

LWVSFC Action & Advocacy Report  
December, 2024

**Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA) and Midtown** – Daniel Hernandez, Director.

The Action and Advocacy Committee has been closely following the Midtown Redevelopment Project. Director Hernandez gave a detailed presentation to us on December 5<sup>th</sup>.

Planning activities to officially designate the area as in need of redevelopment as an MRA under the state statute are underway. The City has contracted with two firms, one in Albuquerque and another in Chicago, to prepare the formal documents.

Metropolitan MRAs are intended to cover low-income deteriorating properties. The City hopes to have the formal designation in place by the spring of 2025. The designation opens avenues for tax-increment financing for development (subject to Governing Body approval) and includes opportunity zones. It is likely that the Midtown property boundaries will be closely aligned with the existing Local Innovation Corridor (LINC) overlay and that development will be in accordance with the LINC overlay. The goal for Midtown is to develop it as a mixed-use, walkable area with multi-family housing. There will be public meetings at both the Planning Commission and Governing Body.

The MRA will be bigger than the Midtown campus. The Midtown Master Plan, adopted after multiple avenues for public input, lays out a mixed-use development with a more urban feel. There will be a new gathering place that feels like Santa Fe for locals. Housing can be higher density because the current zoning allows four- or five-story buildings. Walkability as well as major environmental solutions such as street trees for shade and water channels for drainage.

Mr. Hernandez said it was important that community groups were able to hold their own group discussions during the early public input sessions. Their input was considered along with that from City-run input events. The consensus was that people said they want performing arts and art studios, film production facilities, affordable housing, and gathering spaces. The Governing Body voted to approve the sale on December 11<sup>th</sup>. The entire proposed development will include housing as well as film production facilities and will be an open campus. It will be called Aspect Studio Village. All specific plans will need City approval.

The Purchaser has agreed to do a great deal more as conditions for approval. Some of these conditions include requiring the developer to offer specific numbers of internships for Santa Fe residents as well as creating educational spaces and opportunities in cooperation with SFPS and SFCC. The developer also plans to build 100-150 multi-family housing units with 15% affordable. It is hoped that the housing will span a continuum from low income to market rate. Director Hernandez will return to the committee to provide an update in Spring, 2025.

**Wastewater Facility**

Sally Sabo received a detailed tour of the wastewater facility. The group discussed the fact that the aging facility is constantly experiencing problems, breakdowns, and emergency repairs. The facility is so old they are unable to find replacement parts at times. Sally noted that even if a replacement plant is planned, some repairs need to be done to keep the current plant functioning until the new one is online. Members believe the League can play a role in this and should consider advocacy.