



What is Santa Fe Forward?



Santa Fe Forward is the City of Santa Fe's effort to update its General Plan
The General Plan is the City's long-term policy framework that will guide decisions on land use, housing, transportation, public services, and more through 2050.

What is a General Plan — and Why Does it Matter?

A general plan is a roadmap for the future. It sets policies for how land is used, how we get around, where public investments are made, and how we care for our environment and neighborhoods.

- Affects daily life — traffic, housing, and access to parks and services
- Reflects community values and priorities
- Shapes future policy decisions and funding

Why Update Now?

The current plan was adopted in 1999. Santa Fe Forward is a chance to update the City's vision and align with today's goals for equity, sustainability, and resilience.

The Plan Will Include:



Community vision
and guiding values



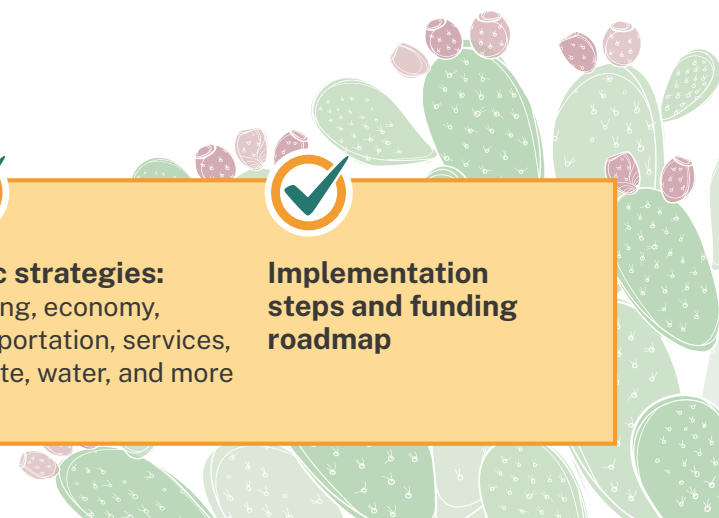
Land use and
zoning direction



Topic strategies:
housing, economy,
transportation, services,
climate, water, and more



Implementation
steps and funding
roadmap



Planning Process



Santa Fe Forward will be developed in six key phases, with public input at every step

1

We are here!

Project Launch and Community Awareness

Kickoff events and outreach introduce the project. A Draft Assessment Report sets the foundation.

2

Solidify Vision and Goals

Community conversations and workshops help define shared values and priorities.

3

Explore and Plan Future Scenarios

We explore how Santa Fe may grow, identifying trade-offs, challenges, and opportunities.

4

Develop the Preferred Plan

A draft General Plan is created, including maps, goals, and policy recommendations.

5

Identify Priorities and Funding Sources

Work with the community to prioritize goals and explore funding and implementation strategies.

6

Step Forward: Final Review and Adoption

The plan is reviewed by the Planning Commission, advisory boards, and adopted by the Governing Body.

Land Development Code Update



What is the Land Development Code (LDC)?

The LDC is the rulebook that governs how land can be used, what can be built, and how neighborhoods look and function. It defines:

Land Use & Layout

Where homes, businesses, parks, and roads go

Building & Site Design

Standards for size, appearance, parking, and landscaping

Neighborhood Character

Consistent rules that reflect Santa Fe's unique identity

Why it Matters to You:

Influences where and how homes are built

Supports walkable, livable neighborhoods

Protects open space and historic identity

Ensures clear, fair, and consistent rules

How It Connects to Santa Fe Forward:

Santa Fe Forward sets the vision. The LDC turns that vision into action. Updating both together ensures:

Policies and regulations are aligned

Outcomes reflect community goals

Timing supports coordinated implementation



How to Stay Involved



Together, let's move Santa Fe Forward

Santa Fe Forward is a community effort built on broad, equitable, bilingual, and collaborative engagement. **Your voice, perspective, and ideas help us create a plan that reflects the aspirations and needs of everyone who calls Santa Fe home.**



Attend Events

Public Open Houses and Workshops

Share your feedback and learn more about key issues.

Community Conversations

Join informal gatherings hosted by local organizations.



Engage Online

Interactive Mapping Tool

Pin your ideas and concerns directly on the city map.

