



**LOS ALAMOS**

where discoveries are made

## **FY22 Work Plan for Los Alamos County Boards and Commissions**

**Fiscal Year 2022: July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022)**

**Board and Commission Name: Lodgers' Tax Advisory Board**

**Date prepared: May 18, 2021**

**Date approved by Council: June 29, 2021**

**Prepared by: Kelly Stewart**

**This work plan will be accomplished in the following time frame: July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022**

**Chairperson: Stacy Baker**

### **Members and terms:**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Start/End Dates</b>	<b>Term</b>
<b>Linda Deck</b>	<b>12/2/2019 – 12/1/2022</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Katie Bruell</b>	<b>12/2/2018 – 12/1/2021</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Stacy Baker</b>	<b>12/2/2018 – 12/1/2021</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Jack Marshall</b>	<b>12/2/2019 – 12/1/2022</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Matthew Allen</b>	<b>12/2/2017 – 12/1/2022</b>	<b>1</b>

**Department Director: Paul Andrus, Community Development Department**

**Work plan developed in collaboration with Department Director? (Y/N?) Y**

**Staff Liaison: Kelly Stewart**

**Administrative Support provided by: Barbara Lai**

**Council Liaison: David Reagor**

**Reviewed by Council Liaison Y**

**1.0 Provide a brief Summary of your Board or Commission’s activities over the past twelve months. Please describe your Board or Commission’s accomplishments and identify constraints. List any “lessons learned” and identify the greatest challenges faced by the Board or Commission.**

## **PRIORITY PROJECTS**

**A. Short-Term Rentals (a.k.a., “Alternative Lodging” like Airbnb, VRBO) to prepare Los Alamos to leverage the power of the growing short-term lodging industry under new laws and provisions, seeking best practices, policies and processes that benefit short-term rental participants and their lodgers, while generating Lodgers’ Tax revenues.**

- LTAB reviewed the new Lodgers’ Tax Handbook published by the New Mexico Hospitality Association, which clarifies policies and practices, and encourages consistent Lodgers’ Tax collection operations throughout the state.
- LTAB hosted presentations from TOURISM Santa Fe that has been managing the collection of Lodgers’ Tax from short-term rentals for the past decade, as well as the City of Roswell whose council approved an updated Lodgers’ Tax ordinance in August 2020 that allowed Lodgers’ Tax collection from short term rentals to be spent per state legislation passed in 2019 and 2020. County Staff Liaison relayed the information learned to the Community Development Department (CDD).

Although the short-term rental and Lodgers’ Tax ordinance update was originally scheduled to be addressed as part of CDD’s Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan and Development Code Update project initiated in fall 2020, it was decided to recommend and budget a separate study due to the complexity and fluid nature of the legislation’s interpretation, as well as the number of County departments impacted (e.g., CDD, Finance, Attorney’s Office).

- On April 26, 2021, Council approved the FY22 budget that include a \$50,000 budget option for a Lodgers’ Tax-Short-Term Rental Ordinance Study, a separate study that will be designed to update the Lodgers’ Tax ordinance and create a separate ordinance addressing policies regarding short-term rentals.

**B. Tourism Marketing Metrics (Identification, Collection, Analysis, Reporting, Application) to identify and apply metrics that accurately assess the performance and effectiveness of Los Alamos’ tourism marketing products and campaigns and inform tourism marketing content, media investments, and visitor services.**

- LTAB hosted a presentation by See Source, a company that provides subscriptions to visitor data. During most of FY21, both visitor centers and nearly all attractions were closed due to state emergency public health orders in response to COVID.
- Consequently, visitation data was collected but was minimal. The County’s financial reports showed an average 50% year-over-year decrease in Lodgers’ Tax accrued revenues during FY21. The County’s tourism marketing contractor (Griffin and Associates dba Sunny505) scaled back marketing efforts to public relations and social marketing designed to drive visitors to the website and links to virtual content.

- Finding a solution for collecting and managing data that informs the County's tourism marketing efforts and event planning is a priority for the County's economic development division in FY22.

**C. Hospitality Best Practices (e.g., customer service training) to research and recommend standards, best practices and feedback systems for the front-line managers of Los Alamos' hospitality industry.**

- The Visitor Journey A2D customer service/ambassador training for Los Alamos has been the tool selected and supported by LTAB to improve Los Alamos' hospitality services. The Los Alamos Commerce and Development Corporation (LACDC) obtained grant funding to develop the software tool via a grant. Discover Los Alamos (DLA, LACDC's meeting and visitor program) will promote and administer the A2D training.

Originally scheduled to launch in March 2020, DLA hosted a test training session with County and visitor center staff just before the COVID lockdown in mid-March 2020 and the program has been on hold ever since. LTAB members have asked LACDC to restart the program as soon as possible, beginning with front-line tourism and hospitality professionals. DLA has reported that they are waiting for the A2D consultant, Visitor Engagement Academy, to update the software and include COVID-Safe practices.

**D. Outdoor Recreation Tourism**

- This initiative was not identified as an LTAB priority at the outset of FY21, but came to the attention of LTAB via the County's Economic Development Division and Community Services Department who have actively participated with the New Mexico Economic Development Department's (NMEDD) new Outdoor Recreation Division and its efforts to develop an outdoor recreation economy for the state.
- LTAB's acting chair and liaison to the County's Tourism Implementation Task Force (Task Force) served on the Task Force's outdoor recreation work group, formed to learn about the County's current outdoor recreation development plans via CSD and the opportunities provided by the state that align with the outdoor recreation goals established in the Tourism Strategic Plan. At the February 16, 2021 meeting, LTAB hosted a presentation by new Los Alamos resident and new Task Force member Lindsay Mapes who shared her experience starting and operating outdoor recreation businesses in northern New Mexico.
- On April 9, LTAB hosted a special joint meeting with the Task Force featuring a presentation and discussion with NMEDD Outdoor Recreation Division Manager Axie Navas. Based on this research, LTAB submitted two letters of recommendation to Council regarding this issue: a March 23, 2021 letter of recommendation advising Council to direct County staff to conduct a strategic plan for developing an outdoor recreation economy; and an April 9, 2021 letter requesting that Council approve four budget options, including option 38, an Integrated Master Plan proposed by CSD that will include an inventory of outdoor recreation assets and services. Budget option 38 was approved as part of the County's FY22 budget on April 26, 2021.

## **E. LTAB Affiliated Projects**

- **Rural Pathways Project.** All New Mexico Tourism Department grant programs, including the Rural Pathways Project grant, were put on hold during the pandemic (mid-March 2020 through mid-April 2021).
- **Critical Plans Review.** As part of researching the priority projects above, LTAB members reviewed Council's Strategic Leadership Plan, the Tourism Strategic Plan, the Economic Vitality Strategic Plan and sections of the Comprehensive Plan developed by the County's Community Development Department (CDD). LTAB members also participated in CDD's Downtown Master Planning and Development Code public process.
- **Planning Calendar Functionality.** LTAB monitors and provides input regarding the content and functionality of the Los Alamos community's official community calendar, [fyilosamos.com](http://fyilosamos.com), to ensure it is updated, comprehensive and representative of all visitor-oriented events and programs. This is a work in progress. LACDC staff leads this effort to upgrade and improve accessibility for both event marketers and visitors.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE**

- A. LTAB Meetings** – LTAB's scheduled monthly meetings from March through June 2020 were cancelled due to the public health orders issued by the state and the County due to the COVID-19 pandemic. LTAB began meeting virtually via Zoom on July 21, 2020, at which time it approved its FY21 work plan for Council.

