

DRAFT

TOWN OF TAOS

DOWNTOWN METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN

HEARING AUGUST 2024



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TAOS DOWNTOWN METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA (MRA) PLAN

HEARING AUGUST 13, 2024

PREPARED FOR: TOWN OF TAOS



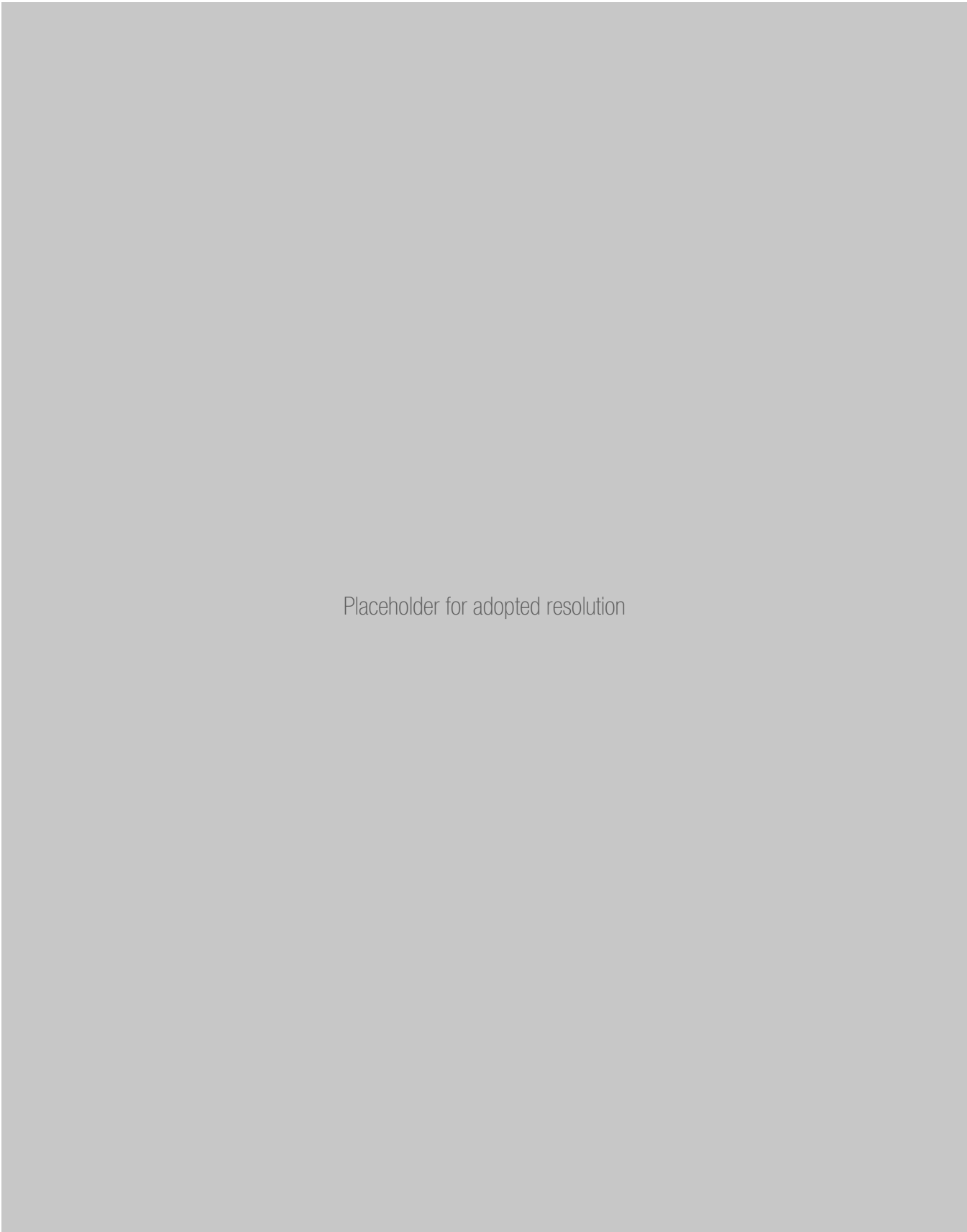
PREPARED BY: GROUNDWORK STUDIO



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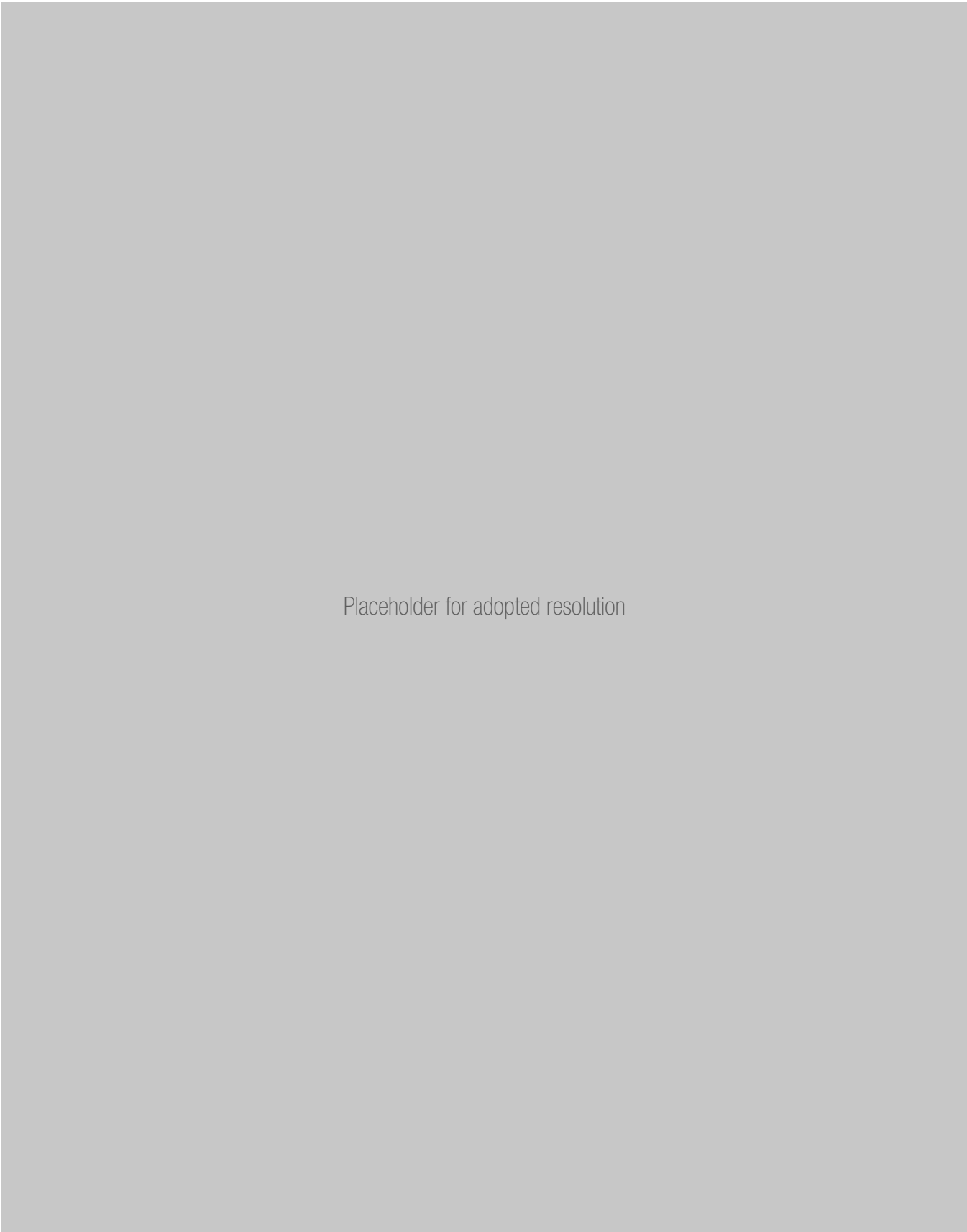


RESOLUTION



Placeholder for adopted resolution

RESOLUTION



Placeholder for adopted resolution

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Glossary

1. Introduction 2

- The Area
- The Purpose
- Guiding Change in the Downtown
- Starting with Values
- MRA Code
- MRA Enabled Tools

2. Planning Process 12

- Community Engagement Approach
- Plan Review

3. Existing Conditions 22

- Location
- Neighborhood Character Areas
- Downtown Zoning & Land Use Assessment
- Connectivity & Transportation
- Water Resources & Infrastructure
- Parks & Public Spaces
- Building & Site Conditions

4. Community Profile & Market Analysis 44

- Demographic Profile
- Quality of Life
- Local Economy
- Downtown Business Environment



6. Asset Inventory62

- Local History
- Attractions
- Arts & Culture Organizations
- Assets & Challenges Summary

7. Vision & Goals 78

- An Aspirational Vision for Downtown Taos
- Goals & Objectives
- How Community Input Informed Goal Themes

8. Strategies & Approach..... 90

- Priority Strategies

9. Implementation Roadmap 114

- Establishing the MRA Board or Agency
- Project Financing
- Funding Sources
- Complimentary Tools
- Community Capacity

10. Toolkit..... 133

- Sample MRA Board Ordinance
- Sample TIF Ordinance
- Template RFP
- Project Ranking Tool & Community Benefit Matrix
- Development Agreement

11. Appendix 149

GLOSSARY

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

As defined by Taos County in the Taos County Affordable Housing Ordinance, affordable housing is residential housing primarily for persons or households of low or moderate income (between 60-80% AMI) . This means that persons or households of low and moderate income are spending no more than 30% of household income on housing-related costs.

MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

“Missing Middle” describes a variety of housing types that create a gentle density, expanding housing supply and diversity while fitting comfortably within a traditional, single family neighborhood. It includes a wide variety of housing types including accessory dwelling units, duplexes, bungalow courts, townhouses, courtyard apartments, and two to-three story mixed-use buildings

PLACEKEEPING

Placekeeping asks how we can “keep” or honor the identity of a place, while fostering equitable development. Placekeeping activities center the idea of people belonging to a place and strive to ensure that this sense of belonging is sustained as a place undergoes changes. This entails conscious commitment to protecting living heritage and celebrating the knowledge, stories, and lifeways of the local community. An important approach of placekeeping is to create spaces that are adaptable to changing needs, with flexible layouts, that allows arts, events, and activities to bring the space to life.

PLACEKNOWING

Placeknowing is rooted in Indigenous planning practice and is also characterized as 7 Generations planning. Placeknowing challenges notions of placemaking and acknowledges that as place-based communities, the place is already made. Placeknowing asks: what is the community's relationship to homeland and what is the knowledge that will help the people to remain resilient into the future? Placeknowing encourages community members to use culture, identity, and generational thinking to inform long-range planning and community development.

PLACEMAKING

Placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

GLOSSARY

RESIDENT

A person who lives/resides [in Taos] permanently or on a long-term basis; part-time residents live in Taos only part of the year. A resident does not necessarily have roots or generational ties in Taos.

STAKEHOLDER(S)

a person with an interest or concern in something; an individual, group or organization that's impacted by the outcome of a project or a business venture.

TAOSEÑO

A person with multi-generational or, possibly, lifelong roots and residence in Taos.

THIRD PLACE(S)

Third Place: an (often informal) public gathering space outside of a person's home and work. A third place is where community can be built and experienced. Coffee shops, parks, bars, churches, hairdressers and barber shops can be third places. Third places have been shown to be beneficial/important to community vitality and cohesion as many aspects of lives are increasingly privatized.



INTRODUCTION

The Taos Downtown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) Plan is a project of the Town of Taos and Taos MainStreet. The MRA plan is the outcome of research, analysis, and a participatory planning process designed to protect what is special about downtown Taos while addressing the economic challenges the community faces. The plan provides a realistic framework for future development and outlines actions the Town can take to create a more beautiful, welcoming, and livable downtown.

This MRA plan is about building momentum that leads to revitalizing action. Its purpose is to build upon the community-developed vision in the Strong at Heart (SAH) Downtown Strategy Report and identify concrete steps that the Town of Taos and community can take to make that vision a reality. The plan incorporates community identified goals and strategies to address challenges that have faced the downtown for years. The plan enables specific tools such as the formation of an MRA board and fund, the establishment of a special financing district, and the ability to enter public private partnerships. These tools make it easier to pull resources and partnerships together for the successful implementation of MRA projects.

Purpose of the MRA Plan

- Support the Town and community to address downtown challenges
- Develop strategies to achieve community-identified goals
- Leverage financial tools enabled by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code
- Outline a roadmap for project implementation

THE PLAN AREA

The Taos Downtown MRA Plan guides redevelopment within the adopted Town of Taos Downtown MRA boundary (Resolution 24-02). Located in the heart of Taos, the MRA district is about 171 acres (0.27 square miles). The MRA district has significant overlap with the Taos MainStreet boundary and the Historic District, encompassing commercial, residential, and major community spaces such as Taos Plaza and Kit Carson Park.



What is a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area?

A Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) or MRA District is a legally designated area within a municipality or county that meets the criteria of the New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code. The criteria set by the Code for “blight” designation include the following physical and socioeconomic conditions:

- Substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures
- Defective or inadequate street layout
- Unsanitary or unsafe conditions
- Lack of adequate housing
- Low levels of commercial or industrial activity

After an MRA is designated, an MRA Plan is developed to identify specific redevelopment strategies and projects that when implemented will help stimulate business and community revitalization activity within the district.

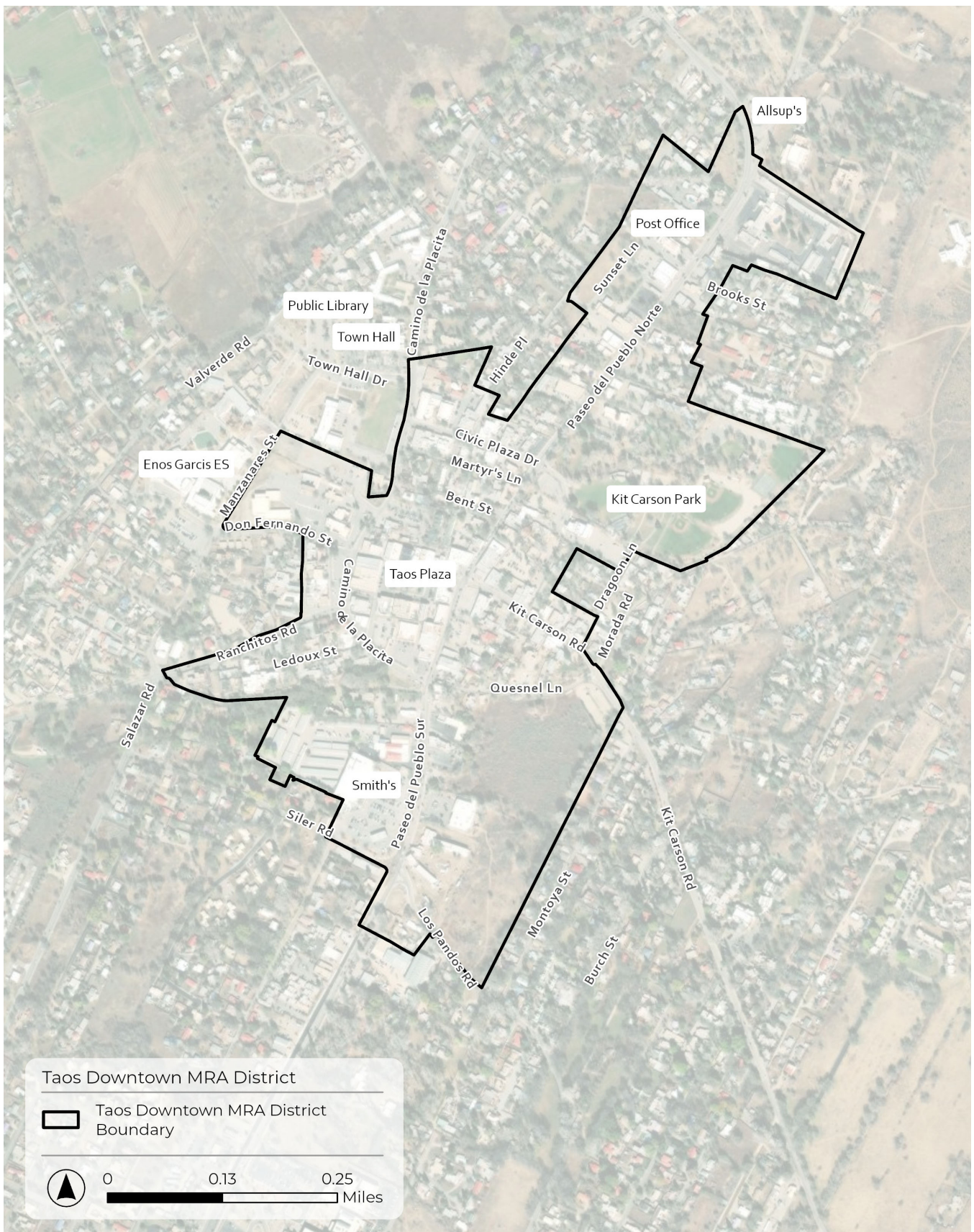


Figure 1. Taos Downtown MRA District.

GUIDING CHANGE IN THE DOWNTOWN

This MRA Plan outlines goals and strategies designed to help guide change in the MRA district and steward a more livable, vibrant and inclusive downtown. Taoseños and Taos residents cherish all that makes Taos unique and are fiercely committed to protecting its identity and heritage. As the Town grows, there is widespread concern that growth is undermining what the community loves most about this place. Further, growing inequality between communities in Taos highlights the fact that the economic benefit of a growing economy is not evenly distributed. A central question during the MRA planning process was: **How can we shape growth downtown in a way that ensures widespread community benefits, expands opportunities for those who live here, and protects all that is special about Taos?**

PROTECTING WHAT MAKES TAOS SPECIAL

There are three community revitalization approaches that community members identified as important for shaping neighborhood change in downtown Taos: Placemaking, Placekeeping, and Placeknowing (for a definition of these terms, see the glossary).

Placemaking is an approach that involves community residents and artists in the creation of vibrant public spaces that contribute to the health, happiness, and wellbeing of the community. In downtown Taos, this could include improvements to alleyways and the plaza to transform spaces into community places where Taos residents and visitors can gather and businesses could participate in outdoor events and retail. This approach has evoked concerns that creative placemaking activities could result in transformation downtown that displaces or excludes Hispano, Latino, and Indigenous residents and culture.

Placekeeping was identified as an approach that could help to protect and strengthen cultural memories and traditions while supporting the ability of local people to thrive in place. In this approach, instead of focusing primarily on physical redevelopment of public spaces,

the Town would identify what in the cultural environment is treasured and contributes to the downtown's unique character and identify ways to protect and steward these assets that already exist. This would include a particular focus on supporting long-term organizations and businesses that steward cultural traditions, arts, programming, and education.

Placeknowing is an approach rooted in Indigenous planning practice that centers culture, identity, traditional knowledge, and generational thinking to inform long-range planning and community development. This approach is based in the understanding that a place is inherited and asks how the community's stories, knowledge, and traditions are reflected in the place and built environment both now and into the future. In Taos, this would involve planning with Taos Pueblo and Taoseños to identify ways that the place's culture and identity shape future development in the downtown.

Principles and practices from each approach informed the MRA Plan process as well as the strategies and projects identified in the plan.

COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS

The Town of Taos Vision 2020 Master Plan (Vision 2020) and SAH utilize the idea of “complete neighborhoods” as an organizing concept for downtown growth management. A complete neighborhood is a neighborhood where residents have safe and easy access to the necessities of daily life within walking distance of their homes. It’s a place where affordable housing choices are located in close proximity to job opportunities, schools, grocery stores, community resources, social opportunities,

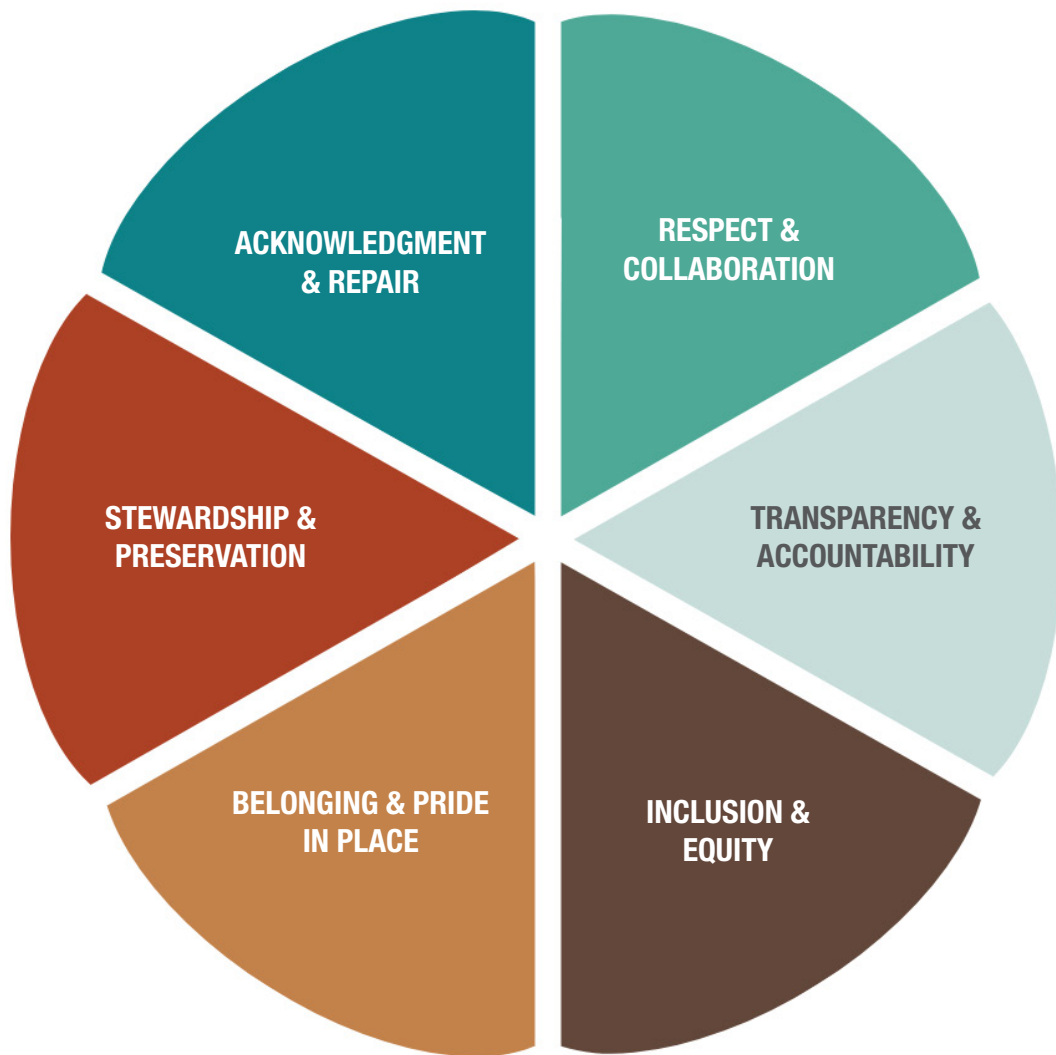
gathering spaces, parks, and transportation. Complete neighborhood formation requires collaboration across sectors such as urban design, transportation, economic development, and housing. The goals and strategies of this MRA Plan integrate complete neighborhoods as an overarching approach for downtown revitalization.