Surveys and Quick Polls

Make your voice heard on a range of planning topics



Stay Updated

Email List

Subscribe to receive updates on meetings, milestones, and ways to participate.

Social Media

Follow Santa Fe Forward for updates and share information with your networks.



Reach Out

Email

info@santafeforward.org

Voicemail

(505) 878-6520



@SantaFeGov

Stay Involved & Learn More
at **SantaFeForward.org**



Nature, Climate, Sustainability, & Resiliency



Why This Topic Matters

Natural spaces, mountains, and life-giving resources are major assets to Santa Fe, benefiting its residents by providing clean air and water, tourism, and economic opportunities for an overall high quality of life. Stewardship of these spaces and resources contributes to Santa Fe's character and vitality. Meanwhile, the climate is forecast to change, so Santa Fe needs to adapt to be ready and resilient.

Key Findings

Waterways Need Stewardship

Areas along the Santa Fe River and arroyos provide both critical habitat and recreational opportunities, but also represent increasing flash flood risks in a changing climate.

Preservation of Natural Land is Beneficial

Natural spaces — small and large — exist throughout the Santa Fe area, serving many important natural needs and community livability benefits.

Hillside Protection Matters

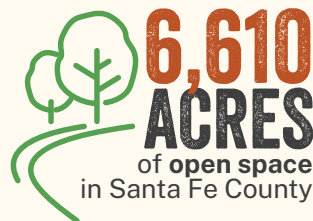
Regulated and protected steep hillsides protect Santa Fe from hazards, maintain its character, allow for scenic views, and provide for natural habitat.

Air and Water Quality Should be Maintained

Santa Fe's generally good environmental quality should be enhanced and maintained.

A Changing Climate is Coming

A changing climate is shifting Santa Fe toward a warmer and drier future, while also increasing risks from natural hazards, such as drought, wildfire, flash flooding, and extreme heat.



Most significant risks include:



WILDFIRE



EXTREME HEAT



DROUGHT



FLOODING

The 25-Year Sustainability Plan outlines **91 STRATEGIES** to address **carbon neutrality, resilience, economic vitality, and social equity.**

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Community Services & Governance



Why This Topic Matters

Important services and amenities are provided by area governments and institutions. These providers deliver services that include public safety, education, and healthcare. The City of Santa Fe only controls some of the decision-making on how these services are prioritized and delivered.

Key Findings

Public Safety Services and Perceptions

Public safety, which includes police, fire, and emergency medical services, is well-served in Santa Fe because of the location of public safety facilities. However, there are concerns about actual crime rates and perceptions of public disorder.

School Enrollment is Declining

Public school enrollment is declining, as Santa Fe ages. This is exacerbated by affordability challenges, poverty, and perceptions about the quality of education.

Modernize City Services

The City's ability to deliver services and improve decision-making would benefit from investment in smart technologies. This can promote collaboration and help standardize, automate, and monitor performance more effectively, while making more information and tasks for self-service available.

More Regional Coordination

Some opportunities and challenges necessitate regional coordination. This can be strengthened by identifying specific regional needs and catalyzing regional cooperation to fund and provide services and infrastructure.

Bolster Healthcare Services for All

Healthcare is not at a level where the community would like it. We need more adequate options to serve all Santa Feans and improved accessibility for some communities, primarily on the south and west sides, which have lower health outcomes.

All neighborhoods in the city
are within a **1-mile
RADIUS**
of police and fire stations


HEALTHCARE FACILITIES
concentrated in central Santa Fe,
limiting accessibility for outliers.

Of nursery and
preschool-
aged children **27%**
**LIVING BELOW
POVERTY LINE**

FY 2025 Budget
DECREASED
9.1%
from FY 2024

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Basic Utilities



Why This Topic Matters

Basic utilities include much of what is taken for granted in modern society: water, sanitary sewer, stormwater, waste disposal/recycling, energy, and communications. All these utility services require long-term, capital-intensive infrastructure investments that impact the environment, depend on sensitive resources, and affect households financially.

