



UPDATE

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos
Volume 75, Number 4, August, 2022

League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

P. O. Box 158, Los Alamos, NM 87544

www.LWVLosAlamos.org

Co-Presidents: Barbara Calef bfcalf@gmail.com and
Rebecca Shankland rebecca.shankland@gmail.com
Newsletter: Bob Williams rawbits2@gmail.com

Calendar

August 13	Rodeo Parade, LWV gather at 9:30 a.m., location TBD
August 18	Lunch with a Leader, Sara Mason, Zoom, noon-1 p.m.
August 25	Board Meeting, Zoom, noon

Lunch with a Leader: **Sara Mason, for the Citizens Climate Lobby**

The next Lunch with a Leader will be on Thursday, August 18 from 11 to noon via Zoom.

Sara Mason, the speaker, represents Citizens Climate Lobby (<https://citizensclimatelobby.org/>). The organization “empower everyday people to work with their community and their members of Congress on climate change solutions. Our supporters cover the political spectrum and work in more than 450 local chapters. Together, we’re building support for a national bipartisan solution to climate change. This presentation will cover: (1) carbon pricing and the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, (2) how to get involved with the NM CCL chapter, and (3) an upcoming workshop on the

five levers of political will that CCL members engage in to bring about political change: lobbying Congress, media relations, grassroots outreach, grassroots engagement, and group developing and organizing.”

Karyl Ann Armbruster

Farewell to Ann Beyer!

Ann Beyer, who died at the age of 92 on July 9, was a life member of the Los Alamos League, having joined more than 50 years ago. She served on the League’s Board of Directors for many years and regularly attended Lunch with a Leader until the pandemic halted in person events.

Welcome, New Member!

A recent new member, **Graham Mark**, writes:

I grew up in Los Alamos, went away to college, returned and worked against the Vietnam War while employed at the Lab, went to grad school, returned with a PhD in evolutionary biology and programmed computers at the Lab for 27 years.

I retired eleven years ago. These eleven years have been marvelous. I am fortunate to be alive, to have health and leisure, to have time to read for pleasure, to have the internet at my fingers.

These eleven years have been catastrophic. The unimaginable has arrived: climate disaster, Trump, January 6, Covid, Ukraine

Come March with the League in the Rodeo Parade!

League members will be marching in the Los Alamos County Parade on Saturday, August 13. The League invites all members to participate. It's great fun being cheered by the crowd. We will wear the suffragist sashes Ellen Mills sewed for the League's centennial. White clothing is traditional for suffragists but not required. The parade starts at 10 but we will need to assemble at 9:30. We will send out a friendly reminder when we know where to gather.

Any League member who would like to march in the parade should contact Ellen Mills at: 505-660-2345 or efmillsnm@gmail.com.

Observer Corps Reports – County Council Work Session June 21

The session was attended by Council Chair Ryti and Councilors Derkacs, Hand, Izraelevitz, and Reagor. Councilors Lepsch and Scott were absent. The session consisted of presentations and discussions; no actions were taken. Our observer report is based upon discussion during the meeting and documentation provided in the full agenda packet for the meeting.

NNSA presentation on partnering with Los Alamos County by Ted Wyka, NNSA Los Alamos Field Office Manager, Kristin Dors, NEPA Compliance Officer, and Paul Holland, Program Analyst.

LANL Electrical Power Capacity Upgrade (EPCU) project

NNSA is proposing to upgrade LANL's existing transmission system by adding a new 115-kilovolt (kV) transmission line, about 12.5 miles long, originating from the Norton Substation along Old Buckman Road in Santa Fe, crossing the Caja del Rio plateau, and spanning White Rock Canyon onto LANL property. "LANL requires a reliable and redundant electrical power supply to support our mission programs and all of our activities," said Wyka. "The existing transmission lines will not provide sufficient redundant electrical power to meet mission requirements after about 2027."

Preparation of new LANL Sitewide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS)

DOE/NNSA is preparing a new LANL SWEIS to provide an analysis of potential cumulative environmental impacts of new or expanded activities at the Lab. The SWEIS document is a key NEPA requirement for the Lab's continued facility operations. Dors, the NEPA Compliance Officer, said updating the SWEIS will involve working with stakeholders and the general public and is expected to take about two years to complete.

DOE land transfers

NNSA has been meeting with the County to review the County's land use and housing proposals for DOE lands slated for transfer to the County. "Approximately 1300 acres remain under the public law for transfer to the County," said Holland, who oversees the NNSA's real property portfolio. "About 990 acres of the total is in Rendija; the majority of that we anticipate transferring in the near future. ... Believe it or not, [this parcel] has been awaiting transfer since 1973." NNSA has discussed with the County that potential residual contamination in this area will limit it to recreational uses. Councilor Izraelevitz asked whether uses that would permit better economic development of those areas might become possible if more in-depth soil investigations were done. Holland replied that additional investigations would indeed be possible, but "I would caveat though, while it is possible to go to greater depth, it is also the position of NNSA that it would still involve deed restrictions because of the unknowns – the way I describe it to people is kind of like running into unexploded IEDs in Iraq. The technology's imperfect and things can be missed no matter how many times you look at it."

Four other DOE parcels still await transfer.

