Los Alamos County Development Code, and that the Commission is acting under the authority granted by Section 16-69(b)(2) of the Development Code.

I further move to authorize the Chair to sign a Final Order denying the application, as well as the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law for this case. This document will be prepared by county staff based on this decision.

EXHIBITS:

- 1 – Los Alamos County, Chapter 16, Development Code: <https://lacnm.com/MunicipalCode>
- 2 – Comprehensive Plan: <https://lacnm.com/ComprehensivePlan2016>
- 3 – Los Alamos Downtown Master Plan: <https://lacnm.com/DowntownMasterPlan>