STARTING WITH VALUES

Creation of the MRA Plan was guided by the Taos MainStreet organization's belief that "Everyone deserves access to a vibrant community: a place with a thriving local economy, rich in character, and inviting public spaces that make residents and visitors feel they belong." The planning process worked to identify core community values as the foundation for the MRA plan and to inform future actions. A review of past plans and collaboration with concurrent planning processes affirmed that many of the values shared during MRA Plan outreach and engagement are widely held and have been important community values for years.

The unifying community values collected here are core to the vision and goals of the Downtown MRA. Guiding principles are action-oriented expressions of these unifying values. These serve as authentic commitments, setting a foundation for collaboration, helping to navigate complex decisions, and providing standards for MRA project implementation.



UNIFYING COMMUNITY VALUES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ACKNOWLEDGMENT & REPAIR

- We acknowledge the long-term caretakers and residents of Taos, many of whom have been marginalized in community decision making and have not benefited from economic growth.
- We understand that trust and relationships are built and maintained by many small actions over time.
- We work to acknowledge historic wrongs and pursue justice.

RESPECT & COLLABORATION

- We value diverse perspectives, experiences, and aspirations in the planning, design, and implementation of MRA projects.
- We work to co-design and co-create solutions to community identified challenges.
- We ask where we have come from and how we can collectively create a better future for downtown Taos.

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

- We are transparent in communications and follow public notice requirements.
- We welcome diverse community leadership and utilize best practices for community oversight of MRA projects.
- We evaluate project proposals to ensure all projects funded through the MRA demonstrate tangible community benefits.
- We utilize development agreements to ensure ethical use of public resources.

INCLUSION & EQUITY

- We work to create a downtown that is livable, inclusive, affordable, and vibrant for locals first and know that in turn it will be a great place for visitors.
- We work to distribute the benefits of economic growth equitably amongst all Taos residents.

BELONGING & PRIDE IN PLACE

- We prioritize projects that will help to restore a strong sense of connection, pride and belonging amongst Taoseños.
- We encourage community participation in community development through storytelling, artmaking, traditions, and celebrations.

STEWARDSHIP & PRESERVATION

- We are dedicated to protecting and stewarding the diverse cultures that make up Taos.
- We value local knowledge, history, traditions, and practices as essential foundations for meaningful planning and design.
- We incentivize sustainable business practices and development.

MRA CODE

The Taos Downtown MRA Plan was developed in compliance with the New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (NM Stat § 3-60A-1 to 3-60A-48). This plan follows the adoption of the Taos Downtown MRA Designation Report (Resolution 19-52 adopted October 22, 2019) and the Taos Downtown MRA Boundary Amendment Report (Resolution 24-02 adopted January 9, 2024).

The code establishes the processes and powers of local government to designate an MRA, develop an MRA Plan, and undertake and carryout projects within an adopted MRA boundary. The powers granted to municipalities through the Metropolitan Redevelopment Act are intended to enable municipalities to promote economic activity in areas designated as MRAs, where growth and development are hindered by physical, economic, and other detrimental conditions. The Metropolitan Redevelopment Act provides tools for municipalities to help eliminate conditions of blight in designated areas, including the ability to acquire land, assist in land assembly, offer financial incentives, and provide public improvements to encourage and promote industry, trade, or other economic activity.

These powers can only be used within designated Metropolitan Redevelopment Areas (MRAs) after the adoption of an MRA plan. Adoption of the MRA Plan provides an exception to the NM Anti-Donation Clause and allows the local government to create an MRA Board; develop a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district; establish an MRA fund; issue bonds; enter into public/private partnerships; sell, lease, or dispose of public assets; amongst other powers. These powers do not include the power of eminent domain. All MRA projects must meet the objectives outlined in the MRA Plan and be in the public interest.

New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code

The New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (§3-60A-1 to §3-60A-48 NMSA 1978) provides municipalities with the authority to implement strategies and projects to correct conditions that “substantially impair or arrest sound and orderly development” within the city. The designation and subsequent MRA planning process gives a municipality the ability to provide public resources to private entities, under certain conditions, without violating the state’s anti-donation clause. (New Mexico Constitution Art. IX, § 14.)

MRA-ENABLED TOOLS

The NM Metropolitan Redevelopment code enables specific tools that the Town can leverage to realize the vision and objectives laid out in the MRA Plan. MRAs allow a local government to contribute public resources to private redevelopment projects as long as they provide tangible community benefit and align with the MRA Plan. The following tools will be essential to the pursuit of the priority strategies laid out in this plan.

MRA BOARD

To ensure community benefit, the MRA Board is responsible for overseeing the implementation and funding of MRA Plan projects. The board is established by local ordinance and board members are appointed by the Mayor.

MRA FUND

An MRA fund is a dedicated fund for MRA projects and should be overseen by the MRA Board. Both the Town and the County may contribute to this fund.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF)

A funding tool which captures the incremental rise in property taxes and/or a percentage of the incremental increase in local or state Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) within the district. The collected funds can be used to support MRA administration and projects.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (P3'S)

A P3 is a cooperative agreement between the local government (Town, County, etc.) and one or more private sector entities. These partnerships enable the implementation of projects that are too costly or high risk for either sector to pursue on their own.

DIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS & DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

The contribution of public resources to private redevelopment projects and business improvements without violating the NM Anti-Donation Clause, including but not limited to: sale or lease of Town-owned property, redevelopment tax abatements, storefront and building infrastructure improvement grants, expedited permitting, impact fee waivers, gap financing grants.

ZONING CODE EXEMPTIONS

The local government may create zoning code ordinances, amendments, and exceptions that will apply only to projects and properties within the MRA.

What an MRA does not do:

- Change the historic nature of the downtown: MRA projects are subject to oversight from the Historic Preservation Commission
- Force business or property owners to participate in redevelopment
- Grant the Town the powers of eminent domain
- Grant the Town the powers to raise taxes within the MRA district
- Allow public contributions to private projects without tangible community benefit

A Thriving Downtown

Taos locals rave about
revitalized alleyways

vibrant street life

urban tree canopy

street art

bike friendly

plenty of parking

walkable streets

PLANNING PROCESS

The creation of the Taos Downtown MRA Plan utilized the following methodology:

- 1. Plan Review:** Review of key plans and reports to gain a contextual understanding of community concerns and goals, existing and potential partnerships and organizational capacity, and previous recommendations for the downtown.
- 2. Existing Conditions & Asset Inventory:** Inventory of the physical conditions of the MRA District builds on the findings of the Taos Downtown MRA Designation Report and Boundary Amendment Reports. The inventory includes geospatial data analysis and mapping of existing zoning and land use, public and private ownership, transportation networks, parks and open space, building and infrastructure conditions, and vacant buildings and properties.
- 3. Community Profile & Market Analysis:** Community profile and market analysis utilizing data and information from various sources including the U.S. Census, past plans, regional reports, and community and business surveys. Analysis includes a review of social and economic characteristics, market trends, business activity, and community issues and perceptions.
- 4. Community Engagement:** Intensive community engagement process that guided plan creation. A high-level of community participation and input confirms values and goals identified by previous plans and indicates that plan recommendations benefit the community. This process also builds community capacity to support plan implementation.
- 5. Downtown Vision, Goal, & Strategy Development:** Vision, goal, and strategy framework based on the plan review, existing conditions assessment, community profile, market analysis, and community engagement process. This includes a vision for downtown, four long-range goals, and supporting strategies. Priority strategies were identified to address multiple goal areas, and actionable and achievable catalytic projects and programs were identified to stimulate revitalization efforts.
- 6. Implementation & Financing Planning:** A phased roadmap identifies catalytic projects and programs that the Town, Taos MainStreet and the community can implement. The roadmap includes suggestions for funding sources and partnerships to support implementation.

PLAN REVIEW

Planning processes are not new to The Taos community. A detailed review of previous planning documents provides a foundation for the MRA plan approach and recommendations. These plans provide valuable insight into the community’s values and goals, as many were conducted with extensive engagement and include detailed documentation of community input. Some of the recommendations from prior plans have been implemented, while others have not. The MRA Plan enables tools that can help further recommendations from past plans. For summaries of relevant information from previous plans, see the appendix.

PLAN REVIEW				
Plan Name	MRA Goal Alignment			
	Connectivity & Street Life	Placekeeping & Identity	Community Economic Development	Complete Neighborhoods
Town of Taos Comprehensive Plan (2022)	X	X	X	X
Strong at Heart: Downtown Strategy Report (2018)	X	X	X	X
Town of Taos Affordable Housing Plan (2020)			X	X
Town of Taos Parks & Recreation Master Plan (2018)	X	X	X	X
Town of Taos Bicycle Master Plan (2002)	X			X
Town of Taos Community Tree Care Plan (2019)	X	X		
Vision 2020 Master Plan (1999)	X	X	X	X
Taos Historic Cultural Landscape Report (2016)		X		
Historic Taos County Courthouse Condition Assessment & Preservation Plan (2013)		X		
Enchanted Circle Trails Plan (2017)	X			
Taos Congestion Relief Study (2007)	X			
Town of Taos Destination Stewardship Plan (2024)			X	

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Inclusive and participatory planning approaches are essential for the development of a meaningful, place-based plan that will be embraced by the community. Throughout the process, the Taos MRA Plan team sought to provide robust opportunities for public participation and decision-making. The various ways community members were invited to engage included pop-ups at community events, project website creation and promotion, op-eds in local publications, two open houses, focus groups, interviews, small group meetings, online surveys, social media, and radio messaging. Engagement activities offered various depths of interaction and involvement levels tailored to connect with a widely representative community spread.

Engagement Goals

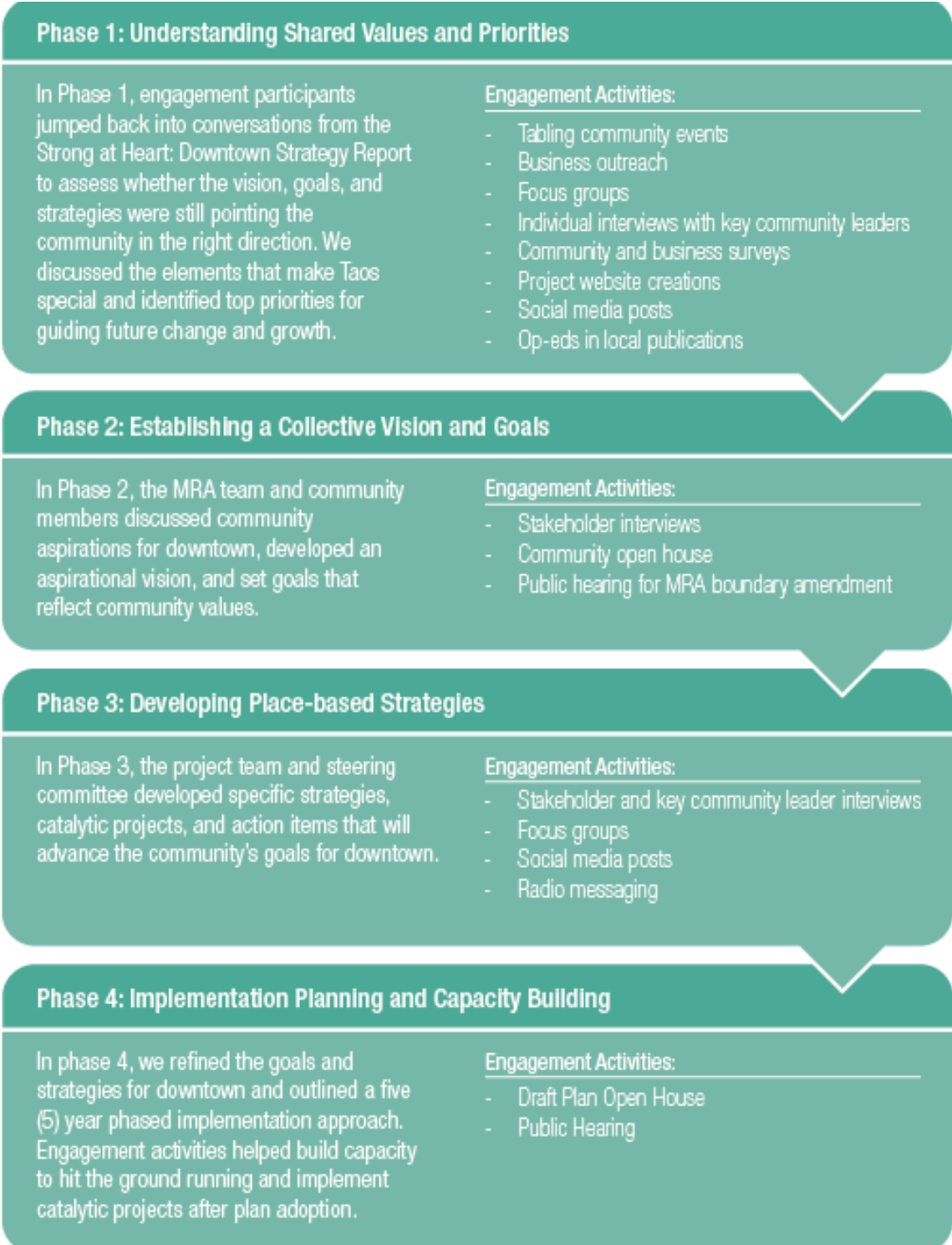
- Broaden community engagement to include stakeholders who are historically underrepresented or left out of planning conversations.
- Provide opportunities for the community to participate in shaping the future growth and development of a vibrant and livable downtown.
- Acknowledge the layered histories, diverse cultures/identities, as well as changing landscapes that shape the Town of Taos today and into the future.
- Align with previous and concurrent planning processes such as Strong at Heart and Destination Stewardship.
- Build trust in the planning process and foster collaborative decision-making.
- Strengthen civic capacity and local leadership.

Engagement Objectives

- Inform the community about the project.
- Provide transparency about the purpose of the MRA Plan and what it can and cannot accomplish.
- Develop an understanding of community concerns, strengths, values, and priorities.
- Provide information and gather input about revitalization and redevelopment approaches.
- Identify preferred strategies, projects and programs designed to reflect Taos' unique character, challenges, and opportunities.
- Engage key stakeholders who could support the implementation of the MRA plan.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PHASES

The Taos MRA Plan process, organized in phases, provided multiple opportunities for public participation over time. A critical part of plan implementation will be sustaining and expanding the community engagement that informed its creation.





Halloween outreach, Source: GWS.



PASEO outreach, Source: Jim O'Donnell.



Focus Group engagement, Source: GWS.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Robust community engagement helped to ensure the Taos MRA Plan was developed with and for the community.

- 10 steering committee members
- 678 residents responded to the Community Survey.
- 75 businesses, property owners, and organizations responded to the Business and Organization Survey.
- 1200+ community members were engaged at events in and around downtown Taos.
- 17 high school students and young adults participated in a focus group focused on youth vision for downtown. 10 students were paid to do community outreach.
- 5 high school students from Taos High School Travel Club went through MRA outreach training and led community outreach activities.
- 21 community leaders participated in a focus group to discuss MRA plan goals and strategies.
- 26 community members participated in an Open House .
- 10 community leaders were interviewed.
- 20 community members provided feedback on the draft MRA Plan at the Draft Review Community Open House.

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

OUTREACH TOOLS

Word about the MRA Planning process and educational materials about how the MRA Plan can support the Town's downtown community goal realization was spread through a variety of means:

- Project Website – ArcGIS Storymap Website
- Social Media - Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube
- Email distribution – Taos MainStreet mailing list
- MRA Zine – small, pamphlet-like publication that includes text, images, artwork.
- Flyers and posters
- Media announcements

SURVEYS

Online surveys open from September 16, 2023, to January 31, 2024 collected input and feedback from different stakeholder groups. A community questionnaire, open to the broader public, enabled the team to assess the relevance of past plans, identify concerns and aspirations for downtown Taos, and learn more about the kinds of future development people would like to see (or not see). The survey was available in English and Spanish. A separate survey for local businesses, organizations, and property owners helped to identify the key challenges of operating downtown and the types of support the Town could provide to help businesses thrive. Students from Taos High School Travel Club were paid to collect survey responses and incentives were offered for both surveys. The team contacted Taos Pueblo via letters and emails to the Governor's Office and War Chief's Office.

- Community Survey – 678 responses
- Business Survey – 75 responses

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Community events offered opportunities to connect with the broader Taos community, spread awareness about the Taos MRA Plan, and have conversations about community concerns and aspirations. The MRA Plan team tabled at 3 community events, connecting with over 1200 people in Taos. The team distributed MRA “zines” containing information about the MRA planning process goals and links to the project website and community survey. At each event, a large QR code banner enabled people to share what they love about downtown Taos. Event participants wrote about feelings, places, and events on colorful stickers and added them to the banner, which served both as a data gathering tool and collaborative art piece.

- Farmers Market - September 13, 2023, ~30 people engaged
- PASEO – September 13, 2023 , ~200 people engaged
- Halloween on Taos Plaza – October 31, 2023, ~1000 people engaged

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

The first public open house was held at the Taos Civic Center. Conversation topics, informed by the Strong at Heart Downtown Strategy Report, included community identity and priorities, connectivity, transportation, placemaking, economic development, and housing. Facilitated conversations helped revisit and update the goals from SAH and ensure that the MRA Plan identifies priority actions and supportive strategies. Twenty-six (26) attendees signed in and approximately (thirty-five) 35 were in attendance throughout the evening.

The second public open house was again held at the Taos Civic Center. The team shared the draft Taos Downtown MRA Plan with the public and received feedback on the various sections of the plan.

- Public Open House 1 - December 13, 2023 - open to public, 26 attendees
- Public Open House 2 – June 13, 2024 - open to public, 20 attendees

INTERVIEWS

Interviews with local property and business owners, community leaders, and Taoseños and Taos residents provided opportunities to dig into survey topics more deeply, acquire background information on community sentiment, and fill-in information gaps on downtown policies, programs, projects, and partnerships.

- Ten one-on-one interviews



Outreach at Farmers Market, Source: GWS.



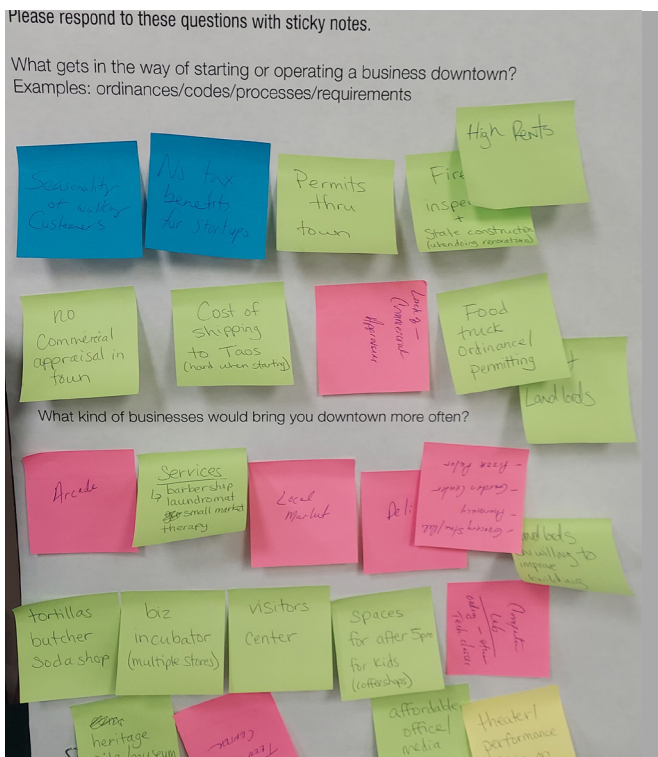
Public Open House, Source: GWS.

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Small stakeholder groups were invited to participate in focus group sessions with the goal of identifying community concerns and aspirations; brainstorming strategies and projects to create a thriving downtown for everyone; and assessing priority MRA project community benefit requirements. Focus groups took place in person, lasted approximately two hours, and were facilitated using interactive boards in small and large group conversations.

- True Kids 1 – October 23, 2023
17 attendees, high-school aged students
- Projects & Strategies – December 13, 2023
21 attendees, mostly representatives of local government, organizations, and businesses in Taos
- Finance & Implementation – January 9, 2024
7 attendees, mostly civic sector leaders



Source: GWS.



Source: Jim O'Donnell.



Goals and Strategies Focus Group. Source: GWS.



Public Open House. Source: Jim O'Donnell.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Taos MRA district commences at the northern boundary of the Town of Taos, adjacent to Taos Pueblo. The district is 171 acres total, made up of 307 parcels.

