

General Information

All County Board and Commission members must be residents of Los Alamos County. Lodgers' Tax Advisory Board members, except the at-large community member, do not need to be residents if they are employed/represent an attraction or hotel.

Once a resident fills out and submits this application, an interview is scheduled with the B&C's County Council liaison, the relevant staff liaison, and the B&C Chair. After the interviews, the applicants' names are presented to the full Council during a regularly scheduled Council meeting, where a vote is taken regarding the appointment of each applicant. Each applicant will be notified if they are appointed or not.

Only on-line applications will be considered.

If you are interested in applying for Labor Relations Board, please contact Mary Tapia at 505-662-8040.

Profile

Board and Commission Application

Note: Please be aware that as a public entity, the County of Los Alamos, is obligated to furnish this information to the public if requested. Note also that current LANL employees, if appointed to a Board or Commission, may be required by LANL to complete a 701 form.

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Planning and Zoning Commission: Submitted

Rachel _____ M _____ Grimm _____
First Name Middle Initial Last Name

_____ Unit A _____
Street Address Suite or Apt

Los Alamos _____ NM _____ 87544 _____
City State Postal Code

_____ _____
Email Address

Home: _____ _____
Primary Phone Alternate Phone

Registered to vote in Los Alamos?

Yes No

Party affiliation as registered: (Select one of the following) *

Democrat

How long have you lived in Los Alamos County?

5 years

How did you learn of this Board/Commission vacancy?

Word of mouth

Do you currently serve on any County Board or Commission?

Yes No

If yes, which one? (Los Alamos County law prohibits residents from serving concurrently on more than one County board except as expressly approved in writing by the County Council before the appointment is made.)

N/A

Community Service

List boards, commissions, committees, and organizations on which you are currently serving or have served. Include any offices held.

I do not currently serve on any boards, commissions, committees, or organizations. However, prior to moving to New Mexico, I volunteered extensively with nonprofit organizations in Paris and Chicago serving a population of torture survivors and asylum seekers. In Paris, I volunteered with the legal team at the Centre Primo Levi, supporting patients through a variety of legal and administrative proceedings. In Chicago, I volunteered for several years as a French interpreter at the Marjorie Kovler Center and National Immigrant Justice Center, providing trauma-informed language services during therapy sessions, medical forensic exams, and asylum interviews.

Employment and Education

List your current and past employment experience.

I am currently a project manager at Los Alamos National Laboratory, where my work focuses on earned value management, performance measurement, cost and change control, and compliance and reporting. Before moving to New Mexico, I worked as a visiting assistant professor at Northwestern University, where I designed and taught courses on topics in French language, literature, and culture. I also volunteered with the Northwestern University Prison Education Program, teaching French philosophy to students incarcerated at the Cook County Jail.

List your current and past education including any professional or vocational licenses or certificates.

I hold a PhD in French and Francophone Studies from Northwestern University. I earned my BA from the Honors Tutorial College at Ohio University, with a double major in French and English. With support from LANL, I am currently pursuing a graduate certificate in Public Management from the Texas A&M University Bush School of Government and Public Service, and I am in the process of obtaining my Project Management Professional (PMP) certification.

Interests & Experiences

Why would you like to serve on this particular Board or Commission?

As a Los Alamos resident with a longstanding interest in urban planning, I am interested in serving on the Planning and Zoning Commission in order to help align the County's stated values and development goals with its regulatory code. Los Alamos County has articulated an ambitious and compelling vision for its future through its comprehensive development plans, including the 2021 Downtown Master Plan and the 2024 Affordable Housing Plan. These planning documents emphasize goals that I strongly support: increasing residential density, expanding mixed-use development, improving multimodal connectivity, and fostering a more inclusive, pedestrian-oriented sense of place. The realization of these worthy goals fundamentally depends on the regulatory framework through which development decisions are made. My interest in serving on the Planning and Zoning Commission stems from a desire to meaningfully engage in this decision-making process: helping to ensure that land-use decisions, policy interpretations, and code updates are consistent with the County's adopted development plans, responsive to community needs, and supportive of a more connected, inclusive, and resilient built environment.

What would you like to accomplish during your tenure on this Board or Commission? (Please identify any special interests you have that led you to become interested in serving on this Board or Commission.)

