



Santa Fe Area
Home Builders Association
Northern New Mexico
Builders Association

Building Homes, Enriching Communities, Changing Lives

April 30, 2025

Bold Action, Shifting Culture, and Building Efficiency at Planning & Land Use Department

Honorable City Councilors, Mayor Webber, City Manager Scott, and Director Lamboy,

Under the leadership of Director Lamboy, and in collaboration with our local build | design associations, the City's Planning and Land Use Department [PLUD] has begun the overdue process of upgrading its hardware and IT systems. These efforts, alongside investments in professional development, can revolutionize how the building community obtains permits and inspections for our work on our City's built environment.

As we part ways with manual and paper-intensive processes and embrace AI technology, electronic plan review/permitting, and even remote video building inspections, the structure and capital needs of the department are changing.

Our industry deeply needs a City budget that supports and advances these efforts. We are concerned that cuts to the department's contractual services and operating costs (Pg. 37 of the proposed budget book), or the potential for freezing unfilled positions could jeopardize the goal of evolving operations up to modern standards.

We respectfully petition leadership and the governing body to carefully examine and consult with PLUD Staff, and bargaining unit representatives before approving the budget to determine where savings can be best applied to avoid cuts to essential contract work, core modernization efforts, technology upgrades, or leave essential positions vacant.

It is worth noting that the Planning and Land Use Department is fully enmeshed in work that is NOT part of business as usual. The Long Term Development Code Update and General Plan Rewrite are once-in-a-generation projects that stretch staff's capacity, diverting resources from daily service delivery and increasing workload across the board.

"Time is money." For Santa Fe's build | design industry, the delays and inefficiencies in the current permitting process translate directly into higher construction costs and longer project timelines. Our [August 2024 survey of New Mexico builders](#) found that over 15% of a home's cost stems from pure delays, permitting, zoning, and entitlement processes. Investment and modernization of the Department is not merely an internal efficiency—it's a direct lever for housing affordability and economic development.

Thank you for your commitment to public service and for considering critical investment at PLUD..

Sincerely,

Miles D Conway, Executive Officer