

# Los Alamos Resiliency, Energy and Sustainability Task Force

Interim Report to County Council  
August 2021

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# I. Personnel

## **Los Alamos County Councilors**

Randall Ryti, Chair

James Robinson, Vice-Chair

Christine Chandler

Denise Derkacs

David Izraelevitz

David Reagor

Sarah Scott

Sean Williams

## **Task Force Members**

Katie Leonard, Chair

Robert Gibson, Vice Chair

Sue Barns

Elizabeth Daly

Suzie Havemann

Chick Keller

Roy Michelotti

Heidi Rogers

Steve Tobin

## **Community Subcommittee Members**

Lia Brodnax (Natural Gas Reduction/Community Planning & Zoning)

Skip Dunn (Community Planning & Zoning/Natural Gas Reduction)

Ben Hill (Natural Gas Reduction/Community Planning & Zoning)

Jack Kennison (Waste, Consumption & Natural Resources)

Daniel Leonard (Electricity Supply & Demand)

Dina Pesenson (Waste, Consumption & Natural Resources)

Oral Saulters (Waste, Consumption & Natural Resources)

Greg White (Natural Gas Reduction/Community Planning & Zoning)

## **Los Alamos County Staff**

Angelica Gurule, Environmental Services Manager

Anne Laurent, Director of Public Works

Amy Danforth, LAC Senior Office Specialist

# II. Los Alamos Resiliency, Energy and Sustainability (RES) Task Force Charter

## I. Purpose

The Los Alamos Resiliency, Energy and Sustainability Task Force (“Task Force”) was initiated through an action of the County Council on December 15, 2020, when the Council formally accepted the Citizen Petition requesting action. The Task Force will serve as an advisory body to the County Council for the purpose of recommending ways for the County as a whole, including government, businesses, and residents, to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions and advance other sustainable practices in the face of climate change. This will be a working committee; members will be responsible for collaborating with each other and Los Alamos County stakeholders.

## II. Scope of Work

The Task Force will build a comprehensive resiliency, energy, and sustainability “white paper” or strategic plan. This plan will present specific, measurable, achievable, and timely recommendations for how Los Alamos can achieve or exceed the goals set forward by our governor in the New Mexico Climate Change Executive Order 2019 which complies with the 2015 Paris Agreement. We expect this comprehensive plan to include Los Alamos community recommendations while incorporating the goals and work that is being undertaken in other cities in New Mexico that are seriously tackling these issues. The subjects addressed by the report will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Consolidate current global, federal, state, and local greenhouse gas (GHG) goals, mandates, and recommendations.
  - Review, validate, and expand as necessary existing data and analyses of GHG emissions associated with primary fuels (coal, natural gas, and petroleum).
  - Study and recommend County government policy and other steps to phase out use of natural gas consistent with Department of Public Utilities conservation goals.
  - Study and recommend practices to reduce energy use.
  - Study and recommend practices for other sectors (e.g., building design and planning) as time permits and information is available.
  - Study and quantify economic impacts of the adoption of recommended practices and policies in terms of initial investment and costs over time.
- Make recommendations to apply all of the above to the County as a whole.

The Task Force will present an interim report of their findings and recommendations by August 1, 2021, with final recommendations, including public commentary and input, by February 1, 2022.

### III. Task Force Representation

The Task Force will be composed of volunteers and is open to all County residents and County staff who are interested in producing a comprehensive “white paper” for the County. The ideal representation will include at-large community members and current or former representatives or liaisons from the following boards: Environmental Sustainability Board, the Board of Public Utilities, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the Transportation Board. One member of the County Council and the Los Alamos County Manager or designee will serve as liaisons to the Task Force. The total number of members shall not exceed nine (9) persons. Task Force members will be individually appointed by the County Council after having submitted letters of interest.

### IV. Charter and Member Term

The term of this Charter shall be for shall be for THREE HUNDRED AND NINETY (390) days from the date this Charter is adopted, and the term of each member shall run until the term of the Charter expires. If during the term of the Charter a member resigns or is otherwise unable to serve, Council shall appoint a new member to fill that member’s remaining term.

