

Buildings & Energy

BE1: Increase building efficiency

BE1.1: Establish an energy benchmarking program for commercial buildings	Establish benchmarking criteria to track building energy and water performance in commercial buildings. Educate building owners on potential cost benefits of efficiency upgrades where necessary. Offer education and incentives, such as through the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA). Encourage commercial customers to share data to promote energy efficiency improvements.
BE1.2: Establish an energy benchmarking program for municipal buildings	Establish benchmarking criteria to track building energy and water performance in municipal buildings using the EPA ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager Tool. Perform ROIs to build the argument for necessary efficiency upgrades in municipal buildings. Earmark recurring funding to support efficiency upgrades of County buildings. Monitor smart meters for gas, water, and electricity currently in place in all relevant County facilities, including buildings and light posts. Create a dashboard to track building performance for all County facilities and consider creating a public dashboard so the community can see improvements in energy efficiency.
BE1.3: Encourage energy efficiency and electrification retrofits	<p>Develop an energy efficiency and electrification outreach and educational campaign focused on the cost savings and public health benefits for residents, business, and landlords, focused on specific retrofits (e.g., weatherization, energy efficient appliances, LED lighting, electric hot water heaters, space heaters, stoves, laundry dryers). As part of the campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market DPU's "Induction Cooktop Loaner Program." - Develop and provide free home energy audits. - Teach residents how to engage in decision-making regarding the ownership, generation, storage, distribution of, and transition to renewable energy. - Provide an informational brochure on available funding and share what incentives are available to relieve the financial burden for low-income residents. <p>Los Alamos County has a relatively older building stock, which can be less energy efficient than newer buildings. This action would reduce GHG emissions and improve energy efficiency in those older buildings. In addition, New Mexico has one of the highest poverty rates in the country, and low-income households often struggle to pay for utilities and fuels used to power their homes and vehicles.</p>
BE1.4: Adopt green building standards	<p>Promote phasing out fossil fuel infrastructure in new residential and commercial construction by adopting a green building performance standard (examples include the Santa Fe County HERS Rating and Seattle Building Energy Performance Standard). Educate the community on the cost and public health benefits this will provide for new buildings such as lower utility bills and improved indoor air quality. Plan to provide assistance and outreach during this transition, especially for commercial users of natural gas appliances such as restaurants and community centers.</p> <p>This action supports LARES recommendations and BPU's goal to phase out natural gas by 2070, which is the leading source of building energy emissions in the county.</p>

BE2: Advance building decarbonization

BE2.1: Incentivize electrification retrofits	Educate the community, including commercial property owners/landlords, on currently available incentives such as LIHEAP, Los Alamos Home Renewable Program, and IRA tax credits that are available for electrification upgrades, especially for low-income households. Notify the community through resources such as the County website, utility bill inserts, and pamphlets distributed at County events when new funding opportunities become available. Stay up to date on future clean energy financing options for low-and-moderate income households, such as the New Mexico Climate Investment Center.
BE2.2: Develop a contractor training program	Identify, support, and/or develop free training programs and resources for local contractors, design professionals, and County staff (i.e., plan reviewers, building inspectors, and project managers) to learn green building skills such as electrification, energy efficiency, and water efficiency retrofits, especially during low-construction times of year. Partner with institutions such as UNM-LA, NNMC, and Santa Fe Community College to teach green building skills and consider organizing a quarterly open house with contractors.

BE3: Increase renewable energy generation

BE3.1: Promote local renewable energy	<p>Support local and statewide standards for community solar programs, micro-grid establishment, and grid modernization. Continue to work with DPU to plan for enhanced distributive energy goals and assist with rooftop distributed solar installation by installing net meters to reduce energy costs.</p> <p>This action aligns with the County's Integrated Resource Plan, which recommends greatly increasing local solar generation and storage capacity.</p>
BE3.2: Expand electric energy resiliency	Continue to expand electric energy resiliency by investing in a diverse set of renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, and nuclear. Work with DPU Electric Production staff to align with existing initiatives and increase energy resiliency for the community through the Utilities Assistance Program and by providing redundancies within the circuit systems.

