

# LOS ALAMOS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## ***HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN***



With Assistance from the Fuller Lodge/ Historic Districts Advisory Board and  
the Los Alamos County Planning and Zoning Commission

As adopted by the Los Alamos County Council, September, 2008

## I. Introduction

The Los Alamos area, sprawled over several north central New Mexico mesas in a region known as the Pajarito Plateau, is historically characterized by remoteness. Many undisturbed prehistoric Pueblo Indian ruins still dot the region. After the arrival of Europeans in the mid 1700s, the Plateau slumbered for some 150 years as a secluded grazing and timbering area. The few homesteads and ranches that arrived in the late 1800s and early 1900s were mostly seasonal.

In 1917, an elite preparatory school for boys took over the year-around Los Alamos Ranch, which occupied a large, central portion of the Plateau. The Los Alamos Ranch School operated until 1943, when outside events forced it, along with a number of homesteads, to vacate the premises. The Jemez' isolation and beauty had attracted the attention of Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, who was seeking a secluded site for a top-secret World War II military program, the Manhattan Project; he had visited the school on horseback during his youth.

The Manhattan Project dramatically transformed the Los Alamos area into a bustling scientific and military complex with several outreach sites, much of it fenced and all of it guarded by U.S. Army patrols on horseback or in jeeps. Staffed by many of the world's top scientists, the Los Alamos weapons laboratory designed, built, and tested at White Sands, New Mexico the world's first atomic bomb. The U.S. dropped two atomic bombs on Japan in August 1945 to end World War II. Ramifications were immediate, immense, and worldwide.

After the war, the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission assumed responsibility for the Laboratory. It also mandated a closed, civilian town built by government contractors. Los Alamos became a county in 1949 but remained closed until 1957. White Rock, initially opened in 1949 to house Laboratory construction workers and intended to be temporary, was reborn in the early 1960s for permanent homes. The Los Alamos National Laboratory continues to design and provide oversight for the nation's nuclear weapons stockpile and nonproliferation activity. Basic medical, energy, and technical research have considerably expanded the Laboratory's initial focus.

Clearly, the development of Los Alamos did not follow a familiar American West scenario. Nor is the County similar to other communities within northern New Mexico. The cultural and technical ramifications of its unique events and personalities have had profound worldwide significance. Preserving the community's physical history is important not only to the people of the County, but to those of the state, nation, and world.

Overseeing historic and cultural resources is a cooperative effort incorporating overlapping spheres of official influence. The National Historic Preservation Act serves as an overall guide to local levels of preservation activity and the New Mexico Cultural Properties Act sets state standards of preservation policy. The State Historic Preservation Division is the liaison between communities and national policy makers. The Fuller Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board, the Los Alamos Historical Society, and other groups – including but not limited to local enterprises, volunteer organizations, Los Alamos County, and Los Alamos National Laboratory –contribute to local historic preservation.

## II. Plan

The Los Alamos County Vision Statement and Policy Plan (Los Alamos County Comprehensive Plan, July 19, 2005) requires appropriate "historic, environmental, and cultural landscape" conservation. This Historic Preservation Plan follows the outline mandated in Section 7 of the Policy Plan, "Preserve our Past" and lists actions needed to carry out the goals and objectives of the plan.

### III. Goals, Objectives, Actions

**Goal 7.A** “Los Alamos County has a historic preservation plan that provides for the preservation and restoration of historic buildings and their surroundings and the protection of archaeological sites.”

**Objective 7.A.1** “The County should adopt a comprehensive, historic preservation plan that incorporates the Fuller Lodge Historic District and other historic and archeological sites identified within the County.”

#### Action

1. This Plan should fulfill that mandate.

**Objective 7.A.2.** “The County should propose and adopt regulations that ensure identification and protection of individual historic structures and historical, cultural, and archaeological sites.”

#### Actions

1. The County should develop a prioritized list of significant historic and archaeological resources, including (but not limited to) artifacts, structures, trails, neighborhoods, natural features, petroglyphs, cultural landscapes, and sites of historic interest.

Responsible Party: Fuller Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board.

2. The list should be maintained and made available to the public as a Register of Los Alamos Historic Places. The register should be keyed to the County database used for tracking and monitoring building permits, zoning variances, and land subdivision.

Responsible Party: Community Development Department.

3. The County should develop a prioritized maintenance plan for county-owned historic sites.

Responsible Party: Capital Projects & Facilities Department.

4. The County should pursue funding for the preservation of County-owned historic buildings including Fuller Lodge, and archaeological sites.

Responsible Party: County Administrator’s Office with applications approved by the County Council.

5. The County should enhance the public protection of historic resources through effective County ordinances to establish historic districts.

Responsible Party: Community Development Department with advice from the Fuller Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board.

6. The County should promote heritage tourism by establishing economic incentives to encourage the preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods.

Responsible Party: Community Development Department with advice from the Fuller Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board and the Lodger’s Tax Advisory Board.

7. The County should develop procedures, guidelines, and standards for projects involving historic structures and/or the integrity of historic districts to help make owners aware of the significance of their buildings.

Responsible Party: Community Development Department, Planning & Zoning Commission, and the Fuller Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board.

8. The County should revise its building code to reflect the requirements of the historic districts and neighborhoods.

Responsible Party: Community Development Department with advice from the Fuller Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board and Capital Projects & Facilities Department.

**Objective 7.A.3** “Where appropriate, the County should support the nomination of historic sites and structures to the State and National Historic Registers.”

