

December 17, 2025

To: Community Development Commission

Re: Scope of CDC work

From: Russell Brott, Commissioner

Background and purpose

The Community Development Commission (CDC) is established in City Code 6-4 as an advisory body to the Governing Body. City Code 6-4 charges the CDC with advising the City on:

- (A) Administration of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program in accordance with the City's adopted consolidated plan;
- (B) Administration of the Santa Fe Homes Program (SFHP) in accordance with adopted ordinances and administrative guidelines;
- (C) Establishing a general plan for the City relating to economic and other community development issues;
- (D) Allocating loans and housing assistance grants under the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) Ordinance (Section 26-3 SFCC 1987).

In recent years, the Commission's work has been limited to Tasks A and D. While valuable, this scope of work fails to meet the breadth outlined in the enabling ordinance and leaves a gap in the City's housing and community development policy framework. The purpose of this memo is to propose adjustments to the CDC's scope, products, and procedures so that the Commission fully meets its legal mandate and becomes a more effective engine for housing policy, while remaining firmly advisory.

Governance and composition

The ordinance specifies that "the mayor shall designate a chairman and vice-chairman from among the commissioners." Historically, Chairs have been members of the

Governing Body rather than commissioners, contrary to the plain language and intent of City Code 6-4. Going forward, the City should align appointments and procedures with the founding ordinance by ensuring that both Chair and Vice-Chair are selected from the CDC's citizen membership.

Role as central housing policy task force

The CDC is an established, diverse, and experienced group of residents that should do far more than review CDBG and AHTF proposals as has been the case in recent years. Santa Fe needs a standing, community-based body responsible for generating ideas, evaluating data, and recommending regulatory and program changes that expand and preserve affordable housing. Within its advisory authority, the CDC should function as the City's core housing and community-development policy task force, originating and testing concepts that the Mayor and City Council can translate into ordinances, budget decisions, and administrative changes.

To make this role concrete, the CDC's work program should emphasize the following:

- Identify and recommend changes to policies, procedures, ordinances, land-development regulations, and the general plan that remove barriers to affordable housing.
- Develop and evaluate "regulatory incentive strategies" designed to improve project feasibility while advancing affordability goals.
- Serve as a forum where community members, housing providers, and stakeholders can bring forward challenges and solutions, which the CDC then translates into formal recommendations for the Governing Body.

Core products, timelines, and accountability

To increase impact and accountability, the CDC should commit to producing clear, recurring work products on a defined schedule, and the Governing Body should commit to formally receiving and responding to them. Beginning in 2026, the CDC should:

- Prepare an annual “Housing Production and Preservation Scorecard” that tracks units produced and preserved by income level, tenure, product type, and geography; key cost indicators; and progress toward adopted targets. This scorecard should be presented at a public joint session of the CDC and Governing Body each year.
- Provide at least one formal written set of recommendations per year focused on regulatory barriers and incentive strategies, including a brief statement of the problem, analysis of options, and recommended code or guideline changes.
- Conduct a yearly review of the Santa Fe Homes Program and AHTF activities and deliver a summary of findings and recommendations to the Mayor and Council, based on performance data and stakeholder feedback.
- Maintain and update a two-year rolling work plan, approved by the Governing Body, that identifies priority topics, expected deliverables, and target meeting dates for major recommendations.

These products will make the CDC’s work more transparent and actionable, and will help Council integrate citizen expertise into its legislative and budget calendars.

Priority activities under City Code 6-4

Consistent with the four responsibilities in City Code 6-4, the following activities should be priorities in 2026 and beyond:

- **Housing targets and monitoring (Duties A-D):** Advise the Mayor and Governing Body on explicit production and cost-reduction targets—units per year by product type and income band, target cost per unit, and timelines—through biannual briefings. Maintain the Housing Production and Preservation Scorecard and publicly report on progress toward these targets, including recommended course corrections.
- **Santa Fe Homes Program (duty B):** Advise on income targeting, required set-asides, and incentive structures within SFHP and recommend how they should apply to specific project types and areas of the city. This includes regular review of performance data, public hearings with developers and neighborhoods, and formal

recommendations on ordinance and guideline changes and resource priorities, creating a feedback loop between implementation and legislative oversight.

- **General plan and community development (duty C):** The Community Development Commission should lead a planning process that articulates the community's affordable housing strategy with on the ground needs and challenges. This work should include setting measurable production and preservation targets, integrating incentives and inclusionary zoning into land use policies, and coordinating public, nonprofit, and private partners to leverage tools like LIHTC projects, land donations, and local trust fund dollars to deliver more permanently affordable homes across the City.
- **Regulatory and zoning changes (duties B & C):** Use the CDC, including subcommittees where appropriate, to draft proposed ordinance changes related to zoning, development standards, fees, and development review processes, delivering ready-to-vote packages to Council.
- **Consolidated plan, CDBG, and AHTF (duties A & D):** Continue the CDC's role in reviewing CDBG and AHTF proposals, but link these funding recommendations directly to adopted targets and the general plan. Assist the Affordable Housing Office in developing RFPs and program criteria to ensure investments advance stated housing goals and align with the Trust Fund ordinance.

To ensure follow-through, the CDC should continue to be supported by the Affordable Housing Office staff, who would jointly prepare agendas, supply data, and help translate CDC recommendations into draft ordinances, policy documents, or budget proposals. Relevant housing-related items going to the Planning Commission or other boards—such as major rezonings, fee changes, or housing-related plan updates—should be routed to the CDC early in the process for advisory comment. This structured coordination will reduce duplication, improve alignment across City policies, and give Council a clearer, consolidated view of citizen input on housing and community development decisions.

Conclusion

Taken together, these recommendations would allow the CDC to fully meet its mandate while remaining firmly within its advisory capacity. They would also fill a critical gap in the City's current housing framework by creating a standing, community-based body responsible for integrating data, lived experience, and regulatory reform into concrete recommendations. Empowering the CDC in this way will help Santa Fe more effectively expand and preserve its housing supply, support equitable community development, and provide the Mayor and City Council with a reliable source of informed, citizen-driven policy guidance.