



# Community Forum

**East Downtown Los Alamos MRA**

December 16, 2024

Presented by Amy Bell & Maren Neldam



# Forum Agenda

## Planning Process Recap

- Project Timeline
- Community Involvement
- What We've Heard So Far

## Preliminary Recommendations

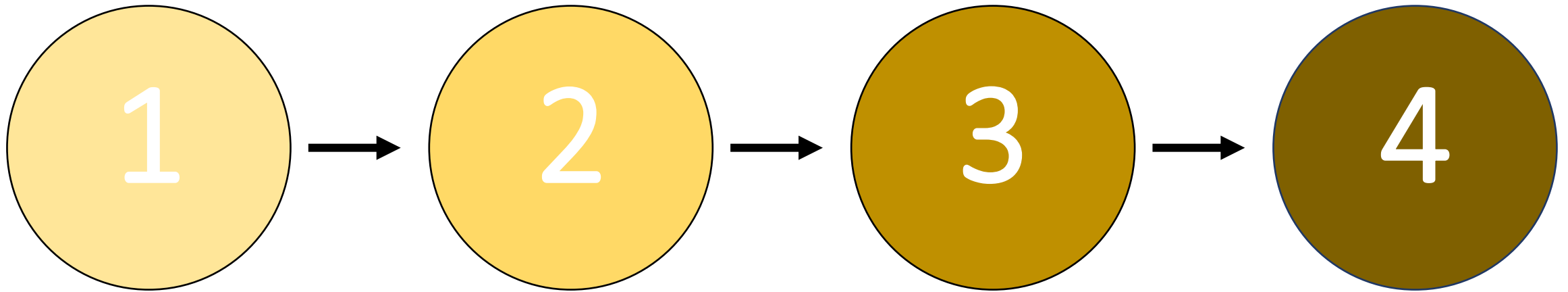
## MRA Enabled Tools



# East Downtown Los Alamos MRA



# Planning Process – Project Timeline



## MRA Assessment

May 2023 – February 2024

- Evaluation of boundary
- Council Presentations
- Community Engagement
- Completion of MRA Designation Report

*Completed*

## MRA Designation

May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024

- Public Notice
- Council Hearing and Adoption of Resolution

*Completed*

## MRA Plan

June 2024 – February 2025

- Community Engagement
- MRA Plan Development
- Public Hearing and Plan Adoption

*In process*

## Plan Implementation

- Create MRA Implementation committee and fund
- Partner with appropriate agencies and organizations
- Projects only proceed with Council/public approval

*Future*



# Community Engagement

## Social Media

- Facebook and Instagram posts

## Community Meetings

- Presentation at LAMSCD and Chamber of Commerce business breakfast – February 2024
- MRA Property Owners Zoom Meeting – May 2024
- Town hall – June 27, 2024

## MRA Plan Community Questionnaire

- Conducted July 2024
- 197 participants



# What We've Heard So Far...

## **Top 3 goals from the Downtown Master Plan**

- Expanded local businesses and a strong economy
- A pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use downtown with retail, residential, and office development
- A variety of housing options at increased densities