Transportation & Land Use

T1: Expand EV infrastructure and adoption

T1.1: Promote EV adoption	Encourage EV network expansion by educating the community on available tax incentives and rebates for EV purchases, with a focus on those available to low-income populations.
T1.2: Develop EV infrastructure plan	Develop and implement an EV infrastructure plan that prepares the county and community for the transition to EVs by mapping infrastructure needs. Partner with the Los Alamos Electric Utility, NMDOT, Los Alamos Public School, UNM-LA, and other organizations to develop strategies and identify barriers for EV readiness in key locations, including public spaces, schools, businesses, places of worship, and multi family homes.
T1.3: Implement codes requiring EV infrastructure	Implement new building codes to incentivize EV readiness for new and redeveloped single family homes. Encourage a certain number of EV chargers in multi-family housing, commercial developments, and community gathering spaces, including increased access for affordable housing units. This action builds on the County's existing incentives to reduce required parking spaces if a contractor includes EV charging infrastructure.
T1.4: Transition County fleet to EVs	Work with the County Fleet and Transit Divisions and EV Working Group to transition County vehicle fleet to EVs when replacing a fleet vehicle that has reached the end of its usable life, where feasible. When technology is not available, pursue transition strategies such as right-sizing or hybrid vehicles. Consider aligning with New Mexico state target to achieve a zero-emission vehicle fleet by 2035.

T2: Enhance sustainable land use planning

T2.1: Expand mixed-use, transit oriented development policies	Continue to expand land use zoning standards and codes, such as changes to parking minimums, to promote affordable, transit-oriented, and mixed-use development to reduce urban sprawl. Incentivize building within walking distance of essential services and promote existing complete streets policies and Public Works Design & Construction Standards. Support existing County policies to maintain and increase housing options for all residents by engaging with non-profit service providers who oversee daily operations of affordable housing homeownership, rental, and rehabilitation programs. Affordable housing policies may include a "rent-to-own" policy, where a portion of rent is set aside as capital towards the down payment of a housing unit.
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T3: Expand and promote multi-modal connectivity

T3.1: Introduce public transit education campaign	Partner with the media to launch an education campaign that educates on how to use public transit options, showcases transit connections to bike and pedestrian ways, and features bus rider stories in an effort to combat fear and prejudice while highlighting advantages and accessibility. Build on Atomic City Transit's marketing plan to increase awareness of the transit opportunities that are available in Los Alamos and retain and attract customers. Continue to teach new riders how to use the Atomic City Transit app and bike racks in an effort to raise Atomic Transit ridership, which is currently low in the County.
T3.2: Advocate and partner regionally to improve transit network	Continue to work with partners such as Atomic City Transit, LANL, Los Alamos Public Schools, North Central Regional Transit District, and NM Park and Ride to advocate and engage in regional opportunities to improve the transit network to (1) ensure there are safe non-motorized connections to transit facilities, addressing first and last mile improvements, (2) expand transit access to neighborhoods that are not currently served by transit and to services, jobs, and activities for seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income residents, and (3) increase bike storage at transit centers. Reference the Transit Center Study to identify priority areas for County transit access, emergency services, and opportunities for regional transit collaboration. Use findings from the Transit Study to increase ridership, implement more micro transit options, provide incentives, and increase route frequency.
T3.3: Encourage multimodal transportation	Provide incentives for commercial property owners and consider updating land use codes to increase bike storage options, preferred parking for carpools, and shared vehicles to promote multimodal transportation options. This action builds off of the Community Development Department's current incentive program, which reduces the parking requirement for commercial properties that have bike storage or repair facilities.
T3.4: Expand non-motorized transportation options and accessibility	Support the 2017 Bicycle Transportation Plan, Trails and Open Space Management Plan, Bicycle Work Group, and Public Works to expand non-motorized transportation options and infrastructure to support biking, walking, and other means of non-motorized transportation. Improve and create bike and walking infrastructure, especially in low-income and older neighborhoods, and invest in County-funded sidewalk improvement for safety and accessibility for all users, with a focus on those with limited mobility. This action supports efforts currently underway, including the annual "Bike to Work" day, the 2024 Pedestrian Study, and the County's Bronze level Bicycle Friendly Community award.
T3.5: Develop a CTR program	Develop a commute trip reduction (CTR) program for County employees that builds on the "Drive Less Los Alamos" Walk, Bike, Ride, Carpool Initiative, which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuing to provide resources on the Los Alamos County Trail Network, cycling safety measures, Atomic City Transit and Afternoon Express routes and schedules. - Encouraging employees to utilize alternative modes of transportation when commuting to and from work. - Continuing to expand flexible work options and remote work through the Telework and Alternate Work Schedules program. - Encouraging local employers to promote CTR, including collaborating with Los Alamos National Laboratory to develop a commuter program.

