

Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Handbook

Los Alamos County

December 1, 2025



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Introduction Letter



LOS ALAMOS

December 1, 2025

Los Alamos County
Community Development Department
1000 Central Avenue, Suite 150
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Dear Community Member,

On behalf of the Los Alamos County Council, thank you for your interest in the Los Alamos County Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA). The creation of this program marks an important milestone in our shared effort to revitalize areas within Los Alamos County and strengthen the vitality of our community.

The MRA Program, adopted under the New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (NMSA 1978, §§ 3-60A-1 to 3-60A-48), is guided by the East Downtown Los Alamos and White Rock Town Center MRA Plans. These plans address challenges such as underutilized properties, vacant commercial spaces, and aging infrastructure. They also identify tools the County can use to partner with property owners, developers, and businesses to promote redevelopment that advances the County's goals and delivers benefits to the community.

Program Goals:

- Revitalize and prevent blight through targeted reinvestment.
- Support private redevelopment that delivers community benefits, such housing, business opportunities, and public spaces.
- Enhance Downtown's character as a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly mixed-use destination.
- Leverage financial tools such as grants and public-private partnerships.

Participation is voluntary, and this handbook explains the MRA program, boundaries, project eligibility, incentives, and steps to submit project proposals. Together, we can create thriving downtowns that improve and support the long-term economic vitality of Los Alamos County.

Respectfully,

Anita Barela
Los Alamos County
Economic Development Division



Los Alamos County Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) Overview

The Los Alamos County Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) program is a redevelopment initiative authorized under the New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (NMSA 1978, §§3-60A-1 to 3-60A-48) and implemented through the County's adopted MRA plans. The program provides a framework for directing public investment to stimulate redevelopment and promote economic growth within designated areas. It targets underutilized properties, vacant commercial spaces, and aging infrastructure that limit development potential.

The MRA program provides the County with tools to partner with property owners, developers, and businesses to advance projects that eliminate blight, attract investment, and create tangible community benefits such as stimulating economic activity, supporting housing opportunities, improving infrastructure, enhancing pedestrian accessibility, and strengthening the area's identity as a walkable, mixed-use destination. MRA tools available to the County include public-private partnerships, infrastructure improvements, monetary grants, and other targeted public contributions consistent with the adopted MRA Plan.

Participation in the program is voluntary. All MRA proposals are subject to committee evaluation and require approval by the Los Alamos County Council at a public hearing to ensure alignment with County goals and objectives. Project evaluation focuses on alignment with the County's adopted MRA priorities which include:

- Economic Vitality – support business retention, job creation, or new economic activity;
- Housing – provide affordable or workforce housing;
- Urban Form and Identity – enhance downtown image and sense of place;
- Infrastructure – improve public utilities, streets, lighting, and accessibility; and
- Placemaking – create public spaces that foster community engagement.

East Downtown Los Alamos (EDTLA) MRA

The East Downtown Los Alamos (EDTLA) MRA was established to encourage reinvestment and redevelopment within a designated area of downtown Los Alamos that includes a concentration of underutilized and aging commercial properties. The MRA advances the goals of the County's Comprehensive and Downtown Master Plans by encouraging reinvestment and higher-intensity mixed-use development that integrates residential, commercial, and/or office uses. It aligns with adopted plan objectives by promoting infill and vertical



mixed-use redevelopment that enhances walkability, supports adaptive reuse, and catalyzes revitalization along the Central Avenue and Trinity Drive corridors.

Projects within the EDTLA MRA are evaluated based on their ability to activate vacant or underutilized parcels, introduce vertical or infill mixed-use development, enhance the pedestrian environment along Central Avenue and Trinity Drive, and create an attractive and welcoming entrance into the Downtown core. Priority consideration is given to projects that stimulate private investment, expand housing opportunities, improve the area, and strengthen multimodal connectivity between key downtown destinations.

White Rock Town Center MRA

The White Rock Town Center MRA was established to address conditions of blight and underutilized properties within the White Rock Town Center commercial core. The program encourages reinvestment that enhances community character, expands housing and service options, and strengthens the Town Center as a local hub for commercial and civic activity.

