



LOS ALAMOS

County of Los Alamos

Los Alamos, NM 87544
www.losalamosnm.us

Agenda - Final County Council - Work Session

*Theresa Cull, Melanee Hand; Suzie Havemann; Ryn Herrmann;
Beverly Neal-Clinton; David Reagor; and Randall Rytj,
Councilors*

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

6:00 PM

Fire Station No. 3
129 State Road 4 - White Rock

NOTE: This meeting is in person and open to the public. However, for convenience, the following Zoom meeting link and/or telephone call in numbers may be used for public viewing and participation:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85448619994>

Or Telephone:

Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

+1 346 248 7799 or + 1 346 248 7799 or + +1 669 444 9171 US or + 1 719 359

4580

or +1 720 707 2699

Webinar ID: 854 4861 9994

- 1. OPENING/ROLL CALL**
- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 3. STATEMENT REGARDING CLOSED SESSION**

January 14, 2025 Closed Session Statement

- 4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

This section of the agenda is reserved for comments from the public on items that do not require action by the Council or are not otherwise on the agenda.

- 5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- 6. BUSINESS**

- A. [19561-25](#) Action to Suspend Council Rules for Work Session**

Presenters: County Council

B. [19562-25](#) Discussion and Possible Action on FY2026 Budget Guidance

Presenters: Anne Laurent, County Manager, Helen Perraglio, Administrative Services Director and Erika Thomas, Budget and Performance Manager

Attachments: [A- Budget Guidance FY 2026](#)
[B - Updated 10YR Projection](#)

C. [19601-25](#) Continuation of the Discussion and Possible Action of a Draft Wildlife Feeding Ordinance

Presenters: County Council

Attachments: [A - Revised Draft Wildlife Feeding Ordinance](#)

D. [19598-25](#) Discussion and Possible Action on Council Engagement with Small Business Community

Presenters: County Council, Theresa Cull, Council Chair and Anne Laurent, County Manager

E. [19600-25](#) Discussion and Possible Action on Potential Ordinances to Consider in 2025

Presenters: County Council and Randall Ryti, Councilor

7. ADJOURNMENT

If you are an individual with a disability who is in need of a reader, amplifier, qualified sign language interpreter, or any other form of auxiliary aid or service to attend or participate in the hearing or meeting, please contact the County Human Resources Division at 662-8040 at least one week prior to the meeting or as soon as possible. Public documents, including the agenda and minutes can be provided in various accessible formats. Please contact the personnel in the Office of the County Manager at 663-1750 if a summary or other type of accessible format is needed.



County of Los Alamos

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Staff Report

January 14, 2025

Agenda No.:

Index (Council Goals):

Presenters:

Title

January 14, 2025 Closed Session Statement

Recommended Action

The following statement should be included in the minutes:

"The matters discussed in the Closed Sessions of County Council held on January 14, 2025 at 4:00 pm were limited only to the topics specified in the notice of the closed session, and no action was taken on any matter in the closed session. We request that this statement be included in the meeting minutes."



County of Los Alamos

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Staff Report

January 14, 2025

Agenda No.: A.
Index (Council Goals): Quality Excellence - Effective, Efficient, and Reliable Services
Presenters: County Council
Legislative File: 19561-25

Title

Action to Suspend Council Rules for Work Session

Recommended Action

I move that Council suspend their procedural rules for this work session, January 14, 2025, so that formal action may be taken.

Body

The 2024 Los Alamos County Council Procedural Rules identifies a Work Session as follows:

"Work Sessions. The Council may schedule work sessions on a regular basis under the requirements of the annual Open Meetings Resolution. Council meetings designated as work sessions shall be held for the primary purpose of discussing issues at length with staff in an informal setting without taking formal action except for required procedural actions such as approving minutes from a prior council meeting, or adopting a statement for inclusion in the minutes regarding a closed session. Public comment will generally be taken only at the beginning and ending."

This action would suspend that rule for this meeting to enable Council to take formal action on agenda items scheduled for this work session.



County of Los Alamos

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Staff Report

January 14, 2025

Agenda No.: B.