Materials & Consumption

MC1: Maximize waste diversion

MC1.1: Promote circular economy practices	Plan for future extended producer responsibility (EPR), reuse, and circularity programs and policies and lead by example by adopting zero waste best practices. Support efforts currently underway across the United States to promote the principles of product stewardship, and implement an environmental purchasing policy (EPP) for all County government agencies and departments. Develop and support community reuse and repair by creating fix-it clinics, a community tool library, and promoting local "buy nothing groups" to support a circular economy. Work in consultation with local businesses to promote local reuse centers and practices such as the Eco Station Reuse Hut.
MC1.2: Expand and refine waste data tracking, reporting, and goals	Expand current waste data tracking and reporting methods to establish new goals, including new zero waste targets and management plan. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducting and expanding the scope of future waste characterization studies to include additional sectors (commercial and multifamily) and waste streams (recycling and compost), as well as a more detailed material list for sorting. - Updating the County's current waste goals and shifting targets to align with zero waste and source reduction priorities.
MC1.3: Implement food waste prevention and diversion program	Continue to establish and implement the municipal food composting program. In the short term, prioritize outreach on the new food compost program for high generators of food waste, and in the long-term, look to expand to curbside collection for residents and consider accepting and incentivizing compostable paper and other compostable packaging. Also consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitating a food waste prevention network between businesses, NGOs, and research institutions to develop systems and infrastructure to reduce food waste and foster connections between sources of unwanted food and communities in need. - Partnering with local businesses, restaurants, and grocery stores such as Gaia's Pantry to raise awareness of edible food recovery programs. - Building upon existing Zero Waste Los Alamos resources and education campaign that provides food shopping, prep, and storage techniques to reduce spoilage; recipes to reduce food waste; and messages on reducing waste.
MC1.4: Promote C&D recycling and reuse	Provide a construction and demolition (C&D) recycling, salvage, and deconstruction toolkit for construction professionals which includes how-to instructions and contact information for local service providers, and information on low-carbon and recycled building materials. Promote educational resources for building professionals through permit counter brochures, industry events, and industry publications. In the long-term, consider a C&D recycling ordinance which requires that C&D project waste is minimized, reused, or recycled; or evaluate an incentivized approach by offering reduced rates for separating reusable C&D materials.
MC1.5: Conduct recycling and composting outreach and education	Conduct commercial and residential education and outreach on recycling, composting, and waste management best practices. Initiatives may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commercial, single-family residential, and multifamily residential technical assistance program that offers recycling toolkits, welcome packets, online resources, and in-person outreach to help with waste prevention, recycling, composting, and sustainable purchasing. - Standardizing waste collection systems for commercial and multifamily properties, including designated colors for collection bins for each waste stream, providing clear and consistent signage such as posters with "what goes where" , and recommendation for front-of-house or public facing bins. - Targeted commercial food scrap outreach that provides additional outreach for the largest generators (including hospitals, universities, and other institutions). Outreach should include information about known contamination issues that need to be addressed.
MC1.6: Implement the zero waste strategy	Implement all other recommendations outlined in the Zero Waste Strategy (ZWS) to continue to reduce the generation of waste and improve the focus to enhance waste reduction, recycling, and composting. Plan for mid- and long-term strategies and actions outlined in the ZWS which include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting and expanding existing recycling services and programs. - Promoting incentives to encourage waste reduction such as a pay-as-you-throw system. - Investing in long-term programs that promote source reduction and alternatives to landfill.

Natural Systems & Water Resources

NS1: Increase urban green space

NS1.1: Promote urban forest stewardship and tree preservation	<p>Reduce the effects of extreme heat and promote healthy communities by increasing native, drought-friendly vegetation cover and enforcing the County's existing tree preservation and mitigation policy. Promote urban forest stewardship through an equitable and inclusive community tree planting and preservation program, focusing "greening" in areas with lower tree coverage and higher exposure to extreme heat.</p> <p>In Los Alamos, many of the pine tree species are under threat from wildfire and invasive pest species exacerbated by climate change, necessitating additional measures to restore and protect natural ecosystems.</p>
NS1.2: Provide green space incentives	<p>Introduce incentives (e.g. streamlined permitting) for developers who prioritize the inclusion of green spaces, parks, and community gardens in the design process for new housing complexes and mixed-use spaces, especially for communities in the county who experience inequities in green infrastructure and access to community services.</p>

NS2: Conserve water resources

NS2.1: Promote green stormwater infrastructure and low-impact development	<p>Continue to invest in green stormwater infrastructure and incentivize low impact development (LID) projects for new construction projects, prioritizing vulnerable communities most impacted by extreme weather and climate impacts. Green stormwater infrastructure is nature-based infrastructure to address urban flooding and water quality issues, such as through rain gardens and bioswales. Green infrastructure provides more climate and health co-benefits than conventional "grey" infrastructure systems.</p> <p>Stormwater management is a key issue for the County and LANL. This action builds on current County actions to integrate low-impact development, natural systems, and permeable surfaces to reduce and filter of stormwater runoff.</p>
NS2.2: Develop a water security strategy	<p>Align with The Los Alamos Long Range Water Supply Plan (2017) and Source Water Protection Plan (2003) to develop a water security strategy and drought preparedness plan to address water shortages and prepare for climate impacts. Promote collaboration and data sharing on water resources with other jurisdictions, and revise land use practices to conserve water in the county. Expand existing water conservation programs which encourage the community to reduce daily water use and educate residents on water sources and supply.</p>
NS2.3: Encourage sustainable landscaping and water conservation	<p>Reduce water consumption from landscaping by planting native and climate appropriate plants. Work with landscape companies and home owners to educate and incentivize drip irrigation and low pesticide management techniques. Support the Water and Energy Conservation Program and Water Rule W-8 to reduce potable water use and encourage management of reclaimed water.</p>
NS2.4: Provide greywater reuse education	<p>Promote greywater systems and offer incentive programs for residents, including providing free rain barrels to homeowners to capture and reuse rainwater. Develop new educational programs to the community on the environmental and financial benefits of reusing rainwater and greywater.</p>