Projects are evaluated based on their ability to remediate blight, introduce higher-density or infill development, and support mixed-use redevelopment that integrates services, retail, and housing consistent with the adopted MRA Plan.

Priority Areas:

- **Longview Drive** – Primary commercial corridor and focus towards higher-density mixed-use redevelopment, façade and streetscape improvements, and enhanced pedestrian activity.
- **Rover Boulevard** – Emphasis on improving neighborhood connectivity, supporting neighborhood-serving retail or services, and enhancing multimodal safety and access.
- **Bonnie View Drive** – Focus on improving residential quality, remediating blight, and introducing compatible infill housing that meets local needs.

Priority consideration will be given to projects that demonstrate significant private investment, advance plan goals, and leverage public funds to catalyze visible and lasting reinvestment within the Town Center.

Eligible Activities

Projects eligible for consideration under the MRA Program must be located within an adopted MRA District and directly support the goals and objectives outlined in the corresponding MRA Plan. Eligible activities are those that remediate blight, catalyze private reinvestment, and contribute to the long-term revitalization of the district and improve the overall character of the community.



The following activities may qualify for County MRA funding or support:

Overall Eligible Activities

- Redevelopment of vacant or underutilized properties.
- Adaptive reuse or rehabilitation of existing commercial or mixed-use buildings.
- Redevelopment of vacant parcels for housing, retail, office, or public uses consistent with MRA Plan goals.
- Removal or mitigation of blighted or unsafe structures.
- Public infrastructure and utility improvements.
- Upgrades or extensions to water, sewer, storm drainage, electrical, broadband, and other utilities that directly support redevelopment.
- Construction or enhancement of public streets, sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, and ADA accessibility features.
- Infrastructure upgrades that enable higher-density or mixed-use development.
- Creation or improvement of plazas, courtyards, parks, and outdoor dining.
- Installation of public art, wayfinding, benches, lighting, and landscaping that enhance community character.
- Architectural, engineering, or environmental services to advance a redevelopment project.
- Feasibility, market, or infrastructure studies that directly support MRA goals.
- Cost-sharing arrangements for site infrastructure or design improvements.
- Participation in catalytic projects that leverage private investment.
- Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements that link destinations within the MRA.
- Projects improving safety, access, and circulation between key corridors and neighborhoods.

EDTLA

- Streetscape design improvements to promote walkability and downtown vitality.
- Exterior improvements to commercial or mixed-use buildings to enhance streetscape appearance and activate pedestrian areas.
- Restoration or modernization of building façades, signage, lighting, and entrances visible from public rights-of-way.
- Development of new residential or live/work units within the MRA.
- Infill or upper-story housing that supports mixed-use redevelopment.
- Rehabilitation of existing structures to provide attainable or workforce housing.
- Demolition of obsolete or unsafe structures impeding redevelopment.
- Site grading, remediation, or utility relocation to prepare sites for reuse.



White Rock Town Center

- Public infrastructure and utility upgrades that support the transformation of underutilized commercial areas.
- Enhancements to pedestrian corridors, public plazas, and gathering spaces to create a village-center atmosphere.
- Façade and exterior improvement projects improving visual cohesion quality.
- Infrastructure improvements that support retail, service, and community facilities.
- Development or redevelopment creating affordable or workforce housing options.
- Streetscape improvements that enhance walkability and safety along key corridors.
- Redevelopment projects that address obsolete structures and promote mixed-use activity.

All eligible costs must be described in the terms of an approved Development Agreement and comply with County and State law.

Ineligible Activities

MRA funds are limited to activities that directly eliminate blight, stimulate private reinvestment, and advance adopted MRA Plan goals. Ineligible activities include routine maintenance or operating expenses; projects outside the East Downtown Los Alamos or White Rock Town Center MRA boundaries; activities lacking measurable community benefit; private improvements that do not create public benefit; plans that are not in compliance with zoning or building standards; unauthorized alterations to historic or cultural properties; and expenses incurred before the Development Agreement is executed.

Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility determinations are made on a case-by-case basis and must demonstrate consistency with the purpose and intent of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code and adopted MRA District Plans. To be considered, projects must:

- **Location:** Be located within a designated Metropolitan Redevelopment Area District boundary (East Downtown Los Alamos or White Rock Town Center).
- **Plan Consistency and Alignment:** Clearly advance the goals, strategies, and priority objectives identified in the applicable MRA District Plan. Additional consideration will be given to projects that demonstrate alignment with other adopted County plans and policies, including the



2016 Los Alamos County Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development Strategic Plan, County Strategic Leadership Plan, and Master Plans for Los Alamos and White Rock.

- **Regulatory Compliance:** Comply with all applicable zoning, land use, permitting, and building code requirements.
- **Public and Community Benefit:** Demonstrate a measurable public benefit such as blight remediation, reinvestment in vacant or underutilized property, visual or functional enhancement of the public realm, increased private investment, job creation, or expanded housing opportunities.
- **Application Completeness:** Submit a complete application package, including all required plans, documentation, and supporting materials needed for evaluation by the County.
- **Financial Feasibility:** Provide documentation of financial capacity to complete the project, such as financial statements, detailed project budget, and development pro forma.
- **Financial Contribution:** Commit private investment to demonstrate majority of financial responsibility and project commitment. This is a negotiable percentage based on project-specific factors, including but not limited to project scale and total investment, anticipated public benefit or return on investment, and degree of financial risk or gap financing required.
- **Good Standing:** Be in good standing with local, state, and federal taxing entities.

Projects approved for participation must enter into a County-approved Development Agreement that establishes the scope of work, performance standards, funding limits, reporting obligations, and compliance requirements. All County participation is contingent upon execution of this agreement and verification of compliance with its terms.

Eligibility determinations are made pursuant to the New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (NMSA 1978, §§ 3-60A-1 to 3-60A-48) and the adopted East Downtown Los Alamos and White Rock Town Center Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plans (2022 and 2025).

Evaluation Criteria

MRA applications are evaluated based on the evaluation criteria listed below:



- 1. Alignment with MRA Plan & Community Goals:** Evaluates how well the project supports the adopted goals of the applicable MRA District and other County plans. Considers contributions to blight remediation, infrastructure capacity, housing and commercial development, visual or design improvements, placemaking, transportation connectivity, and broader community benefits that advance long-term revitalization objectives.
- 2. Catalytic & Economic Impact:** Assesses the project's potential to catalyze redevelopment, stimulate sustained economic activity, and strengthen local business vitality. Considers job creation, attraction of additional private investment, diversification of the economic base, improved business visibility and access, activation of underutilized parcels, and sustained revenue generation.
- 3. Project Feasibility & Readiness:** Assesses the project's financial and operational soundness, including funding structure, budget clarity, and timeline feasibility. Considers readiness indicators such as site control, design completion, permitting status, and mitigation strategies for identified barriers. Projects demonstrating realistic phasing and implementation capacity receive higher consideration.
- 4. Public-Private Partnership:** Evaluates the proportion of private investment or funds relative to public assistance. Considers overall project leverage, commitment of collateral or secured financing, and how effectively County financial participation stimulates additional private capital investment in the MRA. Also evaluates alignment with infrastructure improvements, streetscape upgrades, and housing or commercial reinvestment that generate measurable community value.
- 5. Justification of Public Assistance:** Determines whether the requested MRA funding or support is reasonable, proportional to anticipated outcomes, and justified by public benefit. Considers return on investment, contribution to infrastructure or public space enhancements, quality of design and placemaking, support for multimodal transportation and accessibility, and the degree to which public participation fills a documented financial or infrastructure gap.

Disqualification

Projects resulting in the net loss of existing affordable housing units or the long-term displacement of current tenants are ineligible for MRA incentives.

Application & Review Process

The MRA Program uses a structured, transparent process to ensure public investment is directed towards projects that align with adopted MRA Plans goals and objectives and deliver community and economic benefit.