Index (Council Goals): Quality Governance - Fiscal Stewardship

Presenters: Anne Laurent, County Manager, Helen Perraglio, Administrative Services Director and Erika Thomas, Budget and Performance Manager

Legislative File: 19562-25

Title

Discussion and Possible Action on FY2026 Budget Guidance

Recommended Action

I move that Council endorse the recommended FY2026 budget guidance presented.

County Manager's Recommendation

The County Manager recommends that Council endorse the budget guidance as requested.

Body

The County Manager has worked with budget staff to develop preliminary guidance which has been distributed to Department Heads to begin developing the FY2026 budget. The presentation in Attachment A will go over that guidance along with an overview for discussion. An updated FY25 budget projection along with an updated 10 year budget projection is included in Attachment B for purposes of this discussion. This projection is based on the best available data at this time, and is subject to change prior to budget hearings.

Staff would like to reach concurrence on the preliminary guidance as parameters for budget development.

Alternatives

Council could choose not to endorse the guidance and provide further recommendations, however during the budget development cycle, staff will rely on the guidance provided.

Fiscal and Staff Impact/Planned Item

Fiscal impact is provided in the presentation.

Attachments

A - Budget FY2026 Guidance Presentation

B - Updated General Fund Projection



FY26 Budget Guidance Agenda



1. Budget Prep Timeline
2. Preliminary Departmental Budget Guidance FY2026 Overview
3. Updated Financial Projection
4. Suggested Budget Guidance



Budget Prep Timeline FY26



Budget Comparison
Worksheets Distributed
through 1/30/2025

IDC's and
Position Control 1/7/2025

Budget Development by Departments
& Finance January - February 2025

CMO & Department
Budget Review Meetings
2/4 – 2/27/2025

Department Summary
Documents to Finance by
Monday, 3/3/2025

Budget Hearing Ad to Media by
Monday, 3/24/2025 and Published by
Thursday, 3/27/2025

Proposed Budget
Book
Published by
3/31/2025

Budget Hearings
April 21nd & 22nd
April 28th & 29th
2025



Preliminary Guidance FY2026



1. Year 2 of Biennial Budget FY2025/26
2. The focus is on development for FY2026
3. Guidance to remain within the FY 26 Biennial Projected Amount (3% General Fund and 3-5% other funds driven by other sources)
 1. Non-Union Salary Adjustment +6%
(3% Structure and 2% Merit, 1% Other)
 2. Union Salary Adjustments (in accordance with CBAs)
 3. Group Health Adjustment +5%
 4. Interdepartmental Costs +10% (5% Fleet and 15% General Liability Insurance)
 5. Other Non-Labor +3%



Budget Option Guidelines FY2026



1. Generally – Keep requests to absolute necessary (considering status of unspent funds, carryovers and encumbrances)
2. FTE requests will be more limited than past few years, if any
3. Tie requests to Council goals and strategic priorities



Updated Financial Projection



1. GRT ended higher than projected in FY24 primarily due to non-recurring projected increases in capital spending from primary taxpayer
2. Assumptions associated with GRT decline re-confirmed and may be more acute
3. Expenditure assumptions are within normal inflationary growth.
(3% General Fund and 3-5% other funds driven by other sources)
4. Projected need for GRT Increment remains FY 2027 and CY 2026 action



Suggested Budget Guidance FY2026



1. Guidance to remain within the FY 26 Biennial Projected Amount (3% General Fund and 3-5% other funds driven by other sources)
 - a. Non-Union Salary Adjustment +3%
(3% Structure and 2% Merit and 1% other)
 - b. Union Salary Adjustments (in accordance with CBAs)
 - c. Group Health Adjustment +5%
 - d. Interdepartmental Costs +10% (5% Fleet and 15% Liability Insurance)
 - e. Other Non-Labor +3%
 - f. $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ cent GRT increment consideration before July 1, 2026, to support Capital Plan and future operational budgets
2. Preliminary Council support of FY 2026 budget guidance is requested

GENERAL FUND BUDGET SUMMARY PROJECTED

GENERAL FUND BUDGET 10 - YEAR UPDATED PROJECTION - FOR PURPOSES OF DISCUSSION (UNAUDITED)

