

# City of Santa Fe

# Development Review Guide

Project Introduction & Stakeholder Interview Takeaways

April 29, 2026



CITY OF SANTA FE

# Development Review Guide: Scope of Work

- Peer City Analysis
  - ✓ Identify best practices from guides, manuals, and handbooks published by peer cities
- Assessment
  - ✓ Interview stakeholders: developers, builders, planners, architects, City staff
  - ✓ Public and stakeholder online survey (*active now!*)
    - Analyze and document existing process
    - Recommend process improvements available within existing code
- Create Development Review Guide

# Stakeholder Interviews

Key Takeaways from Public and Private Stakeholders



# Encouragement from Stakeholders



- **Stakeholders are excited by a Development Review Guide.** Development community is encouraged by the effort to document a transparent process to create shared understanding.
- **Digitization is encouraging.** The transition to OpenGov is a recognized step toward digital intake and reduced reliance on paper, and is supported by the development community.
- **Current leadership is responsive.** Leadership in the Planning & Land Use Department helps to advance projects and provide clarity when concerns are elevated.

# Concerns Identified by Stakeholders

---

- **Independent review by departments** produces conflicting comments that create costly rework — especially around water budgets, landscaping, and fire.
- **Paper-based submittals** are expensive, plans have been lost, and fragmented tracking systems compound the problem.
- **Departments are understaffed and under-resourced.** Staff often serve multiple roles (reviewer, project manager, inspector), limiting capacity for timely reviews.
- **Inconsistent code interpretations and unwritten discretionary decisions** can change from project to project , making outcomes unpredictable even for experienced professionals.
- **Applications that could be approved administratively are sometimes routed to public hearings,** adding time and risk despite projects that are allowed by-right in the code.
- **Hearing bodies and boards sometimes introduce 11<sup>th</sup> hour changes that are subjective** (rather than concerned with code compliance) in nature.

# Suggestions from Stakeholders

- **Build the guide as a searchable, visual, digital tool** that City staff can update over time.
- **Complete the digital transition** with online tracking, automated notifications, and consolidated departmental checklists.
- **Document standardized code interpretations and precedent** to reduce inconsistency across staff and departments.
- **Define clear triggers** for traffic studies, utility upgrades, water plan, transportation development, and other major requirements.
- **Publish fee calculations and general review timelines** for consistency and transparency.
- **Encourage a culture of collaboration, responsiveness, and accountability** among staff in the Planning & Land Use Department.
- **Expand opportunities for administrative approvals** for projects allowed by-right (may require Code changes).

# Public & Stakeholder Survey

Survey is open through May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026.



Have you applied for a building permit or given input on a neighborhood project?

The City of Santa Fe is creating a Development Review Guide and we need your help!

Please take a moment to complete a survey that will help to improve Santa Fe's development process!



CITY OF SANTA FE



Attention all architects, planners, builders, and real estate developers!

The City of Santa Fe is creating a Development Review Guide and we need your help!

Please take a moment to complete a survey that will help to improve Santa Fe's development process!



CITY OF SANTA FE

[bit.ly/SFDevReview](https://bit.ly/SFDevReview)



# Thank you!

City of Santa Fe Planning & Land Use Department | Director Heather Lamboy, AICP

Keep up to date: [SFDevelopmentReviewGuide.com](https://www.sfddevelopmentreviewguide.com)



CITY OF SANTA FE