Key Findings

Water Supply is Sufficient but Long-term Risks Exist Due to a Changing Climate

Santa Fe plans and manages its water utility well, but long-term supply has risks regardless of population growth and conservation measures, as a result of drier conditions. Wastewater reuse is an important resiliency strategy that requires major capital investments to develop and implement.

Ongoing Investments are Needed for Utility Infrastructure

Significant investments are needed for existing infrastructure to be enhanced and maintained in a state of good repair.

Better Coordinate Stormwater Management

Stormwater management could be improved through consolidation of responsibilities within the City administration to reduce hazards from increasing water flows, provide habitat enhancement, and reduce costs.

Continue Progress in Waste Reduction and Recycling

Solid waste and recycling services and efforts have allowed Santa Fe to achieve lower waste production than the national average. As reducing waste has stalled, additional improvement will take more incentives and regulations.

Expect More from Franchise Utilities

Electricity, natural gas, and communications, which are operated by publicly regulated companies granted a franchise to serve Santa Fe, generally meet basic needs. A more proactive approach to setting performance standards could improve service, asset management, resiliency, and transition to more sustainable energy sources.

Public Service
Company of
New Mexico
(PNM) aims for
100%
CARBON-FREE
energy by 2040

87%
WATER USE
came from **surface**
sources in 2023

The Santa Fe River
now **runs dry** up to
220 DAYS
PER YEAR
Water used to flow all summer

Annual residential solar
permits rose from
0.5 to 4.4
PER 1000 RESIDENTS
2010-2022

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Transportation & Access to Opportunity



Why This Topic Matters

Transportation connects everything, providing access to opportunity via roads, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, trails, and transit, including Santa Fe Trails bus, Blue Bus, and Rail Runner. Transportation deeply affects quality of life, safety and the environment. Mobility represents a large portion of the City's and household budgets. Investments in transportation have long-term impacts.

Key Findings

Make Transportation Corridors Friendly for All Users

Existing transportation corridors could be improved with better infrastructure design to accommodate other types of travel, without much of an impact on automobile traffic. This would improve livability, safety and overall accessibility; Cerrillos Road is a challenging corridor with high potential.

Close Gaps in the Active Transportation Network

There is a good network of trails, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities, but significant gaps exist that should be closed to allow for more seamless connections. Various travel mode choices, especially to access the bus system, helps create a more connected, sustainable city.

Cars Park "Anytime & Anywhere" but People Matter Most

Parking for automobiles consumes a lot of land, yet it is not fully utilized and adds to both household and business costs. High demand places would benefit from modern management tools, including dynamic pricing and curb management, along with preparation for automation and electrification of mobility.

Update the Bus System to Serve Customer Needs and Wants

The Santa Fe Trails bus system needs a systemwide update to provide higher frequency along key routes and coverage to meet demand. Improved coordination with North Central RTD Blue Bus is also needed to enhance service to destinations beyond Santa Fe, better serve those who rely on it, and provide additional travel choices.

Use Transportation to Invest in Many Other Public Benefits

Transportation investments have strong impacts throughout the community that can come with high costs; these investments should be coupled with other public benefit opportunities in housing, recreation, and the economy to create special places to live, work, and play.

Santa Fe Trails
ANNUAL RIDERSHIP
~400k



ONE Bus Route
w/frequency
less than 30 MINUTES
Remaining 9 bus routes w/frequency at 60mins+



Santa Fe Regional Airport
+350k
PASSENGERS SERVED
in 2024

87
22
CRASHES
between 2012 and 2022



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Housing, Social, & Economic Opportunity



Why This Topic Matters

Housing, education, and economic opportunities are strongly linked to social stability, equity, and strength. The City of Santa Fe has a substantial influence on its housing and economic opportunities, while it needs to partner with the Santa Fe Public Schools, trade schools, and higher education to set up supportive educational systems.

Key Findings

Housing Supply and Variety is Inadequate

Housing supply has increased meaningfully in recent years, however more supply and different types of housing in the right locations are needed. One-third of Santa Fe households pay more for housing than is comfortably affordable.

Economically Vulnerable Residents are Moving Out

Certain measures of economic strength are moving upward, but poverty remains persistent. Evidence suggests that improvements may be due to displacement of impoverished residents outside of Santa Fe rather than genuine progress in reducing poverty.

Wages of Dominant Economic Sectors Do Not Meet Cost of Living

Santa Fe's economy is dominated by the public administration, retail, social assistance, healthcare, and tourism sectors. There are persistent housing, social, and economic needs not supported by the wages of these sectors relative to the cost of living. This needs to be addressed through both reduction in living costs and increases in wages.

Economic Diversification is Needed

Arts, culture, and film are strong economic drivers, however investment in economic diversification and growth should include other potential sectors for which Santa Fe could have a competitive advantage.

Update Land Use Rules to Support Economic Growth

Santa Fe has some success in incubating startup business, but a lack of adequate commercial and industrial space. The potential for economic diversification and growth is held back by housing affordability and educational limitations.

67% of housing is
SINGLE HOUSING UNITS
detached homes or attached townhomes

A simple line drawing of a single-story house with a chimney and a small porch.

49%
RENTERS
Spent **more than 30%** of
their income on housing
in 2020

vs. 39%
HOMEOWNERS

A simple line drawing of a house with a chimney and a small porch.

Average rents
INCREASED
74% since
2016

A simple line drawing of a dollar sign and an upward-pointing arrow.

\$572k
Cost of a typical home is
nearly double that of 2015

A simple line drawing of a house with a chimney and a small porch.

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History, Culture, & the Arts



Why This Topic Matters

Santa Fe's strong tradition of historic preservation is crucial to its identity and is linked to inspiring and sustaining the arts and culture industry. The arts and culture industry contributes over \$1 billion to the area's economy, resulting in direct and indirect employment, along with generating revenue to support City services and infrastructure.

Santa Fe's history includes four broad periods:

Pre-contact Period

This area has been inhabited since time immemorial, and Native American cultures remain in place. Nearby pueblos contribute to Santa Fe's rich cultural and artistic tapestry.

Founded as the Capital

of Nuevo México by the Spanish in 1610.

Greater Access

to the outside world began through increased trade with Mexico and the arrival of the railroad.

The 20th Century

defines the city's character, supporting a reinforcing cycle of attraction, growth, and innovation. The arts and culture sectors have become deeply woven into the present fabric and identity of Santa Fe.

Key Findings

Keep Prioritizing and Protecting Heritage

Historic preservation of buildings and protection of heritage resources vitally maintain Santa Fe's unique architectural character and cultural identity. These are crucial to the area economy; a complex and robust policy and regulatory framework exists to protect these assets.

Preservation Can Unduly Restrict Development

Important and sincere preservation efforts can slow and discourage progress towards meeting the needs of the present and future.

Broaden Participation in the Arts and Culture Industry

Intentionally broadening participation in Santa Fe's arts and culture industry supports equity, resilience, and cultural and economic value.

Facilitate Arts and Culture Innovation

The creativity innate to Santa Fe's arts and culture industry represent an opportunity to approach preservation, enhancement, and investment innovatively.

Diversify How Arts and Culture are Publicly Expressed

Conveying Santa Fe's history through education, public art, and urban design should be broadened to elevate all its contributors equitably, which could further diversify and grow the arts and culture industry.



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The Built City

Areas, Corridors, Shopping, Services, Recreation, & Employment



Why This Topic Matters

A plan for the physical development and land use is the most visible feature of the City's general plan. This plan lays out how land will be used and developed, coordinated with transportation, and integrated with natural lands and economic development, while also respecting historic areas, and heritage features.

Key Findings

Santa Fe Style is Only a Part of the Design Story

The City Different formalized the Santa Fe Style in 1912, based upon Pueblo, Spanish, and Territorial architecture. It has a significant influence on the identity and culture of Santa Fe today. Large areas south and west of the plaza and historic downtown area, developed much like other American cities, and are oriented to single family housing and automobile travel.

Growth is Most Apparent on the South Side

New development to serve growth tends to be in southern Santa Fe, which needs more investment in services, amenities and infrastructure.

Services and Employment are Limited in Some Areas

Major roadways host strips of commercial land uses, with shopping and services, and employment centers outside of the historic downtown generally occur along these major roadways. With limited places for activity elsewhere, wider distribution of these activities is needed.