	FY2025 Adopted	FY2025 Projected	\$ Variance FY2025 Adopted vs Projected	% Variance FY2025 Adopted vs Projected	FY2025 Projected	FY2026 Projected	FY2027 Projected	FY2028 Projected	FY2029 Projected	FY2030 Projected	FY2031 Projected	FY2032 Projected	FY2033 Projected	FY2034 Projected
Beginning Fund Balance														
Nonspendable	\$ 2,351,751	2,351,751	-	0.0%	2,351,751	2,406,751	2,406,751	2,406,751	2,406,751	2,406,751	2,406,751	2,406,751	2,406,751	2,406,751
Restricted for Cash Requirements	9,675,930	11,183,121	1,507,191	14.9%	11,183,121	8,075,902	8,447,870	8,829,018	9,098,159	9,426,365	9,714,212	10,010,857	10,298,934	10,611,488
Other Restricted/Assigned	16,050,000	27,841,968	11,791,968	83.1%	27,841,968	16,050,000	16,050,000	16,050,000	16,050,000	16,050,000	16,050,000	16,050,000	16,050,000	16,050,000
Unassigned	39,077,809	59,542,731	20,464,922	39.3%	59,542,731	52,206,583	28,282,829	15,530,705	3,858,906	(4,072,095)	(9,889,912)	(13,581,290)	(15,040,066)	(16,156,788)
Total beginning fund balance	67,155,490	100,919,571	33,764,081	43.0%	100,919,571	78,739,236	55,187,450	42,816,474	31,413,816	23,811,021	18,281,051	14,886,318	13,715,619	12,911,451
Revenues														
Gross Receipts Taxes	100,106,000	77,390,000	(22,716,000)	-22.7%	77,390,000	79,682,000	89,488,000	92,158,000	94,261,000	97,089,000	100,003,000	103,008,000	106,094,000	109,278,000
Property Taxes	9,153,817	9,153,817	-	0.0%	9,153,817	9,428,432	9,711,284	10,002,623	10,302,702	10,611,783	10,930,136	11,258,040	11,595,782	11,943,655
Interdepartmental Charges	14,575,287	14,575,287	-	0.0%	14,575,287	15,064,420	15,547,590	16,063,216	17,181,719	17,755,416	18,348,200	18,757,546	19,361,581	19,942,429
Investment Income	2,542,563	2,542,563	-	0.0%	2,542,563	2,422,000	1,716,000	1,344,000	1,002,000	774,000	608,000	507,000	522,210	537,876
Grants	1,368,592	1,368,592	-	0.0%	1,368,592	1,409,650	1,451,940	1,495,498	1,540,363	1,586,574	1,634,171	1,683,196	1,733,692	1,785,703
User Charges	2,420,112	2,420,112	-	0.0%	2,420,112	2,470,112	2,520,112	2,570,112	2,620,112	2,670,112	2,720,112	2,770,112	2,853,215	2,938,811
Other	1,202,976	1,202,976	-	0.0%	1,202,976	1,239,065	1,276,237	1,314,524	1,353,960	1,394,579	1,436,416	1,479,508	1,523,893	1,569,610
Total Revenues	131,369,347	108,653,347	(22,716,000)	-17.3%	108,653,347	111,715,679	121,711,163	124,947,973	128,261,856	131,881,463	135,680,035	139,463,402	143,684,373	147,996,084
Transfers from other funds	5,110,237	5,110,237	-	0.0%	5,110,237	3,288,000	3,411,000	3,513,000	3,593,000	3,701,000	3,812,000	3,927,000	4,044,000	4,166,000
Total sources of funds	\$ 203,635,074	214,683,155	11,048,081	5%	214,683,155	193,742,915	180,309,613	171,277,447	163,268,672	159,393,484	157,773,086	158,276,720	161,443,991	165,073,535
Expenditures														
County Council	\$ 428,753	343,002	(85,751)	-20.0%	343,002	353,292	363,891	374,808	386,052	397,634	409,563	421,850	434,506	447,541
County Assessor	622,192	497,754	(124,438)	-20.0%	497,754	512,686	528,067	543,909	560,226	577,033	594,344	612,174	630,539	649,455
County Clerk	1,118,480	937,046	(181,434)	-16.2%	937,046	965,157	994,112	1,023,935	1,054,653	1,086,293	1,118,882	1,152,448	1,187,021	1,222,632
County Sheriff	17,512	14,010	(3,502)	-20.0%	14,010	14,430	14,863	15,309	15,768	16,241	16,728	17,230	17,747	18,279
Municipal Court	689,407	551,526	(137,881)	-20.0%	551,526	568,071	585,113	602,666	620,746	639,368	658,549	678,305	698,654	719,614
