

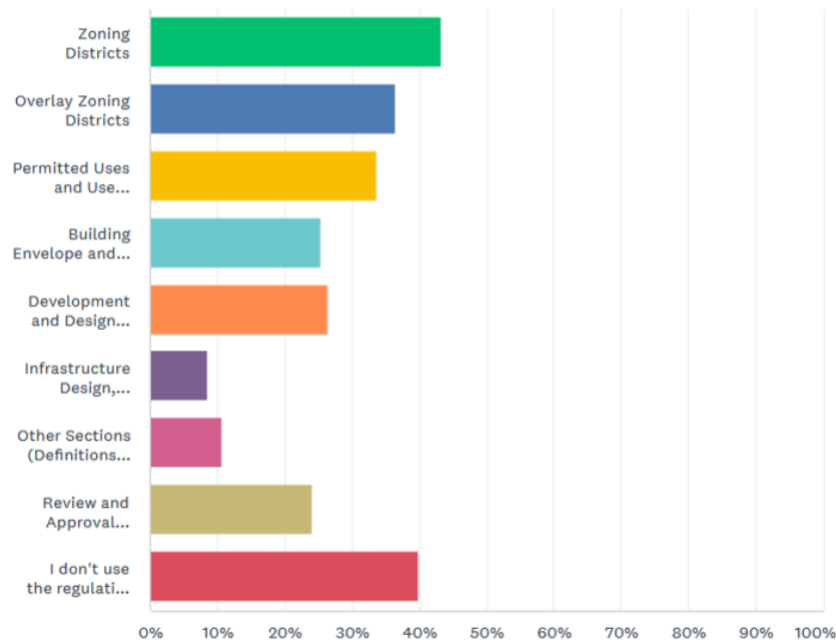
Santa Fe, NM, Land Development Code Survey #1

Response Summary

Q1.

If you use Santa Fe's Land Development Code (Chapter 14 of the Municipal Code) regulations, what section(s) are you most familiar with?

Answered: 178 Skipped: 0

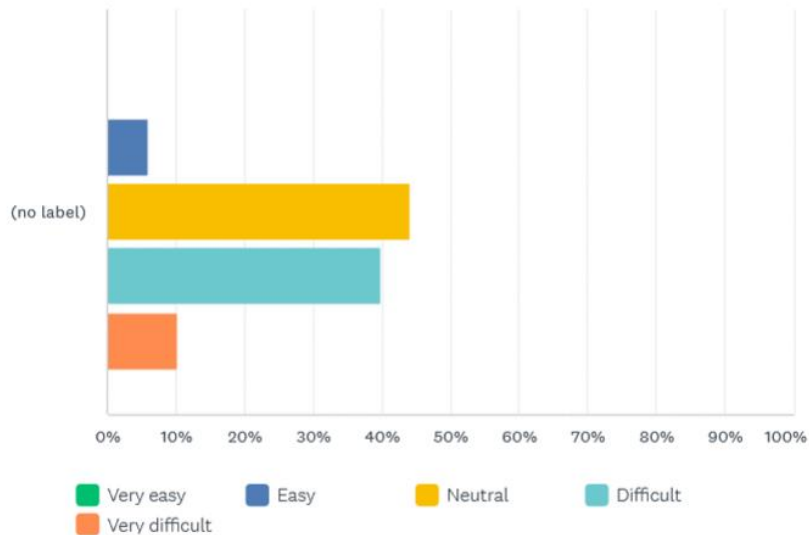


- Sections stakeholders are most familiar with are Zoning Districts (43 percent), Overlay Zoning Districts (36 percent), and Permitted Uses and Use Regulations (34 percent).
- Development and Design Standards, Building Envelope and Open Space Standards and Measurements, and Review and Approval Procedures each had around 25 percent of stakeholders familiar with these sections.
- Infrastructure Design, Improvements, and Dedication Standards ranked lowest in familiarity with only 11 percent and 8 percent, respectively.
- Nearly 40 percent of stakeholders indicated they do not use the regulations.

Q2.

How easy is the current LDC to understand?

Answered: 118 Skipped: 60



	VERY EASY	EASY	NEUTRAL	DIFFICULT	VERY DIFFICULT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0.00%	5.93%	44.07%	39.83%	10.17%	118	3.54
	0	7	52	47	12		

Insights gathered from question two support efforts to revise the organization and content of the current Land Development Code.

- 'Neutral' was the top response when asked how easy the current LDC is to understand. Next, nearly 40 percent of respondents think the code is 'difficult'.
- Modifications to Sections 14-5 Overlay Zoning Districts and 14-5.2 Historic Districts were frequently cited as sections needing revisions for clarity and comprehension.
- Interplay of regulations for base district and overlay district areas, and areas where more than one overlay district applies -- stakeholders find especially difficult to navigate and comprehend.
- Comments emphasized the online portal's limited search capabilities as time-consuming and in need of improvement for easier navigation.