1. **Application and Completeness Review:** Applicants must submit a complete application package, including all required attachments such as financial statements, a business plan or project pro forma, site plans, planning approvals, and supporting documentation. County staff review the applications for completeness. Applications will not be evaluated until all required information is provided.
2. **Review Committee Evaluation & Recommendation:** Complete applications are evaluated by an internal review committee using the Evaluation Criteria. The criteria relate to MRA goals, catalytic and economic impact, financial feasibility, and project readiness.
3. **Development Agreement:** An outline of the proposed terms are drafted in advance and included in the ordinance packet for Council review. The Development Agreement may include any combination of the following MRA tools:
 - Façade Improvement / Storefront Activation Grants – Funding for building, landscaping, and storefront upgrades.
 - Infrastructure Improvements – Public investment in utilities, streets, sidewalks, lighting, and ADA upgrades.
 - Public-Private Partnership (P3) Support – Development Agreement incorporating performance-based assistance to support project feasibility and community benefit.
 - MRA Fund– Direct contribution of MRA funds.
4. **Council Consideration & Approval:** Projects that adequately and successfully address the evaluation criteria will be recommended to the County Council for award consideration. The Council considers recommended projects in two public meetings: the first for ordinance introduction and the second for a final vote to adopt the ordinance. At these meetings, Council may approve the proposed ordinance as presented, modify its terms, or chose to deny the ordinance awarding funds to the project.
5. **Development Agreement Execution:** Approved projects enter into a Development Agreement with Los Alamos County, establishing the project scope, funding amount, performance requirements, reporting schedule, disbursement and compliance verification process.
6. **Compliance Monitoring and Close-Out:** County staff monitor project progress to ensure adherence to the Development Agreement, including performance, reporting, and funding requirements. Applicants must provide periodic updates, documentation, and a final report demonstrating project completion and outcomes. Upon verification of compliance, staff issue formal close-out confirmation and release any remaining funds.



Application

The MRA Program begins with the submission of an MRA Program Application. Applicants must provide all required documentation, including site plans, financial statements, project pro forma, and any necessary planning or permitting approvals. Staff are available to assist applicants and answer questions regarding the program, project eligibility, and application completeness throughout the process.

County staff review each application for completeness; incomplete applications will not proceed until all required materials are received.

After an application is deemed complete, it is forwarded to the Review Committee for evaluation using the standardized evaluation criteria. The Committee assesses each project's alignment with adopted MRA goals, community benefit, financial feasibility, and overall readiness.

The Incorporated County of Los Alamos reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to review, accept, reject, or conditionally approve any application for consideration. Submission of an application does not guarantee approval or award.

Review Committee

Complete applications are reviewed by an internal committee consisting of representatives from the Community Development Department, County Manager's Office, County Attorney's Office, and Finance Department. The Review Committee evaluates each application using the evaluation criteria, which assesses the project's alignment with adopted MRA Plan goals and financial feasibility. Projects that demonstrate consistency with County and MRA Plan objectives, show strong public benefit, and exhibit a feasible implementation strategy may be recommended to County Council consideration and approval of a Development Agreement.

Development Agreement & Compliance

All projects require execution of a Development Agreement between the applicant and Los Alamos County. The draft agreement is prepared by the County Attorney's Office in cooperation with the applicant. It specifies the approved project terms including scope, funding amount, performance benchmarks, reporting requirements, reimbursement schedule, and applicable compliance conditions.

The proposed Development Agreement will be forwarded to the County Council for consideration and approval. In accordance with County ordinance



procedures, the Council will hold two public hearings—an introduction meeting followed by an adoption meeting.

Following Council approval and execution of the agreement, applicants are required to comply with all terms and conditions set forth therein. This includes submission of progress and financial reports, verification of eligible expenditures, and continued compliance with all County codes, permits, and applicable state and local regulations.

Failure to meet performance obligations, reporting deadlines, or project completion requirements may result in suspension or termination of incentives and the recapture (“clawback”) of any disbursed funds, as authorized under the terms of the Development Agreement and applicable MRA resolutions.

Administration & Oversight

The Economic Development Division manages the MRA Program with support from the County review committee and final consideration by County Council. The County may also contract an agent to assist with marketing, application intake, project evaluation, and compliance monitoring.