**Actions**

1. The County should identify and nominate important sites and neighborhoods outside the current National Landmark District that are listed in the register of Los Alamos Historic places for inclusion on the New Mexico State Register of Historic Places. (See 7.A.2.2)

Responsible Party: Fuller Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board and the Community Development Department.

2. The County should monitor the condition of potential historic and archaeological sites, both public and private.

Responsible Party: Appropriate department as determined by the County Administrator’s Office.

**Goal 7. B** “Los Alamos County is a center for regional cultural, historical and environmental information and education.”

**Objective 7.B.1** “The County should work with the Los Alamos Historical Society to find an appropriate site to archive historical and archeological materials.

**Actions**

1. The County should identify a site and construct a new archival facility.

Responsible Party: County Council and Capital Projects & Facilities Department with recommendations from the Fuller Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board, the Historical Society, and other affected entities.

2. The County should determine a funding source for a modern archival facility, including grants, bonds, and other sources.

Responsible Party: County Council, County Administrator’s Office, Fuller Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board.

3. The County should seek ways to provide public access to historic sites within the County.

Responsible Party: Community Development Department, Fuller Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board, Capital Projects & Facilities Department, and Community Services Department – Parks Division

4. The County should develop methods of providing historical information through electronic means.

Responsible Party: Fuller Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board, Historical Society.

5. The County should promote volunteer activities that help protect, restore, or conserve historic resources.

Responsible Party: Fuller Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board, Historical Society, Community Services Department – Parks Division.

**Objective 7.B.2** “The County should support the archiving and safekeeping of historic records and archeological materials.”

**Actions**

1. The County should ensure the protection of the archives in their current location at Fuller Lodge through heating and cooling controls, adequate security and fire protection, and an emergency evacuation and relocation plan.

Responsible Party: Capital Projects & Facilities Department, Historical Society

2. The County should ensure protection of records of historic significance in its possession.

Responsible Party: County Administrator's Office/Records Management Division.

**Objective 7.B.3** "The County should cooperate with the Los Alamos Historical Society to interpret the past through lectures, publications, tours, and exhibits."

**Actions**

1. The County should continue to support the Los Alamos Historical Society in maintaining its museum and activities to educate residents, visitors and the broader community concerning the historical significance of Los Alamos. These foster a deeper understanding of Los Alamos history.

Responsible Party: County Council, Historical Society.

2. The County should continue to support or sponsor history lectures, fairs, tours, schools, and other educational forums. It should continue to coordinate such activities with other groups interested in preservation.

Responsible Party: County Council, Historical Society, Lodger's Tax Advisory Board, and Los Alamos Commerce and Development Corporation.

3. Working with nonprofit organizations, the County should foster a sense of history in its tourism promotions.

Responsible Party: Lodger's Tax Advisory Board, Los Alamos Commerce and Development Corporation, and Historical Society.

**Objective 7.B.4** "The County should share information on archaeological and historical sites with other jurisdictions and coordinate the safekeeping and sharing of materials with museums, educational centers, and government entities."

**Actions**

1. The Fuller Lodge/Historic District Advisory Board should create and maintain a list of resources such as sites, trails, or artifacts that are important to the history of Los Alamos County but are outside the jurisdiction of the County.

Responsible Party: Fuller Lodge Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board and Community Development Department.

2. County staff should maintain regular contact with archeologists and other preservation workers who are in charge of the listed items.

Responsible Party: Community Development Department.

**Goal 7.C** "Fuller Lodge is preserved and restored in a manner that retains its significant cultural and community value."

**Objective 7.C.1** "The County should keep current the usage criteria for Fuller Lodge to allow for cultural and community uses while minimizing the impact and damage to the building and grounds."

**Actions**

1. The County should maintain strict compliance with the requirements of the National and State Landmark Registration of Fuller Lodge and the provisions of the quitclaim deed from the Atomic Energy Commission to the County of Los Alamos.

Responsible Party: County Council, Fuller Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board, Capital Projects & Facilities Department, Community Services.

2. The County should ensure that Fuller Lodge has adequate fire protection and maintain the Fuller Lodge fire protection system.

Responsible Party: Capital Projects & Facilities Department and Fire Marshal.

3. The Fuller Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board should report annually to the County Council on the state of Fuller Lodge. The review, developed with County staff, should make recommendations on periodic and special maintenance needs of the building.

Responsible Party: Fuller Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board.

4. The County should continue to maintain Fuller Lodge in such a manner as to ensure its active use as the multicultural, social, and historic center of the community.

Responsible Party: Capital Projects & Facilities Department with oversight by the Fuller Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board.

5. The County should limit the use of Fuller Lodge and the surrounding grounds to community and cultural activities as specified in County Resolution No. 03-05.

Responsible Party: Capital Projects & Facilities Department, Community Services.

**Objective 7.C.2** “The County should continue the preservation and historic restoration of Fuller Lodge and its surrounding grounds.”

#### **Actions**

1. The County should continue to seek funding for the preservation of Fuller Lodge and its grounds. This may include, but should not be limited to, bonds, tax levies, preservation grants, and capital improvement funds.

Responsible Party: Capital Project & Facilities Department Works and Community Services Departments with oversight by the Fuller Lodge/Historic Districts Advisory Board.

2. The County should continue to maintain the Tewa ruins in the Fuller Lodge Historic District for future generations.

Responsible Party: Parks Division.