“Many sections have been revised over the years and the code is clumsy and somewhat contradictory.”

Q3. Do you have suggestions for improving the organization of the LDC?

Simplifying language and improving online navigation were common suggestions for improving the organization of the Land Development Code.

Other suggestions include:

- An introduction section explaining the organization of the Code to help guide users become familiarized.
- Improving search capabilities and intermittent use of hyperlinks to limit scrolling.
- Integrating graphics to help condense lengthy sections.

“More hotlinks between sections. More clarity about which overlays might apply to your property. Maps, graphics.”

Q4. Are you aware of any inconsistencies, circular or unclear references, or conflicts between regulations in different sections of the LDC?

Most respondents acknowledged inconsistencies, unclear references, or conflicts between regulations that are all present to some degree in different sections of the Land Development Code.

- Section 14-5.2 Historic Districts was frequently identified to have inconsistencies and sometimes in conflict with other regulations.
- Responses highlight a sense of skepticism in consistent applicability of the LDC, noting inconsistencies with the interpretations and application of the Land Development Code.

“Land use and traffic considerations don't seem coherent. That is, it seems land can be developed without regard to what happens to traffic in neighboring areas. These should be considered in an integrated way.”

Q5. Are there sections of the current code that you find complicated, difficult to use, or confusing?

Most stakeholders feel there are sections of the current code that are either complicated, difficult to use, or confusing.

- The length of the Code and vague language throughout sections were cited as particular barriers.
- Section 14-5.2 Historic Districts and 14-6.1 Land Use Categories; Table of Permitted Uses were emphasized as sections needing revisions for clarity and better organization.
- Table formatting throughout the Code may require improvements to promote readability and ease of navigation, quantity of table notes should be reduced.

“The length and language of the ordinance introduce a degree of difficulty and complication.”

Q6. Are there sections of the LDC that would be easier to understand with the inclusion of visual tools such as graphics, pictures, tables, flowcharts, etc.?

Nearly all respondents indicated comprehension of the Land Development Code can be improved with the use of visual tools such as graphics, tables, and flowcharts.

- Use of graphics throughout all sections can be helpful for user comprehension especially in the Overlay Zoning Districts and Development and Design Standards sections.
- Inclusion of graphics throughout can help illustrate complex design standards and architectural requirements, and simplify lengthy text descriptions sections of the Code.
- Linking the Code to the city’s geographic information system zoning maps and infusing maps throughout, were suggested to help users navigate and comprehend the Code.

"I think where appropriate the use of visual tools will always help improve basic understanding of the codes. The codes can be VERY confusing to many when all it is all just words."

Q7. Are there opportunities for improvement to the LDC that you want to mention? What sections of the LDC do you believe are working well and should be retained?

Overall simplification of the Land Development Code was expressed by respondents as an opportunity for improvement.

- Sections working well include Historic Districts Review Board, Review and Approval Procedures, Historic Districts, Architectural Design Review, and Highway Corridor Protection Districts.
- Although seen as effective, some sections like Historic Districts and Review and Approval Procedures were mentioned as needing revisions for concise language.
- Stakeholders expressed support for retaining section 14-5.5 Highway Corridor Protection Districts, 14-5.5(A) SCHC South Central Highway Corridor Protection District in particular.

"Section 14-3 [Review and Approval Procedures] is very useful but can be written more clearly. This would it allow it to provide more effective guidance for following the LDC."

Q8. Zoning Districts. Do you have suggestions for changes to the current lineup of zoning districts in the LDC? Are the dimensional standards (height, setbacks, etc.) working well? Why or why not?

There was wide variation in responses for suggestions to change current zoning districts.

- Greater application of zoning standards that promote density, improving provisions for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and integrating more amenities and social services such as shelters for people experiencing homelessness within zoning districts were specific examples of desired changes.

- Most respondents feel current dimensional standards are effective in preserving Santa Fe’s architectural integrity.
- Several comments conveyed skepticism that height restrictions are consistently adhered to, signifying a desire for limited use of variances in height restrictions with new developments.

“We need a balance of open space and infill. The open space gives Santa Fe a distinctive feel. Be mindful of height standards; don't allow projects that block the views. For sure maintain height and set-back standards in residential areas.”

Q9. Land Uses. Are land uses in the LDC well-defined? Should any land uses be added to the list of allowed uses? Which ones? Are certain land uses in Santa Fe especially problematic because they are hard to regulate or controversial? Are new standards needed for specific land uses?

There was a lack of consensus when prompted about land uses in the Land Development Code being well-defined. Responses ranged from the desire for restrictions on short-term rentals to reducing high density developments.

- Echoing previous comments, some respondents feel the LDC is inconsistently enforced, especially regarding height restrictions.
- Expanding open space and wildlife corridors throughout districts was noted by several respondents.
- Stakeholders suggested standards for short-term rentals need revisions to limit their location and primary owner requirements. Contrastingly, others think current short-term rental regulations should be loosened.

“Hard to regulate; not well known or understood among members of the public (e.g., the Sign Code).”

Q10. Development Standards. Do the current regulations result in high-quality development? Can you suggest any areas where changes to the regulations might provide better development outcomes? (Building design, parking, landscaping, signage, etc.)

Few responses indicate current development standards result in high-quality development.

- There is a strong desire for creative building design that promotes density, walkability, and blends with Santa Fe's unique architectural character.
- General concern that height and architectural design of new-construction multiple-family developments (Capitol Flats mentioned the most) dilute Santa Fe's historic look and feel.
- Respondents feel current parking requirements and building design regulations create an automobile-centric landscape that is not conducive to accessing key amenities safely on foot.
- Landscaping regulations can be improved to support more tree-lined streets and the use of climate-appropriate vegetation.
- Stakeholders conveyed a strong desire to maintain and strengthen architectural and design regulations to keep Santa Fe's historic architectural character intact.

"I don't think the current regulations result in high-quality development. Integrating new parking standards, which push for more parking structures and less surface parking will make significant improvements to our city's landscape. Further, changing the building design standards, such as building height and density, would have a huge impact on reducing urban sprawl, which affected Santa Fe in a negative way, adding more traffic, more pollution. Furthermore, the architectural design standards are falling short by imposing use of stucco for majority of building facades."

Q11. Infill and Redevelopment. Are there provisions that prevent desirable infill and redevelopment from occurring in Santa Fe (e.g., parking standards, site dimensional requirements, building height restrictions)?

When prompted about provisions preventing desirable infill and redevelopment, answers spread between maintaining building height restrictions to protect Santa Fe's architectural character and loosening restrictions to promote greater infill and redevelopment.

- A few respondents think the prioritization of increasing height compromises the architectural character of Santa Fe and infill and redevelopment should instead be achieved through creative building design.
- Others see current dimensional standards and parking requirements as barriers to desirable infill and redevelopment, especially in the downtown area.
- Striking a balance between successful infill and redevelopment and protecting the city's unique architectural design was generally expressed.

"Maintain and enforce design guidelines so that new infill buildings are compatible with existing, older buildings. More widely publicize early notification so that the whole community is more aware of upcoming construction, for example the boutique hotel next to Loretto Chapel, and sprawling new subdivisions. Include graphics and maps. Avoid exceptions raising the height allowances."

Q12. Development Review. Do the development approval procedures result in a fair, predictable, and timely process? Are there ways in which they could be improved?

Broadly, surveyed stakeholders do not agree development approval procedures result in a fair, predictable, and timely process.

- Several respondents expressed concern that current procedures are time-consuming, inconsistently applied, and have significant room for improvement.

- Comments highlighted frustration that the current development review framework gives large development firms with more financial capacity an advantage over local builders.
- There is strong support for increasing the capacity and technical knowledge of staff to answer questions and provide more assistance for the public to understand development review.
- Revisions to the Early Neighborhood Notification (ENN) to allow more time for public participation were mentioned for improving development approval procedures.

“I think there are ways to expedite the staff review and input process, so it doesn’t take so long for an application to get to a hearing. On the opposite side, I think that many applications have been improved and had issues addressed by the time they get to a hearing.”

Q13. Priority Issues. What are your top three priority focus areas that this review needs to consider?

Development Standards and Review, Sustainable Development, Historic Preservation, and Housing Affordability were key topics that emerged from respondents identifying their top three priority focus areas.

- Development Standards and Development Review includes comments related to improving the LDC for comprehension, revising public processes to enable more engagement, strict design review standards, controlling variances, and revising zoning regulations.
- Expanding sustainable development regulations like green stormwater infrastructure, water-efficiency standards, protecting/expanding open spaces, increasing density, and appropriate infill and redevelopment were priorities identified under Sustainable Development.
- Comments related to Historic Preservation emphasize keeping architectural standards intact, protecting scenic and cultural corridors, and revising historic preservation regulations.
- Out of 89 comments, respondents’ top priority areas are:
 - Development Standards and Development Review (38 percent)
 - Sustainable Development (27 percent)
 - Historic Preservation (17 percent), and
 - Affordable Housing (4 percent).

- For second priority areas, most comments were related to the Development Standards and Review and Sustainable Development topics.

While many stakeholders see increasing density and expanding mixed-use development as top priorities, others emphasized the need to maintain current height restrictions and limit density to preserve Santa Fe's unique architectural character. These responses reflect the public's desire to balance growth and maintain Santa Fe's look and feel.

"Maintain the design standards and historic neighborhoods that make Santa Fe such a unique community."

"Change parking design standards to require parking structures for developments above a certain number of spaces, in an effort to reduce surface parking, heat island effect, and improve human environment."