Probate Court	9,278	9,278	-	0.0%	9,278	9,556	9,843	10,138	10,442	10,755	11,078	11,410	11,752	12,105
County Manager	9,585,986	12,835,870	3,249,884	33.9%	12,835,870	12,654,446	13,034,079	13,425,101	13,827,854	14,242,690	14,669,971	15,110,070	15,563,372	16,030,273
County Attorney	1,437,337	1,245,070	(192,267)	-13.4%	1,245,070	1,024,922	1,055,670	1,087,340	1,119,960	1,153,559	1,188,166	1,223,811	1,260,525	1,298,341
Administrative Services	14,052,614	12,182,715	(1,869,899)	-13.3%	12,182,715	12,548,197	12,924,643	13,312,382	13,711,753	14,123,106	14,546,799	14,983,203	15,432,699	15,895,680
Community Development	6,153,792	11,719,077	5,565,285	90.4%	11,719,077	12,070,649	12,432,768	12,805,751	13,189,924	13,585,622	13,993,191	14,412,987	14,845,377	15,290,738
Community Services	17,985,120	14,752,270	(3,232,850)	-18.0%	14,752,270	15,194,838	15,650,683	16,120,203	16,603,809	17,101,923	17,614,981	18,143,430	18,687,733	19,248,365
Fire	9,337,438	7,684,149	(1,653,289)	-17.7%	7,684,149	10,707,668	11,061,437	11,444,528	12,450,996	12,885,198	13,334,381	13,587,433	14,038,086	14,459,229
Police	15,741,260	13,124,142	(2,617,118)	-16.6%	13,124,142	13,182,420	13,577,892	13,985,229	14,404,786	14,836,930	15,282,038	15,740,499	16,212,714	16,699,095
Public Works	19,292,068	21,014,913	1,722,845	8.9%	21,014,913	21,568,110	23,715,153	24,426,608	25,159,406	25,914,188	26,691,614	27,492,362	28,317,133	29,166,647
Total Expenditures	96,471,237	96,910,820	439,583	0.45%	96,910,820	101,374,442	105,948,214	109,177,907	113,116,375	116,570,540	120,130,285	123,587,212	127,337,858	131,157,994
Transfers to other funds	30,333,099	39,033,099	8,700,000	28.7%	39,033,099	37,181,023	31,544,925	30,685,724	26,341,276	24,541,893	22,756,484	20,973,889	21,194,682	22,040,982
Ending fund balance														
Nonspendable	2,406,751	2,406,751	-	0.0%	2,406,751	2,406,751	2,406,751	2,406,751	2,406,751	2,406,751	2,406,751	2,406,751	2,406,751	2,406,751
Restricted for Cash Requirements	8,039,270	8,075,902	36,632	0.5%	8,075,902	8,447,870	8,829,018	9,098,159	9,426,365	9,714,212	10,010,857	10,298,934	10,611,488	10,929,833
Other Restricted/Assigned	16,050,000	16,050,000	-	0.0%	16,050,000	16,050,000	16,050,000	16,050,000	16,050,000	16,050,000	16,050,000	16,050,000	16,050,000	16,050,000
Unassigned	50,334,717	52,206,583	1,871,866	3.7%	52,206,583	28,282,829	15,530,705	3,858,906	(4,072,095)	(9,889,912)	(13,581,290)	(15,040,066)	(16,156,788)	(17,512,025)
Ending fund balance	76,830,738	78,739,236	1,908,498	2.5%	78,739,236	55,187,450	42,816,474	31,413,816	23,811,021	18,281,051	14,886,318	13,715,619	12,911,451	11,874,559
Total uses of funds	\$ 203,635,074	214,683,155	11,048,081	5.4%	214,683,155	193,742,915	180,309,613	171,277,447	163,268,672	159,393,484	157,773,086	158,276,720	161,443,991	165,073,535
Operating Surplus / (Shortfall)	\$ 9,675,248	(22,180,335)	(31,855,583)	329%	(22,180,335)	(23,551,786)	(12,370,976)	(11,402,658)	(7,602,795)	(5,529,970)	(3,394,733)	(1,170,699)	(804,168)	(1,036,892)
Unassigned as a % of Revenue	38.32%	48.05%	9.73%	25.40%	48.05%	25.32%	12.76%	3.09%	-3.17%	-7.50%	-10.01%	-10.78%	-11.24%	-11.83%
Unassigned Target (20% of Rev)	26,273,869	21,730,669	(4,543,200)	-17.29%	21,730,669	22,343,136	24,342,233	24,989,595	25,652,371	26,376,293	27,136,007	27,892,680	28,736,875	29,599,217
\$ over (under) target	24,060,848	30,475,914	6,415,066	26.66%	30,475,914	5,939,693	(8,811,527)	(21,130,689)	(29,724,467)	(36,266,205)	(40,717,298)	(42,932,747)	(44,893,662)	(47,111,242)



County of Los Alamos

Los Alamos, NM 87544
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Staff Report

January 14, 2025

Agenda No.: C.
Index (Council Goals): Environmental Stewardship - Natural Resource Protection
Presenters: County Council
Legislative File: 19601-25

Title

Continuation of the Discussion and Possible Action of a Draft Wildlife Feeding Ordinance

Recommended Action

I move that Council direct the County Manager to implement the draft ordinance changes and return to Council with a revised ordinance prohibiting the feeding of wildlife in the County.

OR

I move that Council consider additional input and analysis as specified [insert detail] before returning to Council with a revised ordinance prohibiting the feeding of wildlife in the County.

County Manager's Recommendation

The County Manager recommends that Council approve the motion requested.

Body

On December 12, 2023, County Council discussed the draft Wildlife Feeding Ordinance and reviewed community feedback. County Council reviewed, discussed and approved the 2024 Wildlife Education Plan, in lieu of an ordinance, and requested an update one year following the approval and implementation.

On December 17, 2024, County Council passed a motion that directed the County Manager to return to Council with an ordinance prohibiting the feeding of wildlife in the County, with further consideration of how the local enforcement is coordinated with the New Mexico Game and Fish Department.

This item before Council, is the updated draft ordinance for further Council discussion and consideration. It has been revised to accommodate Council and public comments that have been received to date. If Council supports it, the ordinance will have to return to Council as an Introduction and Public Hearing.

Alternatives

Council could choose not to pursue a new ordinance consideration or direct the County Manager to gather further public input.

Fiscal and Staff Impact/Unplanned Item

Fiscal impacts have not been evaluated. The Public Information staff has spent four to six hours weekly this past year on this topic.

Attachments

A - Revised Draft Wildlife Feeding Ordinance

INCORPORATED COUNTY OF LOS ALAMOS CODE ORDINANCE 02-###

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 6, ARTICLE I, ADDING SECTION 6-21 TO THE CODE OF THE INCORPORATED COUNTY OF LOS ALAMOS PROHIBITING THE FEEDING OF ~~WATERFOWL AND~~ WILD ANIMALS

WHEREAS, the feeding of wild animals increases the potential for damage to public parks and private property; and

WHEREAS, the feeding of wild animals elevates the potential for the spread of disease in people and companion animals; and

WHEREAS, the feeding of wild animals attracts these animals to more populated areas, leading to vehicle collisions; and

WHEREAS, wildlife studies have shown that feeding wild animals can interrupt their normal migration patterns, ~~can~~ make wild animals more aggressive in demanding food, cause nutritional problems, expose them to danger by eliminating their natural fear of predators and humans and promote the spread of diseases and disease-carrying parasites; and

WHEREAS, the Council of the Incorporated County of Los Alamos finds that the health, safety, and welfare of the community and its wildlife is protected by prohibiting the feeding of wild animals on public and private property within the boundaries of the Incorporated County of Los Alamos.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE INCORPORATED COUNTY OF LOS ALAMOS, as follows:

Section 1. Section 6-21 Feeding of Wild Animals Prohibited is added as follows:

Sec. 6-21. Feeding of Wild Animals Prohibited

(a) Purpose. The intent of this Section is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the community and its wildlife by prohibiting the feeding of wild animals on public and private property within the boundaries of the Incorporated County of Los Alamos. The feeding of wild animals increases the potential for damage to public parks and private property. It also elevates the potential for the spread of disease in people and companion animals. In addition, it is the intent of this Section to protect the welfare of wild animals themselves. Wildlife studies have shown that feeding wild animals can interrupt their normal migration patterns, ~~can~~ make them more aggressive in demanding food, cause nutritional problems, expose them to danger by eliminating their natural fear of predators and humans and promote the spread of diseases and disease-carrying parasites.