Community Resilience & Wellbeing

CR1: Enhance community understanding of climate change

CR1.1: Conduct a vulnerability assessment	<p>Conduct a climate hazard vulnerability assessment to understand how extreme weather and other aspects of climate change will impact people, services, and infrastructure, particularly vulnerable populations. Identify vulnerable areas and populations and enhance equity-focused response in emergency planning to extreme temperature events, drought conditions, and wildfires. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementing a neighborhood cooling program and emergency heat response plan, including partnering with local nonprofits and organizations to provide resources and check-in on vulnerable and/or low-income residents during extreme events. - Implementing County cooling centers for the community in collaboration with community partners. <p>In addition, reference the County's Draft 2023 Hazard Mitigation Plan and work with LANL to implement actions identified in the 2022 LANL Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Resilience Plan (VARP) which include increasing energy redundancy and support, protecting critical assets from climate impacts, and promoting nature-based solutions for resiliency.</p>
CR1.2: Invest in public climate education campaigns	<p>Invest in public education campaigns about climate change in partnership with vulnerable communities on a wide range of climate issues. The County's most vulnerable communities often experience the earliest and most acute impacts of climate change, face historic and current inequities, and have limited capacity to adapt. Share climate information through targeted community outreach to develop capacity to address sustainability issues. In addition, encourage schools to incorporate sustainability related topics and consider partnering with the Los Alamos High School EcoClub.</p>
CR1.3: Support the local food system	<p>Strengthen the local food system and support the local economy by supporting farmers markets, and promoting local food production through coordinated community education and regional collaboration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborate with businesses such as the Los Alamos Cooperative Market to provide resources and support for food production, increasing food security for all residents.

CR2: Prepare the community for climate impacts

CR2.1: Encourage adaptation upgrades	<p>Solicit grants to offer rebates and incentives to encourage adaptation upgrades on residential and commercial properties (e.g., reducing paved areas to address runoff and heat, installing green roofs, permeable pavement, air filters, fans).</p>
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Cross-Cutting

CC1: Encourage sustainable businesses

CC1.1: Develop a sustainable business certification	<p>Develop and promote a certification program or labeling system that recognizes businesses that adopt sustainability measures such as energy efficiency, waste diversion, sustainable supply chains. Promote this program in conjunction with the County's Small Business Center.</p>
CC1.2: Bolster green economic development	<p>Provide sustainable economic development opportunities and free training programs to support County residents and invest in underrepresented and economically disadvantaged communities and local infrastructure. Sustainable economic development sectors to focus training programs may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Electrification retrofits - Water and energy efficiency retrofits - Sustainable landscaping practices (native plantings, xeriscaping, etc.) - Sustainable construction and demolition practices <p>This action builds on goals related to green job programs for vulnerable communities in the Los Alamos Comprehensive Plan and Economic Vitality Strategic Plan.</p>

CC2: Promote climate education outreach

CC2.1: Facilitate equitable public participation in planning	<p>In addition to providing robust and equitable education on how climate impacts affect vulnerable communities, actively seek input from marginalized or vulnerable populations in climate policy-making processes. In Los Alamos, more vulnerable communities may include communities of color, low-income residents, older adults, and non-English speaking residents. Regularly host community meetings and establish advisory boards to ensure diverse voices are heard.</p>
CC2.2: Monitor and share climate action progress	<p>Consistently monitor CAP implementation progress through an online platform that provides climate action information and resources to community members, businesses, and stakeholders.</p>
CC2.3: Collaborate with local Pueblos	<p>Work with local Pueblos to share resources and ideas on climate change issues, and align with relevant plans such as the Pueblo de San Ildefonso Climate Action Plan. Support the County's efforts to build equitable partnerships with local Pueblos through the Progress through Partnering initiative, regional, or one-on-one projects to increase green workforce training offerings, clean energy access, transit, and public safety and wellbeing.</p>
CC2.4: Expand community partnerships	<p>Expand partnerships with Los Alamos National Laboratory, local schools, and community-based organizations to encourage technology development and innovative solutions to addressing climate challenges.</p>