Roles & Responsibilities

County staff manage the day-to-day oversight of the MRA Program. Their responsibilities include reviewing applications, developing project and funding recommendations, negotiating and monitoring development agreements, overseeing compliance and reporting, proposing program amendments, and tracking program outcomes.

County Council provides final decision-making authority. Council responsibilities include considering recommended projects, adopting ordinances and development agreement terms, setting policy direction, authorizing public funding, and monitoring overall program performance.

Order of Precedence

In the event of a conflict, the following order of precedence ensures the MRA Program is implemented consistently, lawfully, and in alignment with County priorities:

1. New Mexico State Law – Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (NMSA 1978, §§ 3-60A-1 to 3-60A-48)
2. Los Alamos County Charter
3. Los Alamos County MRA Resolution(s) and Adopted MRA Plan(s) (e.g., Resolution 25-18 for East Downtown Los Alamos and Resolution 21-06 for White Rock Town Center)



4. Los Alamos County MRA Policies, Procedures, and Implementation Guidelines

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the MRA program?

The Los Alamos County Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) Program provides financial and technical support for projects that revitalize underused or blighted areas within designated MRA districts.

What areas are designated as MRAs?

Current MRA districts include:

- East Downtown Los Alamos (Mari Mac area and adjacent parcels)
- White Rock Town Center
 - Rover
 - Bonnie View
 - Longview

What types of projects are eligible?

Eligible applicants include businesses, developers, and property owners with projects that:

- Are located within a designated MRA district.
- Align with the adopted MRA Plan goals.
- Deliver a public benefit such as blight removal, economic stimulation, new housing units, enhanced public spaces, or job creation.
- Demonstrate financial feasibility and a clear implementation timeline.
- Have no outstanding tax obligations and comply with applicable local land use and environmental requirements.

What kinds of support can the MRA program provide?

Incentives may include:

- Public-Private Partnerships (P3s)
- Infrastructure investment or site improvements
- Grants or direct contributions

All support is performance-based and subject to County Council approval.

How are projects evaluated?

Projects are evaluated using standardized criteria that consider catalytic and economic impact, alignment with MRA Plan goals, financial leverage, community benefit, and overall readiness. Projects resulting in the net loss of existing affordable housing units or the long-term displacement of current tenants are ineligible for MRA incentives.



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What is the application process?

The process typically includes:

1. Application – Provide all required documents, financials, and business plan.
2. Committee Review – Project is evaluated using standardized evaluation criteria.
3. Council Decision – Two public meetings: ordinance introduction and ordinance adoption.
4. Agreement Execution – Sets project scope, funding terms, and reporting requirements.

Who manages the program?

The program is administered by Los Alamos County's Economic Development Division. Staff review applications, facilitate evaluation, and monitor compliance. County Council provides final approval for all project funding.

What reporting requirements are there?

Approved projects must submit quarterly progress reports, provide proof of expenditures, and submit a final project completion report before reimbursement.

What happens if a project fails to comply?

If a project does not meet its performance or reporting requirements, County staff will work with the applicant to resolve issues. Continued non-compliance may result in withholding reimbursements or requiring repayment of awarded funds under the terms of the Development Agreement.

Who do I contact with questions?

Los Alamos County
Economic Development Division
1000 Central Ave, Suite 150, Los Alamos, NM 87544
Phone: (505) 662-8120
Email: economicdevelopment@lacnm.us

Contact & Submission Information

For questions, pre-application appointments, application submittals, or other MRA related inquiries, please contact:

Los Alamos County
Economic Development Division - Attn: MRA
1000 Central Avenue, Suite 150
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Phone: (505) 662-8120

Email: economicdevelopment@lacnm.us

To view the full MRA Plans, visit:

<https://lacnm.com/LACMRAPLans>

Or scan the QR Code:

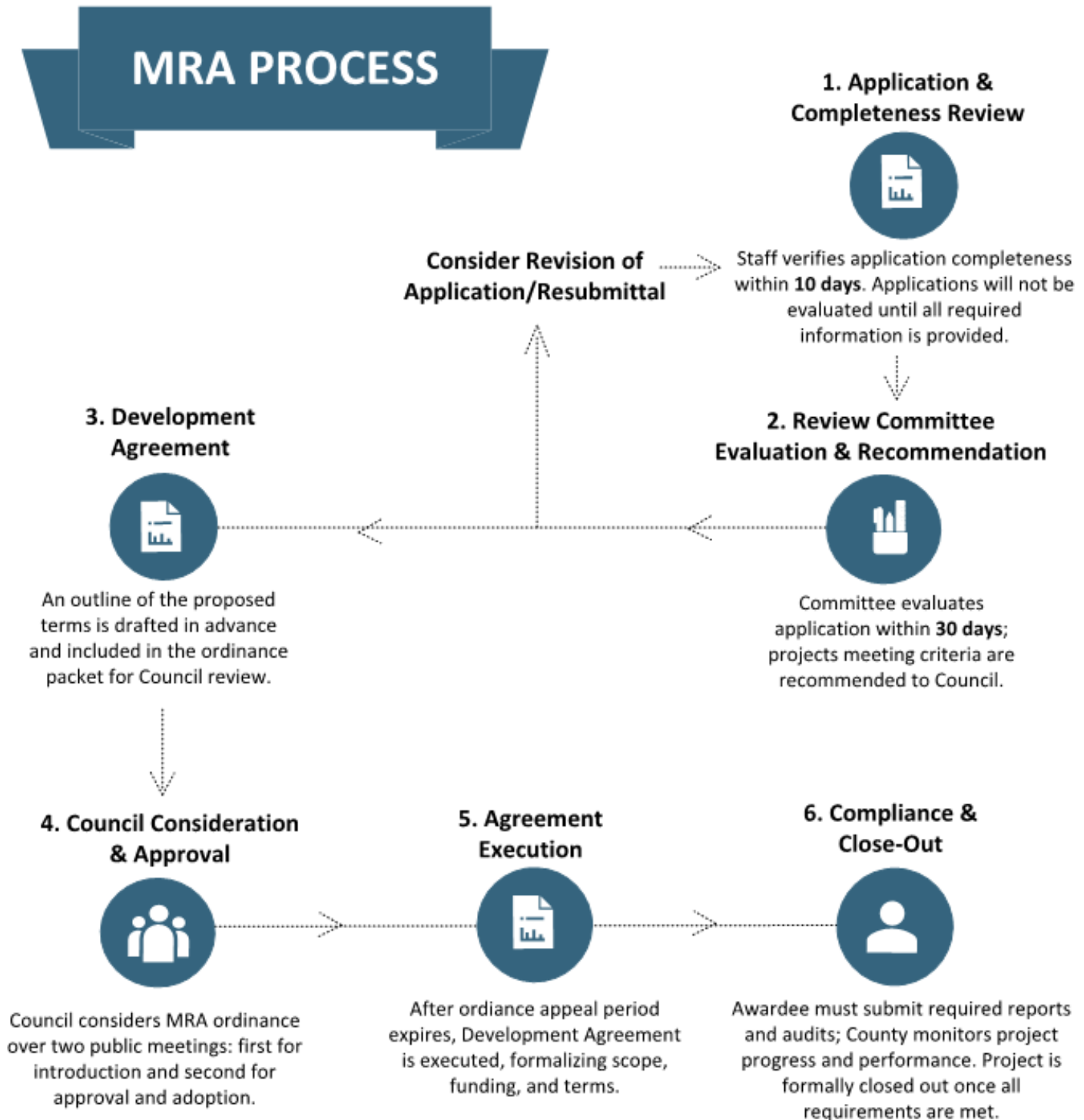


Thank you for being a part of the Los Alamos community.



Attachment A - MRA Process Flowchart

The MRA Program follows a clear, step-by-step process to guide applicants from applying through project approval. The flowchart illustrates the sequence of review, evaluation, and approval stages.