(b) Definitions.

As used in this Section, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

Feed. To give, place, expose, deposit, distribute or scatter any edible material which is intended to ~~can~~ be utilized for consumption by wild animals. Feeding does not include baiting for the legal taking of fish and/or game.

Person. Any individual, corporation, company, partnership, firm, association, or political subdivision of this state subject to county jurisdiction.

Wild Animal. Any animal that is wild by nature and cannot normally be domesticated or controlled; including any animal regulated by the New Mexico Department of Game, the United States Fish and Wildlife, and/or the United States Department of Agriculture, including but not limited to bears, coyotes, bobcats, cougars, deer, ~~feral cats,~~ foxes, groundhogs, squirrels, chipmunks, mice, ~~rats,~~ rabbits, ~~opossums,~~ raccoons, skunks, ~~but does not include songbirds and other common birds for purposes of this Ordinance.~~

(c) Prohibitions.

No person shall purposely or knowingly, feed or in any manner provide access to food to any wild animal within the corporate limits of the county, on lands either publicly or privately owned. Feeding does not include baiting in the legal taking of fish and/or game.

(d) Exception.

Purposely and knowingly feeding songbirds or other common birds by any means, including the use of birdfeeders shall not constitute a violation of this ordinance.

~~(d)~~ (e) Violation and Enforcement.

Any violation of the prohibitions in this Section is unlawful and shall be subject to a fine of not less than \$25 ~~and~~ for the first violation and not less than \$100 or more than \$750 for the second and each subsequent violation. ~~Each ongoing day of the violation(s) shall constitute a separate offense. In addition to the financial penalties so provided.~~

Section 2. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall become effective _____, 202~~5~~3.

Section 3. Severability. Should any section, paragraph, clause or provision of this ordinance, for any reason, be held to be invalid or unenforceable, the invalidity or unenforceability of such section, paragraph, clause or provision shall not affect any of the remaining provisions of this ordinance.

Section 4. Repealer. All ordinances or resolutions, or parts thereof, inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed only to the extent of such inconsistency. This repealer shall not be construed to revive any ordinance or resolution, or part thereof, heretofore repealed.

ADOPTED this ___ day of _____ 202~~5~~3.

**COUNCIL OF THE INCORPORATED
COUNTY OF LOS ALAMOS**

Council Chair

ATTEST: (SEAL)

Los Alamos County Clerk

DRAFT



County of Los Alamos

Los Alamos, NM 87544
www.losalamosnm.us

Staff Report

January 14, 2025

Agenda No.: D.

Index (Council Goals): Economic Vitality - Local Business; Economic Vitality - Downtown Revitalization

Presenters: County Council, Theresa Cull, Council Chair and Anne Laurent, County Manager

Legislative File: 19598-25

Title

Discussion and Possible Action on Council Engagement with Small Business Community

Recommended Action

I move that Council take the following steps to engage with the small business community: _____

Body

In the recently approved 2025 Strategic Leadership Plan, the strategic goal for Economic Vitality includes an objective that focuses on Local Business. This objective states, "Encourage the retention of existing businesses, facilitate the startup of new businesses, and assist in the opportunities for business growth." Also, the results of the National Community Survey (NCS) that was administered by Polco in 2024 indicated that several ratings related to the local economy and businesses remained lower than the national benchmark, including:

- Overall quality of business and service establishments
- The variety of business and service establishments
- The vibrancy of downtown/commercial area
- Shopping opportunities

To address the strategic goal and begin to address the results of the NCS, Council would like to discuss how to improve their engagement with the local business community. There are many options that may be considered.

A Council Working Group could be established. Per the Council Procedural Rules, "Council working groups may only engage in fact finding; only make non-binding recommendations to the Council; and may represent the County in outside matters to ensure that the adopted policies of the Council are voiced and/or executed." The Council Chair may create a Working Group "by requesting that no more than three (3) Councilors, and as appropriate, community members and other advisors or experts, participate when advice on a subject or range of subjects is needed..."