- Tract C-4, the White Rock Y area, will be transferred once the survey has been finalized.
- Tract C-2, which is about 18 acres, is the NM 4 portion of DOE's property stretching from the White Rock Y south towards White Rock, terminating at the boundary of the Pueblo de San Ildefonso Sacred Area. Its transfer will occur after completion of the NM 4 intersection and the warranty associated with the road.
- Tract A-18-2 in Pueblo Canyon is next to the pueblo ruins east of the County wastewater treatment plant. Because of cultural resources that are present, its transfer awaits approval from the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).
- Tract A-16 (Technical Area 21), at the east end of DP Road, will be last to be

transferred, although not in the near future. "Definitely, that had the most mission associated with it," said Holland.

Councilor Izraelevitz asked about the potential to transfer other areas that at least currently are not being used by NNSA, such as tracts along NM 4 near White Rock. The area north of White Rock, in particular, he said, "is one of the most developable areas that the County has and would have a big impact on housing." Holland answered, "We do not have any additional lands available for transfer. And what available means here, consider the land that we had just talked about, those parcels that are going. It took tens of millions of dollars and 25 years to prepare them really to get to this point." Dors pointed out that, "[even] if there's not a building there, that doesn't mean it's not used. It's providing a buffer, a boundary area, and that is also considered a use to us."

DOE-County partnerships

Wyka noted that 66% of the Lab's workers live someplace else other than Los Alamos. He said, "Part of what we're looking at is how to keep people off the Hill if they don't need to be up here to do their work. We're taking advantage of teleworking; we're also taking advantage of leased spaces in the Santa Fe area." The DOE and the County are also coordinating efforts to reduce burdens for commuters along road intersections in the County, such as satellite parking and different transportation mechanisms.

In the news

The report on the NNSA presentation was posted by Maire O'Neill of the Los Alamos Reporter on 6/25/22:

- [*Los Alamos Reporter, 6/25/22 - NNSA's Wyka talks about NNSA Land Transfers, Cerro Pelado fire, and electrical power upgrade*](#)

Library Board presentation.

John Nash, Board Chair, summarized highlights of Library accomplishments in the past year. An ongoing challenge for the Library is allocating its budget to balance demands for both print and digital media. “This year, for instance, we’re looking at getting rid of some of our print reference materials,” said the Library Manager, Eileen Sullivan.

In addition to hiring another senior librarian to take the lead on technology and website development, the Library and board are also focused on addressing demands for expanded digital resources and for providing library resources outside the physical building, such as Wi-Fi.

Councilor Ryti brought up the issue of book donations to the Friends of the Library. A lot of the books are being recycled because there’s not really much of a market for them. He asked Sullivan if she knew of any solutions, other than perhaps some of the small lending libraries around town. Sullivan said the Friends try to find homes for those items that they cannot sell, and they work with other partners in the community, including the senior center, senior facilities, and other nonprofits. “So, I would also welcome any ideas from the community, from any of our councilors or other management here at the county, in terms of ideas of ways that we might be able to expand that,” said Sullivan.

Parks & Recreation Board presentation.

Ramiro Pereyra, Board chair, summarized some of what the Board and the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Division have accomplished over the past year. Much discussion with the Council had to do with the BMX track planned for North Mesa. Cory Styron explained the first request for proposals returned with projects far out of budget and the Department is working on a rebid.

Councilor Ryti brought up the issue of maintenance of other County recreational assets. Styron said, “I think the big thing that’s going to come out of this is our Integrated Master Plan. That is one of the resounding comments that we’ve heard, is to continue to

maintain what we have. This document will also give us the ability to prioritize those items that we need to maintain and upgrade.”

Presentation on the 2022 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) draft implementation plan.

Jordan Garcia, the Department of Public Utilities (DPU)’s Power System Supervisor, provided a detailed technical overview of the process and recommendations in the draft IRP plan, which is being jointly conducted by DPU and LANL. Under an Electric Energy and Power Coordination Agreement (ECA), Los Alamos County and LANL have partnered to combine the resources and share the costs within the Los Alamos Power Pool (LAPP) since 1985. The IRP develops and evaluates near-term and long-term resource strategies by which LAPP can ensure a reliable electric supply for the Los Alamos County service area in the planning horizon of 2022–2041. Our summary draws heavily from Garcia’s presentation slides and the draft IRP report included in the full agenda package for this work session.

IRP objectives and metrics

The IRP develops portfolio options (different mixes of energy resources) based on commercially available utility-scale resources to meet LAPP’s six objectives: i) manage cost in a prudent manner; ii) meet sustainability goals; iii) mitigate risks driven by market volatility; iv) improve operational flexibility and reduce operational exposure; v) improve reliability; and vi) build a resilient portfolio with diversified and complementary resources. The consulting company for the IRP, FTI Consulting, worked with DPU to develop the preferred resource plan that would best meet these goals.

LAPP’s current energy resource positions (energy values are rounded)

Garcia summarized the current resource positions of Los Alamos County and LANL. The County has about twice as much available energy resources as needed to meet the demands of its approximately 8500 customers. LANL is about 50% undersupplied. “We want

to reiterate where the County lies in all of this and where the DOE lies in all of this,” Garcia said. “As of 2025, we will be oversupplied, if we were not being in any kind of pool relationship. ... So, our load needs really are the DOE’s needs right now. ... They’re about 200 GWh short. ... They are approximately 50% undersupplied.”

The County and LANL also differ in the extent to which each is meeting its sustainability goals when viewed as individual entities. The County’s carbon neutral goal is that the County offsets its load with carbon free generation by 2040, and LANL’s goal is to use 100% renewable energy to meet its needs by 2035. Over 60% of the County’s total energy resources are carbon free (145 GWh out of 236 GWh), derived from hydropower, solar, and wind facilities. For LANL, 43% of its resources are carbon free (91 GWh out of 211 GWh). “We are negotiating our future resources right now post-2025,” said Garcia. “And we’re trying to find out how best to meet their [LANL] needs and their Executive Orders and our carbon-neutral goal. ... Our carbon neutral goal is written such that we have to offset our load with carbon-free generation—not renewable but carbon-free—and as you can see, this would have met our objective in 2025.” At present, LANL is not close to meeting its carbon free objective.

LAPP’s feasible energy resource options

The draft IRP considers a wide range of utility-scale technology options as potential additions to LAPP’s existing resources. Feasible options considered for the portfolio can be categorized according to the part of the demand-supply curve to which they apply:

- Load-modifying resources that can reduce total or peak demands:
 - energy efficiency initiatives, such as education or rebate programs for buying energy-efficient appliances
 - demand response programs, such as charging for electric power based on time of use
 - distributed energy resources, i.e., installed rooftop solar in the service area

- Peaking resources, also known as dispatchable resources, that can be used to manage hourly and seasonal imbalances in demands:
 - Carbon-emitting: reciprocating internal combustion engine (RICE), simple-cycle gas turbine (SCGT)
 - Emission-free: battery storage, demand response programs. Battery storage provides the flexibility to charge from solar (as a hybrid project) or from the grid.
- Baseload resources that can supply energy around-the-clock:
 - Conventional: natural gas fired combined cycle gas turbine, RICE, SCGT
 - Emission-free: solar + battery, solar + wind, small modular (nuclear) reactors
- Intermittent (weather-dependent) renewable resources: solar, wind

Some of these new resources would not be immediately available to LAPP. New wind builds would need to be sourced in appropriate regions such as the eastern New Mexico and would require additional transmission capacity because the present transmission line for the eastern New Mexico wind farm is fully subscribed. Because nearly all solar cells and modules are imported from Asia, solar projects are subject to cost uncertainties due to the contemplated imposition of anti-dumping and countervailing duties on imports being sold at below the price of American-made goods. The small modular (nuclear) reactor (SMR), which would be the nation’s first-generation SMR nuclear plant, is being developed by Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems (UAMPS). It will be sited at Idaho National Laboratory and is scheduled to be in commercial operation by 2030. Work is currently underway at the site to develop the Combined Operating License Application for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

LAPP’s load forecasts

The IRP considers future electricity demands from residential, commercial, and

industrial customers, electric vehicles, and potential increases in electrical demands resulting from reduction in the use of natural gas. LAPP energy consumption in 2020 was 550 GWh but, under the base case, is projected to grow to about 1400 GWh by 2041. Of this total consumption rate, the County's energy load is projected to be about 155 GWh, with a peak load of 28 MW, and LANL's energy load is projected to reach about 1220 GWh (about 87% of the total load), with a peak load of 152 MW.

"One of the big things in this process is that we took into account electric vehicles [EV] and natural gas conversion," Garcia noted. "We have the 50-yr goal to get out of natural gas. We think those loads are going to be enormous." Besides an increased demand, LAPP also faces the need to replace energy provided by retirement of coal-fired generation, nuclear power at Diablo Canyon, and coastal gas-fired generation. Historically, the coal-fired San Juan Generation Station has served over a third of the County's peak load. The County is exiting its participation in this project as of September 30, 2022 and has entered into a 2.5-yr contract with Uniper Global Commodities to replace it with solar and wind energy starting October 1.

Planning scenarios

The IRP defines three "state-of-the-world" planning scenarios—low, high, and base case—that encompass a wide range of considerations affecting the availability of energy resources. The scenarios make different assumptions about fuel prices, carbon prices, capital investments in utility-scale renewable energy projects, investment and production incentives, a New Mexico mandate for renewable portfolio standards, national Clean Energy Standards, and the rate of growth of peak loads and energy demands.

Preferred resource portfolio and pivot strategies for LAPP

Using the scorecards and with input from the County and LANL, the draft IRP recommends that LAPP could best mitigate near-term risks and avoid long-term risks by

building or contracting for a total of 55 megawatts (MW) battery storage, 380 MW solar, 135 MW wind, and 8 MW small modular (nuclear) reactor (SMR) during the planning horizon. The near-term pivot strategy recommended actions for four energy resources to move LAPP towards its goal for 2041:

- Solar and wind – acquire 85 MW solar and 105 MW wind builds by 2027.
- Battery storage – add 30 MW utility-scale 4-hour lithium-ion battery storage to the LAPP portfolio by 2025 to manage the intermittency of new wind and solar resources.
- Simple-cycle gas turbine (SCGT) – incorporate SCGT into LAPP portfolio to address near-term resource adequacy, provide regulation services, voltage support, and operating reserves. (This would be an interim transition resource, to be replaced by a carbon free resource before 2041).
- Small modular (nuclear) reactor (SMR) – includes 8 MW SMR through a long-term contract from the Carbon Free Power Project (CFPP).

Planning reserve margin (PRM)

Currently, the DPU does not have explicit PRM requirements. However, for this IRP, LAPP is considering the implementation of a positive PRM, consistent with best practices of utilities in the same market footprint. "This is a fundamental shift that we're taking from 1987 to right now," said Garcia. "In the past 37 years, we have never had a positive reserve margin. Our plan has always been to lean on the market for 20 to 25% of our needs. With everything that's happening, with liquidity issues, energy emergencies being declared, we don't think that's a very prudent outlook into the future. ... we are meeting our needs, and then some, just to have it in reserve."

Critical schedule dates for implementing IRP recommendations

Several interparty agreements need to be completed before LAPP can move forward with implementation of the recommendations in the

draft IRP. First is the completion of an Interagency Agreement between the County, Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), DOE, and NNSA by the end of this year. Second, because the term of the current ECA expires on June 30, 2025, the County and LANL are negotiating a renewal of the ECA to

continue resource and cost sharing in the LAPP, with a tentative post-2025 ECA by July 2023 and an updated ECA in 2025.

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Interlude

As a break from reading reports, here's a pic of LWVLA marching in the 2021 parade.



Observer Corps Reports – County Council June 28

The hybrid session was attended by Council Chair Rytí and Councilors Derkacs, Hand, Izraelevitz, Lepsch, and Reagor. Councilor Scott was absent. Our observer report is based upon discussion during the meeting and documentation provided in the full agenda packet.

DOE cleanup of Middle DP Road site

Michael Mikolanis, Manager of the DOE-Environmental Management-Los Alamos (EM-LA) field office, and Troy Thomsen, N3B's Program Manager for Environmental Remediation, summarized the status of the DOE's cleanup of the Middle DP Road site. The cleanup schedule calls for DOE to submit the final assessment report to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) by February 2023. Once the DOE has resolved any comments it receives from NMED and NMED has approved the report, which should occur no later than November 2023, the County will be given the go-ahead to proceed with work on the site.

Justice40 initiative

Mikolanis reported that EM-LA is participating in the Presidential Justice40 Initiative to deliver at least 40% of the overall benefits from certain Federal investments to disadvantaged communities. Under this Initiative, Federal agencies are directed to engage with states, Tribal Governments including Pueblos, and local communities on Federal investments. EM-LA was selected as one of five DOE Justice40 Initiative Pilot Programs. Challenges include identifying the benefits of covered programs, determining how those programs distribute benefits, and developing metrics for calculating those benefits.

Mikolanis also noted that, "Being a pilot for a Presidential initiative gives the EM-LA legacy waste cleanup mission a lot of visibility. I've got OMB visibility, I've got extraordinary support from the leadership in the Office of

Environmental Management up through the Secretary, because we're one of five pilots. This gets Congressional attention; this gets presidential attention. That kind of focus on our mission really gives us support, not just for the Justice40 but for the entire cleanup mission."

Community Broadband Network Study Progress Update

Jerry Smith, the County's Broadband Manager, and Patrick Mulhearn, Director of Broadband Policy and Project Manager with CTC Technology and Energy, summarized the status of work on the County Broadband Network (CBN) Study. CTC has been asked to update the previous broadband study conducted in 2012. The presentation described how CTC is documenting what the county has in place now as far as the last mile and internet service provider (ISP) options. The consultant plans to present an updated strategic plan to the County in November 2022 with recommendations about how the County could improve broadband delivery.

Last mile and middle mile

Jerry Smith clarified the distinction between last mile and middle mile. "There are two main parts to the work ... to build strong interconnectivity options for all residents and businesses. Those two parts are known as last mile and middle mile. ... Last mile is the part of the internet that connects your home into the internet or your place of business into the internet and gets you onto the community's network. ... Once the internet traffic network leaves the community, it's in what's called the middle mile and it's this network of fiber-optic cables that connects communities on out to the internet hubs scattered around the state and the region. ... The focus of our information-sharing this evening is related to last mile.

Broadband study scope

CTC is finishing up its preliminary assessment of the community infrastructure and broadband coverage based on information from local internet service providers. Next it will implement a comprehensive public outreach strategy to determine the

community's needs and desires so that they can begin developing solutions.

The community outreach strategy includes a speed test website integrated with a paper/online survey. Underserved areas are defined as those in which premises cannot access connection speeds greater than 100 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 20 Mbps upload. According to data gathered by the federal government, most populated areas of the county do have access to those connection speeds. However, anecdotal evidence indicates otherwise. Mulhearn emphasized that the connection speeds gathered by the federal government are self-reported by the ISPs. "We're trying ... to develop a separate data set of actual connection speeds from members of the community," said Mulhearn. "Part of the reason behind this, besides creating a robust data set for us to work from and making our recommendations, is to provide the county an opportunity to perhaps rebut some of the claims made by internet service providers about the connection speeds that they are reporting."

Local residential broadband providers and the state of fiber service

The County is primarily served by DSL (Digital Subscriber Line), cable, or fixed-wireless; there currently is not a lot of fiber-optic service, noted Mulhearn. "For us, and I think probably for most members of your community, fiber is the gold standard," said Mulhearn. "It's the future-proof technology that we really should be building for all of our data infrastructure. Data is a utility, just like water and electricity. You should have investment in infrastructure that will last longer than 20 years and require a minimum of investment for upkeep." The benefits of fiber are that it's more reliable, with fewer repair costs, and fewer things that can break on the fiber network.

Mulhearn noted that only LA Net and CenturyLink/Lumen have some level of fiber-optic service available in the county but their plans to extend this type of service are limited. "CenturyLink/Lumen has announced plans to

extend fiber to many legacy copper customers but so far appears to be focusing fiber investments in larger metro areas. Its investment in Los Alamos County is limited so far to new residential construction." He concluded that "areas with cable service will require public or private investment in new [fiber] network infrastructure to provide incentives for incumbent providers to make upgrades and timely repairs, offer competitive pricing, and deliver quality customer service. ... This is going to take some time and effort for the community but it's not otherwise most likely going to happen."

How other communities have improved broadband access

An increasing number of communities are taking a more assertive posture with developing infrastructure by entering into public-private partnerships. For example, some are putting conduit wherever they would like fiber to go and have partnered with an ISP to put fiber into the conduit to deliver service to the premises. Others have built their own fiber backbone infrastructure and entered into an agreement with a private partner to build off of that network to build fiber to the premises.

Questions from Council

Councilor Reagor asked how the County might address privacy issues for its residents if the county were to enter into a public-private partnership with an internet service provider. "You can build that [privacy protection] into your agreement with whoever your ISP is," replied Mulhearn. However, "all of them, they're leveraging our data from the various connections for advertising purposes ... All of them are using our access to data to make money."

Councilor Reagor asked whether wireless or other technologies could be used to deliver internet service from a fiber network to households. Mulhearn agreed that less-expensive technologies would be possible but "we would recommend though, just as future-proof technology, that every connection be fiber so that you never have to go back and touch it again." Mulhearn illustrated this point by noting that the infrastructure for fixed

wireless has to be upgraded whenever the technology is upgraded “whereas with fiber, whenever the technology changes or new methods come into play, the fiber doesn’t change. The fiber is the same and can be used for any number of purposes.” In summary, Mulhearn said, “we’ll provide you options, ... the costs and benefits of the various ways of delivering data to your constituents. And then you will decide how you would like to proceed.”

Councilor Ryti asked for clarification about the asymmetric nature of the service standard, which sets a higher threshold for download connection speed (100 Mbps) than for upload speed (20 Mbps). He pointed out that the lower upload speed could be a downside for people uploading videos or teleconferencing. “This is the common way that, for the common products that internet service providers deliver to people’s homes, that it’s an asymmetrical connection,” Mulhearn explained. “I believe that providers assume that people need to consume more data than they need to deliver. ... But the fiber can provide very easily symmetrical connections. That’s one of the other advantages of fiber infrastructure.”

Councilors Izraelevitz and Ryti both asked about the pay point at which people would be willing to pay a higher price than they currently do for internet service, in exchange for a more reliable high-speed connection. Mulhearn agreed to add this question to the survey.

Local news reports about this Council meeting

- Kirsten Laskey, Los Alamos Daily Post, June 30, 2022
<https://ladailypost.com/los-alamos-council-action-taken-june-28/>
- Maire O'Neill, Los Alamos Reporter, July 6, 2022
<https://losalamosreporter.com/2022/07/06/cleanup-of-middle-dp-road-site-expected-to-be-completed-no-later-than-february-2023/>

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Observer Corps Reports – County Council July 12

The hybrid session was attended by Council Chair Ryti and Councilors Derkacs, Hand, Izraelevitz, Lepsch, Scott, and Reagor.

Conceptual design for rehabilitation of the Women's Army Corp (WAC) Building

By a vote of 6–1, with Councilor Reagor in opposition, Council selected a conceptual design to move forward to final design and refined cost estimates for the two-story WAC building on 1725 17th Street. The design calls for offices, visitor center and exhibits for the Manhattan Project National Historical Park (MNHP) on the first floor and a small live-in suite for a caretaker or temporary housing for a park-service employee on the second floor, with most of the second floor left unrehabilitated until a future date. Outdoor public restrooms are also part of the selected site plan.

Rehabilitation project

The WAC building was constructed in 1943 during the Manhattan Project as a 20-room dormitory to house members of the WAC. The County purchased the property from the Christian Science Society in early 2020. While some site improvements are needed to bring the property up to code and for accessibility, the County’s highest priorities are rehabilitating the building exterior with the intention of achieving National Historic Register status and inclusion in the MNHP and the County’s Historical Walking Tour.

Next steps

The draft Historic Evaluation and Preservation Plan for the building developed by Mullen-Heller is expected to be finalized by the end of August 2022. Upon completion of schematic design and construction/bid documents, it is anticipated that this project will go out for bid for construction in Spring 2023.

Local news reports about this Council meeting

- Kirsten Laskey, Los Alamos Daily Post, July 14, 2022.
<https://ladailypost.com/council-action-taken-july-12-2022/>

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Observer Corps Reports – County Council Work Session July 19

The hybrid session was attended by Council Chair Ryti and Councilors Derkacs, Hand, Izraelevitz, Lepsch, Scott, and Reagor. No action was taken at this meeting.

County boards and commissions

Briefings on the past year's accomplishments and current challenges were presented to Council by David Hanson, Vice-Chair of the Community Development Advisory Board (CDAB), and Rachel Adler, Chair of the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission.

Topping the list of challenges for both boards/commissions was high member turnover and vacancies. Hanson noted that there is only one member on the Board now who was on it a year ago. Consequences of vacancies are especially disruptive in the case of the P&Z Commission, which currently has six members and three vacancies; five members are needed for quorum. "We're just reaching quorum at most of our meetings," said Adler, "and, in a lot of cases, if one or two commissioners cannot make it, we're not able to reach quorum, which can be really difficult on occasions — making legally binding decisions, essentially impossible."

Council comments

Councilor Izraelevitz asked rhetorically, "I wonder if at some point we need to consider whether to redesign or reestablish the charter of committees so that we can have fewer committees, fewer boards. ... Are there some boards that we should convert to task forces, so they come up as needed as opposed to

having a standing board? Should we consider reducing the size of some boards?"

Councilor Hand added, "Basically, we have county staff that invest their time to support these different boards and committees, and also subcommittees of some of these boards and committees...I realize that this is a mechanism to get citizen involvement, and that's important, but ... based on some of the reports we're getting from county management, we're struggling with staffing throughout the county and so we might want to think about revisiting the importance of some of these committees and boards as a permanent function or whether or not it could be something that could have an end after certain activities have been completed..."

Councilor Ryti noted that the Council has received requests to establish additional boards or some other sort of group. He suggested that, at its work session on August 23 the Council discuss not only these requests, but also the nature of the existing boards, such as composition, number, and scope.

Federal Legislative Committee

The County's Federal Legislative Committee visited Washington, D.C. the week of June 6, 2022, to advocate on behalf of County priorities. This Committee is made up of Councilors Ryti, Scott, and Hand, County Manager Steven Lynne, and Intergovernmental Affairs Manager Danielle Duran. The trip consisted of visits with the New Mexico (NM) Federal Delegation (Senators Lujan and Heinrich, staff of Representative Leger-Fernandez), the Senate Armed Services Committee, and representatives from the U.S. DOE, NNSA, and U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

County priorities

The Committee's written trip report summarized its meetings and follow up activities for each of the five County priorities:

1. *Land Conveyance* – The full NM Federal Delegation supported legislation to extend the existing land conveyance law (PL-105) to permit the final cleanup and conveyance of the land that NNSA agreed

to convey to the County in 1997. This need was also discussed with the DOE, NNSA, and the Senate Armed Services Committee. Both the House and Senate draft versions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) FY 2023 bill include language to extend PL-105 for another 10 years.

2. *New Land Conveyance Requests to NNSA* – The County discussed its requests to NNSA to identify additional land for conveyance to the County for housing and economic development with the NM Federal Delegation. Our senators have either requested a report from NNSA on the status of this request or have discussed these requests with NNSA and overall showed support for additional lands being conveyed to the County. Our representative's office requested background information on the land conveyance issue to allow them to take some action on the matter.
3. *Appropriations/Authorization: NNSA and Environmental Management (EM) Funding Summary* – The County expressed need and support in each of the meetings for accelerated NNSA and EM cleanup at Los Alamos. The House currently supports increasing the budget for EM at Los Alamos to \$303.3 million (in both the NDAA and appropriations bills). The Senate Armed Services Committee summary notes the bill would authorize “an increase of \$500 million to reduce risks associated with meeting the statutory requirement to produce no fewer than 80 plutonium pits per year by 2030.”
4. *Clean-up* – The Federal Delegation supported the County's efforts to have a complete analysis done of the area. The County will be discussing the issue with DOE-EM Manager Mike Mikolanis and then providing a follow-up letter to DOE-EM to more specifically identify the characterization and the risk assessment expected by the County. With NNSA, the County discussed clearance of munitions at Rendija Canyon.
5. *Bi-partisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)*

Funding – Discussions with the NM Federal Delegation on funding from the BIL elicited a great deal of support and specific direction on how to work with staff and external agencies. The County also visited the US DOT, which provided extensive information on grants and other types of funding that would benefit the County, including Transportation Oriented Development which, under certain circumstances, would allow for government and private development that is within 0.5 miles of a transit hub.

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Observer Corps Reports – County Council July 26

The hybrid session was attended by Council Chair Ryti and Councilors Derkacs, Hand, Izraelevitz, Lepsch, and Scott. Councilor Reagor was absent.

Mountain biking projects in Pueblo Canyon

On July 15, 2022, Council received a petition requesting "the County Council to halt the planning for the Mountain Biking Projects in Pueblo Canyon." By a unanimous vote (6–0), Council directed the County Manager to have staff work directly with the petitioners, mountain bike trail users, and the Open Space subcommittee of the Parks and Recreation Board, as well as with broader community members, to find a consensus on conceptual plans for mountain-biking projects that the County Community Services Department (CSD) proposes for Pueblo Canyon. The collaborative process is to include an expanded evaluation of options and is to document the pros and cons of these options, considering all community feedback.

Description of proposed projects

CSD proposes four mountain-biking projects in Pueblo Canyon. Two of the projects would make use of existing trail routes with a few short, rerouted sections and some longer passing zones or trails. Trail design features

would include banked turns, removal of some rocks in the trail tread, and possibly surface treatment to control erosion. The projects are at a conceptual stage to evaluate feasibility, implementation costs, and public input for making trail improvements geared toward supporting mountain biking for riders at all levels in Pueblo Canyon:

- a mountain-biking skills park, including a kids' pump track, strider zone, and progressive skills features, to be located in Kinnikinnik Park in upper Acid Canyon, extending to the canyon shelf below the Aquatic Center and the Pajarito Environmental Education Center (PEEC);
- a National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) racecourse aimed at beginning and intermediate riders, with a staging area, in the lower (eastern) part of Pueblo Canyon;
- a connector trail from the San Ildefonso roundabout, across Pueblo Canyon, to the Aquatic Center; and
- a 7-mile-long trail down the length of Pueblo Canyon, approximately from the Aquatic Center to the White Rock Y.

Citizen Petition

July 15 Susan Barns submitted a petition on behalf of 128 people, requesting "the County Council to halt the planning for the Mountain Biking Projects in Pueblo Canyon." By the start of the Council meeting, the petition had garnered 257 signatures and 56 individual written comments. The petition stated clearly that it was not proposing curtailment of mountain biking on existing trails, but rather that it was requesting that CSD discuss alternative locations for the projects with the public.

Cheryl Kuske elaborated on the petitioners' concerns in her presentation to Council. Concerns that related to all four projects included disturbance of soil, vegetation, and wildlife habitat and increased trail-user conflicts. The proposed location of the skills park was particularly strongly criticized for "turning a natural area into a playground," as well as for a number of other negative impacts

such as safety issues due to limited emergency access to that location, the potential for trampling of the entire area by bicyclists and observers, and the potential for becoming "an attractive nuisance," concomitant with trash, smoking, and vandalism. Additional concerns specific to the NICA racecourse were that parts of the course weaved through protected cultural and historical sites, and that environmental damage would result from clearing land for parking and a staging area.

Presentation by the County

Anne Laurent, Deputy County Manager, briefly described elements of the four proposed mountain-bike projects and highlighted major issues needing to be discussed or mitigated. She acknowledged that the County needed to communicate more effectively on the reasons for the conceptual design project, define options and limitations for the different components, and clarify what is or is not being proposed. To identify and address environmental issues, the County plans to implement a process for evaluating environmental impacts as the project moves forward with a more defined scope, will coordinate with PEEC's environmental education program, and will develop a process for communicating project progress. She noted that high priority will be given to cultural site protection and safety concerns.

Laurent stressed that project planning was still very much in the conceptual stage. The project schedule calls for presenting the conceptual design and estimates to the Parks and Recreation Board in September and to County Council in November. Council would then be asked to prioritize the different elements and consider funding for them in the Capital Improvements Plan. "Even if all that were to happen — it got approved and prioritized, and funding got identified in our budget — we'd still be looking at the end of '23, '24, and that is best-case scenario," said Laurent. "I just want everyone to know there's — at least from staff's perspective — not a sense of urgency..."

Public input

Even before the meeting, intense public interest about the mountain biking projects was apparent, with 257 signatures on the petition, 75 emails sent to Council, many letters to the editor in the local newspapers, and numerous Facebook postings. Thirty-nine people spoke during the public comment period. The most common complaint raised by the public related to the planning process:

- Communication about the proposed projects – “It was not advertised,” said Kuske. “It was really word-of-mouth that finally got the attention of people.” Modifications made to the conceptual plan in response to public input were likewise not made evident to those outside the planning process.
- Bundled package – Many people objected that the four mountain biking projects were treated as an “all or nothing” bundle in a poll to gauge public support, without alternative locations offered for any single project. Kuske said, “I think choosing a location and saying ‘this is what we’re going to do’ is not the way to start this process. There are too many people involved, and we all value these areas very highly for many uses.” Furthermore, because of the multiple elements, there were often misunderstandings about which comments applied to which project element, and to what degree.
- Stakeholders – A widely expressed complaint was that the project planning process did not involve stakeholders other than the mountain-biking community, and that a more inclusive dialog was warranted. “My big problem with this is not mountain bikers,” said resident Michael Smith. “The problem I have with it is that it was brought forward as a project, and it was very specific to one sector of the users of the trail. ... This project was developed just with the bikers in mind and just in Pueblo Canyon.”

Moving forward

Councilors and members of the public both noted areas of general, although not universal,

consensus among all parties. Councilor Scott said, “One of the broad takeaways I had was, whether you like these projects or not, people support mountain-biking in this town.” The need for better maintenance of the existing trail network was frequently mentioned. Finally, public input made clear the desire to explore options in a manner that would not continue to breed animosity and resentment in the community. Councilor Izraelevitz asked Kuske, “What would you like to see, what do you think the people that signed your petition would like to see, as a path forward to find a solution?” Kuske’s response — echoed by many of those who commented — was that she wanted to move forward with a more collaborative and open approach to accomplishing the goals of the mountain-biking projects, including a broader look at the County and including White Rock.

News links

- Kirsten Laskey, Los Alamos Daily Post, July 28, 2022, “Council action taken July 26, 2022.”
[*Los Alamos Daily Post, 7/26/22 Council Actions*](#)
- Video by Kirsten Laskey, Los Alamos Daily Post, July 27, 2022, “Council Chair Ryti recaps July 26 meeting.”
[*Los Alamos Daily Post video, Ryti's recap of July-26-meeting*](#)

Committee appointments

Los Alamos Health Council.

Council appointed Carrie Fanning, Catharyn Fite, Philip Gursky, Caron Inglis, Gisel Martinez, Maxine McReynolds, and Mary Abigail Nelson to fill seven vacancies on the Health Council.

Personnel Board.

Council appointed Stephanie Haaser, David Hampton, and James Wernicke to fill three vacancies on the Personnel Board.

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

July's Lunch with a Leader: State Senator Leo Jaramillo

Leo Jaramillo, who spoke to the League via Zoom, was elected in November 2020 to represent Senate District 5, which includes Los Alamos, but not White Rock. He currently serves as the Vice Chairman of the Rules Committee and is also a member of the Corporations and Transportation Committee in the New Mexico Senate.

The senator began his talk by describing the passage of the largest state budget ever, \$8.46 billion, which gives the state opportunities that it might not otherwise have had. He described several bills other passed in the 2022 session:

- the tech-ready gross receipts tax credit, which he described as a major win for the Lab and tech companies;
- an increase to teacher salaries -- he was a teacher for a few years, but had to give it up because of the low pay;
- an emergency bill making it easier for rural people who rely on LP gas to refill their propane and LP gas cylinders during a declared emergency;
- a memorial thanking LANL employees for their hard work during the pandemic;
- another memorial celebrating teachers who passed a certification exam;
- baby boxes, which will be located in fire stations for mothers who wish to anonymously surrender their babies -- he said, "A woman's decision is her decision, and the government shouldn't step in to stop that."
- The Lottery Scholarship was continued, and a new Opportunity Scholarship program was created to help non-traditional students get college degrees or, just as important, certificates for professions like electricians, pipe fitters, welders -- areas where the state desperately needs more workers.

- Also, social security payments to low-income seniors were exempted from income taxes, along with other new tax credits.
- In the special session, the Legislature passed the "junior bill" that the governor had previously vetoed, and also passed several bills to provide funds to every New Mexican to help them through the pandemic.

Jaramillo described many activities in Los Alamos he's been involved in, including playing Mother Ginger in "Nutcracker on the Hill"; and helping with Cheetah Reader, a Chamisa school reading program. He also described several upcoming events he plans to participate in, like the Torch Run benefitting the Special Olympics; he's started walking and running with plans to run at least part of the race next year.

On the overturning of Roe vs. Wade, Jaramillo was unequivocal: "Women's rights are human rights. We need to ensure we vote for our Democratic colleagues to protect those rights. LGBT rights could be next. We need to stand up for human rights because it's the right thing to do."

Akkana Peck

LWVLA Board of Directors

2022-2023

Officers:

- Co-president: Barbara Calef
- Co-president: Rebecca Shankland
- 1st Vice-President: Felicia Orth
- 2nd Vice-President: Ellen Mills
- Secretary: Rebecca Chaiken
- Treasurer: Rosmarie Frederickson

Directors:

- Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster
- Publicity: Jody Benson
- Voter Services: Lynn Jones
- Newsletter Editor: Robert Williams
- Director at Large: Addie Jacobson
- Director at Large: Akkana Peck

Off-board Directors:

- Arrangements: Wendy Swanson
- County Council and P&Z Observers: June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin
- Membership: Jean Dewart & Dotty Reilly
- Nominations: Ellen Mills & Leslie Wallstrom
- Website and Facebook: Madhavi Garimella & Helena Whyte
- Video Editor: Eduardo Santiago



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LOS ALAMOS

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Mail to: LWV Los Alamos / P.O. Box 158 / Los Alamos, NM 87544

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone(s): _____ E-mail: _____

_____ Check here to receive our Newsletter Update as an electronic file, saving postage and paper.

_____ **OR** Check here if you prefer to have a hard copy of the newsletter mailed to you.

_____ Check here to receive occasional friendly reminders of upcoming events by e-mail.

Membership Categories: all checks for memberships and contributions should be payable to LWV-Los Alamos and all are now tax-deductible. Let us know if you'd like a tax-deduction statement.

_____ Single membership: \$45.

_____ Household membership (two or more people at the same address): \$70.

_____ Single Sustaining membership: \$75.

_____ Household Sustaining membership (two or more people at the same address): \$95.

_____ Student membership: \$0 (must be 16 or over).

_____ Contribution to support League work: \$ _____.

Interests and Ways to Help the League (check as many as apply)

Topics of Interest

- ___ Affordable Housing
- ___ Local Government
- ___ Education
- ___ Elections, Voting Rights
- ___ Water Issues
- ___ Land Use
- ___ Health Care
- ___ Money in Politics
- ___ Sustainability
- ___ Living Wage
- ___ Public Transportation
- ___ Environment
- ___ Other area of interest: _____

Ways to Help with League Activities

- ___ Voter Registration
- ___ Organize/provide refreshments at forums
- ___ Observer Corps: Council, DPU, P&Z, etc.
- ___ Write newsletter articles
- ___ Assist in developing the Voter Guide (editing, developing questions, data entry, etc.)
- ___ Assist with Lunch with a Leader
- ___ Website/Social Media – Technical assistance and content development
- ___ Advocate for League positions – Communicate with local, state, and federal leaders
- ___ Serve on LWV-Los Alamos Board (we need a Treasurer and a Lead for the Voter Guide)
- ___ Other ideas? (See the *March, 2022 Update* for details.)

In this issue	Page
<i>Calendar.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Lunch with a Leader: Sara Mason, for the Citizens Climate Lobby</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Farewell to Ann Beyer!.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Come March with the League in the Rodeo Parade!</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Observer Corps Reports - County Council Work Session June 21</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Interlude.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Observer Corps Reports - County Council June 28.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Observer Corps Reports - County Council July 12.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Observer Corps Reports - County Council Work Session July 19.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Observer Corps Reports - County Council July 26.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>July's Lunch with a Leader: State Senator Leo Jaramillo.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>LWVLA Board of Directors 2022 -2023</i>	<i>16</i>