### V. Quorum

A quorum of the Task Force is defined as a simple majority of the appointed Task Force members. Task Force actions can be taken and considered valid only if a quorum has been established at the meeting. Information can be shared during a meeting even if a quorum is not established.

### VI. Resources

The County will provide a staff project manager responsible for coordinating the Task Force in its exploration and development of implementation actions including meeting logistics and other needs. Other County staff will be available based upon identified needs or specific topics of discussion but all staff members will be non-voting members of the Task Force.

### VII. Meetings

Meeting dates and frequency will be established by the Task Force and County staff. A Chair and Vice Chair shall also be appointed at the first meeting. Action minutes shall be made and kept for each meeting of the Task Force. The public shall be given notice of any meeting of the Task Force at least 72 hours in advance of any meeting through coordination with the County's Public Information Officer. All meetings may be attended by the public, who will be permitted and encouraged to comment.

#### VIII. Subcommittees

The Task Force may form subcommittees as needed. These may include content experts and interested parties. Subcommittee reports will be available to the public and presented to the full Task Force. All recommendations to the County Council should be that of the full Task Force, as indicated by a majority vote of Task Force members. The subcommittees may include persons not otherwise identified as a member of the Task Force. However, subcommittee membership does not convey an ability to vote on any recommendations. Subcommittee formation may be for the purpose of research, education, and outreach.



Open Space on North Mesa

### III. Interim Report Executive Summary

This interim report contains the 6 sections of recommendations: General Recommendations and recommendations in the areas of Community Planning & Zoning, Electricity Supply and Demand, Natural Gas Reduction, Transportation & Mobility, and Waste, Consumption & Natural Resources.

GoogleDocs Formatting issue:

Each recommendation, or set of recommendations, will include the following: Time Frame, Background and Research/Data, Outcome, Case Study (if appropriate), Tactics to Achieve Outcome, Impact and Examples in Other Communities, Economic Impact, Benefits Other than CO<sub>2</sub> Reduction, Challenges & Anticipated Barriers, Community Outreach/Public Education/Educational Materials, and References/Resources

DO WE NEED THIS? General Recommendations including creating a permanent board to support Climate Change Resiliency and a permanent County position to facilitate this great task. We also recommend that the County perform a baseline GHG emission study and, based on the data gathered, create a Climate Change Action Plan with emissions reductions targets. These will be reviewed on an annual basis and the Plan should be updated (if needed) every 5 years.

Community Planning & Zoning

Electricity Supply and Demand

Natural Gas Reduction

## IV. Introduction

Communities all around the world, large and small, are creating action plans to address Climate Change. The recommendations outlined in this interim report are based on research and data, and follow recommendations and policies that other nations, cities, and towns are adopting.

We have taken into account our unique location and population: a high-altitude, mountainous desert location with a fairly stable population (in terms of numbers) composed of highly educated citizens and their families. The major employer for most residents is Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL or “The Lab”). While we recognize that the County has no jurisdiction over LANL, we cannot completely ignore its presence or its impact on our community.

The remote location and lack of shopping and services in the county means that residents regularly go “off the Hill,” to Espanola or Santa Fe, for their needs, resulting in more driving than others who live in a location with more amenities.

Our intention in submitting these recommendations is for the County and its employees and residents to do our part to slow Climate Change in our area and to create a resiliency plan to address how our natural environment will change over the coming decades. This community has already been significantly impacted by wildfire. We do not wish for any future crisis to ruin lives or our beautiful natural surroundings and the wildlife within them.

As the future unfolds, we will all need to “do our bit” to stem the tide of Climate Change, as individuals, as families, as employees, and as a community. This will mean changing some of our behaviors and sacrificing some of our luxuries, comforts, and conveniences. These changes will take consistent and dedicated community education and outreach. It will take planning, effort, and people power.