As a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, I would like to achieve an improved, forward-looking alignment between the County's development goals and its regulatory code, particularly as it pertains to density, mixed-use development, and walkability throughout Los Alamos County—not just downtown. Chapter 16 of the 2023 Development Code proposes a form-based zoning logic for the Downtown Los Alamos (DTLA) district, emphasizing pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, strong spatial definition, and incremental development. These placemaking objectives, consistent with the County's comprehensive development plans, are made possible through small lot sizes with maximal coverage, increased height allowances south of Trinity Drive, and reduced building setback and parking requirements. Yet beyond the DTLA district, much of the County's regulatory framework retains the use-based zoning logic and dimensional standards of a thoroughly suburban development pattern, as demonstrated by large lot sizes with low coverage, height restrictions, and minimum building setback and parking requirements. I largely support the County's decision to focus its short- to mid-term investment in the DTLA district, which shows the greatest near-term potential for dense, mixed-use, and pedestrian-oriented development. At the same time, the 2023 Development Code currently prohibits such development strategies from being adopted elsewhere in the County, even if they are shown to be effective in the DTLA district. This regulatory discrepancy creates a potential long-term challenge for affordability, even as DTLA redevelopment efforts increase the housing supply. A growing body of research demonstrates that walkability consistently increases property values, spurring a virtuous cycle of economic productivity. Without complementary provisions to allow for similar development strategies in other parts of the County, there is a risk that the DTLA district becomes a spatially segregated, high-value, walkable enclave, while other areas remain legally constrained to lower-density land uses that are less adaptable, resilient, and attractive to residents. As a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, I would encourage the County to learn from and adapt to the lessons of the DTLA redevelopment effort as it progresses in the coming years, examining how its successes can be thoughtfully extended to advance affordability, housing choice, and long-term vitality across the County. Otherwise, I do not have any special interests, aside from those of a child-free millennial with an active lifestyle, hoping to one day afford a home within walking distance of a coffeeshop.

Have you had any direct or indirect involvement with this Board or Commission or with the County staff supporting this Board or Commission or County Councilors? If so, please explain.

I am an avid reader of Stephanie Nakhleh's work, much of which addresses issues directly relating to the work of the Planning and Zoning Commission. Otherwise, my only involvement with County staff is through casual professional acquaintances, most of whom I met through my participation in the Leadership Los Alamos program in 2023-24.

What volunteer or professional activities have you participated in that could apply to this appointment?

In my current role at LANL, I regularly participate in management reviews and lessons-learned initiatives to improve the transparency, accountability, and compliance of operational processes and systems. This work involves reading, interpreting, and applying technical process documentation, deliberating among groups with different priorities, and exercising informed judgment in a highly regulated, high-stakes environment. I find this work to be the most meaningful when it supports not only compliance but also collaboration, creative problem-solving, and continuous learning. This experience is directly relevant to the responsibilities of an advisory body like the Planning and Zoning Commission. My academic background has also shaped how I engage with issues related to urban planning. As a professor at Northwestern University, I developed and taught a course focused on the literary and cinematic representation of walking in the city. The course examined how urban design, land use, and public space influence social interaction, storytelling, and sense of place—topics that relate directly to contemporary theories of urbanism and walkability. My experience developing and teaching this course enhanced my ability to analyze urban space from both a technical and human-centered perspective, and to engage thoughtfully with how urban planning decisions shape our lived experience. I see my academic background as strongly complementary to the work of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

The time involved may be 10-15 hours per month or more. Are you able to serve the volunteer hours and attend training needed to perform your duties as an appointee?

Yes, I am able to commit 10-15 hours per month and attend training to perform my duties as an appointee.

Are there any issue or matters, financial or otherwise, that you are now or might become involved in that may come before the Board or Commission for which you seek appointment?

To the best of my knowledge, I am not involved with any issues or matters, financial or otherwise, that may come before the Planning and Zoning Commission.

General

Have you ever worked for Los Alamos County?

Yes No

If yes, please list dates and department.

N/A

Are you related to any employee of Los Alamos County?

Yes No

If yes, please indicate name and relationship.

N/A

Are you aware of any potential conflicts of interest in connection to your occupation or financial holdings in relation to your responsibilities as a member of the advisory body to which you seek appointment?

Yes No

If yes, please indicate any potential conflicts.

N/A

Are you aware of the time commitment necessary to fulfill the obligations of the Board or Commission to which you seek appointment?

Yes No

Can you commit to approximately 10-15 hours per month to this Board or Commission to prepare for and attend monthly meetings and training as needed?

Yes No

Are you willing to participate in Board and Commission meetings that are recorded and may be live-streamed?

Yes No

Are you willing to have your name listed on the County Boards and Commissions public webpage?

Yes No

If you have any questions, please contact Adrienne Lovato at 505-662-8293



County Manager's Office
BOARD & COMMISSION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Rachel Mihuta Grimm
Applicant's Name

Planning & Zoning Commission
Board or Commission

Karen Easton
Interviewer Name

01/29/2026
Date/Time of Interview

Interview Conducted:
Personally
[X] Telephone
Remote/Teams

NOTE TO INTERVIEW PANEL: Please remember to use this interview as an opportunity to share Council's directives and guidance for B&C's.

Table with 2 columns: #, Question/Documented Response. Contains 5 rows of interview questions and answers.

