

Fellow Commissioners,

This is the transcription of all the notes that residents offered during our River activity during our first 4 community input sessions. I still need to do a lot of work, as far as integrating any missing pieces not reflected here, but captured in our note-taker notes, as well as adding the notes from the section of the session where we ask participants specifically about the five specific questions in our remit, as presented to the community:

- ★ How should power be shared between the mayor and the councilors?
- ★ Who should have hiring and firing power over the City Attorney, City Manager, and City Clerk?
- ★ Should Councilors be required to vacate their council seat in order to run for mayor, and how should we fill vacant council seats?
- ★ Who should be in charge of preparing the city's budget, and what should that process be?
- ★ Should the city have a Strategic Plan?

My hope was to have this all ready for you in time for the Special Meeting next week, but it is a tremendous amount of work, and I simply was not able to complete it in time. I will send an updated report with all of the above in the next week or so. For now, I will share what is ready for you.

I also have taken the liberty to put all of our data below into Claude and ask for a brief summary of themes and patterns across all sections, here for your review below:

Cross-Cutting Themes

- **Housing dominates every session.** Rent control, taxing/limiting second homes and STRs, "recycling" homes from aging residents to young families, affordable starter housing — the top concern in every category.
- **Tourist economy vs. livable economy.** Repeated frustration that city dollars and attention favor tourists and downtown over residents, wages, and the southside.
- **Mobility & walkability.** Desire for complete bike lanes/trails, better transit, fewer cars, and 15-minute neighborhoods with local schools, groceries, and shopping.
- **Culture as civic infrastructure.** Arts, fiestas, multigenerational/multicultural traditions, and history are named as what nurtures the community — but seen as threatened by growth and newcomers who don't engage. Bilingual staff/services are a recurring gap.
- **Civic participation is wanted but weak.** Calls for real input mechanisms, neighborhood decision-making, more council districts, and a trusted, coordinated information ecosystem (a shared community calendar comes up in 3 of 4 sessions).
- **Staff: appreciated, under-resourced.** Good benefits and dedicated people, but hurt by turnover, understaffing, slow permitting/Land Use, no central complaint-tracking, and housing unaffordability for staff themselves.
- **Elected officials: accessible, structurally weak.** Mayor seen as responsive and

visible; councilors seen as underpaid, understaffed, dependent on lobbyists, and struggling to reach consensus.

- **Community self-sabotage.** Getting stuck on symptoms over root causes, individualism, "othering," apathy, and (especially in the Spanish-language session) not believing in one's own dreams, not organizing as workers, not learning rights.

SESSION NOTES:

SESSION 1

Genoveva Chavez Community Center

July 23, 2026

THE SUN

What is your vision of the best Santa Fe in a generation's time?

- Our gutted neighborhoods are filled with families and aging folks
- We have a pool projected where young people can move into the housing of older folks who move into assisted living. And we'd have financial structure to intentionally do this.
- We have affordable housing, for starter families and individuals on small lots, intentionally.
- Affordable housing, paying jobs, balanced cost of living.
- Our cost of living is lower and we have better job opportunities to attract younger families
- Rent control, affordable housing.
- Multiple bilingual staff in every department.
- Events and community activities for the Latino community
- Structural conversations between the people and the government.
- Full time city councilors
- Efficient police department
- Bike lanes connecting the whole city from Airport to Downtown.
- We catch all storm water from the curb cuts. Water catchment on all buildings.
- We tax second homes.
- Extreme taxes for second homes.
- Solar panel parking shade across the city.

COMMUNITY

What feeds and nurtures our community?

- Consistent flow of different age groups and types of ownership
- Lots of events going on, Railyard, etc. For a city this size.
- Museums
- Multiculturalism

- The arts
- Community helps community
- Smallness of the city
- Long standing queer and artistic community.
- Librarie

What are some challenges that our community faces?

- Not enough things going on for children.
- After school and summer programs are not accessible to many.
- Capitalism.
- Railyard offers lots to do but not accessible for parking.
- Builders want to make money as their first priority.
- Things (like Midtown) take ten years or more to be stuck in conversation about.
- The city's focus on tourists rather than improving the life of the local people

DEPARTMENTS AND STAFF

What feeds and nurtures our departments and staff?

- City pay and benefits.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

What feeds and nurtures our elected officials?

SESSION 2

NEA

August 2, 2026

THE SUN

What is your vision for the best Santa Fe can be in a generation's time?

- Mass public housing.
- Mass public transit.
- Mass public political participation.
- Walkable city, good public transportation, fewer cars.
- Historic preservation is a priority, and supports our economics.
- A city that retains its historic and cultural (all of them) identity while also effectively managing growth and natural resources.
- A diverse, thriving, low/medium growth that is economically balanced.
- Regeneration of neighborhoods that used to house our families.
- More festivals and other accessible activities.
- No LLC for STR in residential zones.
- Allows for residents who have separate ADR to make them properly into condos, with limitation of sell to local residents.

- Residents live a simple, uncomplicated life.
- Streets are maintained.
- Southside has grocery storeS.
- Sector bargaining union, city wide contract specifically service industry.
- No full time legislators, they should run because of interest of expertise, not pay.
- We attract young families.
- Rent control
- City career ladder.
- Educational opportunities and housing for our workforce.
- Our labor force lives here.

COMMUNITY

What feeds and nurtures our community?

- GRT tax base.
- Wealthy tax base.
- A city built on art and culture.
- Rich culture, art, music.
- Free live events.
- Hardworking, hourly labor workers.
- Homewise.
- The best weather in the world.
- A mainly progressive population.
- We pioneer many progressive ideas.
- Iconic food.
- Iconic History.
- Strong family and community values with a sense of history.
- People do engage
- Geography,
- Our history.
- The oldest climate proof city in the US.
- Artists and creatives are drawn to the city. They are unique problem solvers.
- Parks and open spaces.

What are the challenges for our community?

- We don't have a solid and trusted, fact based information ecosystem.
- People can't afford to live here, and there are not many good jobs.
- We don't have educational and economic opportunities.
- High cost of living.
- Geography limits our growth in the East.
- Primary tax source is subject to capital flight/strikes.
- Landlords and real estate lobby.
- Half the work force doesn't live here.
- Commercial real estate is unaffordable.
- Incomplete bike lanes and trails limit accessibility. We need environmentally sound forms of transit.
- Budget corruption.
- Political priorities are not the people's priorities.

- Lack of effective public transit.
- Continued class segregation with housing.
- We don't have a good way for residents to weigh in on major government decisions, especially with real estate.

How does the community get in its own way?

- Lack of community buy in for public service.
- We get stuck on symptoms (obelisk, loud cars..) which obscures the real problem. We don't move ahead.
- People act entitled individually rather than act like they are part of a community.
- Divisiveness, false cultural flash points.
- Refusal by some to heal from generational historic traumas.
- Apathy, despondance, inability to participate in the political process.

DEPARTMENTS AND STAFF

What feeds and nurtures our Departments and their staff?

- Trash, water, streets, parks, libraries are built and maintained by public service and it shows.
- Freedom to express ourselves (city employee).
- Sincere water conservation.
- Decent public services.
- They are largely organized in Labor Unions.
- The fact that as a resident I don;t have to take much thought on it.
- A really well organized and rigorous firefighter training academy.
- Our city services are well managed.
- There are lots of events organized for residents to meet and see city staff and officials.
- Events where staff and electeds attend and connect with residents on a human level.
- COLA, all kinds of benefits for staff.
- They are responsive and knowledgeable.
- They can problem solve in a crisis to best solve the needs of the public.
- There is great staff communication. Actually talking.
- They coordinate all the events and things to do.

What are the challenges for our Departments and Staff?

- Lack of expertise in some areas, especially technology.
- There is no central hub/location for key info, like a community calendar, community events, etc.
- Training.
- Hard to get a hold of, no emails or phone numbers.
- Not enough skill.
- Difficult to acquire permits.
- Digital rent extraction in critical city equipment.
- That's not my job ma'am attitude. We don't have money for that. Common sense is not valued.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

What feeds and nurtures our elected officials?

- The direct access the public and staff have to them.
- Their visibility at events and around town.
- Opportunities to engage and reflect with residents.
- People feel heard and action is taken as a result.

How does this nourishment get to our elected officials?

- Through meetings with the mayor. Open discussion and dialogue with the lead executive.
- There are ways to give them direct feedback, for good or bad decisions.
- Through folks like us. Neighborhood parking zones actually happened!
- People can easily report problems, though they may not get resolution, people feel hard and seen.

What are challenges for our elected officials?

- They need better visibility into constituent opinions.
- They are disorganized. Should organize their work more efficiently into categories or containers.
- Not enough participation of millennials and gen z
- Lack of knowledge on certain issues, big picture issues.
- They should be able to introduce legislation without City Attorney review.
- They depend on outside sourcing, lobbyists, and special interests.
- Need to campaign frequently, takes away time from daily duties.
- Prioritize private profit over public interest. Without mass public participation monied interests take priority.
- Too many needs and wants, they need help!

SESSION 3

Santa Fe Business Incubator (session conducted in Spanish, notes have been translated by Commissioner Perez)

August 20, 2026

THE SUN

What is your vision for the best Santa Fe can be in a generation's time?

- No discrimination.
- No ICE.
- Access to healthcare for everyone.
- Universal healthcare and housing for all.
- Housing for families and average people.
- We are a more conscious community and take care of our community.
- No cameras/surveillance.
- Wages, housing and resources that give us dignity.
- Everyone has a voice and a vote.

- A good economy, class equality.
- All the information is bilingual.
- The city helps low income people buy first homes.
- Quality free education available to our children k-college.
- Many municipal decisions are made by neighborhood committees.
- Politicians are courageous.
- Lots of green space.
- Santa Fe remains Santa Fe: More families living in our current forever empty homes.
- We keep our Santa Fe look and feel.
- Less cars.
- Multi generational families that are respected.
- A structure that allows for consistent leadership in staff (city manager)
- Shared values, allowing for/within mixed cultures.
- A proper public plaza and good transit in the south side.
- Community centers for everyone, more public sports fields and facilities, gyms. Pools.
- No chainstores, only locally owned businesses.
- More resources for older adults, recreation, parks.

COMMUNITY

What feeds and nurtures our community?

- The rootedness of Santa Fe and its history.
- Our youth(x2)
- Plenty of cultural events and organizations to keep things mixed up.
- Cultural traditions (x3)
- Great arts and other cultural events.
- Culture, music, ancestral foods.
- Healthy food.
- Good education for our children.
- Our faiths.
- Great newspapers and radio stations.
- Homewise and other organizations that want to support quality of life.
- Our community organizations (x2)
- Our fiestas. Our cultural customs, our voices.
- Our dreams of success.
- Employers that pay just wages.

How does this nourishment get into the community?

- Non profit organizations provide broader public input into governance.
- Good planning at times, for big projects like the Railyard, Midtown, Tierra Contenta.
- Regular opportunities for electeds, staff, and residents to meet with in our own neighborhoods.
- By finishing the trail system.
- By inviting all cultures, and providing city resources for each community to celebrate their country of origins' fiestas (x2) to celebrate our diversity.
- By working together.

- Through money.
- Through us.
- Through events.

What are the challenges for our community?

- There is no coordinated system to provide the entire community with information about events and meetings. We need a coordinated calendar.
- People move here and take land, housing, and opportunities.
- Affordability.
- Lack of equity.
- Anti-immigrant laws.
- We need more city districts (5 or 6) for more representation across cultures. City council of 10, 3 year terms.
- Tourist economy.
- Tourism keeps distracting our tax money from infrastructures and support services for our people.
- The millionaires that come to change our way of life.
- Rents keep going up and wages don't.
- The community doesn't have a good way to provide input to the city government.
- Almost all events are downtown.

How is our community getting in its own way?

- Trying to do too much, too perfectly, too quickly.
- Neighborhoods not pushing their own identity and history.
- Othering people even though we have more in common than not.
- Voter apathy.
- We don't change our beliefs that keep us oppressed. We don't value our dreams.
- We don't believe in our own dreams.
- We don't organize as workers.
- We don't learn our rights.
- We don't set roots.
- We don't learn English.
- At times, the creativity turns into fracturing of viewpoints and difficulty in making decisions.

DEPARTMENTS AND STAFF

What nurtures our Departments and their staff?

- Their union (x2).
- City services for families.
- Benefits for city staff (x4)
- In a stable work environment they can retire with a pension.
- Good, positive work environment (better than before).
- The satisfaction of being good public servants.
- CDL certification for city drivers.
- The police department was very cooperative in helping with "Safe Parking".
- Experienced independent staff at midtown campus.

- Transit staff has really transformed and analysed and improved the system.

What are the challenges for our Departments and Staff?

- Changes in leadership, high turnover.
- Doing things cheaply rather than doing them well.
- Wealthy residents who want special treatment.
- Affordable housing for staff (x3).
- Affordable housing office needs to change its process.
- Planning and building processes can be so long and inefficient.
- Wage theft is not enforced.
- Economic Development is slow to help the southside's economic development.
- There is not a department that manages complaints effectively, particularly around wage theft.
- Contract management.
- Not enough staff, too many managers.
- Not enough bilingual staff (x3)
- Not enough information about city taxes.
- They don't recruit or appreciate volunteers or nurture neighborhood relationships.
- Personal relationships between workers and supervisors or directors.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

What feeds and nurtures our elected officials?

- Public financing helps elect diverse people (x2).
- Their power and status.
- They have a budget to work with.
- They love the community. It's good when they were born here.
- Salaries and benefits,
- Active citizens to keep them from boring meetings.
- They are responsive to the public.
- Mayor is very responsive and encourages outreach.
- They are curious and want to learn (Clr. Cassutt wanted to learn about Land Use).