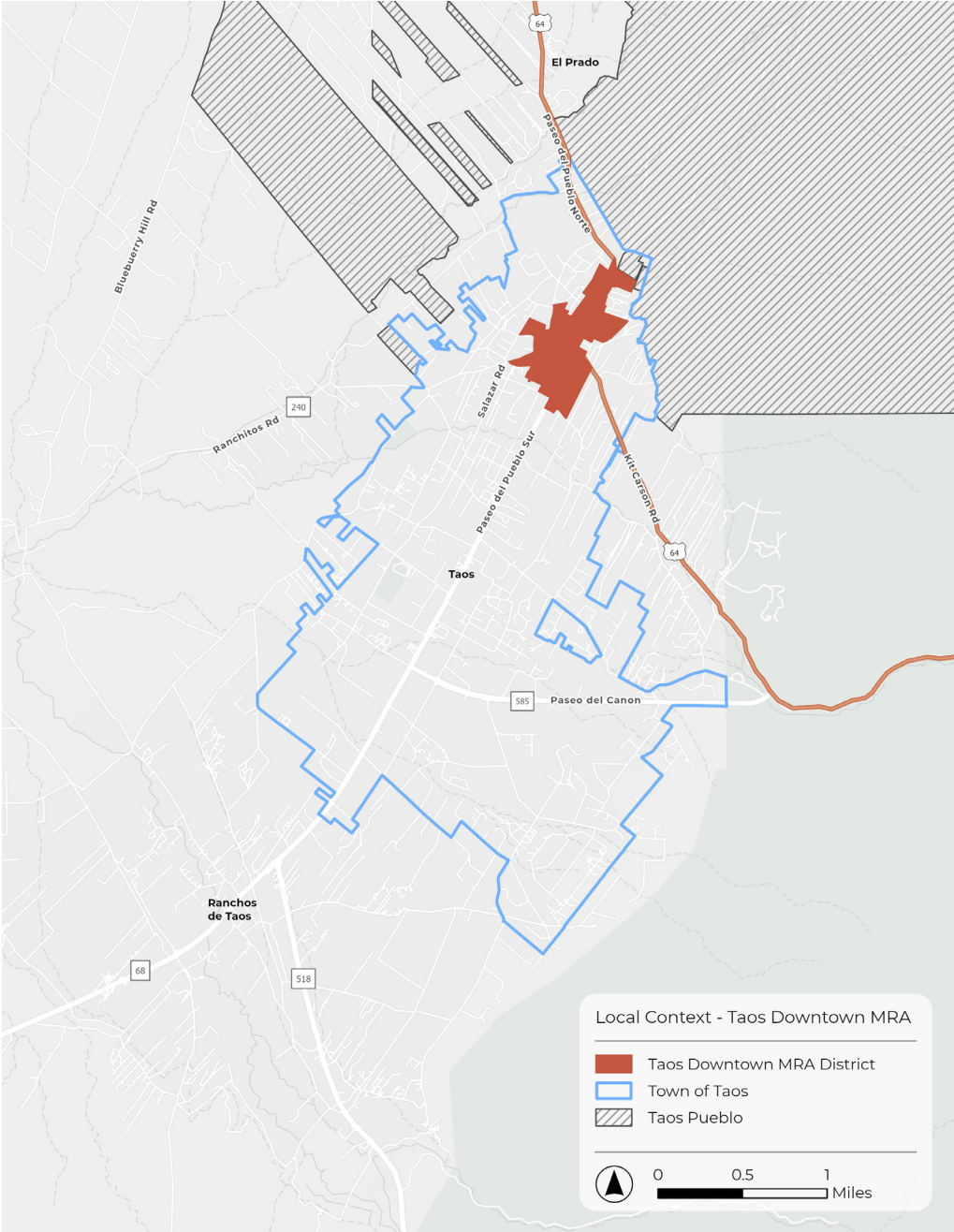


Figure 2. Local context map

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AREAS

The North, Central, and South sections of the MRA District represent different zones with their own distinct character and feel. They serve specific purposes within the community, function differently within the fabric of downtown, and have distinct land use patterns.

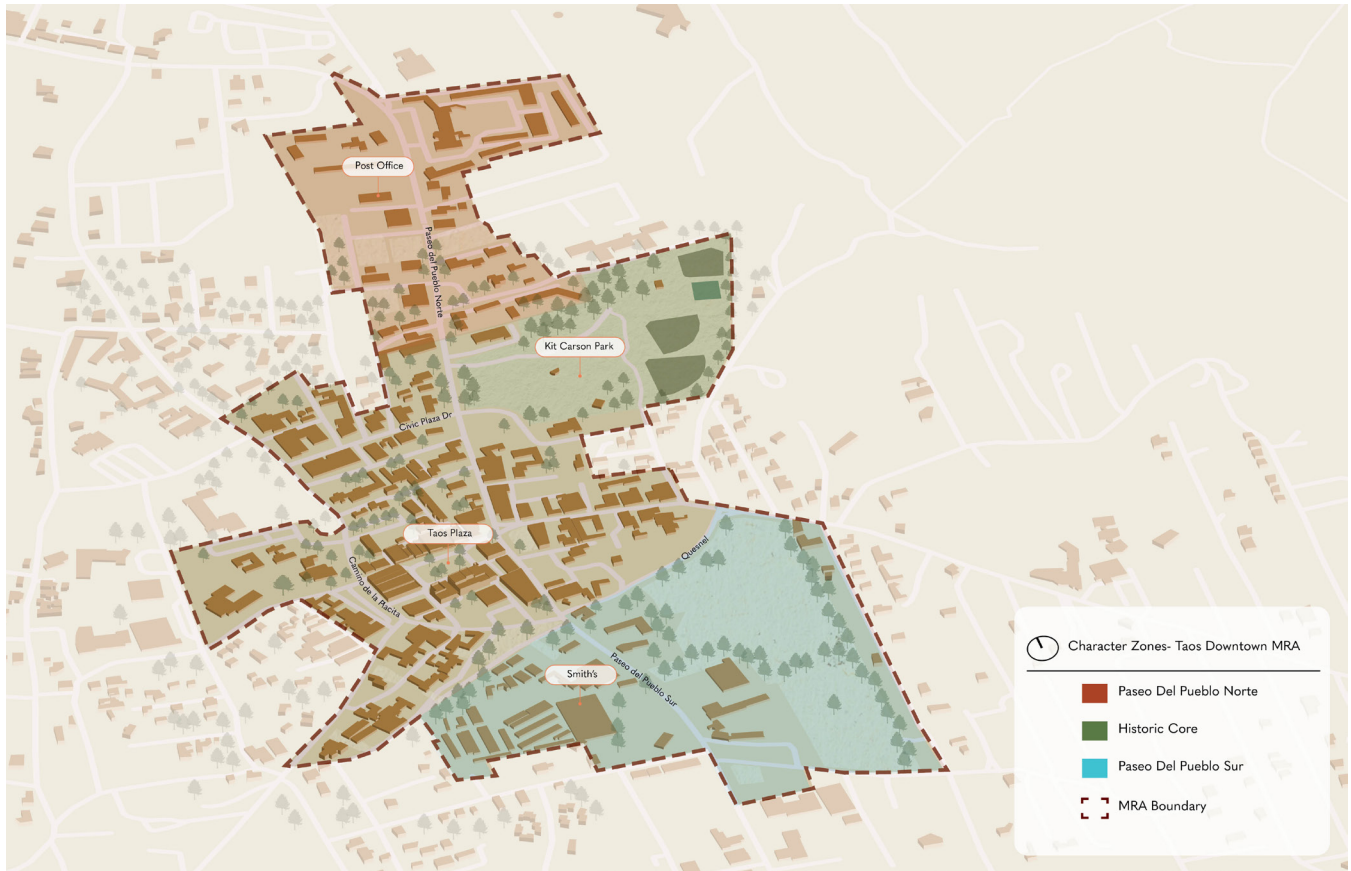


Figure 3. Character Zones of Taos Downtown MRA.

The North section of the MRA aligns with the northern gateway to downtown and is composed of the Paseo del Pueblo Norte Area, from the Allsup's by the Taos Pueblo entrance to the Kit Carson Park boundary. Just north of the Town, El Prado, a semi-rural, low-density area, transitions within the MRA to a more urban form along Paseo del Pueblo Norte (commonly referred to as Paseo or Paseo Norte), the main road. The area along Paseo is largely commercial and comprised of locally owned businesses. Residential areas immediately adjacent to Paseo Norte provide opportunities to develop a walkable mixed-use neighborhood.

The Central section of the MRA, the Historic Core, runs from Kit Carson Park to the intersection at Camino de la Placita and Quesnel Ln along Paseo Del Pueblo Sur. This area includes primarily commercial properties and some residential properties centered around Taos Plaza. As stated in Strong at Heart (2018), this area is "the social, economic, and historic heart of the downtown," (pg. 24). Many community events are held in the historic core,

where hundreds of local businesses drive the Town economy. This area is categorized by higher density mixed used buildings, allowing for walkability between key destinations such as Kit Carson Park and Taos Plaza.

The South section of the MRA, the Paseo del Pueblo Sur area, from Placita/Quesnel Ln. to Los Pandos/Siler Rd., is the southern gateway to downtown, characterized by a wider roadway (Paseo del Pueblo Sur) and large commercial properties with surface parking between the road and buildings. The area is commercial, with some light manufacturing, and contains Couse Pasture, a sizeable vacant open space. There are adjacent residential areas, but the environment is less walkable than the Historic Core or Paseo del Pueblo Norte area because of the development pattern.



North Character Zone: Paseo del Pueblo Norte



Central Character Zone: Historic Core.



South Character Zone: Paseo del Pueblo Sur.

DOWNTOWN ZONING & LAND USE ASSESSMENT

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

The Taos Downtown MRA District overlaps with both the MainStreet District and the Historic Overlay Zone. The Taos MainStreet boundary was designated in 2019 as an Accredited MainStreet Program, creating a partnership for downtown revitalization between the Town of Taos and the Taos MainStreet 501(c)3. As part of an Accredited program, Taos MainStreet can leverage technical assistance and resources from the state and the national MainStreet program for small-scale revitalization projects in its boundary at no cost to the town. It is beneficial to have an existing MainStreet program when establishing an MRA because there are existing community relationships and projects already initiated. The MRA can also help the MainStreet program accomplish its goals by creating more flexibility for the Town to support revitalization.

Much of the MRA district is within the Historic Overlay Zone (HOZ), which is designated to “protect, preserve, and perpetuate areas of historical, cultural, architectural, artistic or geographical significance located within the town” (Town of Taos § 16.16.220.1). The district contains 12 registered historic buildings. Many buildings are either of national, state, or local significance and often all three designations apply. The few parcels not in the historic district include Hines & Hines Storage units, Central Station condos, the two parcels at the SE corner of Paseo del Pueblo Sur and Los Pandos, and Kit Carson Park. Since the Town is a Certified Local Government, development in the historic district is governed by the preservation standards in the Town zoning code and is subject to review by the Town Historic Preservation Commission.

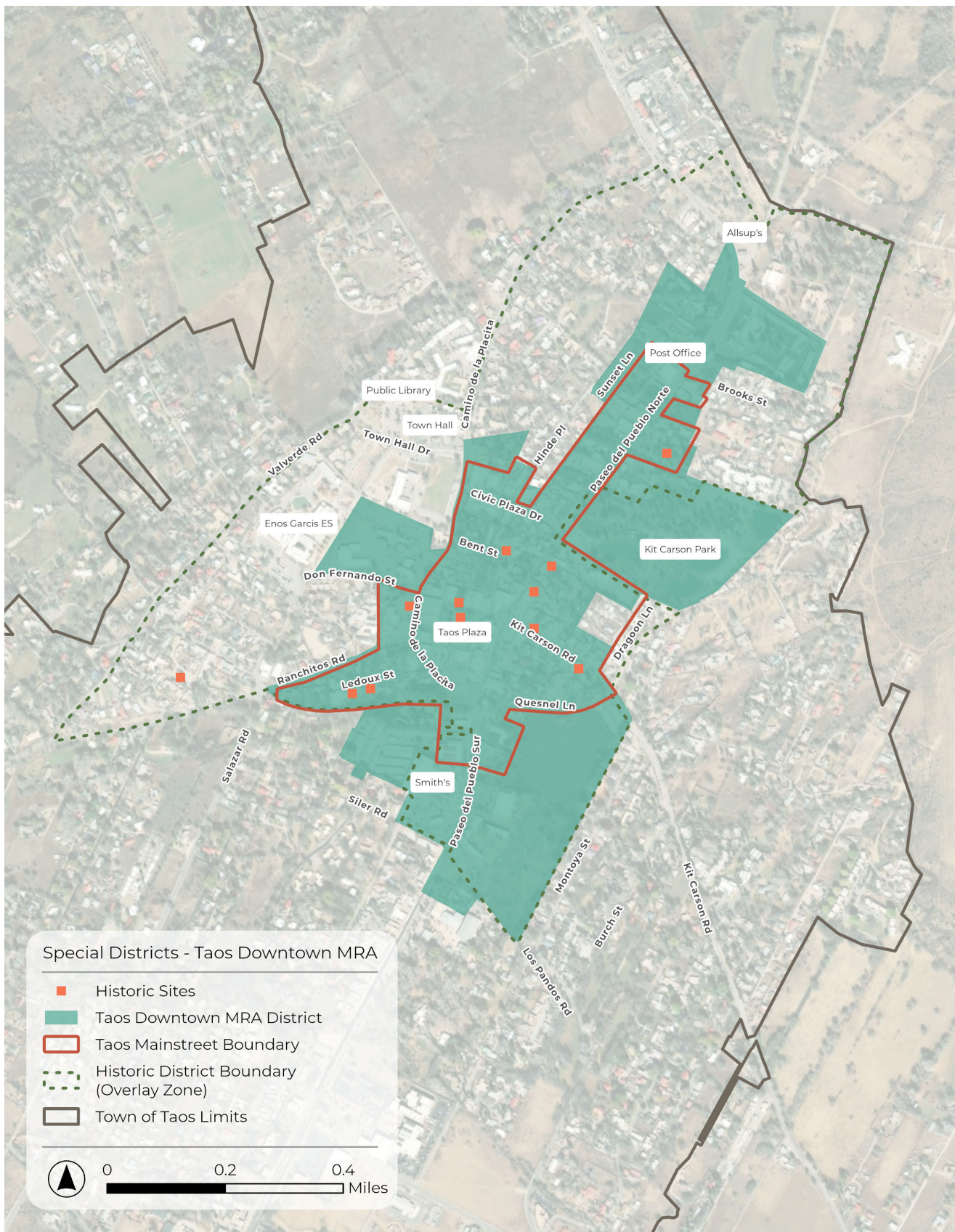


Figure 4. Special districts in downtown Taos.

ZONING

Current zoning districts in the Town of Taos were established in 2003 with Ordinance 03-07, under Town Code § 16.16. There are 9 zoning designations in the Taos MRA district:

- **ARO Agriculture, Recreation, Open Space, Flood Zone** - agricultural, ranching, recreation and open space uses.
- **RA Residential/Agriculture** - rural residential areas and small scale agricultural and/or ranching activity with low population densities, parcels no less than 3 acres.
- **C-1 Neighborhood Commercial** - neighborhood oriented, small scale commercial uses primarily to supply convenient goods and services to the residents of the neighborhood areas. Mixed use is encouraged.
- **C-2 General Commercial** - general commercial uses and services along streets carrying large volumes of traffic where a commercial use characteristically already exists. The primary purpose of the zone is to provide for sale of goods and services to residents, visitors, and tourists alike.
- **CBD Central Business District** - forms the community's center for commercial, historic, financial, professional, governmental, civic, religious, and cultural activities. Residential usage is allowed.
- **M-1 Light Manufacturing** - light manufacturing, processing, storage, warehousing, distribution, and commercial uses which do create smoke, gas, odor, dust, sound, vibration, soot or lighting to any degree.
- **R-4 Residential** - single-family and two-family residential areas where municipal water and wastewater services are supplied.
- **R-14 Multi-Family Residential** - multi-family dwelling units in essentially residential urban areas where municipal water and wastewater services are supplied. Mixed use is encouraged.
- **PUEBLO** – owned by Taos Pueblo.

The MRA district is centered around the Central Business District, with nearly half of the acreage zoned CBD (48%). This is followed by C-2 (17%) and ARO (12%). The northern part of the MRA district along Paseo del Pueblo Norte is zoned primarily C-2 with a small area of residential (R-14) along Sunset Ln. The Historic Core is zoned primarily CBD along with Kit Carson Park, which is zoned ARO and neighborhood commercial along Civic Plaza Dr., Quesnel Ln., and Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. The southern part of the district is comprised of CBD, manufacturing behind Smith's, and RA in the northern half of Couse Pasture. The two parcels zoned PUEBLO are at the corner of Paseo Sur and Camino de la Placita, along a steep slope. The areas immediately adjacent to the MRA district are primarily residential and neighborhood commercial, with some general commercial along Paseo del Pueblo.

Barriers to redevelopment

A review of the Taos Zoning and Land Use Code provided insight into potential barriers to redevelopment in downtown Taos due to existing zoning. These barriers were also detailed in Strong at Heart (2018). Barriers include:

- Building allowable height is low
- Parking space requirements are high
- Setback requirements are large
- Residential development is prohibited in the M1 zone
- Residential development requires conditional permission in the C1 and C2 zones
- Multifamily residential development is prohibited in the downtown zones

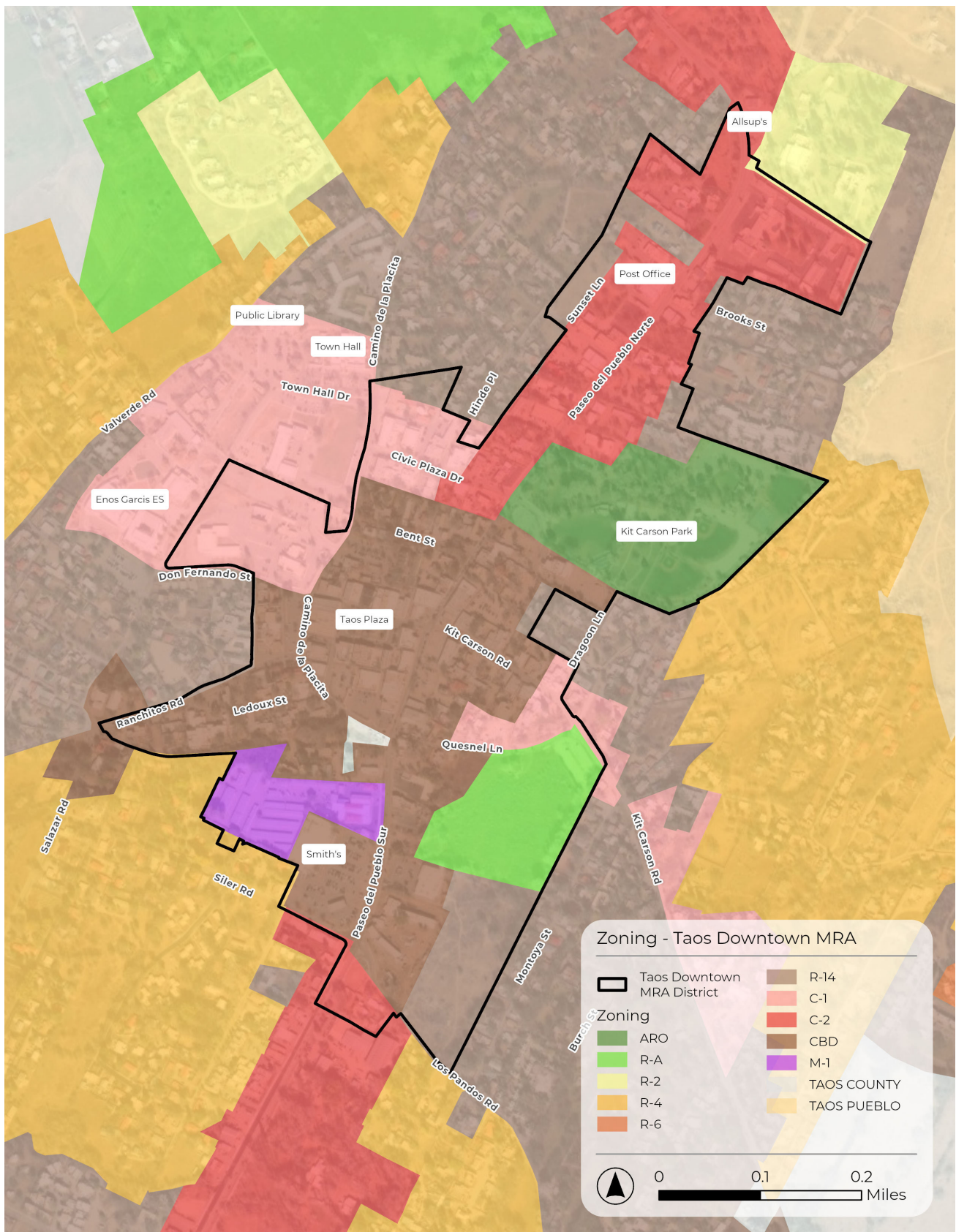


Figure 5. Zoning in downtown Taos.

LAND USE

Land development in the Town is guided by the Land Use Development Code (LUDC) Title 16 of Town Code which was last updated in 1999 (Ordinance 99-05). The code is enforced by the Town Planning Department as well as the Planning and Zoning Commission. The LUDC is a tool to regulate current and future development within the Town of Taos. It establishes zoning districts which are different character areas with various permissible uses and requirements for development. This includes anything from density of buildings to landscaping, building design, lighting, storm drainage, roadways, etc. The land use code impacts the character, livability, safety, and infrastructure of a space, resulting in both its aesthetic and functionality.

Land use in the MRA district is primarily commercial (45% of total acreage), vacant (20%), and park (15%). Other land uses includes hotel, church, public, residential, residential-multi, school, utility, semi-public, and right-of-way. The largest parcels in the MRA district include Kit Carson Park (land use: park), Couse Pasture (vacant), the old Kachina Lodge (hotel), and Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish (church), which impact the acreage

of these land use categories. The areas immediately adjacent to the MRA are mostly residential, as well as schools (Enos Garcia properties) and public (Town Hall and the Public Library).