A task force dedicated to this topic could also be created. In this case, Council and staff would need to create a charter that defines the work of the task force, number of members, term, and timeframe for any desired interim or final reports. Once Council has approved the charter, then letters of interest would be solicited, and Council would select members of the

task force and appoint them at a Council meeting.

Another option would be for the Chair to appoint no more than three (3) Councilors to established group or organization working in this area. In this case, the Councilors assigned would report back to Council on the group's efforts and activities.

Council's recommended action would give the Council leadership and the County Manager direction on how to proceed in this area.

Fiscal and Staff Impact/Unplanned Item

The fiscal and staff impact of any action taken by Council would need to be evaluated, based on the option selected by Council.



County of Los Alamos

Los Alamos, NM 87544
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Staff Report

January 14, 2025

Agenda No.: E.
Index (Council Goals): Quality Governance - Communication and Engagement
Presenters: County Council and Randall Ryti, Councilor
Legislative File: 19600-25

Title

Discussion and Possible Action on Potential Ordinances to Consider in 2025

Recommended Action

For each potential ordinance:

I move that Council direct the County Manager to remand an ordinance on _____ to the _____ Board/Commission/Task Force/Working Group and ask that the group provide a recommendation.

OR

I move that Council support _____ ordinance(s) and further specify the engagement and input process specific to each ordinance.

OR

I move that Council not support an ordinance on _____.

Body

In previous Council and staff discussions, several potential ordinances have been discussed. It was requested by Councilor Ryti to bring to Council several ordinances to discuss and decide on the path forward for each one. These ordinances include ones that have had some prior Council discussions and public engagement including: charging a fee for single-use plastics; discouraging vacant and abandoned properties; and raising the minimum wage. A brief history of these ordinances is below.

Single-use plastics

The effort to address plastic bag use in Los Alamos began in 2015 with a citizen petition to ban single-use plastic bags and impose a \$0.10 fee on paper bags. After public meetings and surveys, where 80% opposed a ban and 72% opposed reducing distribution, the Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB) recommended education over regulation. In 2019, another petition sought to ban plastic bags, straws, and Styrofoam, prompting the County Council to form a subcommittee. By FY2021 budget process, Council actions focused on education campaigns, funding washable utensils for schools, and a feasibility study on food composting, but no plastic bag ban was implemented.

Vacant and abandoned properties

Council sponsored a town hall focused on a possible ordinance on commercial vacant properties on January 24, 2022. The public hearing for this ordinance, based on a similar ordinance in Raton, NM, was brought to the Council on February 1, 2022. The ordinance (Ordinance No. 02-323) provided vacant commercial building registration, fees associated with registration, as well as an enforcement mechanism. At that meeting, action was that **“Council refer back to county staff for further consideration or evaluation”** the Ordinance No. 02-323.

Raising the minimum wage

Prompted by a presentation from local students recommending that the Council raise the local minimum wage, the Council held a public town hall on June 26, 2023. The Los Alamos Chamber of Commerce developed two surveys to solicit feedback from local businesses. The Chamber and Los Alamos MainStreet held a public forum on January 22, 2024. Ordinance No. 02-347 was created and it set local minimum wage of \$15.00, for tipped workers of \$3.75, for student workers of \$13.50. The public hearing for Ordinance No. 02-347 was held on February 6, 2024 and the motion to amend the ordinance and adopt it failed by a vote of 3-4.

For these three ordinances, discussion should include whether Council supports any changes to previous draft ordinances, needs additional feedback from Council Boards, or other action.

The other ordinances that are also in some form of development and outreach are: traffic cameras to address speeding; hands free only cell phone use while driving; and prohibiting feeding of deer, bears, and similar wildlife. The last item is being discussed in another item at this meeting. For the other ordinances including but not limited to the ones listed, discussion should include what problem is being addressed by the potential ordinance and what feedback and outreach is desired prior to consideration of the ordinance.

Although possible "Recommended Action" are given, they are suggestions, and Council has the ability to draft their desired action during the meeting.

Fiscal and Staff Impact/Unplanned Item

Fiscal and staff impacts will need to be evaluated for each ordinance.