Planning and Zoning Rules Should be Simplified

The current general plan and land use regulations for Santa Fe could be simpler and more flexible to accommodate needs and opportunities. Updates now underway to both the General Plan and Land Development Code should focus on simplification.

Keep Investing in Parks, Recreation, and Nature

Parks, recreation facilities, natural lands, and trail corridors are beneficial to Santa Fe's distinctive quality of life and public health. They also shaping the built city and its relationship with water, but these amenities are unevenly distributed across the city.

A plan for Santa Fe should include three approaches:

Preservation areas:

These areas are characterized by historic and cultural resources. Investment in these areas will prioritize compatibility to maintain existing character.

Enhancement areas:

These areas are characterized by stable and thriving places that could benefit from supportive investments.

Investment areas:

These areas are characterized as being undeveloped, underutilized, or having deficiencies that warrant substantial public and private investments. These areas have the capacity to meet Santa Fe's existing and future unmet needs.



100+ PROPERTIES
on the National Register of Historic Places and State Register of Cultural Properties, Sites and Districts.



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People, Population, & Income



Why This Topic Matters

Basic demographic information provides a strong, factual foundation of understanding. Characteristics of the population and forecasts shape Santa Fe's social, economic, infrastructure, and built environment outlook. This information provides insights on influences that will shape Santa Fe's values, just as people have shaped Santa Fe and its natural environment for over 10,000 years.

Key Findings

Average Age is Older than in Peer Cities

Santa Fe's population is older and growth is slower than in peer cities. The population will continue aging with fewer children in the community. Although recently there has been a slight increase in the population of young adults, growth in this cohort is outpaced by those 65 years of age and older.

Ethnic Mix Firmly Rooted in Santa Fe's Deep History

The population of Santa Fe has long been diverse. Nearly half of residents identify as Hispanic, and due to Santa Fe being a destination for Native American migration, has a relatively larger number of Native Americans at 3.5 percent of the population.

Population Forecasted to Eventually Decline

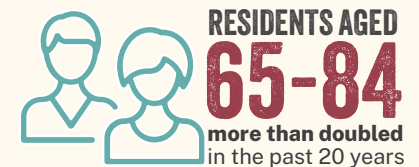
The population is forecast to grow until after 2040, when it plateaus and then declines. Birthrates nationally are declining to below replacement level, while the rate of foreign immigration to support continued population growth is uncertain.

New Arrivals are Wealthier

Recent migration into Santa Fe has tended toward higher income groups, especially for residents arriving from other states. This creates displacement pressures, particularly for more economically vulnerable populations.

Displacement Risks are Most Significant Near Acequia Neighborhoods

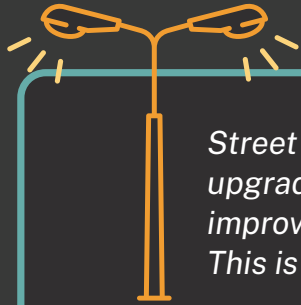
A combination of household economic vulnerabilities, development pressure, infrastructure improvement, and land values places residents of neighborhoods near acequias at most risk for displacement.



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Tell Us What You Love About Santa Fe



Street lights have been upgraded to led, making an improved experience for all. This is ace!

Historic architecture, lovely landscaping, the river... a nice contrast when juxtaposed the downtown built environment.



Kudos on the airport upgrades! The airport facilities used to be an embarrassment, but it's really come a long way to looking like a modern airport neighborhood centers.

Dale ball Dog Run- great to have a dog park near the trail system!



I love the park along the river and the biking/walking trails that follow the river further out from the historic core.

I love CCA. This is the only part of the city where locals can go out for entertainment without being overrun by crowds of tourists. Please do not overdevelop this area!

Sun mountain is a fantastic hike in town. Wonderful!

Love Santa Fe's parks. As the city expands I hope we can continue to build beautiful parks to act as neighborhood centers.

I love the variety of businesses in the Solana Center, it makes the neighborhood walkable.

Love how much this little corner of town is becoming a community hub!
(off Country Club Rd)

Santa Fe Public Library is amazing!



These comments were shared by Santa Fe residents through the Engagement Map activity found on the project website. Add your own comment today!

Santa Fe
Forward