The large number of vacant properties, many privately owned, was one element prompting the area's designation as an MRA district. With the MRA designation, the Town can provide guidance on vacant land use to private property owners and enter into public-private partnerships supporting the development of properties into housing, parks, open space, mixed-use development, or public spaces that benefit the community as a whole. Increasing housing development downtown is an option for creating an invested downtown population whose resources go back into the downtown economy and whose continual presence increases safety of the area.

The Town of Taos is in the process of updating their Land Use Development Code and has the opportunity to integrate recommendations from Strong at Heart.

Challenges and opportunities

20% of land in the MRA district are vacant properties.

Vacant properties:

- Contribute to low levels of commercial activity
- Can contribute to public health and safety hazards
- Can cause issues with pedestrian connectivity.
- Offer potential locations to expand housing options, parks, and/or community-serving businesses

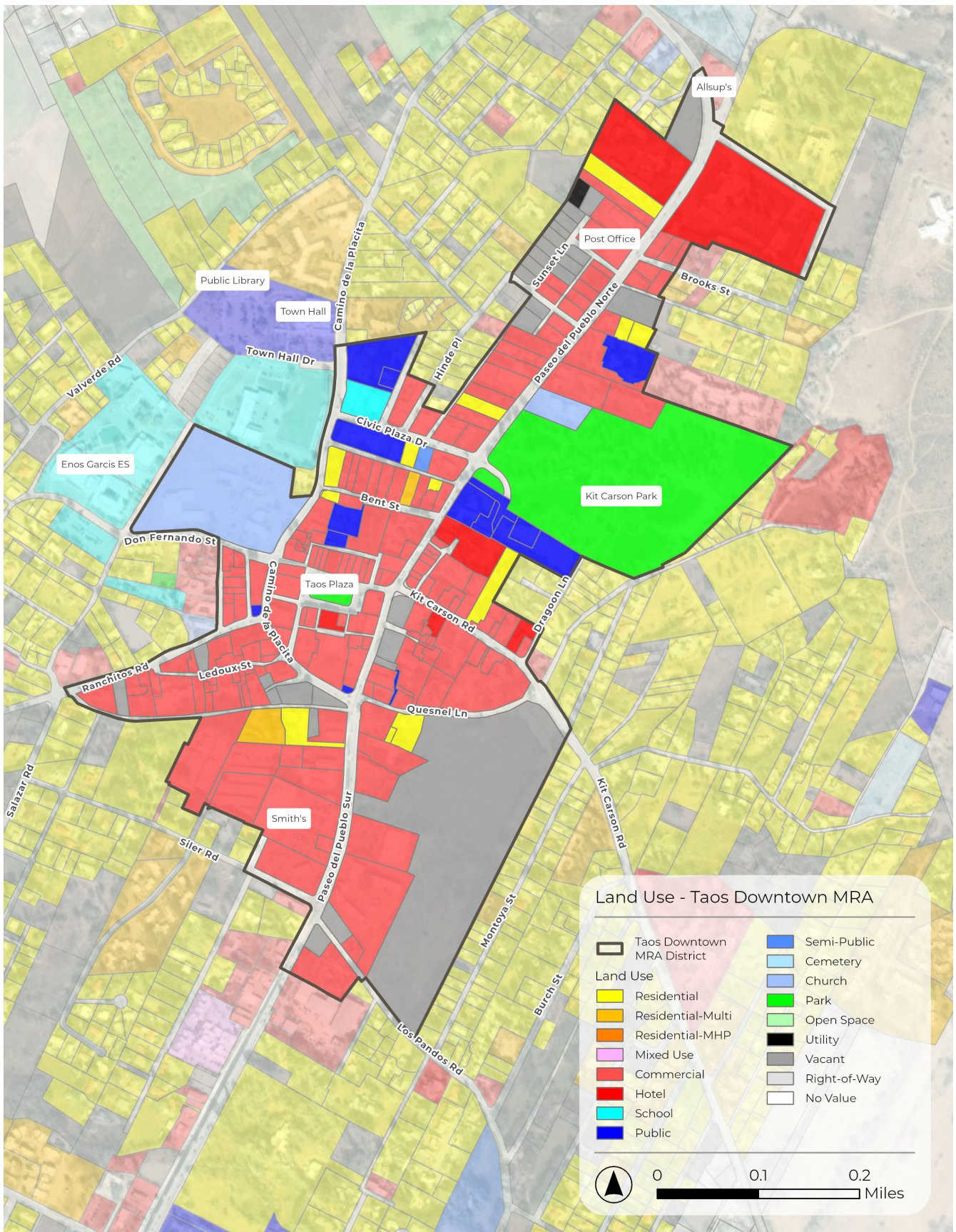


Figure 6. Land use in downtown Taos.

SPATIAL COMPOSITION

Figure-ground analysis provides information about the spatial composition of the town by contrasting buildings and the spaces around the buildings such as parking lots, streets, sidewalks, and yards. In particular, it can help to highlight areas within the MRA which have significant numbers of vacant or underutilized parcels.

Approximately 20% (0.05 sq miles) of the Taos Downtown MRA district is developed with buildings. Positive space, or built spaces, are in greatest concentration surrounding the plaza and then decreases to the south and north, where significant areas are dedicated to parking, property set-backs, and vacant properties. These open or vacant spatial uses registers in a figure ground map as negative space. There are

opportunities for infill development and connectivity improvements in these spaces, especially along Sunset Ln., Couse Pasture, around Kit Carson Park, and along Don Fernando St. Couse Pasture is an example of a property that could provide opportunities for mixed-used development such as housing, local businesses, and community gathering while still maintaining sizeable areas of public open space. Past plans have identified opportunities to concentrate parking in strategically located lots or garages which would allow for extraneous surface parking to be developed as quality spaces for people rather than cars.



Spatial Composition of the MRA

Figure ground analysis helped to identify:

- historic character of the streets and alleys surrounding the plaza
- significant area dedicated to parking, property set-backs, and vacant properties
- opportunities for infill development and connectivity improvements

Image showing large vacant lot in the Historic Core. Courtesy of GWS



Figure 7. Figure ground spatial analysis in downtown Taos.

CONNECTIVITY & TRANSPORTATION

TRAFFIC AND CONGESTION

Traffic through Taos travels north-south on Paseo del Pueblo, through the middle of the downtown MRA district. This includes through-traffic to Taos Ski Valley, Colorado, Santa Fe, Angel Fire, and other destinations, as well as semi-trucks. The main bypass around Taos for larger vehicles is US-285 approximately 20 miles west of Taos, on the west side of the Rio Grande Gorge.

Traffic counts show that Paseo del Pueblo is the busiest road in the MRA district, with approximately 14,000 vehicles per day. Because it is the main road through town, Paseo del Pueblo (NM-68 and US-64) can become severely congested, making it difficult for locals and visitors alike to drive in and around downtown. Past traffic studies explored the feasibility of developing bypass routes to reduce traffic volume downtown, but these have yet to be developed. Many stakeholders shared their support for a recommendation from the Taos Congestion Relief Study that would change Paseo del Pueblo and Camino de la Placita into one-way streets.

The MRA Plan does not provide special tools to address traffic congestion on Paseo del Pueblo but can support the development of a park-once district, a recommendation of the Strong at Heart Downtown Revitalization Report, which could encourage people to get out of their cars and walk between destinations thereby reducing the number of cars driving around looking for parking.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION

For the past several years, the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) has been working on major infrastructure improvements on Paseo del Pueblo. Construction began in March 2020 and is projected to be completed in 2025 but is taking more time than expected. This construction project is meant to correct physical and geometric deficiencies, reduce congestion, and improve pedestrian access, safety, and mobility. Many survey participants expressed concerns about the impacts of ongoing road construction on traffic congestion and challenges accessing small businesses downtown. Taos MainStreet is currently working with NM MainStreet and the NMDOT to improve communication about the project and mitigate the harmful impacts of construction.

ROAD OWNERSHIP

Major roads in the Taos Downtown MRA District are primarily owned and operated by the NM Department of Transportation (NMDOT) including Paseo del Pueblo Norte (north of the intersection with Kit Carson Rd., US-64), Paseo del Pueblo Sur (south of the intersection with Kit Carson Rd., NM-68), Kit Carson Rd. (US-64), and Ranchitos Rd. (NM-240). This limits the ability of the Town to pursue infrastructure improvements along these roadways. The Town of Taos owns and maintains all other roads downtown. Many of the town-owned roads are smaller and because of their low traffic and walkable feel, opportunities to develop pedestrian-focused or festival streets have been identified in past plans. Already, there are occasional event closures to vehicular traffic on some of these streets, such as for Bonfires on Bent and Lighting of Ledoux. This allows pedestrians to freely use the street for activities, markets, and food vending. Community input from in-person engagement events and the Taos MRA survey indicates some community interest in car-free zones and a car-free plaza, in particular.

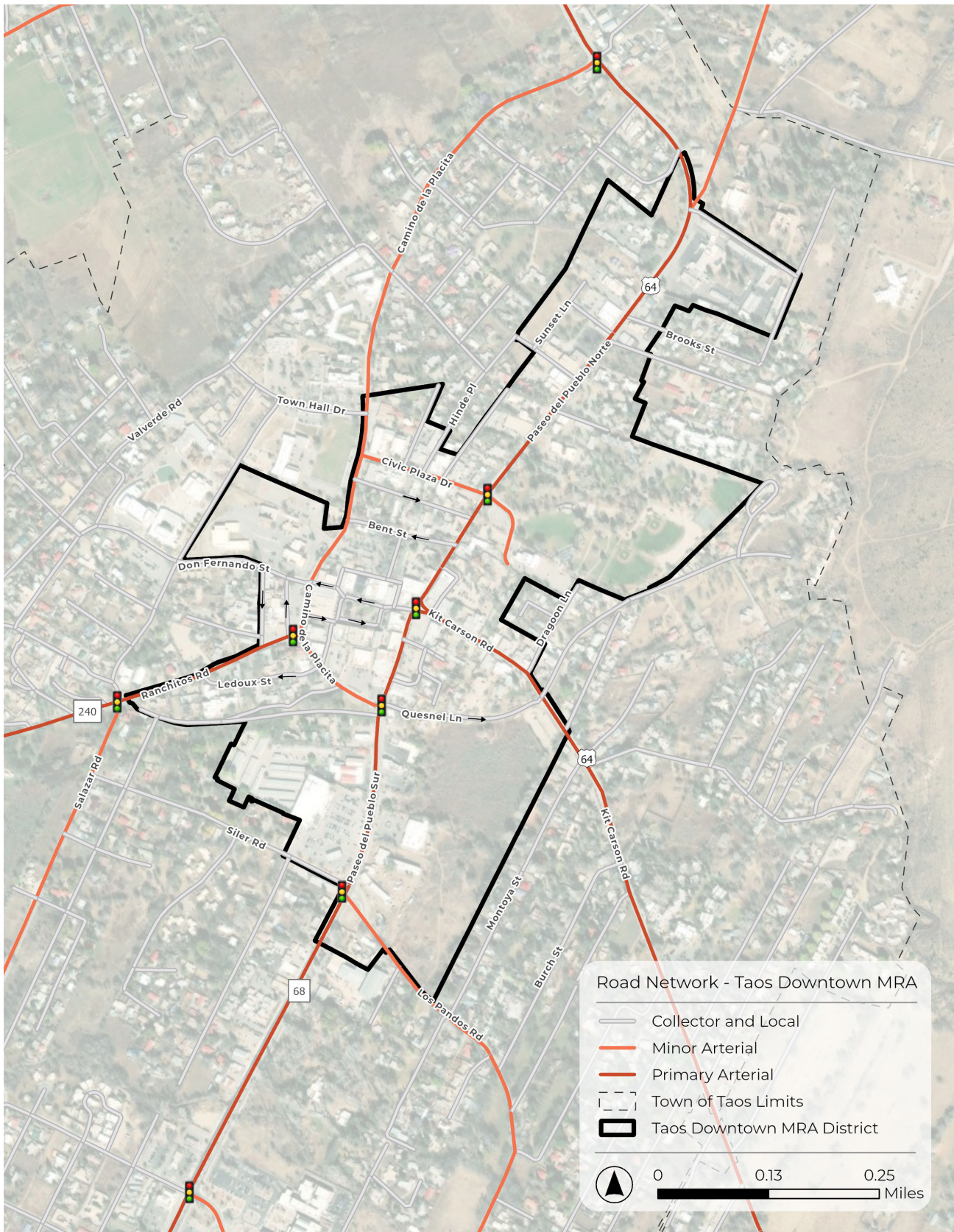


Figure 8. Road network in downtown Taos.

ROAD CONDITIONS & MAINTENANCE CHALLENGES

Due to the high volume of vehicles on both NMDOT and Town owned roads, the amount of maintenance required often exceeds operational capacity. Snow and ice removal is one of the largest road maintenance concerns because it impacts both vehicles and pedestrians. Community members expressed concern regarding snow removal, as plows often push snow onto adjacent sidewalks, limiting pedestrian access. The maintenance of sidewalks is the responsibility of individual property owners and which creates a burden for individual property owners and businesses.

“More square footage [along Camino de la Placita] today is devoted to surface parking and vacant lots than to buildings, parks, or usable public space.” - Strong at Heart, pg 22.

PARKING

The parking available in the MRA district includes metered public lots, free public lots, metered street parking, and private lots. Community members expressed the sentiment that downtown Taos needs more parking because spots directly in front of destinations can be difficult to find during major events and busy seasons. Many shop owners believe that having parking adjacent to their business is important to ensure visitation. SAH argues that there are sufficient parking spaces, just not in the right locations. The SAH process included a preliminary parking study to develop a rough estimate of spaces in key parking lots. The study concluded that within a couple blocks of the Plaza there are roughly 15 parking lots which contain approximately 825, if not more, parking spaces (SAH, p. 38).

SAH recommends that the Town conduct a more comprehensive study to understand the number of parking spaces currently available throughout the downtown. As it stands, surface parking lots can utilize valuable space that might otherwise go to housing, parks and public spaces, or businesses. A strategically located parking garage could encourage the concentration of parking within an easy walking distance of most of the downtown destinations, thus encouraging people to park once and walk, increasing foot traffic for businesses and the liveliness of the streets.



Images: above, a rough inventory shows the high amounts of parking already available in the Historic Core. Concentrating parking in areas of high demand could free up space for more community-forward uses. Below, a rendering of a parking garage near the Historic Plaza shows how a parking facility could be stylized to fit the historic context, and even wrapped with small businesses frontage to create more street life and social activity.



Map and rendering from Strong at Heart report, pg 22.

WALKABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Despite being the most walkable part of Taos, the downtown can be an unwelcoming environment for pedestrians. Barriers to walkability and accessibility include:

- Narrow and missing sidewalks that contain tripping hazards
- Dangerous and insufficient street crossings
- Limited and inadequate lighting
- Noisy trucks on Paseo del Pueblo
- Excessive vehicle speeds

Due to these impediments to walking and non-motorized forms of transportation, it is common for locals to drive from one end of downtown to another instead of walking, despite relatively short distances between most destinations. Improving walkability and pedestrian conditions in downtown Taos has been a focus of many past planning efforts. SAH identified improvements to street life and walkability as a top goal for the downtown. Improving connectivity and making downtown safer for pedestrians supports the development of complete neighborhoods with increased walkability, which the Town set as a priority in the 2022 Comprehensive Plan.

Taos MainStreet conducted an Alleyway Network Analysis in 2021, examining and mapping the downtown network of alleyways, side streets, and parking lots that provide walking connections between the plaza and other community hubs (figure 8). The subsequent report identified opportunities to improve priority alleyways to increase connectivity and street life. In 2023, Taos MainStreet and the Town of Taos began work on the Taos Wayfinding Plan to improve wayfinding in downtown. This includes incorporation of traditional vehicular signage, smaller pedestrian signage, maps, and creative wayfinding such as sidewalk paint or murals.

The MRA plan can build momentum and support implementation of the projects identified in SAH, the Alleyway Analysis and the Wayfinding Plan.



Narrow and deteriorating sidewalk in the MRA District. Courtesy of Jim O'Donnell

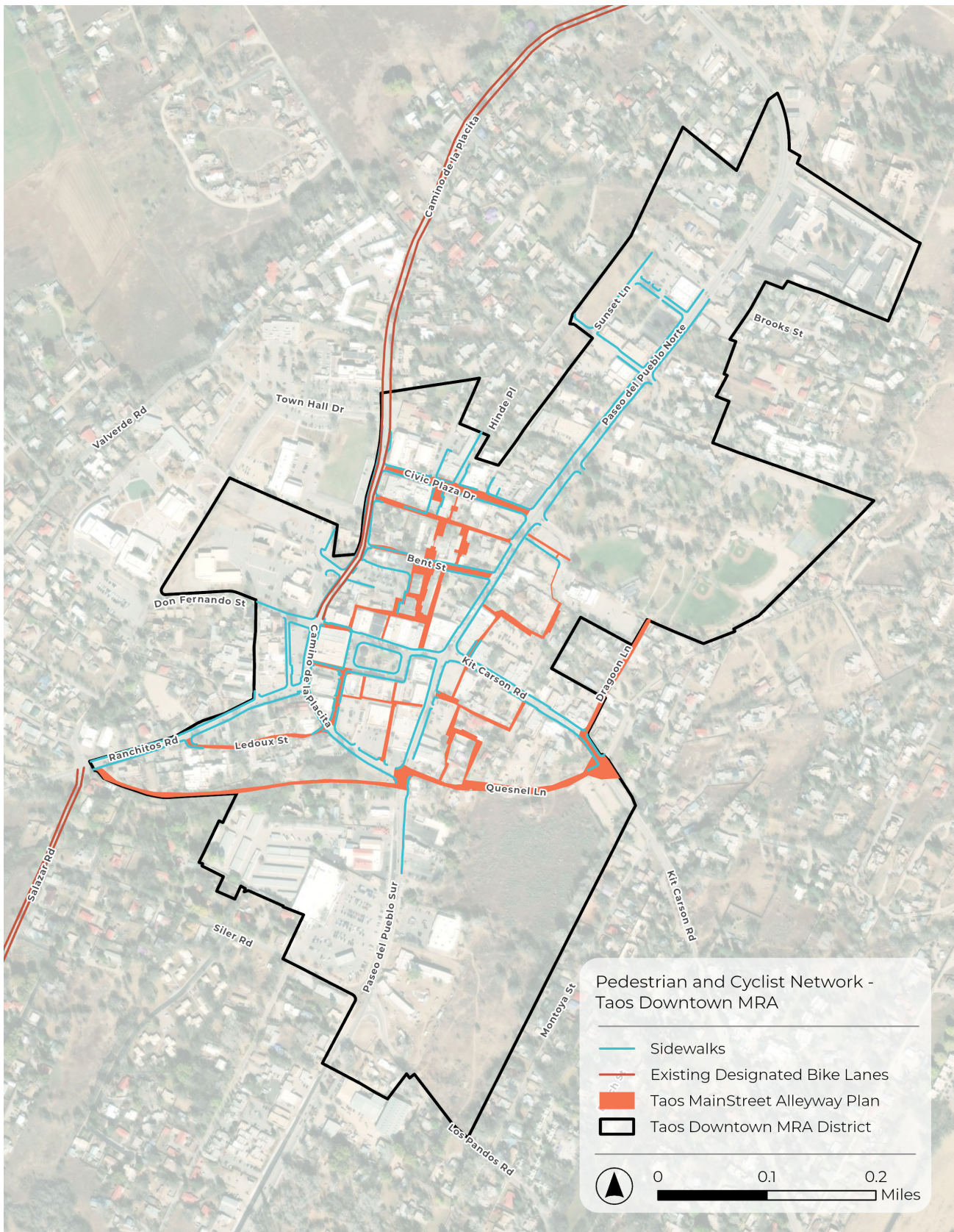


Figure 9. Pedestrian and cyclist network in downtown Taos.

BICYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

There is one dedicated bicycle lane in the Taos Downtown MRA district, from North Plaza to Paseo del Pueblo Norte along Camino de la Placita. Another bike lane runs adjacent to the district along Salazar Rd. Both bike lanes are unprotected and share the road with vehicles, as opposed to being separated from traffic. During engagement events and in the survey, community members expressed feeling unsafe bicycling downtown because of fast-moving vehicles and the lack of protected bike lanes. Additionally, there are few bike racks or other infrastructure to support bicycling downtown.

Many Taos residents would like to see improvements to the bicycle infrastructure connecting downtown with other parts of the community. The Taos Bicycle Master Plan identifies several streets around downtown and a network of potential trails that could improve biking connectivity and safety. Opportunities to expand bike infrastructure are constrained due to narrow streets and sidewalks and limited right of way. In many areas, the Town would need to acquire easements to make more room for bike lanes.

Survey respondents indicated that:

- Bike lanes are likely not a good fit for many downtown roads
- Improving pedestrian infrastructure is a greater priority for the historic core at present.

It will be important to evaluate where bike lanes are appropriate as roads are scheduled for restriping, reconstruction, or other improvements. The MRA Plan can help encourage and incentivize the inclusion of bike infrastructure in redevelopment projects.



Many important destinations in the MRA lack bike lane connectivity and are not easily or safely accessed by bike Source: Taos News

WATER RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Downtown Taos historically had several small rivers flowing through it, which were diverted hundreds of years ago with the colonization of Taos by Europeans. After diversion, the rivers were channeled into acequias to deliver water to agricultural fields within the valley. While acequia irrigation is still commonly used in Taos, there are only a few active acequias in the MRA district. The Acequia Madre del Pueblo diverts water from the Rio Pueblo de Taos, along the Town and Pueblo boundaries. The Kit Carson Lateral flows from the Acequia Madre, bringing water through the park for field irrigation. Any excess water runs in the acequia along Dagoon Ln., under Kit Carson Rd., into Couse Pasture.

The historic acequias through downtown brought water down Paseo del Pueblo Norte, Civic Plaza Dr., Bent St., and through the Plaza down Ledoux St. These acequias have been built over and no longer carry water. Water is now supplied to landscaping through Town water infrastructure, including to the Plaza and Kit Carson Park when it does not have flood irrigation.

Restoring historic acequias downtown is a community priority that has been identified in various past plans as well as during community engagement for the MRA Plan. Restoring and interpreting acequias is a powerful way to preserve and celebrate Taos' history and culture. The local community art organization Paseo Project has begun work on this through art installations that tell the story of acequias. Taos Center for the Arts is currently working to highlight the old acequia along Paseo del Pueblo Norte in their campus redesign.

Community concerns about water use and conservation are exacerbated by the impact of development and climate change. The State of New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission conducts periodic regional water planning to set goals for water supply and demand. The most recent plan for Region 7 - Taos County was completed in 2016 and includes implementation strategies to meet future water demand. The main priorities include better understanding of groundwater supply and availability in the County, protecting water resources from wildfire impacts, restoring headwaters and wetlands, and protecting acequia water rights.



Acequia flowing through Kit Carson Park. Courtesy of GWS.

PARKS & PUBLIC SPACES

TAOS PLAZA

The Taos Plaza is a central public square surrounded on all sides by two-story businesses. Originally operated as a trading center, the Plaza, in its various forms and locations, has always been the heart of community and business in Taos. Everyone agrees the Plaza is a vital place for community to come together and socialize. At present, events held in the Plaza include: Taos Plaza Live, Yultide Events, Fiestas, car shows, markets, and Halloween events.

In 2015, a Cultural Landscape Report was written on the history, design, and use of Taos Plaza. The Old County Courthouse and the center of the Plaza are owned by Taos County while the other buildings are individually privately owned. Currently, vehicles are allowed in the Plaza although there is debate on whether it should be partially or entirely closed off to cars. There are three inlets and outlets for cars leading to an interior road and approximately 70 parking spaces on the Plaza itself (Strong at Heart, 2018, p. 38). The center of the Plaza, although lacking amenities such as benches, is used by locals and visitors for strolling, resting, and events.

Because the Plaza is integral to the community, there is debate on how it should be used and managed – what businesses should be on the Plaza, how the Plaza center should be designed, and who should have priority for use. Stewardship and activation of the plaza are essential to bringing life back to the heart of the community.

KIT CARSON PARK

Kit Carson Park, located in the heart of downtown, is the main town park. It is owned and maintained by the Town of Taos. The park is 20.2 acres inclusive of a playground, grass fields, ballfields, a historic cemetery, historic acequias, and walking trails. The Town of Taos Parks and Recreation Master Plan was created in 2018 and includes the Kit Carson Park Master Plan. This plan outlines the existing conditions and plans for the park. Plans include enhanced recreation and access, highlighting historic features, and activity programming. At present, events held in the park include: Movies on the Green, sports events, PASEO art festival, and concerts.



Las Fiestas in Taos Plaza. Source: GWS.



Lions Club Carousel in Kit Carson Park. Source: GWS.

BUILDING AND SITE CONDITIONS

Architecture in downtown Taos is primarily of the unique and beloved Pueblo Revival style. Many of the buildings are not adobe, instead emulating the adobe aesthetic with stucco and concrete. Many of the buildings are quite old, (some walls in town date back as early as 1700s); others were constructed as recently as the early 2000s. There are many buildings in general disrepair with crumbling or deteriorating facades, broken/boarded windows, structural damage, deferred maintenance, or other dilapidation. Many of these properties are fenced, with large setbacks and parking lots that grow weeds and collect litter.

Throughout the area, commercial buildings need repair, rehabilitation, and in some cases, removal. Additionally, existing buildings may include inadequate floorplans or internal issues such as outdated electrical, telecommunications, and equipment that limits their commercial viability as attractive spaces for new tenants. Rehabilitation of buildings may involve costly upgrades that current owners may not be ready or able to invest in.

The poor condition of area buildings contributes to ongoing, low levels of commercial activity and creates a disincentive to new private investment. Business owners have expressed both the need for building maintenance and the unwillingness or inability of property owners to make needed upgrades. Some of these upgrades can be especially costly due to the age of buildings and infrastructure, and difficulty or repairs can be compounded by historic preservation requirements.

VACANT BUILDINGS

While the number of vacant buildings can change frequently, there were approximately 25 vacant commercial properties in the MRA district as of January 2024 when the MRA boundary was updated. Many of these buildings are owned by out-of-state property owners who have not performed maintenance on the buildings in years. They are sometimes inhabited by

people or animals, in their vacant state. Repairs to these buildings can cost millions of dollars so developers are often cautious about taking on undue risk and cost. The MRA can help lower the costs to revitalize these buildings.

PUBLICLY OWNED BUILDINGS

The MRA includes approximately 20 publicly owned properties (owned by the Town of Taos or Taos County) that could be reimagined for greater public benefit: the Fire Department, municipal buildings on Civic Plaza Dr, the Taos Center for the Arts campus, Kit Carson Park, the Harwood Museum, the center of Taos Plaza, the former US Bank, the Old County Courthouse, and public parking lots.





COMMUNITY PROFILE & MARKET ANALYSIS

This community profile and market analysis builds a foundation for the place-based strategies identified in the MRA plan by highlighting the changes and challenges facing the communities of Taos and Taos County.

The Town of Taos, located in north-central New Mexico, is approximately 70 miles north of Santa Fe and 50 miles south of the Colorado border. As the seat of Taos County and the largest community in the Enchanted Circle region, the Town is a regional hub for retail, services, healthcare, and governance. As of the 2020 Census there were 6,522 people residing in the town and 34,489 in Taos County. The county and wider Enchanted Circle populations are important for understanding the number of people who utilize services in Taos.

The Town is situated in the Taos Valley, at the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the east and the Rio Grande Gorge to the west. Adjacent to Taos Pueblo, a National Historic Landmark and UNESCO World Heritage Centre continuously inhabited for over 1,000 years, the Town has long been a tourist destination, attracting visitors from around the country with its unique natural and cultural heritage.

The tourist draw of Taos is both a boon and a challenge for residents of the Town, the valley, and the Pueblo. The MRA plan can help balance the Town's offerings for short-term visitors with amenities and services that meet long-term residents' needs.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Steady growth in the town and county populations, employment, and tourist economies masks growing inequity in Taos. Changing demographics led by an in-migration of wealthier retirees and 2nd householders paired with a steady decline in job earnings have led to increased concentration of wealth and poverty throughout the county. Many youths from the community move away from Taos due to the lack of housing and employment opportunities. Downtown Taos, as the heart of the County seat, has potential to positively impact Taos County and beyond with job creation, services, and amenities.

POPULATION

Both the Town and county populations have increased steadily since the 1940s. The town grew from approximately **965** people in 1940 to **6,472** in 2020. The 2022 Comprehensive Plan indicates that over the next 20 years the town is likely to continue to grow by approximately 1,100 people. Both the town and county have become popular destinations for outdoor recreation enthusiasts and retirees to settle, but the microcosm of the MRA boundary appears to be slightly out of

step with this trend, having lost an estimated 8 people from 2020 to 2023 (ESRI Business Analyst, 2023). Notably, there are forty-two (42) short-term rentals in historic downtown Taos which could contribute to a lower number of permanent residents within the MRA boundary. Community members have indicated that this declining population is a challenge for maintaining vibrancy and vitality downtown.

AGE

As with many rural and semi-rural places, Taos' population is aging. The population of children, youth, and young adults has decreased due to declining birth rates and the out-migration of college and working-aged young adults. These population losses are offset by growing populations of working-age adults and retirees. In 2020, 30% of the Town population was over 65 years old, and the largest age bracket for both male and females was 70-74 years old. The aging demographics

of the town indicate that supportive living situations for adults aging in place, such as intergenerational housing and assisted living facilities, will be increasingly in demand in Taos. The demographics of the Town also suggest a need for more housing and employment opportunities to retain youth.

RACE & ETHNICITY

Race and ethnicity data, in addition to other economic and housing data, helps with evaluating whether programs and policies could disproportionately impact specific communities in Taos. Taoseños have expressed concern over the disproportionate impacts

that downtown redevelopment could have on different communities. Taos is 3.7% Native American or Native Alaskan, 48.2% Hispanic or Latino, 45.4% White/Caucasian, 10.8% two or more races, and .4% African American.

Total Population	MRA District	Town of Taos	Taos County
2023 Population, Total	273	6742	34802
2020 Population, Total	281	6522	34489
2010 Population, Total	258	6058	32937
<i>Data from 2020 U.S. Census</i>			

Age	MRA District	Town of Taos	Taos County
2020 % Over 65 years old	30%	30%	27%
2020 % Under 21 years old	18%	20%	20.50%
2020 Median Age	52.1	50.4	50
<i>Data from 2020 U.S. Census</i>			

**A note on data: Due to the relatively small size of downtown Taos, there is not statistically reliable census data for the MRA district boundary. For this plan, a demographic profile was developed using Census and American Community Survey (ACS) data for the County and Town of Taos compared with ESRI Business Analyst estimates for the MRA district. Where appropriate, demographics within the MRA boundaries were compared with the Town of Taos and Taos County to understand if trends in the MRA district are reflective of the larger community.*



QUALITY OF LIFE

Past and current planning processes highlight quality of life factors that are important to Taos residents. Overall, Taoseños value living in a rural community with a slower pace of life and a small-town feel. They take pride in the town’s unique history and culture and feel deeply tied to the land and the natural beauty of the high desert. Amongst residents, there is growing concern that the qualities of life that make Taos enjoyable are at risk of disappearing; this motivates a strong desire to protect and steward natural and cultural resources.

The powerful refrain “Keep Taos for Taoseños,” has emerged as a motto that speaks to the desire for improved quality of life for generational residents of Taos, and the belief that making Taos a vibrant, thriving, and inclusive place to live does not preclude it from being an excellent destination for visitors.

EMPLOYMENT & OCCUPATIONS

Unemployment in Taos is relatively high at 6.5% compared to 3.8% in NM and 4% nationally. The largest employment categories by industry in Taos are services, construction, and retail trade. The industry sectors with the greatest employment growth over the past 15

years are relatively low-paying, such as farming; arts and entertainment; recreation; and educational services (Headwaters Economics, 2018). Many service industry positions are tourism-related and seasonal.

	MRA District	Town of Taos	Taos County
2023 Civilian Population 16+ in the Labor Force	109	2,832	14,782
2023 Population 16+ Employed	89%	93.5%	93.7%
2023 Population 16+ Unemployed	10.2%	6.5%	6.3%
2023 Employed Population 16+ by Industry	97	2,648	13,850
Employment by Industry			
Services	59.8%	54.5%	49.3%
Construction	8.2%	17.4%	14.3%
Retail Trade	12.4%	14.4%	13.6%
Public Administration	9.3%	4%	8.2%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	4.1%	2.5%	6.1%
Manufacturing	1%	2.3%	1.7%
Agriculture/Mining	3.1%	2%	2%
Transportation/Utilities	3.1%	1.4%	1.8%
Information	1%	1.3%	1.9%
Wholesale Trade	0%	0.2%	1.1%
<i>Data from 2020 U.S. Census</i>			

INCOME & POVERTY

In 2020, the Town median household income was \$46,170 compared with \$49,481 in Taos County and \$59,726 in the state of NM. Lower median income levels can indicate that households may struggle with meeting basic living needs and likely do not have extra income to maintain or improve their properties.

As shown through household income distribution for the MRA, Town, and County household income is disproportionately concentrated in the lower income brackets. A significant portion of Taos residents (19.6%) earn below \$15,000. In 2022, the Town poverty rate was 16.3% higher than the County rate of 14.9%.

Service positions, which make up approximately 21% of jobs in Taos, are often seasonal or low-paying work with limited opportunities for advancement. As the cost of living in Taos increases, “many residents depend on a patchwork of part-time jobs, subsistence, and bartering to make ends meet.” (Headwaters Economics, 2018).

Household Income Distribution			
Income	MRA District	Town of Taos	Taos County
<\$15,000	21.8%	19.6%	15.6%
\$25,000	10.9%	12.7%	11.8%
\$35,000	6.7%	7.3%	7.7%
\$50,000	12.6%	10.6%	12.5%
\$75,000	17.6%	17.9%	18.1%
\$100,000	19.2%	7.3%	8.5%
\$150,000	12.6%	10.5%	13.5%
\$200,000	4.2%	6.1%	5.8%
>\$200,000	5%	7.8%	6.3%
<i>ESRI Business Analyst Community Summary, ACS 2021</i>			

HOUSEHOLDS

As of 2020 there were an estimated 3,178 households in the Town of Taos, with an average household size of 1.99 people. The median age of these households falls between 40 and 54; many of them are outdoor enthusiasts, and many identify as white and single and

or white and married (Esri Tapestry Segmentation, 2023). As of 2020 there were an estimated 15,747 households in the County, and an average household size of 2.17.

Households	MRA District	Town of Taos	Taos County
Households, Total	114	3178	15747
Average Household Size	2.43	1.99	2.17
% Family Households	50%	50%	56%
% Non-Family Households	50%	50%	44%
% of Non-Family Households Living Alone	81%	84%	83%
Median Annual Household Income	\$41,757	\$46,170	\$49,481
<i>Data from 2020 U.S. Census</i>			

HOUSING AND COST OF LIVING

In 2020, there were 3,825 housing units in the town. 83% of these were occupied and 17% vacant. 52% of the vacant houses were “seasonal or occasional use”. Of the occupied housing units, there is almost an even split of owned vs. rented (1600 units vs 1578 units). The town and county have both seen increased demand for 2nd Homes (seasonal, recreational, or occasional use) and short-term rentals (STRs) which impacts housing availability and has the potential to push out renters and critical members of the workforce.

According to the Town of Taos Affordable Housing Plan, the mismatch between incomes and housing costs in the Town of Taos is, “the most extreme in the state” (Taos Affordable Housing Plan 2020.Pdf, 2020, p. 3) The median rent (including utilities) reported from 2018-2022 was \$953/month and the monthly owner cost for homes with a mortgage was \$1,552. The mismatch between wages and housing costs means

that there is an increasingly limited supply of housing at prices affordable to residents. The Taos Affordable Housing Plan indicates that there are only “five low-rent properties in the Town of Taos, with a total of 118 units and a wait list of 146. Sites in Peñasco and Questa only have 24 and 27 units respectively and each has a waiting list higher than the total number of units available.” (p. 44)

Lack of affordable workforce housing poses significant challenges to the town and county’s economic potential and has impacted the availability and retention of the workforce in Taos. Downtown has become increasingly unaffordable over the past decade, particularly for renters, and there are growing concerns over displacement of long-time lower-income residents. Creating living-wage jobs and workforce housing will be essential to developing a more livable community.

	MRA District	Town of Taos	Taos County
Median Annual Household Income	\$41,757	\$46,170	\$49,481
Housing Units, Total	170	3825	20904
% Vacant	19%	17%	25%
% Occupied	81%	83%	75%
# Owner Occupied	38%	42%	54%
# Renter Occupied	29%	41%	21%
Median Monthly Owner Costs, with Mortgage		\$1,552	
Median Monthly Owner Costs, without Mortgage		\$437	
Median Monthly Rental Costs, with utilities (2021)	\$875	\$905	\$927
<i>Data from 2020 U.S. Census</i>			

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND SECURITY

A significant number of survey respondents indicated that they feel unsafe in downtown Taos. Perceptions of a lack of safety can stem from the built environment, narratives of danger and perceived danger, and personal experience. There are concerns amongst property and business owners in the Town about property destruction, vandalism, hazardous material dumping, and camping in public spaces (Easley, 2024). The 2023 ESRI Crime Index designated the Town of Taos' total crime index as 207, which is high compared to the base index of 100; Taos County had a 2023 Crime Index of 139, also higher than the base index of 100. When referencing the crime index, it is important to understand that the Crime Index is not a catalogue of committed crimes but a predictive tool, an "indication of the relative risk of a crime occurring," "(...) measured against the overall risk at a national level." (Source: Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028. Applied Geographic Solutions).

Sidewalk and roadway conditions, such as insufficient pedestrian infrastructure, fast-moving vehicles, and prevalent vehicle collisions, can also lead to perceptions of lack of safety and result in injury and death. The 2021 Taos Community Report indicates that in 2021 there were 193 car crashes in Taos, ten (10) of which involved alcohol, and one of which was fatal. This number is lower than crashes documented between 2012-2020, but it is higher than the number of crashes that took place in 2021 in New Mexico municipalities of similar size to Taos, except for Ruidoso, whose population is larger.

	2020 Population	2021 Overall Crashes	Fatal	Injury	Property Damage Only
Taos	6522	193	1	37	155
Ruidoso	7,901	206	0	41	165
Aztec	6,369	113	1	19	93
Zuni	6,176	23	1	3	19
Truth or Consequences	6,052	66	1	22	43
<i>Data from NMDOT Table 103: Severity of Crashes and Severity of Injury in Crashes by City, 2021</i>					

Some ways that the MRA can contribute to improved safety and perceptions of safety include infrastructure improvements that increase separation of vehicles from pedestrians and cyclists (space allowing); sidewalk repairs; façade improvements; lighting installation; alleyway, street, plaza, and open space activation; investments in spaces to make them places for people; increased housing downtown, and general street connectivity to improve street life and make it safer for pedestrians. In short, the MRA can assist with revitalization that brings more people into the downtown and contributes to an environment that both puts people at ease and discourages anti-social and dangerous behavior.

LOCAL ECONOMY

The economy of Taos County has traditionally been driven by agriculture and tourism. Tourism became a driving force in Taos as early as the 1880s, with the advent of the railroads and the ability of prosperous East Coasters to travel for pleasure (New Mexico Tells New Mexico History | History: Tourism, n.d.). Today, the largest industry sectors are retail, healthcare, hospitality, and education. The arts, one of the reasons tourists first set out for Taos, have had a strong presence in the Town and County since prior to colonization but were one of the economic sectors most impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic (AEP6, 2023). Due to Taos' distance from major federal highways and its limited airline access, there are significant challenges recruiting location-dependent businesses.

The Taos Community Economic Development Strategic Plan (2011) indicated that community economic development activities in Taos should:

- Foster a supportive environment for the creative economy and entrepreneurial development
- Focus on quality-of-life improvements which might attract “location neutral” businesses that can be operated anywhere
- Emphasize growth and retention of local businesses and invest in businesses that residents of varying incomes can afford and want to patronize



COURTESY OF GROUNDWORK STUDIO

TOURISM

Since the 1880s, Taos has been a tourist destination, attracting visitors from around the world. Tourism has become a primary driver of Taos' economy. The 2023 Destination Stewardship Plan (DSP): Situation Analysis Report, 2023 indicates that visitors spent over \$278.1 million in Taos County in 2021 and that direct visitor spending sustained 26% of jobs.

Jobs in travel and tourism have made up nearly 40 percent of the total jobs in Taos County during the past two decades (Headwaters Economics, 2018). Previous plans and planning processes such as The Strong at Heart Downtown Strategy, the Taos Affordable Housing Plan, and the Destination Stewardship planning processes identified that while tourism has generated many jobs, most of the positions are low-wage and seasonal and that earnings are not keeping pace with increases in the cost of living.

While majority of Taoseños agree on the significance of tourism to the local economy, many believe that tourism negatively impacts their quality of life. The DSP Resident Tourism Sentiment Survey indicated that in addition to affordability challenges particularly in the housing market, many residents believe that tourism does not help to protect local culture. Respondents to the MRA Plan community survey shared that the heart of their community — the historic district— caters predominantly to tourists, and that this preoccupation with serving tourists impacts the focus of retail stores, decreases affordability of goods, and leads to an unwelcoming environment for residents.

Tourism will continue to play a significant role in the Taos economy and with effective planning, there is opportunity for it to contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future.



ACCOMODATIONS AND LODGER'S TAX

A Lodger's Tax Ordinance was adopted by the Town in 1996 and went through several revisions. Although the Lodger's Tax was enforced, the Town struggled to collect it from short-term rentals. In the years leading up to 2020, New Mexico's tourism rates skyrocketed (Plant, 2023). In 2020 a state law responded to the influx of tourists with the mandate that short term rentals (STRs) and other lodging facilities pay a Lodgers' Tax and Gross Receipts Tax of 5.125% to 8.6875% of the listed price (Harper, 2024; Plant 2023). State regulation ensures that short term rentals pay a similar tax to other lodging facilities and contribute to the economies of the communities they impact. The Taos news reported in May 2023 that Taos County has a 5% tax rate which contributes over one million dollars a year to the county revenue, far more than was collected in the years prior to the state law (Plant, 2023).

Currently the Town cap of 129 STRs is higher than the number of registered units town-wide, which is 81. The current short-term rental ordinance does not allow new STRs in the historic district. Within the historic overlay currently, there are 42 short-term rentals that were licensed before the ordinance – many of them small condos along Padre Martinez Lane. If STRs in the historic overlay lose their permit under the current ordinance and council, they cannot get it back. There are also a number of illegal or unpermitted STRs in the Town. When the Town identifies unpermitted STRs, a cease and desist letter is sent and then a fine is imposed.

ACCOMODATIONS IN TAOS		
Lodging	Taos MRA, 2024	Town of Taos, 2024
STRs	42	81
Hotels, motels, Inns, B&Bs	8 (1 vacant, 1 under restoration)	86
<i>Data from Town of Taos and Taos Mainstreet</i>		



COURTESY OF GROUNDWORK STUDIO

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

There are approximately 235-245 businesses downtown (Taos MainStreet) that employ over 1,900 people (ArcGIS Business Analyst). The greatest concentration of retail establishments in the county are located within the MRA district and the top business categories within the MRA Boundary are retail trade and services. Most of the shops downtown are classified as art galleries; crafts, souvenirs, and homeware; or health and wellness. The most populous establishments after retail and services are government; eating and drinking; and finance, insurance, and real estate businesses. According to ESRI Business Analyst, eating and drinking

establishments within the MRA, an approximately .27 square mile area, are composed of three (3) bakeries, three (3) bars and pubs, three (3) coffee shops, and 21 restaurants; these stats approximately align with Taos MainStreet's record of downtown businesses categorized as restaurants. The bulk of eating and drinking establishments are in or towards the Western half of the MRA, with many along Paseo Del Pueblo Norte, Paseo Del Pueblo Sur, and Bent Street.

DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES	
Business Category	Quantity
Retail	88
Art Galleries and Studios	49
Restaurants	29
Professional Services	15
Real Estate	9
Lodging	8 (1 vacant, 1 under restoration)
Health and Wellness	8
Salon/Beauty/Barber shop	8
Museums	6
Non-profits	6
Religious Institutions	4
Tattoo/Piercing	4
Grocery Store	2
Education Facilities	2
<i>Data provided by Taos MainStreet</i>	



Courtesy of Taos MainStreet

GROSS RECEIPTS TAX (GRT)

In 2024-2025, Town Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) is projected to increase 2% to \$16,120,007, up from \$15,803,928 in 2023-2024. In 2023, sectors with the highest GRT in Town included Retail Trade; Accommodation & Food Services; and construction.

GRT AND PULL FACTOR BY INDUSTRY	
Industry	2023 GRT
Retail Trade	\$5,529,802.00
Accommodation & Food Services	\$2,504,576.00
Construction	\$1,114,957.00
<i>Data provided by Town of Taos</i>	

RETAIL MARKET POTENTIAL

Based on Market potential calculations for the Town of Taos and the MRA District, Taoseños and Taos residents travel domestically at the same rate as the national average but spend less on foreign travel. Restaurant visits are in line with national averages, and fast-food visits are average or slightly low. clothing and apparel purchases are about average, and jewelry and watch sales are slightly lower than average. Gasoline, motor oil, and car tune-up expenditures are average.

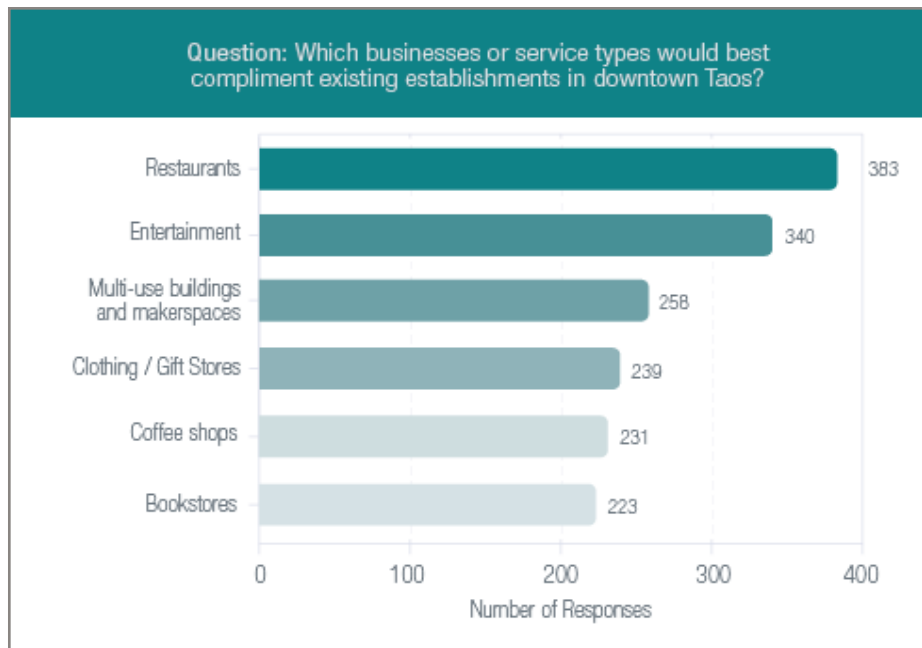
Metrics from the MRA District and the Town indicate that there could be an opportunity to expand the Taos electronics market. See the Market Potential Index (MPI) chart in Appendix E for more information on MRA and Town consumer behavior. Grocery stores (in lieu of convenience stores), pet care and pet products, and businesses offering financial and investment advice might also respond to an existing market and fill a need in the town.

MARKET GAPS & RETAIL LEAKAGE

The community has long been aware that town and county residents make most major purchases outside of Taos. When residents purchase construction supplies, furniture, electronics, office supplies, clothing, and other goods these tend to be purchased non-locally. In 2007, the Town of Taos commissioned a retail leakage study from the University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER). The study found that local purchases of retail goods was as low as 44%, which means a retail leakage of 66% of all retail sales to shops in surrounding communities and online (Potter, 2007). The BBER study has not been recently updated, but local business owners and residents indicate that the trend continues.

Community survey participants shared that they would like to see more local-serving businesses and services downtown. Top desired businesses and services include

restaurants, bars, and cafes; entertainment; multi-use buildings; maker spaces; clothing and gift stores; coffee shops; and bookstores. This might indicate that the retail, eating and drinking, and entertainment options downtown are geared toward tourists and do not meet the needs of the local market or that there is a desire for a greater variety of options. The MRA Plan enables the Town to provide resources to assist retail development, which is currently not possible through Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) funding. This support could be essential in lowering the risk of entering the local retail market. The Town could work with local entrepreneurs or regional retailers, particularly in the area of electronics and clothing which are two categories with the greatest leakage.





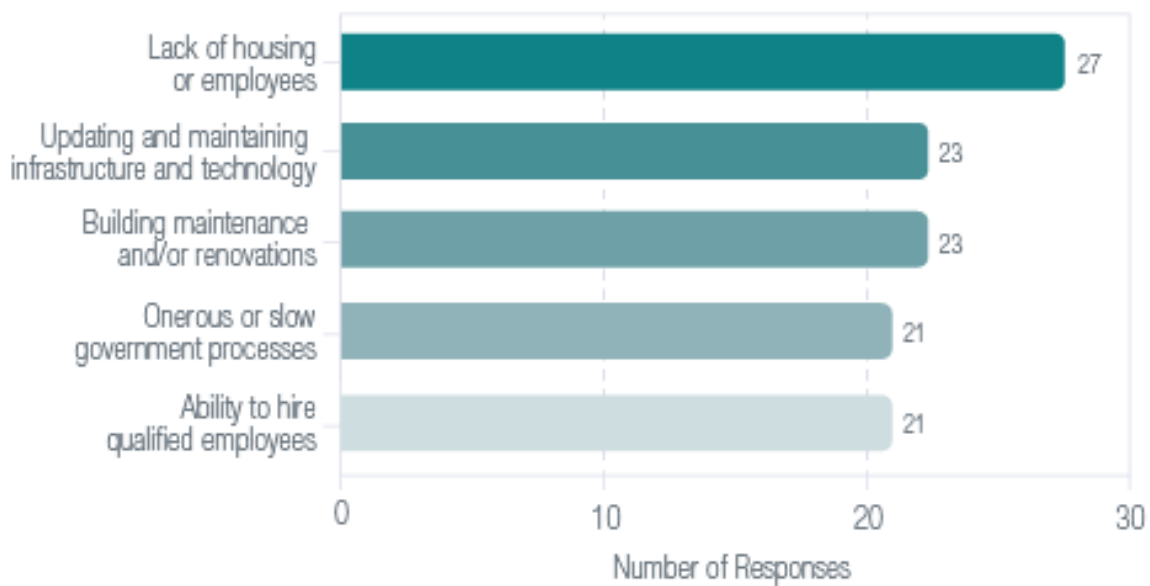
COURTESY OF GROUNDWORK STUDIO

CHALLENGES OF DOING BUSINESS

75 downtown businesses, property owners, organizations, and community groups responded to the Taos MRA Business Survey. The top challenges faced by businesses and organizations in downtown Taos are

lack of housing for employees, building maintenance and/or renovation, updating and maintaining infrastructure, ability to hire qualified employees, and onerous or slow government processes.

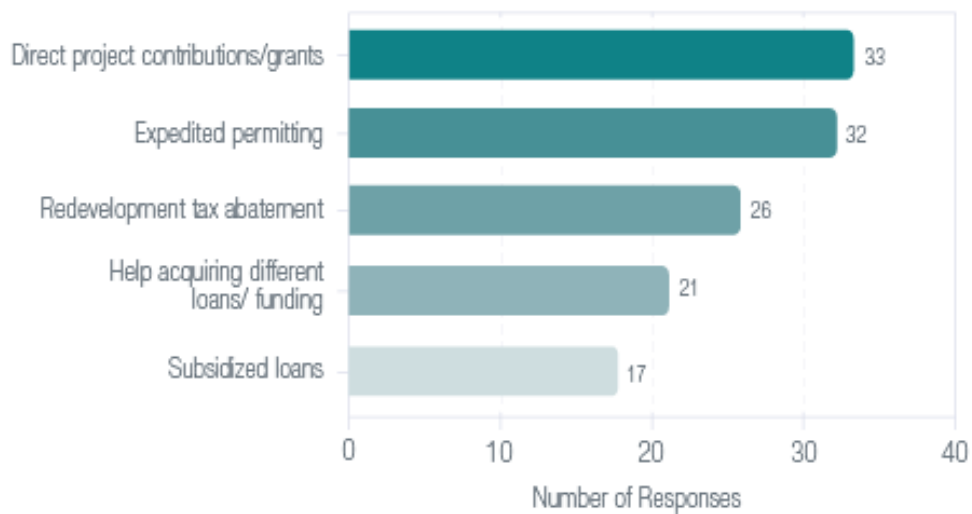
Question: What are the 3 biggest challenges, issues, or concerns faced by businesses and organizations in downtown Taos?



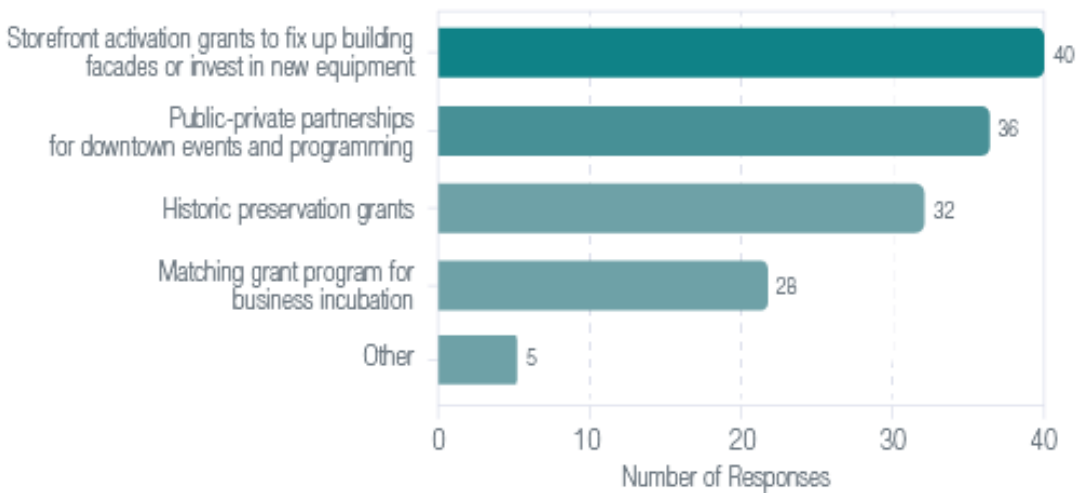
HOW THE TOWN CAN HELP

Businesses identified a number of ways the Town could help alleviate the challenges of doing business downtown. These include a range of financial incentives, grant programs, and partnerships to support community economic development.

Question: What types of incentives could the Town offer to encourage (re)development? (Choose top 3)



Question: What types of programs and campaigns would be helpful to support downtown community economic development, locally owned businesses, and entrepreneurs?





COURTESY OF JIM O'DONNELL

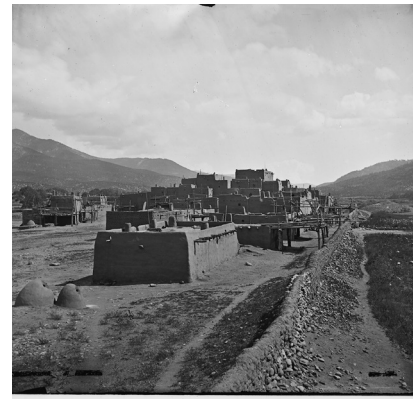
ASSET INVENTORY

This section provides a summary of important assets in the Taos community, with focus on the downtown. The inventory includes a discussion of physical assets such as buildings and parks as well as social assets such as businesses and organizations. This asset inventory is by no means comprehensive, rather it is meant to highlight attributes of the Downtown MRA District that can be celebrated and incorporated into community development work. The County is conducting a Cultural Asset Inventory that could provide an additional reference point for asset and strength-based planning in the future.

A BRIEF LOCAL HISTORY

TAOS PUEBLO

Taos Pueblo, a designated UNESCO World Heritage site (UNESCO, n.d.), is one of the oldest continuously inhabited communities in the United States (U.S.). The kin of Taos Pueblo were living in Taos Valley around 1000 CE. Taos Pueblo village structures were built between 1300-1450 CE.



Taos Pueblo. ca. 1871–1907.

SPANISH COLONIZATION

Spanish conquistadors arrived to the area in 1540. In 1615, the Village of Don Fernando de Taos was established by the first Spanish Governor, Don Juan de Onate. The Puebloans revolted against Spanish colonization in 1640 and 1680; The town was reestablished in 1776 as the Don Fernando de Taos Land Grant, comprised of land granted to 63 Spanish families (Taos Chamber of Commerce). The historic Taos Plaza was the center of the town, itself a prominent trade route stop (Taos Historic Cultural Landscape Report).



Taos Plaza, ca. 1880.

U.S. TERRITORY AND STATEHOOD

In the early 1800s, Mexico fought and won a War of Independence against Spain, taking over an area inclusive of the Town of Taos. The U.S. fought Mexico for the same land in the Mexican-American War, during which some Taos Puebloans and local Hispanos rebelled against the U.S. government in Taos by killing the newly appointed Governor Charles Bent (Taos County Chamber of Commerce). Mexico ceded present-day New Mexico to the U.S. in the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.



Taos Plaza, ca. 1915.

TAOS ARTIST COLONY

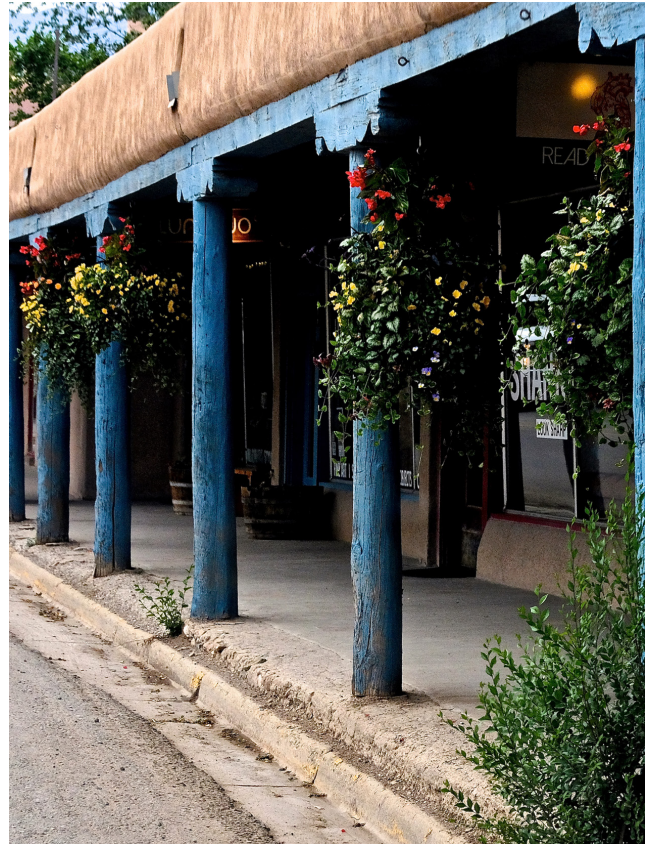
Artists Bert Phillips and Ernest Blumenschein stopped in Taos in 1898 with a broken wagon wheel and never left, popularizing the Town with art communities nationally. The Taos Society of Artists formed in 1915. (Taos Chamber of Commerce).



Taos Society of Artists, 1915.

TOWN OF TAOS

In 1912, New Mexico became the 47th state in the U.S. In 1934, the Town of Taos was incorporated as a municipality. The Taos Ski Valley opened just north of town in 1955, and in 1965, The Rio Grande Gorge bridge was constructed across the Rio Grande River, facilitating additional travel to Taos (Taos Chamber of Commerce). Hippies built communes in the area in the 1960's, and, "Taos became known as the Hippy Capital in the U.S." (Taos Historical Society).



TAOS TODAY

For centuries, Taos has played an outsized role as a destination for trade, art, and escaping societal norms. Taos's remote location helped keep the Town small and special. The cultures that found their way to Taos contribute to a unique and vibrant community. Today, the Historic Taos Plaza continues to anchor downtown Taos, accompanied by dozens of locally owned shops and restaurants, museums, art galleries, and neighboring open space directly adjacent to the sovereign nation of Taos Pueblo.

ATTRACTIONS

REGIONAL ATTRACTIONS

Attractions in Region

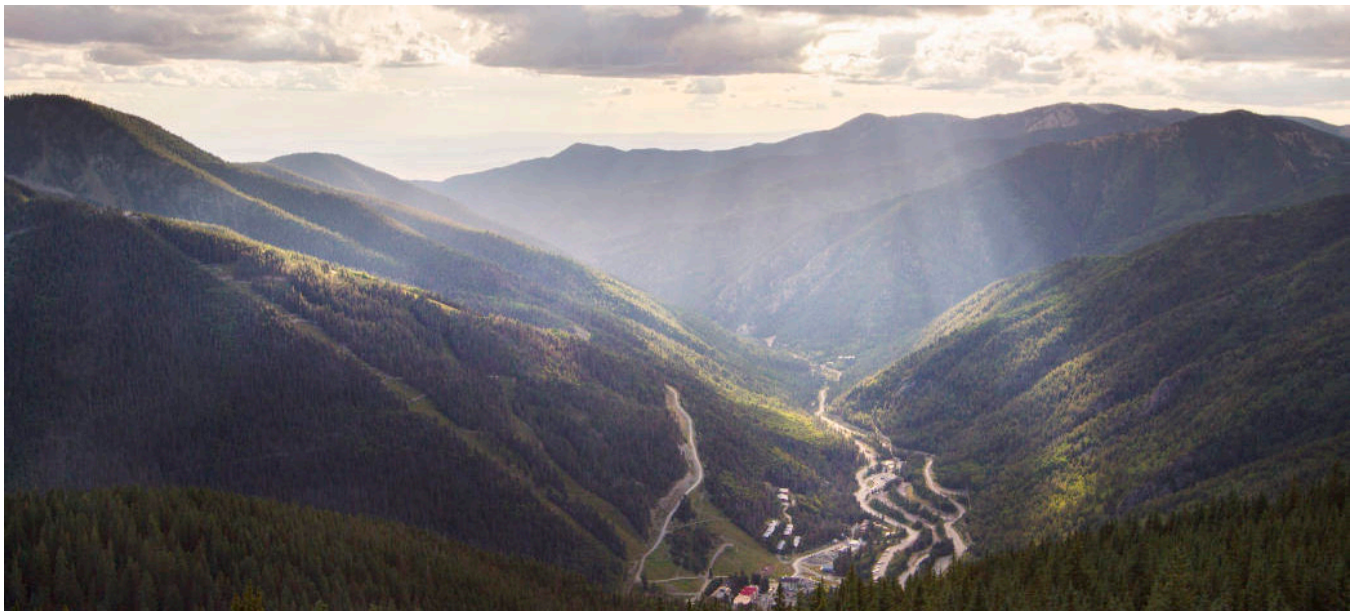
- Enchanted Circle: Angel Fire, Eagle Nest, Red River, Questa, Taos
- High Road between Taos and Santa Fe
- Santa Fe
- Abiquiu
- Colorado

Attractions in Taos County

- Taos Ski Valley
- Village of Arroyo Seco
- Rio Grande Gorge Bridge
- Town of Red River
- Rio Grande del Norte National Monument – hiking, climbing, biking, camping
- Rio Grande – rafting, fishing, swimming, etc.
- Hot springs

Attractions in Town Vicinity

- Taos Pueblo
- Concerts at Mothership
- Museums: Millicent Rogers, Martinez Hacienda
- San Francisco de Asis Church
- Carson National Forest – hiking, biking, cross country skiing, camping



Taos Ski Valley summertime. Source: NM True

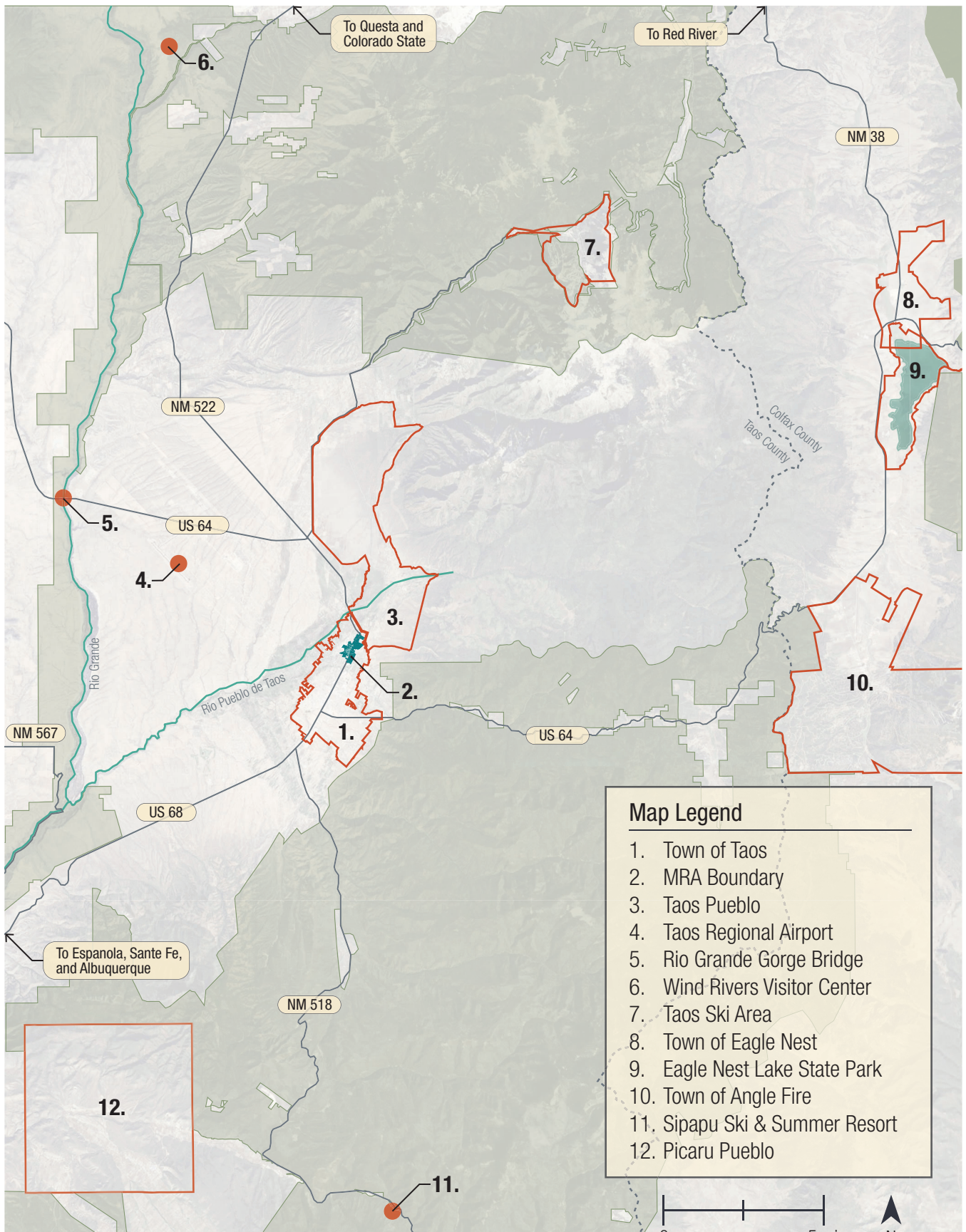


Figure 10. Regional Context Map

DOWNTOWN TAOS ATTRACTIONS

Downtown Landmarks

- Taos Plaza
- Bent Street
- John Dunn Shops
- Kit Carson Road
- Ledoux Street

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Events

- Bonfires on Bent St
- Concerts at Kit Carson Park
- Fiestas de Taos
- Taos Plaza Live
- The PASEO

Activities

- Museums: Harwood Museum of Art, Ernest L. Blumenschein House, Mable Dodge Lujan House, Couse-Sharp, Governor Bent House, Kit Carson, Taos Art Museum
- Shopping and dining



Fiestas de Taos. Photo source: Visit Taos



Taos Plaza Live. Photo source: Jim O'Donnell



Concert at Kit Carson Park. Photo Source: Taos News



Bonfires on Bent. Photo source: Jim O'Donnell

TAOS HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Taos Historic District, known for its rich history and unique architecture, is home to many of the town's most important cultural and historical assets. Aspects of each period of the town's history are evident in the area's buildings, streets, and alleyways. A majority of the town's most important historic sites can be easily reached on a short walking tour of the downtown.