## **Top 3 Strategies from the Downtown Master Plan**

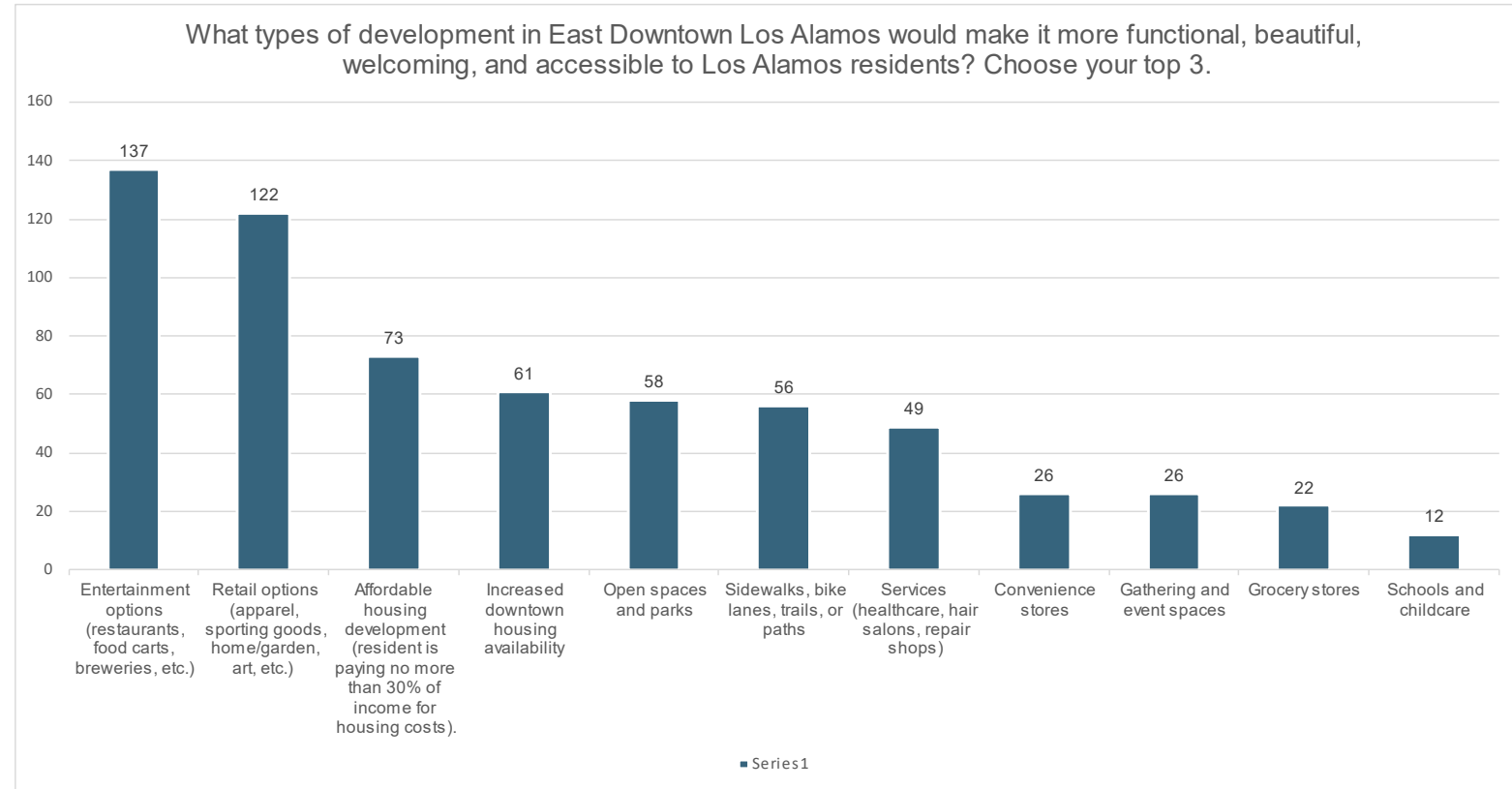
- Enable, foster, and direct quality downtown development to address vacant and underutilized structures and land
- Expand opportunities for financial assistance to local business, such as grants and façade improvement programs
- Improve street life and walkability.  
Examples: widened sidewalks, increase pedestrian lighting, expanded roadway crossing



# Types of development

## Top 6

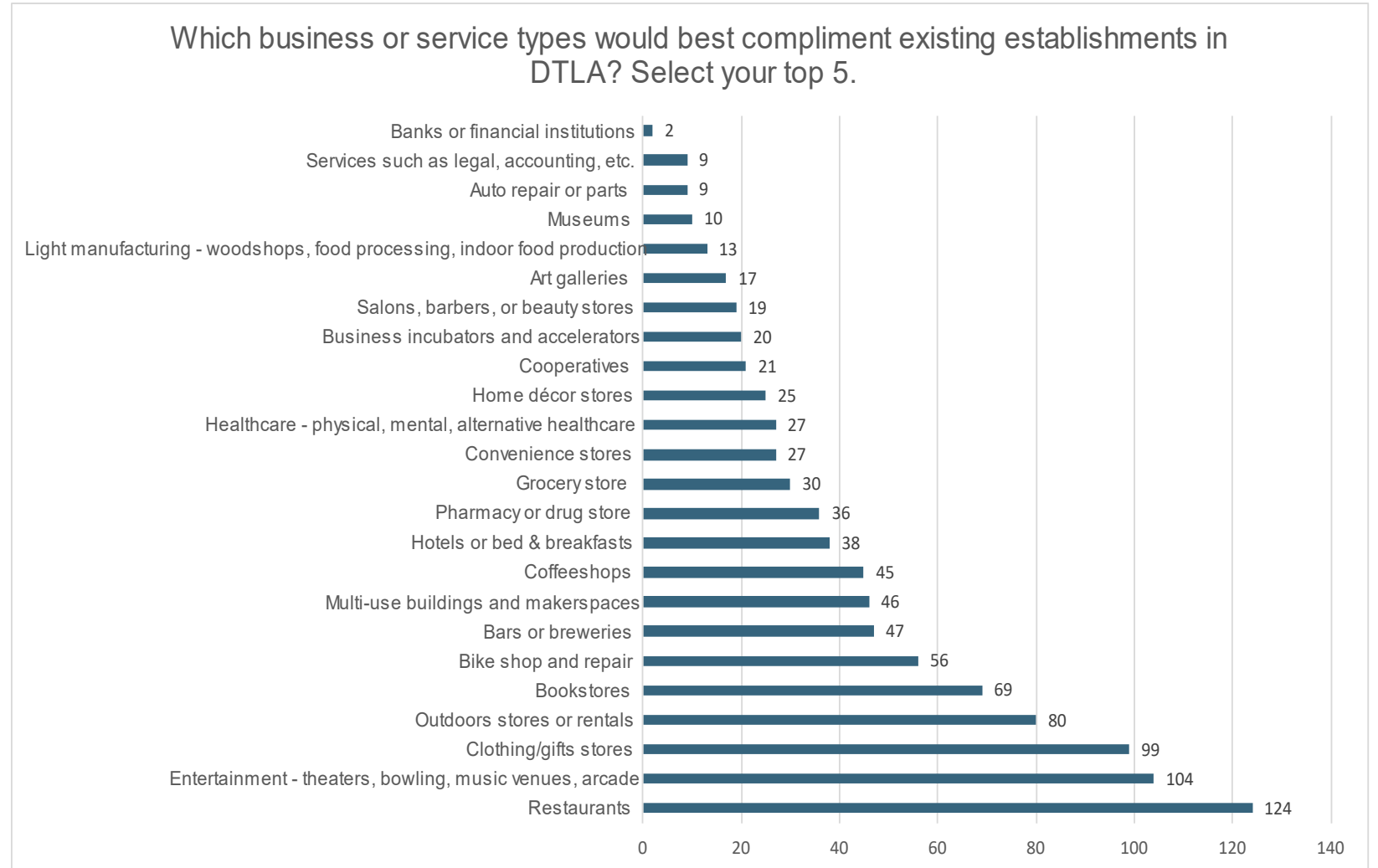
- Entertainment options
- Retail options
- Affordable housing
- Increased housing availability
- Open spaces and parks
- Sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, or paths



# Desired businesses or services

## Top 6

- Restaurants
- Entertainment
- Clothing/gift stores
- Outdoor stores or rentals
- Bookstores
- Bike shop and repair





## Concerns

- Rent affordability, barriers to development, and viability of small, local businesses
- Need for additional housing particularly higher density and affordable housing
- Transparency, public accountability, MRA administration, and County process
- Use of property for LANL office space
- Parking garage development
- Protection of scenic and natural beauty







## Preliminary Recommendations

The vision and development framework from the Master Plan serve as the foundation for the East Downtown MRA Plan. The MRA Plan identifies challenges specific to the designated MRA boundary, highlights relevant redevelopment goals, and recommends revitalization strategies. The redevelopment tools enabled by the MRA Plan increase the ability of the County to implement the strategies of the Downtown Master Plan.

Downtown Master Plan Element	MRA Plan Goal
Economic Vitality	Create public private partnerships that redevelop properties and provide opportunities for small businesses to thrive while furthering Downtown economic vitality goals and County Council strategic goals.
Housing	With a focus on affordable and workforce housing, support development projects that will increase housing opportunities within the MRA and/or preserve existing attainable housing units whenever possible.
Infrastructure	Prioritize projects that will upgrade or modernize public infrastructure within the MRA area.
Public Space/Streets	Create a welcoming, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly Downtown that includes public gathering spaces.
Sustainability	Foster and promote sustainability practices in MRA-designated projects, both private and public.
Transportation	Create safe, efficient, and convenient pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and convenient parking options.



# MRA Enabled Tools

## MRA Agency

To ensure community benefit, the MRA Agency is responsible for overseeing the implementation and funding of MRA Plan projects.

## MRA Fund

An MRA fund is a dedicated fund for MRA projects and should be overseen by the MRA Agency. The County may contribute directly to this fund.

## Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

A funding tool which captures the incremental rise in property taxes and/or a percentage of the incremental increase in local or state Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) within the district. The collected funds can be used to support MRA project implementation.

## Public Private Partnerships (P3s)

A P3 is a cooperative agreement between the local government (Town, County, etc.) and one or more private sector entities. These partnerships enable the implementation of projects that are too costly or high risk for either sector to pursue on their own.

## Direct Contributions & Development Incentives

The contribution of public resources to private redevelopment projects and business improvements without violating the NM Anti-Donation Clause, including but not limited to sale or lease of Town-owned property, redevelopment tax abatements, storefront and building infrastructure improvement grants, expedited permitting, impact fee waivers, gap financing grants.





MRA Enabled Tools and Incentives	General Capabilities (from State Statute)	Example Strategies/Actions for Los Alamos County
Fee Waivers	The local government can waive application, development, impact, permit, and utility connection fees for projects within the MRA boundary	The County can encourage redevelopment and building conversion through permit fee waivers which could reduce development costs and support expedited project timelines.
Tax Abatement	The local government can offer property tax abatement for up to 7 years. Typically, the local government would take title of the property and lease it back to the developer during the abatement period	The County may take title of a property within the MRA during a 7-year tax abatement period and then lease the property back to the developer. This strategy would be most beneficial to large projects.
Infrastructure Improvements	The local government may invest in public infrastructure that incentivizes private investment, including covering the costs of infrastructure improvements that would typically be the responsibility of the developer.	The County may utilize LEDA and/or MRA funding to help provide infrastructure improvements to facilitate commercial building conversions, support tenant refurbishment, and improve the streetscape and pedestrian environment surrounding new development.



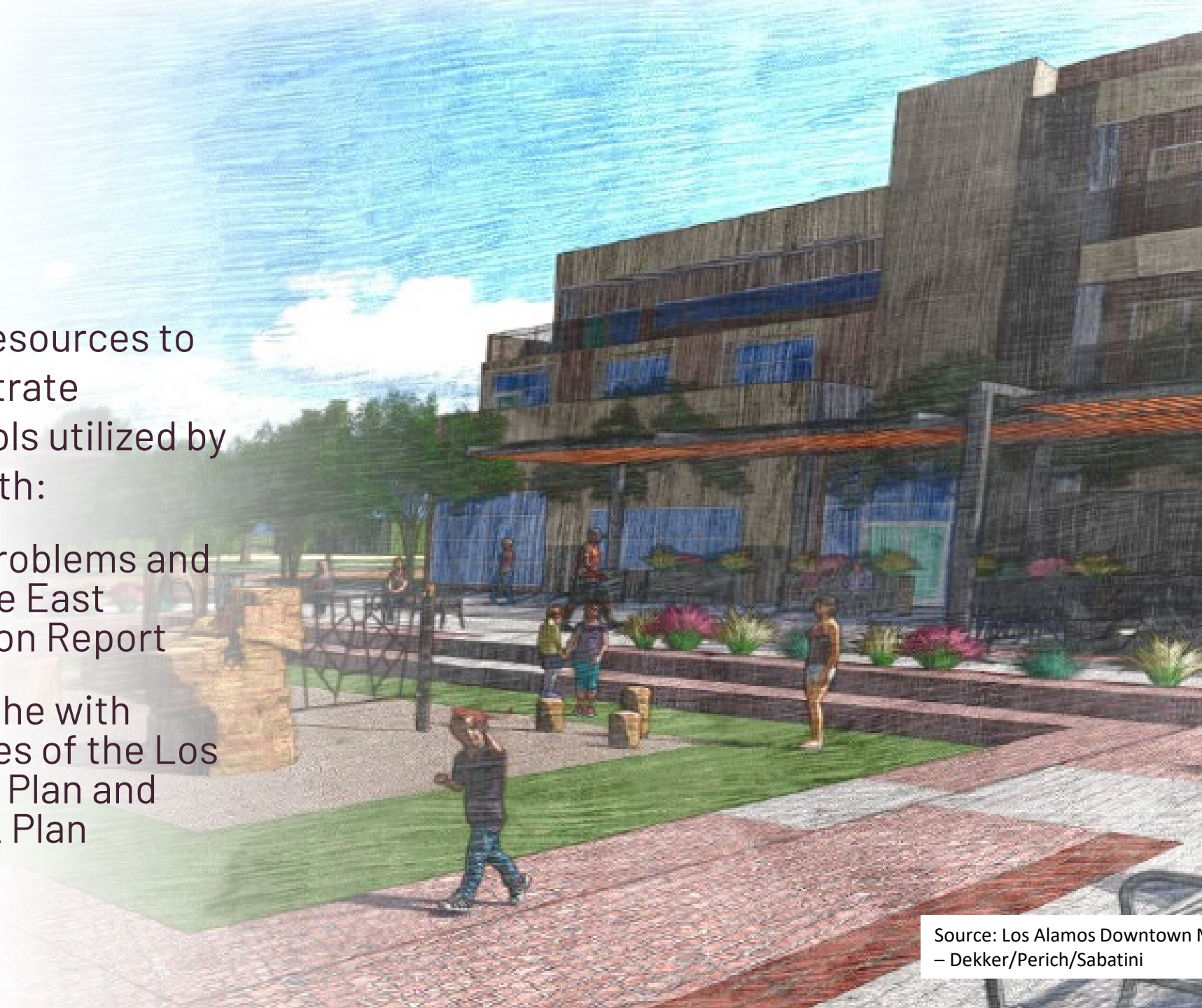
MRA Enabled Tools and Incentives	General Capabilities (from State Statute)	Example Strategies/Actions for Los Alamos County
<b>Zoning Code Exemptions/Changes</b>	The local government may create zoning code ordinances, amendments, and exceptions that will apply only to projects and properties within the MRA.	The County may establish requirements for new developments to incorporate a minimum number of storefront establishments on the ground floor aimed to increase supply and keep rents affordable
<b>Land Banking &amp; Land Conveyance</b>	The local government can acquire properties within the MRA and then exchange or sell the property at a “fair value” (at or below market prices) to support redevelopment that provides community benefit.	The County may support downtown redevelopment through the acquisition of properties within the MRA and by supporting the establishment of a community land trust or real estate investment cooperative.
<b>Direct Contributions</b>	The local government can provide gap financing funds for private redevelopment projects. Funds may be structured as equity, loans, or grants.	The County may make various direct contributions to MRA projects including low-interest loans, “Lease to own” or “Buy your building” programs, façade and infrastructure improvement grant programs, or other direct contributions through development agreements



