

Agenda Item: Recommendations for Enriching Our Attractions and Downtowns and Celebrating the Natural Beauty of the Los Alamos County Setting

Purpose/Background:

This agenda item aligns with **Strategic Focus Area 3: "Enrich Our Attractions and Downtowns + Celebrate the Natural Beauty"** from the Los Alamos Tourism Strategic Plan (2018). The intent of this focus area is to achieve an **improved visitor experience and increased draw of Los Alamos through selective investments in capital improvements that benefit both the local community and visitors**, while retaining community quality of life.

Local businesses have expressed a need to **"develop attractions and activities that would encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more money within the community"**.

Discussion Points for LTAB:

1. Assessing and Enhancing Current Attractions and Natural Assets:

- How effectively are Los Alamos's **unique blend of science, history, and natural beauty** (including the three National Parks, extensive trail systems, and scenic views) currently being presented and leveraged for visitors? What are the **key strengths and weaknesses of existing attractions and public spaces** from a visitor experience perspective?
- What specific **investments are needed to upgrade and maintain Los Alamos County's trail system and outdoor recreation facilities** to a high standard, addressing current deficiencies and promoting multi-use opportunities (e.g., hiking, biking, horseback riding, large-scale races)?
- How can existing major attractions (e.g., Bradbury Science Museum, Los Alamos History Museum, Fuller Lodge, Los Alamos Nature Center, Pajarito Mountain) be **further enriched or better connected** to enhance the overall visitor journey and encourage longer stays?
- What are capital investments that are planned or are being made to address this priority? Is it likely that they will create positive results?

2. Improving Downtowns and Commercial Areas:

- What **initiatives are most critical to make downtown Los Alamos and White Rock Center aesthetically pleasing, vibrant, and welcoming** to visitors?
- Identify and review ideas put forth by the Local Business Coalition and others for investments that would make a difference. Review the ideas, engage with their promoters, and make recommendations to the Council about adoption of promising ideas.,
- What **new experiences, attractions, or activities can be developed or enhanced** to attract visitors to stay longer and increase local expenditures while aligning with Los Alamos's unique character and strategic goals?

Potential Recommendations for LTAB Consideration:

- **Request presentations from the Local Business Coalition and others on their ideas for improvement.** Partner with the Local Business Coalition, Chamber of Commerce, and others in establishing a "Local Business Tourism Engagement Forum" as a recurring event to directly gather input from businesses on strategies to increase visitor spending and foster collaborative marketing efforts.
- **Recommend and support capital improvements, economic development projects, and other County support for promising projects that are identified as important for visitation/tourism.**
- **Recommend redefinition of projects incorrectly identified as tourism projects and their removal from the workload of staff dedicated to tourism activities.**
- **Conduct a joint meeting with the County Open Space Working Group to discuss the appropriate role of our natural beauty and setting in enhancing visitor and tourism results. Develop joint recommendations for LTAB to make to Council.**
- **Encourage, recommend, and support the development of unique, privately-led events, activities, and attractions** like SALA's planned immersive technology experience, which highlights Los Alamos's history, science, and landscapes, and facilitates collaboration with other local businesses to drive foot traffic.
- **Prioritize funding for understanding current visitor perceptions and recommendations concerning our attractions, downtowns, and natural amenities such as trails and overlooks.** A visitor intercept interview survey instrument and methodology would provide data to inform future investments.