New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham acknowledges that Climate Change is happening and is human-caused, and has set ambitious Climate Change Action Goals in Executive Order (EO) 2019-003 ([https://www.governor.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/EO\\_2019-003.pdf](https://www.governor.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/EO_2019-003.pdf)):

- Supporting the Paris Agreement Goals
- Reducing New Mexico GHG emissions by 45% by 2030 (as compared to 2005 levels)
- Creating a New Mexico Climate Change Task Force
- Increasing energy efficiency standards for electric utilities
- Creating a New Mexico Climate Strategy document

President Joe Biden has also called for major change on a short time scale. On April 22, 2021, President Biden set new target reduction goals at 50-52% (from 2005) by 2030, as well as reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050. This goal includes reaching 100% carbon pollution-free electricity by 2035. This means everyone, government, industry, residents, consumers, communities large and small, urban and rural, will need to make major changes and cutbacks to their Greenhouse Gas emissions.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/04/22/fact-sheet-president-biden-sets-2030-greenhouse-gas-pollution-reduction-target-aimed-at-creating-good-paying-union-jobs-and-securing-u-s-leadership-on-clean-energy-technologies/>

Similar communities to ours, such as Park City, UT, have very ambitious climate goals:



Park City has made North America's most ambitious climate goals: to be net-zero carbon and run on 100% renewable electricity for city operations by 2022, and for the whole community by 2030. These goals, passed unanimously by City Council with strong community support, are not just aspirational but achievable.

Our high level strategies are:



Photo from the Park City, UT sustainability website: <https://www.parkcity.org/departments/sustainability>

Telluride, CO, has completed a baseline GHG inventory and will soon be starting the process of setting climate mitigation targets through a Climate Action Plan (CAP):

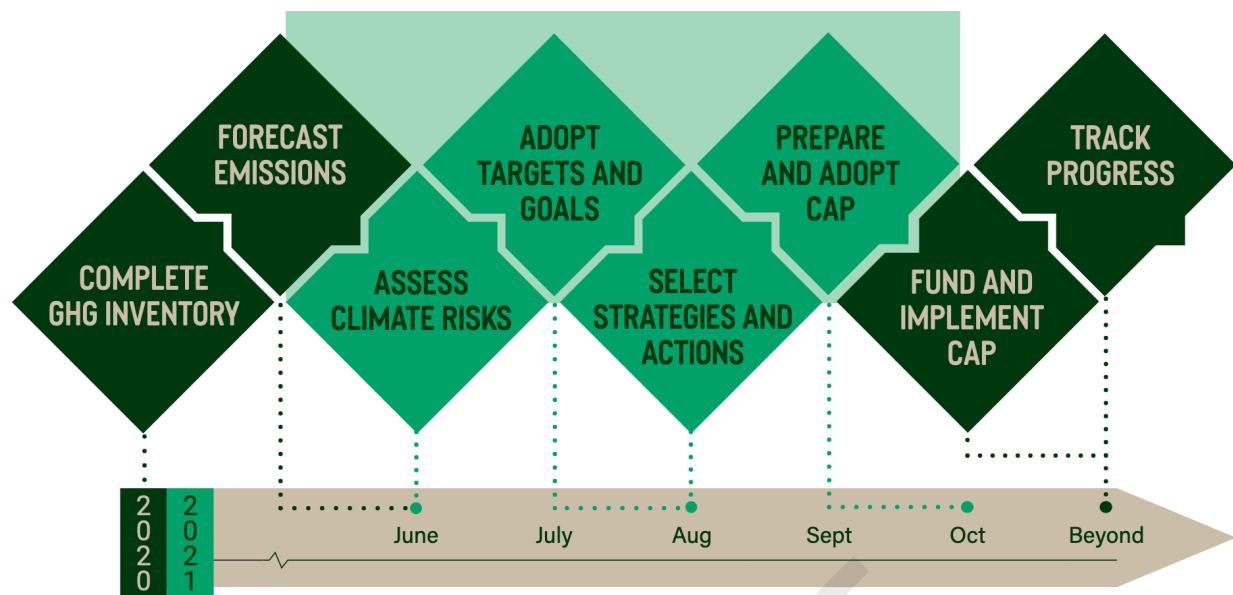


Photo from Telluride's Climate Action Plan Fact Sheet website:

