

Observer Report – Bernalillo County Commission

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Housing

The Bernalillo County Commission is proposing to form a housing authority with the City of Albuquerque. The final form has not yet been determined, but it may be a joint powers agreement to form the Middle Rio Grande Housing Collaborative.

Over the last year, Bernalillo County has appropriated more than \$29 million dollars for housing vouchers for low income persons, and subsidized approximately 3,000 rental assistance units with housing vouchers. The county manager said that has caused the county to reassess their strategy of assisting low income persons with housing.

The county now intends to repurpose existing properties into more long term rental units and to create an additional 1,000 units by 2025. The proposal says housing units will be distributed in all quarters of the city and county.

League position:

We support the following guidelines for government assisted housing. Assistance for private affordable housing projects under the following conditions:

- The surrounding neighborhood has been involved early in the planning for the project.
- Regulatory variances which may be granted do not permit unsafe or unsightly conditions.
- Design review by a qualified panel.
- A variety of home ownership and rental opportunities in public or private affordable housing projects.
- An adequate maintenance system in all affordable housing projects. This system should include education and training for residents in maintenance skills.
- Encouragement of the formation of tenant organizations.
- Long range planning, accountability, and neighborhood involvements in expenditure of federal community development.
- Black grant funds for housing rehabilitation.
- Leadership in assistance for homeless programs which provide both shelter and services for targeted populations, particularly families and the mentally ill.
- Boarding houses as a way of meeting housing needs.
- Community based residential care for the mentally ill.

County staffing problems

Bernalillo County spends \$83 million a year to operate the Metropolitan Detention Center. Commissioner Steve Quezada is pushing the county to work with the City of Albuquerque and possibly Sandoval and Valencia Counties to operate a regional jail facility. He believes this is needed because funding the jail currently takes more than half the county budget. MDC is operating at 45% staffing levels while the county seeks more corrections officers. In addition, about 45% of people who are released from the MDC are facing homelessness.

The understaffing appears to be a county-side problem.

Second judicial district court security is operating at 46% of authorized staff levels

The Bernalillo County Sheriff's office is down 37 deputies from authorized staff levels.

Emergency dispatch has 8 vacant position and the county is thinking about combining emergency dispatch with the City of Albuquerque.

The League does not have a state or local position on staffing of government.