# Application of Incentives

Any contribution of public resources to MRA projects must demonstrate community benefit. MRA tools utilized by Los Alamos County must both:

- Reduce or eliminate the problems and conditions identified in the East Downtown MRA Designation Report
- Achieve or be consistent the with vision, goals, and strategies of the Los Alamos Downtown Master Plan and meet the goals of the MRA Plan



# MRA Implementation

- Establishment of MRA Agency by County ordinance
- Appointment of commissioners
- Creation of MRA Fund





# MRA Administration

“A local government may directly exercise its metropolitan redevelopment project powers, or it may, by ordinance if it determines such action to be in the public interest, elect to delegate the exercise of such powers to the metropolitan redevelopment agency created pursuant to the Redevelopment Law. If the local government so determines, the agency shall be vested with all of the powers in the same manner as though all the powers were conferred on the agency or authority instead of the local government.”

**Universal Citation: NM Stat § 3-60A-15 (2023)**



# MRA Agency

## NM Metropolitan Redevelopment Statute

### Section 3-60A-16 – Metropolitan redevelopment agency

- A. There may be created in each local government a public body to be known as the "metropolitan redevelopment agency". The metropolitan redevelopment agency shall not transact any business or exercise any powers until the local government has adopted an ordinance creating a metropolitan redevelopment agency and has specified the powers and duties of the agency.
- B. When the metropolitan redevelopment agency has been authorized to transact business and exercise powers, the mayor or manager of the local government, with the advice and consent of the local government, shall appoint a board of commissioners of the redevelopment agency, which shall consist of five commissioners. The commissioners shall be initially appointed to serve staggered terms as follows from the date of their appointment:
- (1) two members for three-year terms;
  - (2) two members for two-year terms; and
  - (3) one member for a one-year term. Thereafter, commissioners shall be appointed for terms of five years each.



# Next Steps

## Community Input

- “Have your say” Survey
- Open until December 31, 2024
- <https://lacnm.com/EDLAMRAFeedback>

## MRA Plan Document

- Integrate Community Input into Plan recommendations (December)
- Plan review and finalization (Dec – mid Jan)

## MRA Plan Adoption

- Public Notice x2 (mid Jan-mid Feb)
- Public Hearing and Plan Adoption (late Feb-early March)