## **B. LTAB Membership & Leadership**

- LTAB is mandated by state statute and County code to consist of only five members: 2 lodging representatives, 2 tourism attraction representatives and 1 public at-large representative.
- LTAB started 2020 with a full board, electing lodging representative Jacqueline Shen as Chair and reelecting tourism attraction representative Katie Bruell as Vice Chair.
- In July 2020, both lodging representatives resigned, and Katie Bruell took over as Acting Chair. In September, one of the lodging vacancies was filled with the new general manager from the Holiday Inn who was subsequently elected to Chair and Katie Bruell returned to Vice Chair.
- In December 2020, the lodging representative/chair resigned, leaving both lodging positions vacant; Katie Bruell returned to the acting chair position.
- On March 30, 2021, County Council appointed two lodging representatives to LTAB: Jack Marshall, general manager with the Hampton Inn and Suites in White Rock and Matthew Allen, owner/operator of the Pueblo Canyon Inn and Gallery in Los Alamos.
- On May 18, 2021, LTAB elected Stacy Baker (community at-large representative) as chair and Linda Deck (Bradbury Science Museum director and tourism attraction representative) as vice chair.

- C. **LTAB Workgroups** LTAB and the County Staff Liaison had planned to break into teams of two to focus on the priorities, specifically, Short Term Rentals, Hospitality Best Practices and Tourism Marketing Metrics. However, due to the pandemic, this effort was put on hold.
- D. **LTAB Subcommittee: Tourism Implementation Task Force** Recognizing the alignment and overlap between LTAB and the Task Force’s goals and projects, the long-term timeline of the Tourism Strategic Plan projects, and the temporary nature of the Task Force’s status (“ad hoc”), LTAB is working with County staff and the Task Force members to initiate the process of making the Task Force an official subcommittee of LTAB.
- E. **Training** No training occurred during since the February 2020 Robert’s Rules of Order session.

**2.0 Describe the future work plans for this Board or Commission using the following items and showing the relationship to those items: *(Please remember that Council approval of this work plan does not constitute official Council approval of proposed projects, assignments, or anticipated recommendations included in this work plan that have budget implications.)***

- A. **Short-Term Rentals** (a.k.a., “Alternative Lodging” like *Airbnb, VRBO*)  
Participate in County’s Lodgers’ Tax ordinance update and short-term rental study process, including outreach to the short-term renter community and community at-large. Monitor related activities of the New Mexico Tourism Department, New Mexico Taxation & Revenue Department, New Mexico Hospitality Association, local lodging establishments, local short-term rental community and short-term rental customers. Participate in all existing forums and recommend additional forums to capture feedback and recommend decisions.
- B. **Tourism Marketing Metrics** (*Identification, Collection, Analysis, Reporting, Application*) Work with County to develop a data plan that recommends data collection, analysis and reporting practices to produce metrics that will assist LTAB in assessing visitation and tourism effectiveness and making recommendations to the County/Council for improvements.
- C. **Hospitality Best Practices** Encourage launch of LACDC’s Visitor Journey A2D Training program, participate and monitor outreach, and provide feedback, including recommendations for additional topics. Visit each lodging establishment and establish regular contact with general managers to gather data (occupancy, average daily rate), recommend marketing and destination campaign efforts, and other collaborations.
- D. **Outdoor Recreation Economy Development & Marketing** Monitor New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division (NMORD), Community Services Division, Tourism Implementation Task Force Outdoor Recreation Work Group and other related efforts to develop and market an outdoor recreation economy in Los Alamos via regular monthly reports, and special notifications/presentations, as needed.
- E. **Destination Development & Marketing Projects** Work with County staff to help identify, support and promote County and community-based projects and initiatives that enhance the visitor experience, including but not limited to: community pride/ambassador initiatives and campaigns; local business marketing assistance; Discoveries Action Team proposals (food trucks, micro-businesses); County projects (e.g., WAC dorm, MAPR exhibits); visitor-to-resident relocation services and campaigns.

- F. **Strategic County Projects** Review the County’s Economic Vitality Strategic Plan and Tourism Strategic Plan to identify goals and projects aligned with LTAB goals, then recommend actions and involvement. Projects already identified include: Wayfinding (Phase 1), Visitor Center Renovation Plan & Project, Visitor Materials Suite Production (i.e., Adventure Guide, History Guide, 24/7 Orientation Guide, All Streets Map, ack cards and web links).
- G. **New Mexico Tourism Department (NMTD) Programs & Grant Opportunities** Monitor and participate in NMTD’s tourism development and grant programs, particularly those that drive Bandelier visitors to Los Alamos townsite attractions and businesses.
- H. **Event Calendar Upgrade** Monitor and provide input to fyilosalamos.org (or replacement platform) to ensure it meets the needs of event marketers, community members and visitors.
- I. **Administrative Actions**
- **Board Elections.** Hold elections for LTAB chair and vice chair at May 18, 2021 LTAB meeting.
  - **Workgroup Assignments.** Reassess and reassign Board leads for specific projects.
  - **LTAB Subcommittee: Tourism Implementation Task Force.** Coordinate with Task Force re goals, projects and reporting at monthly LTAB meetings. Work with County staff to determine feasibility, timing and requirements for making the Task Force a subcommittee of LTAB in the future.
  - **Training.** Work with LTAB to identify training needs and opportunities, and coordinate with County staff to identify trainings and coordinate registration.

**2.1 List any special projects or assignments given to this Board or Commission by Council or the Department director:**

**TBD**

**2.2 List the guiding documents/plans (with approval or revision dates listed) used by this Board or Commission.**

- FY22 Tourism Marketing Services Marketing Plan (tourism marketing contractor)
- Lodgers’ Tax Fund Accrued and Actual Revenue reports (Los Alamos County Finance Department)
- P.R./Social Media Data reports (tourism marketing contractor)
- Visitor/Attraction Trends reports (visitor center contractor)
- Recreation Division monthly reports (Los Alamos County Community Services Department’s Parks, Recreation & Open Space Division)
- Reports from interactions with Arts In Public Places Board, Historic Preservation Board, Library Board, Parks and Recreation Board, Planning and Zoning Board, and Transportation Board
- Tourism Strategic Plan
- Wayfinding Plan
- Economic Vitality Strategic Plan (EVSP)
- Brand Action Plan
- Comprehensive Plan
- Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan & Development Code Update

- Community Services Integrated Master Plan

**2.3 Other projects/assignments proposed by the Board or Commission: (*Any projects or activities proposed in this section should be discussed with the Council Liaison prior to listing it in this work plan.*) To assist with Council review of the work plans, please list the B&C's proposed projects or assignments in priority order.**

- Explore reestablishment of the LTAB small project grant program (\$10,000-\$15,000), funded by Lodgers' Tax Revenues as an ongoing expense.

**3.0 Identify any interfaces for the goals/tasks in this work plan with County Departments and other Boards and Commissions. Specify the coordination required.**

- LTAB to identify the entities whose activities best inform LTAB's focus areas of Data Development, Short-Term (Alternative) Lodging Program and Hospitality Best Practices.
- LTAB will also seek regular briefings from County Departments, Boards and Commissions, and outside interests to inform the key focus areas.

**4.0 List any special public information or involvement meetings or efforts to be conducted by this Board or Commission:**

Of the LTAB goals, objectives and tactics listed under section 2.0 of this report, it is anticipated that the following action items will require some form of community outreach and involvement support from the County's Communications & Public Relations Office:

- **Short-Term Rentals/Lodgers Tax Ordinance Update Study** – while the RFP will require a public participation process as part of a \$50,000 study process to be initiated by CDD after July 1, 2021, additional CPR outreach may include press releases, e-newsletter mentions, digital/print ads, and surveys to notice public input opportunities.
- **Hospitality Best Practices** – LTAB may request PIO assistance in promoting and/or soliciting community participation in the Journey A2D customer service/ambassador training once it is launched by LACDC.
- **Destination Development & Marketing Projects** – Depending upon how County staff decides to proceed with pursuing assessment and development of community-sourced projects, LTAB may identify destination development projects that support LTAB goals that also require community vetting and engagement.

PIO to provide list of recommended public involvement services and associated costs to County staff liaison by June 15, 2021. County staff liaison to confirm estimated services and costs with PIO. County staff liaison to identify an available funding source by July 1, 2021. At the start of the planning process for a planned project, or following the proposal of an unanticipated project involving LTAB, the County staff liaison will coordinate with the PIO to determine need, level and cost for CPR support.