What are the challenges for our elected officials?

- Low pay and zero staff support for councilors.
- Councilors don't have support staff
- No support staff.
- No staff so they are dependent on others to give them policy ideas.
- If they had staff they could focus on policy and hire competent staff to administer.
- City's website needs help!
- They are controlled by outsourcing corporations.
- Small budget.
- Sometimes they wag the dog.
- They are non responsive.
- They need to work on more consensus building.
- Mayor and council need to work on getting to consensus more, to get better solutions rather than just divisiveness.

- They are representing people from very different socio economic classes

How do our elected officials get in their own way?

- They let themselves be influenced by economic or political interests, not the people's interests.
- Their ego makes them not be able to work together.
- The structure and culture of our city government allows politics to go into too much in our community, and hurts effectiveness.

SESSION 4

Convention Center

September 4, 2026

THE SUN

What is your vision for the best Santa Fe in a generations' time?

- Existing housing is recycled back to young families as other members of the community age and move.
- Events happening regular and accessible to families and children.
- Viable, active, multi-generational and multi cultural neighborhoods associations (section 2.04 of charter).
- Shopping, restaurants, event venues, groceries all in neighborhoods within walking distance.
- More schools in more neighborhoods for kids in the neighborhood.
- Preservation of existing neighborhoods and nurturing of newer ones (as per Land Use Dept guidance)
- Growth and vitality in our neighborhoods.
- Community gardens in all neighborhoods and spaces to learn to garden, cook, etc.
- Young people can afford our city and come for good jobs. People who grew up here stay here because there is opportunity.
- Plans for every department.
- City has a well organized plan and process to maintain infrastructure across the city.

COMMUNITY

What feeds and nurtures our community?

- Restaurants with community tables.
- Food related events like pancakes on the Plaza.
- Our generational culture.
- Arts, culture, and music.
- Newcomers who have an interest in understanding our culture and make an effort.
- Our parks and green spaces. The Rose park particularly.
- Our history is unparalleled.
- Neighbors you know. Neighborhoods can be a joy.
- The Farmers Market Institute.

How does this nurturing get into our community?

- Arts and Design Center as an incubator for the creative industry.
- Community gardens- they are registered through the parks department, on city or school property for the most part.
- Through the many jobs that support the arts and culture sector.
- Through all of our events.
- Through the city of Santa Fe emails about events and meetings. Not many people get these.

What are the challenges for our community?

- Inequality, segregation.
- Not enough events for young people and families.
- Not enough private employers.
- We don't have many 3rd spaces for people to meet, especially in groups.

How does the community get in its own way?

- Name calling, when in controversy, "those people" mentality.
- Age discrimination, old against young and vice versa.
- Lack of creativity of our businesses around the plaza to create spaces for people when there are events.
- Class divisions.
- Hispanics vs. Anglos that have moved in.
- People not understanding the culture.

DEPARTMENTS AND STAFF

What feeds and nourishes our Departments and Staff?

- Once you get to the right person, they are very helpful.
- A lot of vacancies have been filled, with fair wages.
- Zozobra and Fiestas, staff is encouraged to take time off and attend as member of the community.
- Canyon Rd Christmas walk, 4th of July celebration, all of these things involve staff and are executed beautifully each year.
- The welcoming vibe of our city.
- They have a 24/7 online constituent service line now for reporting problems. This is new.

What are the challenges for our Departments and Staff?

- Affordability of housing here.
- People can be very rude, especially to Parks employees.
- Itemized approach to complaints as individual matters. As opposed to looking at the concerns or complaints of a group or neighborhood.
- Oversight, nobody is pushing things along, collecting data, or reviewing.
- All the reports of complaints just pile up, who is checking?

How are Departments and Staff getting in their own way?

- Land use is really hard to navigate and has a bad rep.
- Land Use review process is not getting the right/ enough input.
- Good projects get passed and are implemented poorly because of lack of investment.
- Police and Fire dispatch doesn't work very well for the community.
- 70% of our police officers live elsewhere.
- Information about how to navigate departments is not readily available or accessible.

ELECTED OFFICIALS**What feeds and nurtures our elected officials?**

- We don't have a flake as a mayor anymore.
- Having a full time mayor.
- The mayor is out and about a lot, communicating with the public.

What are the challenges for our elected officials?

- They don't listen to real heart-felt opinions and thoughts from groups in the community, depending on who they represent.
- Councilors don't get paid and have no staff.
- Councilors need to be out more and hear more from the quiet people in their neighborhoods.

How do our elected officials get in their own way?

- Infighting, especially under the last mayor.