6	<p>What other community and/or civic activities have you been involved in?</p> <p>Chicago (and Paris) – volunteered as French interpreter for foreign nationals in the US who were the victims of torture. Seeking more connection to broader impact through boards participation. (Not direct social services)</p>
7	<p>Do you have any questions about the expectations included in the application?</p> <p>Discussion of Quasi-judicial; Quasi-judicial aspect – decide only on testimony provided Conflict of interest discussion (County employee)</p>
8	<p>Do you have any other questions for the interview panel?</p> <p>NA</p>

Notes:

LOS ALAMOS

County Manager's Office BOARD & COMMISSION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Rachel Mihuta Grimm
Applicant's Name

Planning & Zoning Commission
Board or Commission

Suzie Havemann
Interviewer Name

1/29/26 2pm
Date/Time of Interview

Interview Conducted:
 Personally
 Telephone
 Remote/Teams

NOTE TO INTERVIEW PANEL: Please remember to use this interview as an opportunity to share Council's directives and guidance for B&C's.

#	Question/Documented Response
1	Please tell us a little about yourself, especially your experience and background related to this board/commission. PhD in French from Northwestern - ^{Colonial} N. Africa / Paris Acute interest in urban planning / walkable cities / built environment. Project mgr at UICL Taught a course called "Walking In The City"
2	Why would you like to serve on this board/commission? See a bore, plus zoning and the code influences our built environment. It's not per job to impose vision on the code but can help ensure it aligns w the county's vision - Desire to learn.
3	What do you believe are the major issues facing this board/commission? "Affordability" -- tipping point of resilience... Our Lab-Driven "monoculture" makes us more vulnerable. We are simultaneously economically strong + precarious. Increasing housing type & volume & modes of transportation can help. Economic diversity.
4	How would you approach a situation where the proposed project complies with the Development Code, but you personally disagree with the project or feel it does not align with community sentiment? Acknowledges the mandate is to apply the rules based on code but they can gather info to learn & make better decisions & advocate for change for future code / decisions

6	<p>What other community and/or civic activities have you been involved in?</p> <p>In Chicago & Paris: when studying Colonial N. Africa, learned about & got involved w/ org's helping Algerians who were subject to torture. Commented about how built space affects everyone.</p>
7	<p>Do you have any questions about the expectations included in the application?</p> <p>Enthusiasm for the topic, Ability to sort thru mundane administrative - get something done w/ it; ability to understand banal things. Att'n to detail.</p>
8	<p>Do you have any other questions for the interview panel?</p> <p>Q: The mechanics - mtgs 2x/mo. Do commissioners meet outside of meetings?</p> <p>KE: Reminded her P&Z acts as a quasi-judicial body & takes evidence. Cannot make your own</p>

Notes:

inquiries or gather doc. or have ex-parte conversations.

KE: Regarding advocacy: P&Z gets to participate in development of the Comp. Plan.

Q: what if there's a discrepancy betw. the code & the Comp Plan?

DV: This happened w/ Fire Station 4 & land use/O.S. plan -- so they did an Amend't & it went to Council --

Q: Can county employees serve on a Board?

A: No

County Manager's Office BOARD & COMMISSION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Rachel Mihuta Grimm
Applicant's Name

Planning & Zoning Commission
Board or Commission

Danyelle Valdez
Interviewer Name

Jan. 29 2026 1:30pm
Date/Time of Interview

Interview Conducted:
 Personally
 Telephone
 Remote/Teams

NOTE TO INTERVIEW PANEL: Please remember to use this interview as an opportunity to share Council's directives and guidance for B&C's.

#	Question/Documented Response
1	Please tell us a little about yourself, especially your experience and background related to this board/commission. PhD French - interested in Urban Planning, studied (separately from PhD) zoning, built environment, economics, walkability + livability. (Walking in the City - taught course). Project Management w/ land.
2	Why would you like to serve on this board/commission? Understanding that livability is based on planning + zoning. Interest in development in regard to building the community + community impact. Desire to be involved in decision making for the community; to learn.
3	What do you believe are the major issues facing this board/commission? Affordability - and how the community relies a lot on land, and how there needs to be more economic resilience; how the board can help. Increasing m/use development + multimodal development.
4	How would you approach a situation where the proposed project complies with the Development Code, but you personally disagree project or feel it does not align with community sentiment? Mandate and responsibility to apply the rules not out of emotion. Advocate at the appropriate time, not during the project. (Gather information).
5	What do you feel you could contribute to this board/commission? Passion, energy ^{engagement} , + enthusiasm for the work (planning, zoning, built environment). Understanding of Codes + Review. Attention to detail, enjoys the work; patience to research. Advocate for passion topics via Code.

6	What other community and/or civic activities have you been involved in? ^{Direct Services. Community} Chicago/Paris - (sensitive subject materia) - Assisted Algerian refugees worked w/ treatment centers to help survivors. French interpreter (therapy, interviews, legal aide asst.). ^{Wants to work in/}
7	Do you have any questions about the expectations included in the application? No.
8	Do you have any other questions for the interview panel?

Notes: