



City of Santa Fe, New Mexico

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May 24, 2021

Members of Santa Fe Area Home Builders Association, AIA Santa Fe, NM Roofers Association & Santa Fe Association of Realtors,

As many of you may know, the City of Santa Fe Planning and Land Use Department is currently working with your leadership teams to improve coordination among our organization in the areas of permitting and inspections. The construction industry is essential to our local economy, and the GRT generated by your work during the COVID pandemic continues to provide a vital source of revenue to the City's General Fund. The City's General Fund supports many of the City's core activities, and is the primary source of funding for the Planning and Land Use Department.

The City continues to process a high volume of permit applications and requests for inspections. Just like many of you, the Planning and Land Use Department is dealing with the additional demands of our local construction boom. We are currently, on average, issuing 500 permits and conducting 2000 inspections each month. This is being achieved with significant reductions in staffing across all development review teams. The reductions in staffing are due in large part to vacancies left unfilled due to the budgetary impact of the pandemic.

The City's FY22 Budget addresses many of our staffing challenges head-on. The Planning and Land Use will be adding 4 new positions and funding 4 existing vacancies in the coming year. These positions will significantly improve capacity in permitting and inspections, and of the new positions, is a direct result of feedback we received during the budget process from members like you. We will be hiring a full-time employee dedicated to responding to phone calls and emails so that your questions about applications and processing can be answered in a timely manner. We will also begin advertising these new and vacant positions at the start of the next fiscal year and hope to have them filled by early fall.

The pandemic required our Department to fundamentally change the way we interact with our customers. We are now using tools and technologies to provide electronic permitting services that were unimaginable even 18 months ago. The City is committed to on-going process improvements and expanding these online systems even further. This will require continued collaboration with stakeholders to provide the proper training and tutorials to ensure the systems are implemented in an intuitive and user-friendly manner. We hope to continue to work closely with your organization to educate users and are exploring additional opportunities to provide work stations at City Hall and other locations to allow for better access to our Customer Self Service (CSS) platform.

Moving forward, we hope that our teams can continue to work together to streamline operations and improve the overall customer experience. I have asked that the recent stakeholder survey be done every six months so that we can see the areas where improvements have been made and where there is still work to be done. This process of incremental innovation and change will take time, but by working together we can move our organization in a direction that is beneficial to all involved and support the vital work you do for our community.

Regards,

Elias Isaacson

Elias Isaacson
Planning and Land Use Director

cc: Alan Webber, Mayor
Jarel LaPan Hill, City Manager
Rich Brown, Director of Community Development
Jason Kluck, Assistant Land Use Director