The two hundred year old Taos Plaza, at the center of the Historic District, as well as the streets and alleys that radiate from it, provide space where locals and visitors gather for live music and events, to dine out, and to stroll through shops and galleries. Community residents stress the importance of preserving the historic character of downtown in all future community development activity.



IMPORTANT PLACES FOR TAOS RESIDENTS

There are many places of community significance in the MRA District. Overwhelmingly, community engagement participants shared that the Taos Plaza is their favorite place downtown, followed closely by Kit Carson Park. Other areas of importance include Bent St., John Dunn Shops, Taos Center for the Arts (TCA), and, just outside of the MRA District, the Public Library. These are overwhelmingly places that facilitate gathering, community connection, and social life. Additional locations and areas can be seen below on the “Places We Love” heat map and include the church and important places for shopping.

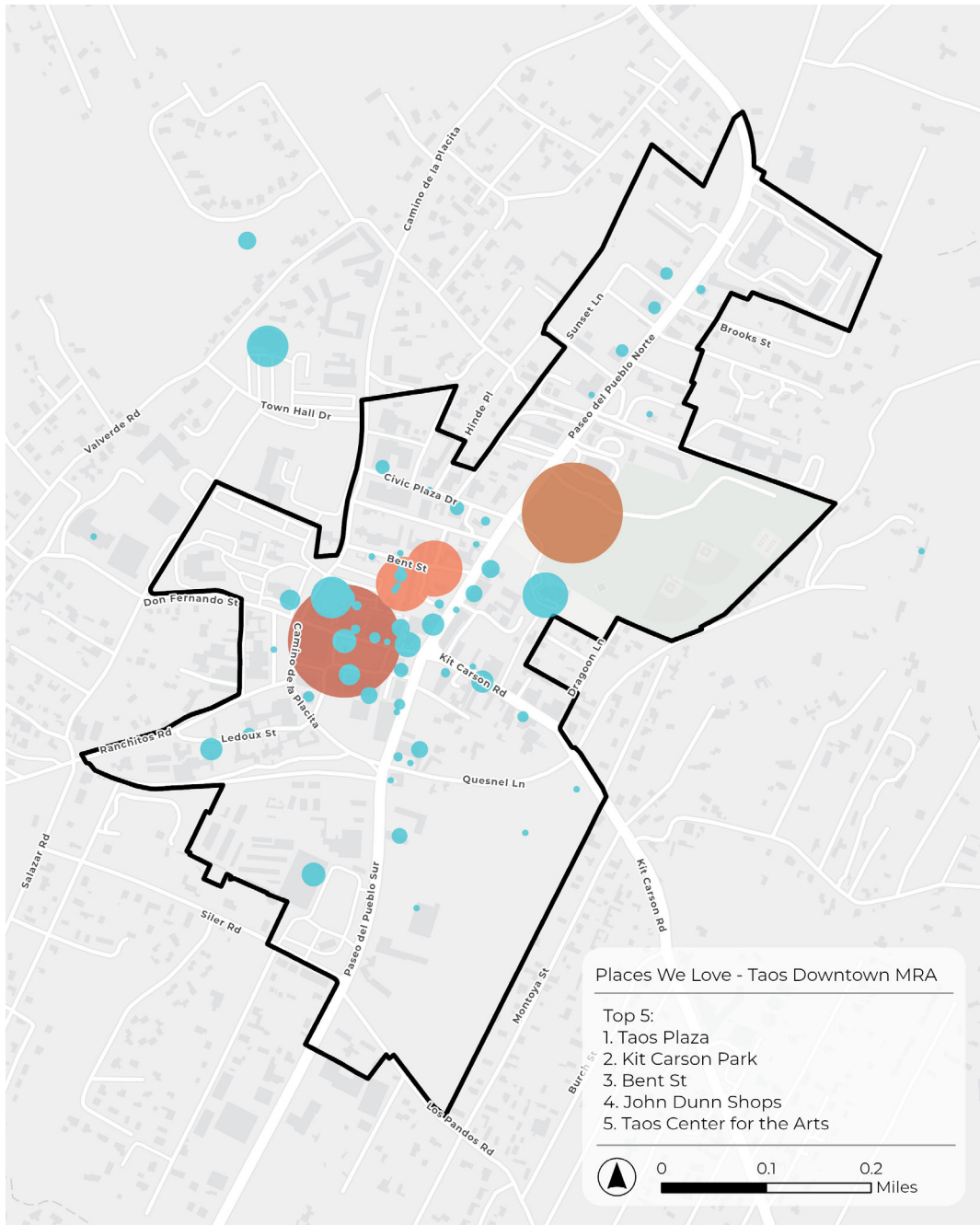


Figure 11. Places We Love Heat Map. Created by GWS from community input.

ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS

Arts and Culture organizations in Taos help to sustain centuries of living culture in the heart of Taos. These organizations provide a wide range of cultural, artistic, and educational programs and activities. They also help to promote and sustain the artists, performers, knowledge keepers, and culture bearers that embody the creative spirit of Taos.

These organizations also help to drive investment and are uniquely situated to support revitalization. Taos County's "Americans for the Arts: Arts & Economic Prosperity 6" study provides a metric to evaluate the impact of nonprofit arts and culture businesses in the county. "In Taos County, the (arts) sector generated \$70.7 million in economic activity during 2022—\$15.9 million in spending by arts and culture organizations and an additional \$54.8 million in event-related expenditures by their audiences. That economic activity supported 958 jobs, provided \$31.3 million in personal income to residents, and generated \$11.3 million in tax revenue to local, state, and federal governments." (AEP6, 2023, p.4) the jobs created by arts and culture businesses are often local, and

the revenue generated from arts and culture events generates income for local merchants, service providers, and municipalities. Arts and culture both strengthens community pride and buy-in and supports and grows the visitor economy (AEP6, 2023).

Continued reinvestment in arts and culture businesses positively impacts surrounding businesses, perhaps especially restaurants. According to a February 2023 KOB4 News article in Albuquerque, a statewide industry survey of the New Mexico Restaurant Association indicated that, following Covid-19 closures and revenue losses, 80% of New Mexican restaurants had raised their prices while 49% reduced their hours. Many restaurant owners speak to struggling to find and retain staff while being hit with inflation and supply chain issues and dealing with higher levels of vandalism.

The MRA can assist downtown activation and arts and cultural programming which encourage people to come downtown for events and then make an outing of it by dining at a local restaurant and further contributing to the local economy.





COURTESY OF TWIRL



COURTESY OF THE PASEO PROJECT

COMMUNITY ASSETS AND CHALLENGES SUMMARY

Downtown Taos has many assets that speak to the character of Taos and make it a place that Taoseños and visitors want to be. The buildings, streets, alleyways, and public spaces reflect the unique history, culture, and identity of the community. Taoseños are committed to the protection and stewardship of these assets. There are also several challenges that create barriers to successful redevelopment and revitalization. The MRA Plan provides multiple tools to address these challenges.

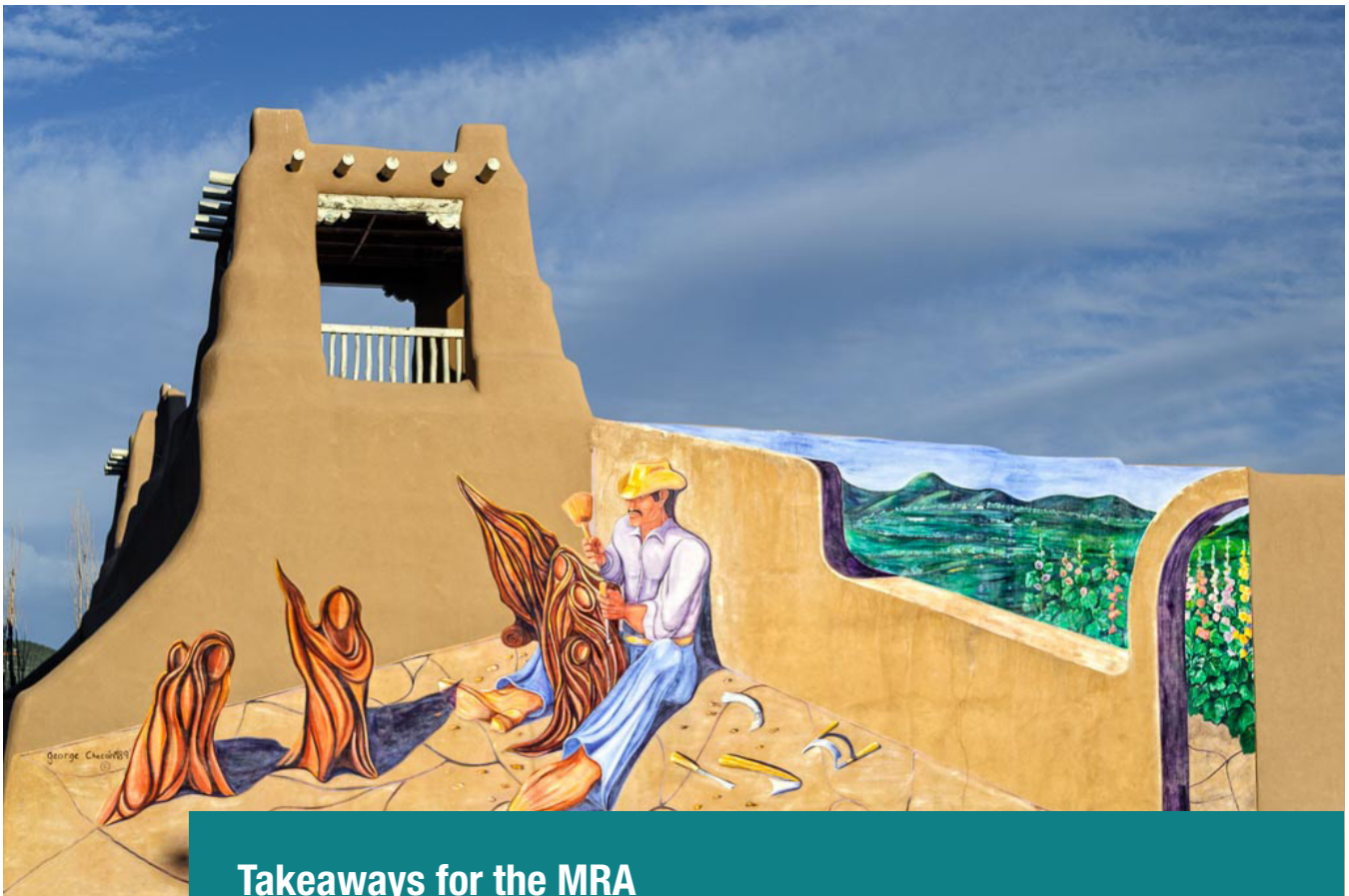
ASSETS

- Regional setting and natural environment
- History, arts, and culture
- Historic buildings and architecture
- The Historic Taos Plaza
- Unique side streets and alleyways
- Parks, open space, and nearby wilderness
- Local businesses, organizations, cultural practitioners, and knowledge keepers
- Local attractions and events
- Lodging – historic bed & breakfasts
- Food & drink – downtown Taos has a wide selection of food and drink options
- Shopping – for a small community in New Mexico, downtown Taos has a lot of retail options. It attracts business owners who want to start unique stores and sell to tourists

CHALLENGES

- Significant number of vacant properties
- Excessive surface parking lots
- Unsafe/uncomfortable pedestrian and cycling environment
- Aging infrastructure including roads and utilities
- Aging and unmaintained buildings
- Restrictive zoning
- High cost of living and low earning potential
- High unemployment
- Lack of affordable/workforce housing
- Labor shortage
- Rural, isolated
- Growing wealth disparity and (persistent) poverty





Takeaways for the MRA

Addressing downtown challenges while protecting the community's assets.

- Updates to zoning and development review and permitting processes could remove barriers to redevelopment and new business creation.
- Lack of affordable and workforce housing is a key challenge in Taos. Without government subsidies, affordable housing developments are often not financially viable. Public private partnerships and the transfer of Town property for fair value, as enabled by the MRA, could incentivize investments in affordable housing development expanding the diversity of housing options downtown.
- Façade improvement programs and similar direct contributions enabled by the MRA could benefit local business owners while helping to protect and steward the historic character downtown.
- Partnerships with businesses and organizations on placemaking and placekeeping activities including creation of parklets, outdoor seating for restaurants, and support of year-round programming and events could help to strengthen the local business environment while boosting businesses and organizations that help to steward Taos' cultural identity.
- Use of a Community Benefit Matrix as a project evaluation tool could help guide development within the MRA and ensure that MRA projects positively impact the lives and pocketbooks of Taoseños.



VISION & GOALS

This section outlines an aspirational vision for what downtown Taos could become, supported by long-range, qualitative goals that the community would like to achieve. The aspirational vision for downtown reflects what downtown could become in the future. The MRA goals are informed by the Strong at Heart Downtown Strategy Report and integrate priorities identified by stakeholders throughout the MRA planning process. The goals are supported by objectives which break larger goals into smaller, attainable steps.

AN ASPIRATIONAL VISION FOR DOWNTOWN TAOS

Taos continues to grow, adapt, and evolve. As it does, the Taos Plaza and downtown historic district remain the beating heart of the community, buzzing with Taos residents, visitors, and thriving businesses. A connected and livable community center, Taos’ downtown offers diverse options for housing within walking distance of everything needed for daily life. A network of safe sidewalks and off-street pedestrian and cycling routes provide easy access to the plaza, community hubs, other areas of town and regional routes and trails. Public spaces are beautiful, well cared for, and full of activity. Outside of the cafes, bars, restaurants, and shops, lively alleyways, parks, public art, music, flowers, and well-loved shade trees weave together to create the fabric of downtown, a welcoming and inclusive place for Taoseños and residents of all ages. Small businesses and community organizations protect and celebrate the community’s natural and cultural resources through year-round activities, events, and programming. As the downtown evolves, it supports a high-quality of life for all Taoseños and Taos residents.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

To help identify clear MRA project outcomes, four thematic goals have been created to guide Plan programs, policies, objectives, and strategies:

MRA GOALS	
Thematic Goal	Downtown Taos is...
Connectivity & Street Life	a well-connected place that is safe and accessible to get around by foot, bike, and public transit.
Placekeeping & Identity	a vibrant place of belonging and pride for Taoseños where residents and visitors alike love to be.
Community Economic Development	a thriving place that supports the well-being and economic vitality of the community.
Complete Neighborhoods	an affordable place where Taoseños young and old want and are able to live.

1. CONNECTIVITY & STREET LIFE



Downtown Taos is a well-connected place that is welcoming, safe, and accessible to get around by foot, bike, and public transit.

Objectives

1. Slow and reduce vehicular traffic and improve circulation.
2. Improve wayfinding and connectivity between the plaza, community hubs and key destinations while treating streets as public spaces.
3. Make walking downtown safe, dignified, and pleasant.
4. Enhance non-motorized trail infrastructure and improve cycling connectivity and safety

Streets and alleyways are fundamental building blocks of a thriving downtown. Not only do streets and alleyways provide connectivity and access between key community hubs and destinations, but they are also essential public spaces for people to wander, gather, and socialize. Safe mobility and activity play key roles in making our experience downtown more enjoyable, creating conditions for a strong local business environment.

This plan prioritizes pedestrians and treats streets as places for people, not strictly infrastructure that facilitates vehicle travel from one place to another. Downtown Taos has a network of alleys and streets which offer potential to provide pedestrian and cycling connectivity and access to local businesses, a sense of place and historic character, and public spaces promoting social connection. The goals and strategies identified in the plan prioritize walkability, bike-ability, and accessibility, while also identifying short- and long-term improvements that can improve connectivity and enhance street life.

“The street is the river of life, the place where we come together, the pathway to the center.” William “Holly” Whyte



Rendering of potential streetscape improvements that could encourage better street-life and connectivity downtown



Rendering of a streetscape that prioritizes walkability and bike-ability for people of all ages and abilities



2. PLACEKEEPING & IDENTITY



Downtown Taos is a vibrant place of belonging and pride for Taoseños where residents and visitors alike love to be.

Objectives

1. Improve quality and increase quantity of comfortable public spaces that are welcoming to all.
2. Reflect and celebrate the histories and rich cultural identities of Taos in the built environment.
3. Establish a community events fund that supports year-round programming that is affordable, celebrates Taos' diverse cultures, and gets people excited to spend time downtown.
4. Steward the natural, aesthetic, and built environment downtown.

Community engagement participants spoke to the past significance, current challenges, and future possibilities for downtown Taos. The Plaza and historic core are deeply connected to the Town's history, a storied place of many meanings and memories. And yet many Taoseños feel a growing disconnection (a sense of unbelonging) from a place which once served as the symbolic heart of the community. There are real concerns that the people, culture, stories, and identity of this place are threatened with removal or erasure as the Town changes.

There is a strong desire to reconnect with downtown, for it to serve as a "third place," a place to gather, celebrate, and enjoy life. The Plaza is envisioned as a source of pride, a place that honors and reflects the community's diversity, and that shows a high level of stewardship and care.



Taos Plaza collage highlighting some of the important historical, cultural, and social attributes that Taos residents would like to see preserved and enhanced.



Opportunities abound to transform underutilized spaces for gathering and events that celebrate Taos' unique history and culture



3. COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Downtown Taos is a thriving place that supports the well-being and economic vitality of the community.

Objectives

1. Foster equitable distribution of benefits from downtown redevelopment.
2. Expand and improve places available for community development activities that provide space for commerce, events, and education programs.
3. Encourage entrepreneurship and new business development from within the community and promote economic stability of local, independent, small businesses and developers.
4. Promote sustainable development and business practices which help to conserve and steward Taos' natural environment and resources.
5. Promote and showcase businesses that meet resident demand, lessen retail leakage, and support the local economy.
6. Promote and showcase events that meet resident demand and celebrate community development successes.

Conversations with stakeholders highlighted concerns about growing economic inequality in Taos. Community input for the MRA mirrored input for the Destination Stewardship Plan which indicated that Hispanic or Latino community members have not experienced the same benefits from economic growth and particularly from tourism. Addressing these disparities by ensuring the fair distribution of economic benefits from development activities is a top priority. Community members would also like to see more businesses and services geared towards locals. There are opportunities to invest in local businesses and entrepreneurship and promote businesses that offer distinctive goods and services that reflect the culture, spirit, and values of Taos.



Rendering showing potential types of improvements the Town could fund to support local businesses and property owners



Rendering of alleyway improvements and other activities that Town can support to promote economic vitality.



4. COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS



Downtown Taos is an affordable place where Taoseños young and old want and are able to live.

