

12/17/25

To: Community Development Commission

From: Anne Watkins

Re: 2026 WORK PLAN

During the time I have been on the Community Development Commission (CDC), our work has been entirely focused on allocating funds from the Affordable Housing Trusty Fund (AHTF) and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). This is a very small part of the City Code charge of the CDC, which includes advising the City on the administration of the Santa Fe Homes Program (SFHP) and establishing a general plan for the City relating to economic and other community development issues.

Given the challenges facing the City in developing adequate workforce and affordable housing stock as well as the opportunities to move this initiative forward, **I propose that the CDC create an expanded and much more robust work plan** that will make substantial progress in this area. The following list of action items would be a good start towards taking a more active role in the development and funding of a broad housing platform for Santa Fe.

I also suggest that the CDC form committees to address issues and develop action items or policy recommendations around specific topics. Although we now at least have a fabulous director and will hopefully have more staff, there is great expertise and community connections on the Commission that we could put to much better use!

1. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT

At each meeting, we should review the status of all active grants, including drawdowns and any obstacles holding up completion of projects. NOTE that there should be a complete list of projects funded by the City to date with detailed information and status, and this should be updated regularly.

At each meeting we should also have an update on available funds (which will hopefully be in the AHTF!), including source and when expected.

We should also review the Community Development Fund to assess how our funding and that source can best coordinate to maximize impact. NOTE that a discussion of this fund should be on our earliest agenda in 2026!

2. PROJECT QUALITY REVIEW

I frequently hear complaints about problems with homes or apartments built by organizations whose we have funded. To my knowledge, there has been no followup on any of these projects to assess satisfaction of occupants and identify any issues with the construction or maintenance. A HIGH PRIORITY before we further fund these organizations must be to determine whether there are any residual problems with we have funded so that we can get those corrected and guarantee high quality in future construction.

3. The CDC should actively participate in expansion of funding sources by:

- making recommendations to Council to insure that the City budgets money for not only the AHTF but also for such infrastructure and development support to accelerate production of housing;
 - making recommendations to the Council for a legislative agenda that includes both funding as well as statutory and regulatory changes that will facilitate housing here and throughout the State.
- NOTE: The CDC should consider hosting broad-based work groups to hammer out a strategy to maximize needed funding.

4. The CDC should create working partnerships with other local entities on housing development, especially:

Santa Fe County

Santa Fe Public Schools (note recent bond for housing—own lots of land and buildings!)

State of NM

NM State Land Office

federally owned land

local community and other colleges, hospitals and other businesses with land, money, and employees needing housing

LANL.

First priority should be to identify vacant publicly-owned land that could be used for housing or for property exchange to support development. For example, several years ago after I asked about this, Jennifer Jenkins was asked to help assess 8-10 city properties for development potential—which she did but it went no further.

An additional priority should be to identify ownership of other vacant land and of existing built properties to determine potential for housing.

We should also develop a plan to acquire other land when it comes available, such as:

—property up for auction for lack of payment of taxes

—nuisance properties with potential for foreclosure (Councillor Cassutt introduced legislation for this purpose).

5. The CDC should actively pursue creation of a land trust.

6. Address the homeless situation much more aggressively! Daniel Werwath and the Community Investment Alliance drafted the SANTA FE HOMELESS PLAN in September 2024, and Henri Hammond-Paul has been working on the issues around Consuelo's Place. The CDC should actively collaborate with both to develop momentum towards resolving this issue.

NOTE: It is critical that a resolution be found for Consuelo's Place before it gets torn down in the Midtown Redevelopment process. This should be a very high priority for the CDC and for the City.

7. The CDC should actively address land use and development regulations as well as other regulatory issues that adversely affect the ability to build affordable housing and make appropriate recommendations to the City for needed changes.

8. The CDC should play an organizing role in bringing together the many providers of multiple services to the housing-challenged to discuss how best to provide these services across the community. We have been founding many organizations for years and that support has come to be expected. The change this year to funding construction projects should be added encouragement to re-evaluate this landscape to assess whether we are most efficiently and effectively meeting needs.

TO SUMMARIZE:

It is clear from its enabling legislation that the intent was for the CDC to play an active role in developing both funding and policy recommendations to expand housing supply and address the many housing challenges facing the City. The above suggestions could form the basis for a work plan that will allow the CDC to fulfill its charge and create a much-improved focal point for information and data to support and inform needed policy changes and decisions.