**5.0 List the current subcommittees for this Board or Commission.**

**5.1 For subcommittees with members that are not members of the parent board or commission:  
List the subcommittee members and their terms.  
Explain how sub- committee members are selected or appointed.  
Provide a description of each subcommittee’s charter or purpose.  
Describe the expected duration for the subcommittee and their work  
plan(s) demonstrating how they support the Board or Commission:**

- Explore incorporating the limited term, ad hoc Tourism Implementation Task Force as a subcommittee to the Lodgers’ Tax Advisory Board, or similar affiliation.

**Attachment A: Provide a copy of your Board or Commission’s “Purpose” and “Duties and Responsibilities” from Chapter 8 of the County Code:**

**Attachment B: Using the chart below, place an X in the column on the right if the Council Goal is related to the work of the LTAB Board or Commission:**

**Mark all that apply on the chart on the following page. (From 2021 Strategic Leadership Plan)**



## **ARTICLE VI. - LODGER'S TAX ADVISORY BOARD**

### **Sec. 8-101. Purpose**

A lodger's tax advisory board is established to advise the county manager and council on the expenditure of funds authorized by NMSA 1978, § 3-38-22 for advertising, publicizing and promoting tourist attractions and facilities in and around the county. (Ord. No. 02-078, § 2, 10-3-2006)

### **Sec. 8-102. Membership, terms and qualifications.**

The lodger's tax advisory board is established and its members shall be appointed in accordance with NMSA 1978, § 3-38-22. Only the member representing the general public must be a resident of the county. The term of each member of the lodger's tax advisory board shall be three years beginning on December 2 and ending on December 1. (Ord. No. 02-078, § 2, 10-3-2006)

### **Sec. 8-103. Duties and responsibilities. (Ord. No. 02-078, § 2, 10-3-2006)**

The lodger's tax advisory board shall serve in an advisory capacity to the county council and shall have the following functions, responsibilities and duties:

- 1) Provide citizen input to staff and council on ways and means for improving the county's use of lodger's tax funds. For this purpose, the board shall gather public input in ways appropriate to the circumstances, which may include public hearings dedicated to specific topics.
- 2) Review and act upon all lodgers' tax related matters submitted to the board by council.

## Council Goals and Priority Areas

Enhancing quality of life, economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and racial equity and inclusivity are overarching goals that will be components of all our efforts as we coordinate with Los Alamos National Laboratory and regional partners and plan for appropriate levels of County services.	
Enhancing Communication	
Enhancing communication with the public to promote transparency and strengthen trust in County government.	X
Increasing the Amount and Types of Housing Options	
This includes increasing the variety of housing options for all segments of the community, from affordable to new options for those interested in downsizing or moving closer to central areas of the community, and pursuing opportunities for utilization of vacant spaces to address these needs.	
Protecting, Maintaining, and Improving Our Open Spaces, Recreational, and Cultural Amenities	
Los Alamos County open spaces and cultural attractions are greatly valued by the community and provide opportunities for recreational and economic growth; appropriately allocating resources to ensure their health and sustainability is important to our citizens.	X
Enhancing Support and Opportunities for the Local Business Environment	
This includes appropriately supporting existing businesses, growing new businesses, supporting technology start-ups and spin-offs, and identifying opportunities for utilizing vacant space as a part of these efforts.	X
Supporting Social Services Improvement	
Behavioral, mental, and physical health and social services are important quality of life components; there are key areas where appropriate types and levels of County support could help address current needs	
Improving Access to High Quality Broadband	
Enabling reliable high-speed broadband service throughout the county by determining appropriate investments (e.g., conduct a community needs analysis, evaluate technical options).	
Investing in Infrastructure	
Appropriately balancing maintenance of existing infrastructure with new investments in county utilities, roads, trails, expanded transit options, facilities and amenities, which will help improve environmental stewardship, sustainability, and quality of life, while allowing for sustainable growth.	X