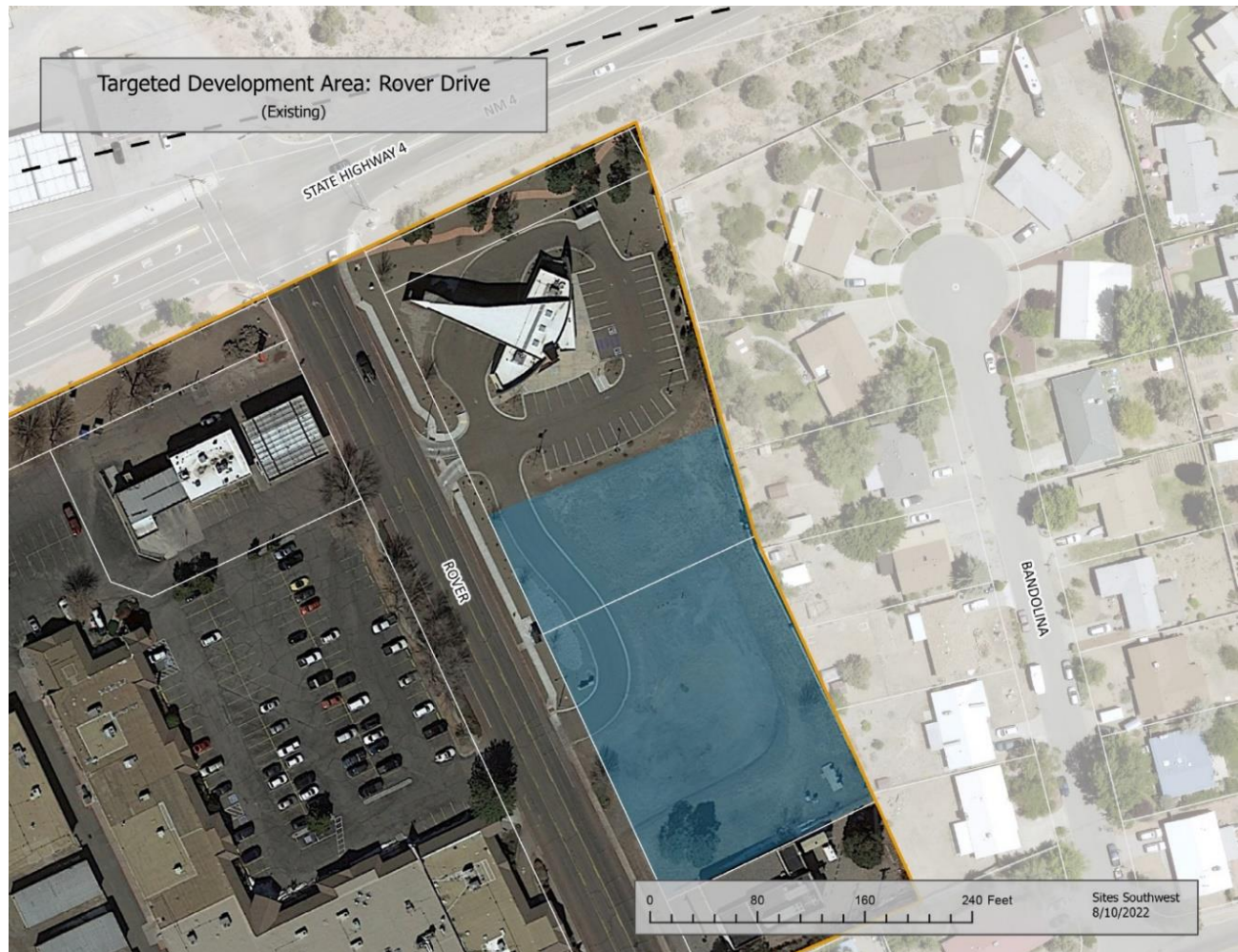
Attachment B – East Downtown Los Alamos MRA Boundary



Attachment C – White Rock Town Center MRA Boundary



Attachment D – White Rock Town Center (Rover)



Attachment E – White Rock Town Center (Bonnie View)





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Attachment F – White Rock Town Center (Longview)