[https://mcusercontent.com/45794dd4deb0a48d92b415574/files/db86a259-d6c2-6dcb-7cd6-be4f41ac845e/Town\\_of\\_Telluride\\_CAP\\_Factsheet\\_FNL\\_6.25.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/45794dd4deb0a48d92b415574/files/db86a259-d6c2-6dcb-7cd6-be4f41ac845e/Town_of_Telluride_CAP_Factsheet_FNL_6.25.pdf)

Since its founding, Los Alamos has been an innovator, a leader, and a hub of scientific research. We must continue to lead the way to address Climate Change and create a sustainable future for generations to come. We, too, must create a Climate Change Resiliency Action Plan. Without a stable and safe future, our children, grandchildren, and their children and grandchildren will not be able to thrive as we have. Making significant progress against Climate Change will take every stakeholder in our community: the County, the Lab, the Schools, local businesses, and residents. As the saying goes, we need to “think globally, act locally.”

Note: The research effort for each subcommittee's focus areas (as well as General Recommendations) has been undertaken by one or two members of WCNR, and the recommendations below reflect various stages of completion. All recommendations are subject to further modification, addition or elimination as subcommittee work continues through 2021.

## V. Glossary of Terms

ACT - Atomic City Transit

CAP – Climate Action Plan

CSCNM - Coalition of Sustainable Communities New Mexico

EV - Electric Vehicle

GHG - Greenhouse Gas(es)

GHGP - Greenhouse Gas Protocol

LAC - Los Alamos County

LANL - Los Alamos National Laboratory

LAPS - Los Alamos Public Schools

LARES - Los Alamos Resiliency, Energy and Sustainability (Task Force)

RTD - Regional Transit District

SOV - Single-Occupant Vehicle

T-Board - Transportation Board

## VI. General Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Create a permanent Resiliency, Energy and Sustainability Board. Perhaps the name will change, but the intention should remain the same: we need ongoing oversight and guidance to meet the challenges of the future.

Recommendation 2: Create a permanent staff position at Los Alamos County specifically to oversee this board and its operations and tasks. This person will also be the County liaison to the Consortium of Sustainable Communities New Mexico. This job is too big to attach to any staff member with other responsibilities.

Recommendation 3: Perform a baseline GHG emissions study from which to set reduction targets and other goals. This may be performed “in house” by County staff or may be hired out to a consulting firm.

Recommendation 4: Create a Climate Change and Resiliency Action Plan which includes baseline data, GHG reduction targets, and other climate mitigation strategies, to be updated every 5 years or as needed.

- Most community Climate Action Plans center around what is referred to as the “Triple Bottom Line” of Economics, Environmental Sustainability, Social Justice. These communities calculate their sustainability and resiliency priorities with a score based on these three factors.

Recommendation 5: Produce an Annual Sustainability Report to be presented to County Council and shared with the community. This report should not be a report that “sits on a shelf” on just appears on a website that no one visits. There should be publicity and outreach to residents are aware of its contents, much as the Annual Water Quality Report does. A condensed version (1-2 page) of the report should be made available to all residents.

## XII. Other Communities’ Sustainability Plans

The following list contains examples of sustainability/Climate Change action plans from various communities around the country large and small. We know that we are at the beginning of this journey; many of these plans have been in place for over a decade and have been reworked, modified, and updated based on needs and changes. We expect our plan to be a “living” document which will also be modified and updated as needed.

Albuquerque, NM: <http://www.cabq.gov/sustainability/climate-action-plan>

Bend, OR: <https://www.bendoregon.gov/city-projects/sustainability/-selectview-1>

Boulder, CO: <https://www.pyxeraglobal.org/how-boulder-colorado-created-a-zero-waste-roadmap/>

and <https://www.bouldercounty.org/environment/sustainability/sustainability-plan/>

Eugene, OR: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Z-JHsnHyhy7qHn-8MOaNm57DxSAoAZwN/view>

Fort Collins, CO: <https://www.fcgov.com/sustainability/files/2019-sustainabilityandadaptationplan.pdf>

Hillsboro, OR: <https://www.hillsboro-oregon.gov/departments/city-manager-s-office/sustainability>

Park City, UT: <https://www.parkcity.org/departments/sustainability>

Phoenix, AZ:

<https://www.phoenix.gov/sustainability/goalhttps://www.phoenix.gov/sustainabilitysite/Documents/Final%20COP%202015-16%20Sustainability%20Brochure%2003.27.17.pdf>

Salt Lake City, UT: <https://www.sl.gov/sustainability/climate-positive/>

Santa Fe, NM: [https://www.santafenm.gov/sustainable\\_santa\\_fe\\_plan](https://www.santafenm.gov/sustainable_santa_fe_plan)

Seattle, WA: <https://www.seattle.gov/environment/climate-change/climate-planning/climate-action-plan>

and

[https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Environment/ClimateChange/2013\\_CAP\\_20130612.pdf](https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Environment/ClimateChange/2013_CAP_20130612.pdf)

Sedona, AZ: <https://www.sedonaaz.gov/home/showpublisheddocument?id=40957>

Telluride, CO: [https://mcusercontent.com/45794dd4deb0a48d92b415574/files/db86a259-d6c2-6dcb-7cd6-be4f41ac845e/Town\\_of\\_Telluride\\_CAP\\_Factsheet\\_FNL\\_6.25.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/45794dd4deb0a48d92b415574/files/db86a259-d6c2-6dcb-7cd6-be4f41ac845e/Town_of_Telluride_CAP_Factsheet_FNL_6.25.pdf)

Westminster, CO: <https://www.cityofwestminster.us/Residents/CityServices/Sustainability/SustainabilityPlan>

List of 50 Largest Cities in US Climate Mitigation Plans:

[https://ballotpedia.org/Climate\\_action\\_plans\\_in\\_the\\_50\\_largest](https://ballotpedia.org/Climate_action_plans_in_the_50_largest)

C40 (World’s Biggest Cities Committed to Fighting Climate Change): <https://www.c40.org/other/agenda-for-a-green-and-just-recovery>



View from Navajo Road on Barranca Mesa

### XIII. Other Resources and References

DRAFT

## XIV. Acknowledgements

The LARES Chair and Vice Chair wish to thank all Task Force members for their hard work, research, expertise, experience, and perspectives which all contributed to this document.

All LARES Task Force members wish to thank the Subcommittee members who dedicated so much time and energy to this task. Thank you to the community members who attended meetings and/or communicated questions, concerns, and suggestions to us. Thank you to our family members who supported us in our quest to make the world a better place. Thank you to the County Council for granting our charter and providing us this opportunity.

We particularly wish to thank County Council Chair Randall Ryti, Environmental Services Manager Angelica Gurule, Director of Public Works Anne Laurent. These are incredibly busy people who attended nearly every meeting and provided countless advice, knowledge, resources, and guidance along the way. We could not have done this without your support: thank you.

Thank you, Amy Danforth, for all of your administrative help. Thank you to the Board of Public Utilities, the Transportation Board, the Department of Public Utilities, and all LAC staff members who provided information and data, who answered questions, and who helped bring this report together. We are grateful for your time, knowledge, and help.

A sincere thank you to Deputy Director of Public Works Jon Bulthuis, Head of Department of Public Utilities Philo Shelton, Community Development Director Paul Andrus, Fleet Manager Pete Mondragon, Transit Coordinator Annette Granillo, and Traffic and Streets Manager Juan Rael for your time and assistance.