Objectives

1. Create a vibrant mixed-use downtown with “complete neighborhoods” where people have access to all the necessities of daily life, including affordable housing choices, job opportunities, schools, grocery stores, community resources, social opportunities, gathering spaces, open spaces, parks, and transportation.
2. Expand downtown housing options for locals with a focus on increasing affordable housing options for middle and low-income residents.
3. Ensure that housing within the MRA maintains the authentic look and feel of the historic district.
4. Foster economic stability and counteract displacement of long-time residents

Many Taoseños would like to live downtown and want to see the development of walkable neighborhoods that offer “convenient access to daily needs and a strong sense of place” (Strong at Heart: Downtown Strategy Report, 2018. P.69). The need for housing choices that locals can afford also emerged as an important goal during past planning efforts and the MRA Plan process. There is significant opportunity to expand housing choices while preserving the historic character and feel of the downtown. A range of housing types including duplexes, courtyard apartments, bungalow courts, townhouses, and live/work units could provide smaller-scale housing options while gently increasing density.



Rendering showing a variety of housing options that could be developed in vacant lots downtown.



Rendering of a walkable neighborhood, connected to downtown amenities by walking and biking trails



HOW COMMUNITY INPUT INFORMED THE MRA GOALS

Community engagement throughout the plan process helped to clarify the goals from SAH into four goal areas which were used to guide goal development for the MRA Plan. These goals support the overarching goal of Complete Neighborhoods identified in the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The following highlights the top concerns and top priorities shared by community members for each goal area. For a complete community engagement summary, see the appendix.

Connectivity & Street Life



Top Concerns

- Traffic congestion
- Cars are prioritized over pedestrians.
- Getting around downtown feels unsafe (crime, lighting, infrastructure/sidewalk conditions and cars) and uncomfortable.

Top Priorities

- Limit cars and prioritize pedestrians downtown.
- Improve pedestrian accessibility and improve walkability.
- Bike-ability is important but less important downtown than walkability.
- Provide access to public transportation for locals and tourists.
- Improve safety for everyone

Placekeeping & Identity



Top Concerns

- The condition of the Plaza
- Downtown does not encourage a sense of belonging, making locals feel unwelcome
- Lack of spaces for youth and families.
- Activities and businesses aren't geared towards locals.
- Loss of culture and character as downtown changes.

Top Priorities

- Make downtown welcoming and inclusive by creating more reasons and opportunities for Taoseños and residents to spend time there.
- Expand public amenities and infrastructure such as seating, landscaping, lighting, restrooms, and shade.
- Provide affordable activities and spaces that bring people together in "third spaces".
- Highlight the importance of history and culture (history museum, cultural landmarks, interpretative installations).
- Preserve natural spaces and enhance beauty.

Community Economic Development



Top Concerns

- Large number of vacant buildings and lots.
- Downtown businesses are too expensive for locals and hours are restricted. Locals don't go downtown much unless it is for a special event.
- Barriers for local and small businesses: staffing shortages (quality and quantity), lack of promotion, difficult permitting process, high rents, difficult landlords, high cost of building maintenance/renovation.

Top Priorities

- Improve vacant buildings, lots, and rundown storefronts to improve downtown image.
- Support business that cater to locals by providing appropriate products and services, pricing and hours.
- Support locally owned businesses by providing workforce training, expedited permitting, public-private partnerships, grants and financial assistance, fee waivers and tax abatements, and increased Town promotion of businesses.

Complete Neighborhoods



Top Concerns

- Lack of affordable housing
- Poor condition/insufficient infrastructure
- Lack of services and assistance for people experiencing homelessness.
- Large amount of short-term rentals in Taos are not owned by locals.
- Barriers to providing more housing options: high cost of building, lack of workforce, lack of proper infrastructure, locked parcels, and poor land use and zoning codes.

Top Priorities

- Provide more low- and middle-income housing in downtown in mixed use developments that rehabilitate vacant buildings and lots.
- Provide financing to help developers overcome financial barriers.
- Make changes to Town codes to encourage mixed used development at higher levels
- Provide education and technical assistance for property and business owners.



STRATEGIES & APPROACH

The MRA Plan strategic framework honors the vital role downtown Taos plays and seeks to breathe new life into the heart of the community while also strengthening connections between this center place and other important community hubs. This section of the plan highlights several core strategies the Town and community should prioritize to guide future investment and change in Downtown Taos. These Priority Strategies rose to the top because they support achievement of more than one goal. These strategies help to bridge redevelopment activities that are traditionally approached separately such as transportation planning and economic development. This can help the community to leverage MRA investments to address multiple priorities at once (proverbially feeding two birds with one scone).

PRIORITY STRATEGIES

The MRA Plan priority strategies are strategies that support multiple downtown goals and that will provide a myriad of community benefits.

1. Facilitate adaptive reuse and redevelopment of vacant buildings and lots through public private partnerships.
2. Update zoning and development review processes to promote infill development, mixed-use development, and housing.
3. Support revitalization and historic preservation of buildings and the updating and improvement of building infrastructure.
4. Create a Park-Once district that concentrates parking in strategic locations with proximity to the plaza and other community hubs.
5. Implement the Taos Wayfinding Plan and support navigation and historic and cultural interpretation.
6. Improve street life, public infrastructure, and amenities in public spaces.
7. Support and finance year-round programming, activities, arts and cultural events downtown.

PRIORITY STRATEGIES



Update zoning and development review processes to promote infill development, mixed-use development, and housing.



Support revitalization and historic preservation of buildings and the updating and improvement of building infrastructure.



Facilitate adaptive reuse and redevelopment of vacant buildings and lots through public private partnerships.



Create a Park-Once district that concentrates parking in strategic locations with proximity to the plaza and other community hubs.



Implement the Taos Wayfinding Plan and support navigation and historic and cultural interpretation.



Support and finance year-round programming, activities, arts and cultural events downtown.



Improve street life, public infrastructure, and amenities in public spaces.

RELATIONSHIP TO GOALS

The MRA Plan priority strategies diagram shows the goals that each strategy supports

Connectivity & Street Life

Placekeeping & Identity

Community Economic Development

Complete Neighborhoods



FACILITATE ADAPTIVE REUSE AND REDEVELOPMENT OF VACANT BUILDINGS AND LOTS

Adaptive reuse and redevelopment of vacant buildings and lots can breathe new life into a neighborhood, providing opportunities for housing and mixed-use development close to jobs, essential services, and amenities. Despite these benefits, there can be challenges to implementing infill development and redevelopment projects including the costs for demolition, remediation, and upgrading utilities. Many downtown redevelopment projects are only economically feasible when the public and private sectors partner.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Identify 3 Town-owned properties and pursue Public Private Partnerships
- Develop a Cultural Center
- Support development of a Business Resource Center
- Support mixed-use and housing development



BENEFITS



- **Complete Neighborhoods** – P3s are one of the best ways to facilitate development of housing downtown and are essential to meet the demand of affordable housing.
- **Community Economic Development** – Helps encourage private investment that can significantly increase available funding, enabling projects that bring social and economic benefits to the community.
- **Placekeeping & Identity** – Can support redevelopment of vacant buildings and lots into community-serving facilities.
- **Connectivity & Street Life** – redeveloping vacant lots can curb sprawl and encourage more connected and walkable neighborhoods.

HOW?

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (P3S)

P3s are the MRA Plans' most powerful tool to support project implementation within the MRA district. A P3 is a cooperative agreement between the local government (Town, County, etc.) and one or more private sector entities. These partnerships enable the implementation of projects that are too costly or high risk for either sector to pursue on their own. P3s can bring a wider array of funding mechanisms such as tax credits, grants, and revenue sharing which can be creatively structured to ensure projects are financed.

The P3 process includes:

- **Request for Proposal (RFP)** – The local government creates an RFP to solicit developer interest and qualifications to enter a P3 for implementation of an MRA Plan project.
- **Project Evaluation and Community Benefit Matrix** – The MRA Board or Ad hoc committee evaluates proposals using a community benefit matrix to ensure projects meet minimum community benefit requirements.
- **Development Agreements** – Holds developers accountable for the use of public funding in their projects. Types include purchase, lease, and owner participation agreements.
- **Clawback Provisions**– Clawback provisions are usually included within Development Agreements and require the return of property or money if the developer does not meet the requirements of the development agreement.

P3 Success Story: Drylands Brewing - Lovington, NM

The City of Lovington worked with New Mexico MainStreet (NMMS) and a local entrepreneur to develop Drylands Brewing Company. NMMS developed a conceptual site plan, a project implementation plan, and business plan with the entrepreneurs to build a pizzeria and brewpub. Additional development planning was provided through funding from the New Mexico Resiliency Alliance. Drylands received \$100,000 in state LEDA funds for the expansion, in addition to local LEDA funding.

Drylands Brewing Company restaurant, tap house and canning facility opened in 2017 in the Lovington MainStreet District. The business created 10 manufacturing jobs and 20 service jobs supported by

the new brewing and canning operation. The project is the newest addition to Lovington's MainStreet area and supports the continued growth of Lovington's downtown district



IDENTIFY 3 TOWN OWNED PROPERTIES & PURSUE P3S

The Town owns multiple properties within the MRA which offer opportunities for adaptive reuse and redevelopment as community-serving spaces such as a Cultural Center, a Business Resource Center, and mixed-use & housing development. The Town should start with one RFP within first year of plan adoption and pursue additional partnerships as capacity allows for successful implementation. See Implementation Toolkit for sample RFP, Community Benefit Matrix, and Development Agreement to help guide the process.

Cultural Center

Utilize a Town owned property or building, such as the U.S. Bank building to develop a cultural center as a place of gathering, education, programming, and commerce for Taos residents and visitors.

Business Resource Center

Utilize a Town owned property or building to support development of a business resource center and other facilities (makerspaces, co-working spaces, etc.) that support creative economic activity, local entrepreneurship, and small business development.

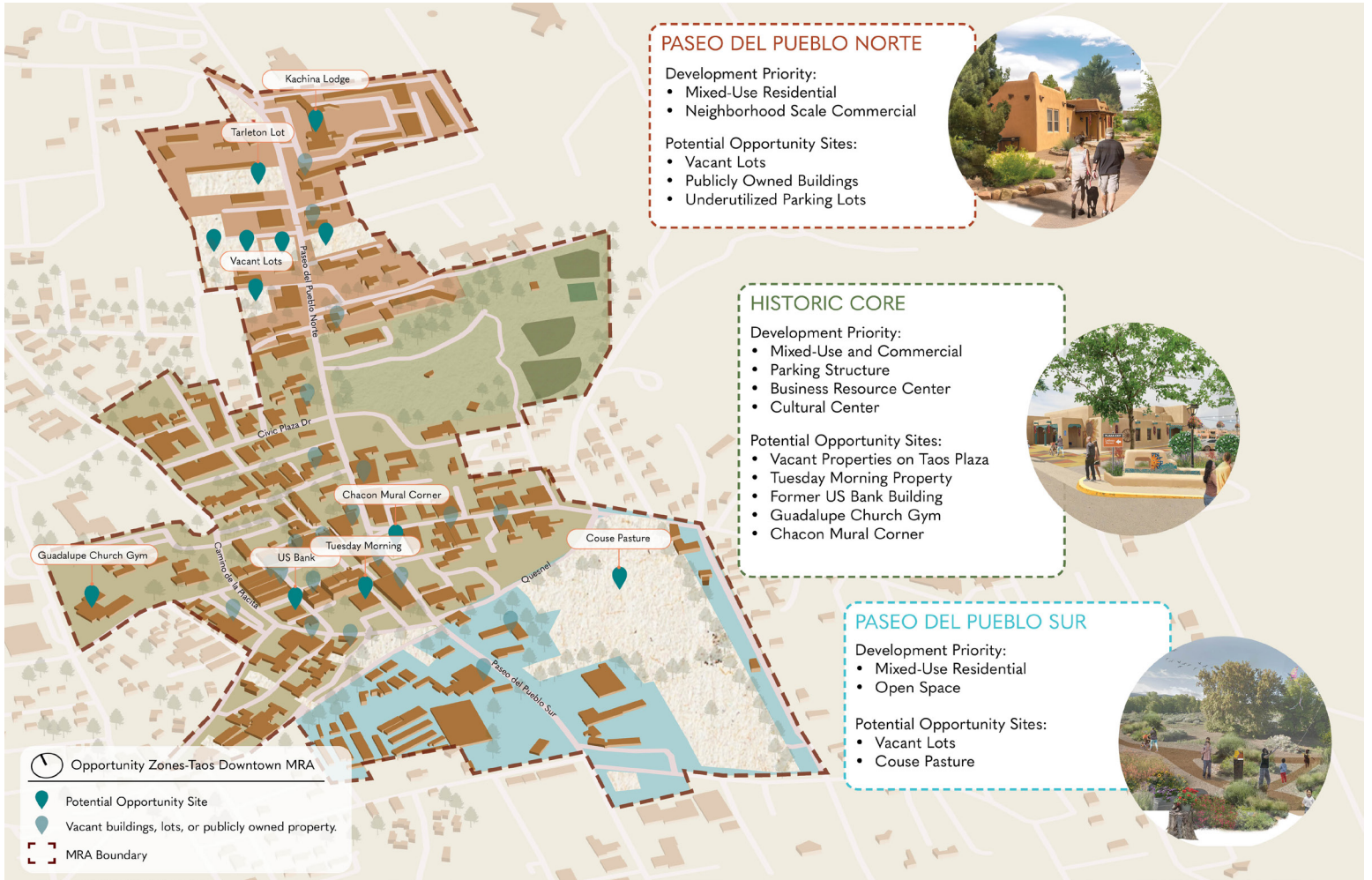
Housing/Mixed-Use Development

Utilize a Town owned property or building for housing and/or mixed-use development that includes housing. There is a significant need for more housing in Taos and multiple property owners who have expressed interest in housing development in the MRA district.



Action Steps

1. Inventory and evaluate public properties within the MRA district
2. Identify 3 underutilized or vacant properties
3. Select one property and develop a vision for reuse (NMMS can support visioning process)
4. Develop and issue RFP
5. Evaluate project proposals
6. Create a Development Agreement
7. Secure financing
8. Build

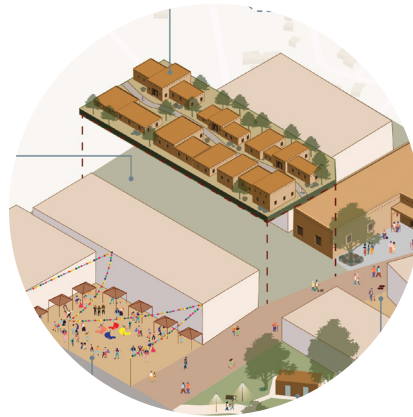


UPDATE ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL PROCESSES

Existing zoning and development review processes create hurdles to redevelopment project implementation. There are opportunities for the Town to make updates to zoning and development approval processes to promote infill development, mixed-use development, and housing. The Town should begin to shift from regulating the uses and density of the built environment to regulating the form and character (see next page for explanation). In the meantime there are simple updates to existing zoning codes that could be made to better support redevelopment.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Update zoning
- Streamline development review and permitting processes



BENEFITS



- **Complete Neighborhoods** – Enables the development of expanded housing options. Supports affordable housing development which would otherwise not be feasible. Expedites and reduces cost of development processes.
- **Community Economic Development** – Supports the expansion of mixed-use and commercial development and creates an environment more supportive of local developers.
- **Connectivity and Street Life** – Encourages pedestrian activity downtown.
- **Placekeeping and Identity** – Can help bring life and vibrancy back to the heart of the community by making it possible to build walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods.

CHANGING HOW WE REGULATE DEVELOPMENT: FROM USES AND DENSITY TO FORM AND CHARACTER.

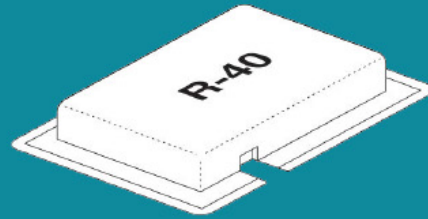
From the Form-Based Codes Institute:

"A form-based code is a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. A form-based code is a regulation, not a mere guideline, adopted into city, town, or county law. A form-based code offers a powerful alternative to conventional zoning regulation.

Form-based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards in form-based codes are presented in both words and clearly drawn diagrams and other visuals. They are keyed to a regulating plan that designates the appropriate form and scale (and therefore, character) of development, rather than only distinctions in land-use types.

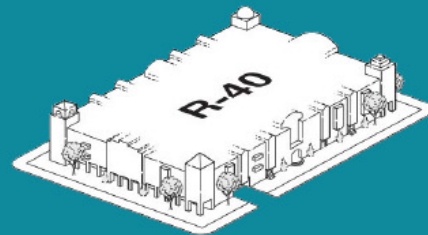
This approach contrasts with conventional zoning's focus on the micromanagement and segregation of land uses, and the control of development intensity through abstract and uncoordinated parameters (e.g., FAR, dwellings per acre, setbacks, parking ratios, traffic LOS), to the neglect of an integrated built form. Not to be confused with design guidelines or general statements of policy, form-based codes are regulatory, not advisory. They are drafted to implement a community plan. They try to achieve a community vision based on time-tested forms of urbanism. Ultimately, a form-based code is a tool; the quality of development outcomes depends on the quality and objectives of the community plan that a code implements."

Source: Form-Based Codes Institute



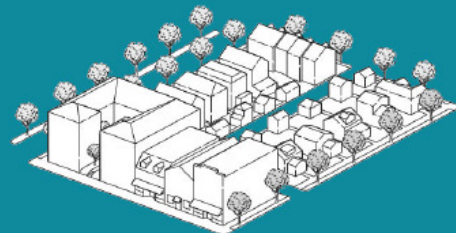
Conventional Zoning

Density use, FAR (floor area ratio), setbacks, parking requirements, maximum building heights specified



Zoning Design Guidelines

Conventional zoning requirements, plus frequency of openings and surface articulation specified



Form-Based Codes

Street and building types (or mix of types), build-to lines, number of floors, and percentage of built site frontage specified

Source: Form-Based Codes Institute

Image source: Strong at Heart Downtown Strategy Report

ZONING UPDATE

There is a need to revise zoning to allow desired development types within each downtown neighborhood. The Town is currently pursuing an update to zoning and land use development codes and should integrate recommendations from SAH.

Develop context-sensitive parking standards

Reduce parking requirements for commercial development within walking distance of Town-owned lots (or future garage)

Allow cost-effective 3-story buildings

In the CBD, C-2 and M zones, increase the allowable building height to 36 feet + roofline elements to accommodate 3-story buildings.

Updates to CBD Zone

Eliminate residential density limit, focus on regulating building form, and increase building height limits.

Updates to R-14 – Multifamily Residential Zone

Increase residential density limits and reduce front and side setbacks.

Updates to C-1 – Neighborhood Commercial Zone

Increase residential density limits, reduce parking requirements, increase building height limits, and eliminate front setback.

Updates to C-2 Zone

Increase residential density allowances, increase building height limits, reduce parking requirements, and eliminate front setbacks.



STREAMLINE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND PERMITTING PROCESS

The process associated with obtaining approval for new construction is time-consuming and costly which has led to slow redevelopment of vacant buildings and properties throughout the MRA district. Making improvements to the regulatory process can foster an environment for emerging investors and developers from within the community.

Comprehensive review of development approval process

Initiate a review of the steps in the development review process and identify factors that contribute to bottlenecks in the process or barriers to development approval.

Pre-approved Building Design Program

Develop pre-approved architectural plans consistent with local character and neighborhood scale, compliant with Historic Preservation Code, and that meet zoning requirements.



The Town can take both short-term and longer-term actions to update zoning and streamline development review and permitting processes to encourage infill development, appropriate density, and mixed-use and missing middle housing. Image source: Strong at Heart Downtown Strategy Report

SUPPORT REVITALIZATION AND PRESERVATION OF BUILDINGS

The Taos Downtown MRA Designation Report identified a significant number of vacant and deteriorating buildings within the MRA district. The stewardship of neglected commercial buildings can have positive impacts for the entire downtown. The creation of a façade and building infrastructure improvement grant program can help to incentivize improvements to the exterior appearance of buildings, building infrastructure, and landscaping that can help strengthen locally owned businesses and create a more welcoming and comfortable environment. Façade improvement grant programs can help property owners cover costly improvements to aging historic buildings which can support the important work of cultural preservation in the historic district.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Establish a Downtown Stewardship Grant Program



BENEFITS



- **Community Economic Development** – Strengthens local small businesses, creates a more welcoming downtown environment, and spurs economic growth.
- **Placekeeping and Identity** – Supports cultural preservation activities and enables the stewardship of historic buildings.

DOWNTOWN STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM

The Town of Taos should work with Taos MainStreet to coordinate a grant program to support storefront rehabilitation; signage development; façade restoration; historic preservation; awning, window and lighting repair or updates; and more.

The Taos Center for the Arts (TCA) is currently exploring potential improvements to the historic Manby House to support expanded community programming. These improvements may include the creation of a “makers space,” where community members could access tools, equipment, and other resources while sharing ideas. The Stewardship Grant Program could support key building upgrades necessary to accommodate this new, creative community resource.

Action Steps

- Establish a fund and grant program for building and storefront revitalization.
- Compile a list of priority sites for cleanup and façade upgrades.
- Develop a grant application form.
- Promote grant opportunity with building and business owners.
- Review grant applications
- New Mexico MainStreet can provide design technical assistance for facade and building improvements.
- Document impact of improvements

EXAMPLE PROGRAM: FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM & FAÇADE SQUAD

New Mexico MainStreet coordinates a façade improvement grant program and works with local MainStreet chapters to expand the funds available for façade improvements in rural communities. This helps to preserve historic resources and spur economic growth. Some MainStreet communities establish volunteer Façade Squads which help to coordinate property cleanup and implement basic improvements including painting, minor repairs, window displays, and landscaping.



CREATE A PARK ONCE DISTRICT

The most welcoming and vibrant downtowns of any size have the right amount of parking in the right locations which get people out of their cars to wander, shop, and socialize. Creating a Park-Once District involves centralizing parking facilities in strategic locations and encouraging people to park in one place and then travel on foot rather than driving from destination to destination. The development of a mixed-use parking garage located in close proximity to the Plaza was a recommendation in the Strong at Heart Downtown Strategy Report.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Parking Study
- Parking Garage
- Parking App
- Parking Policies



BENEFITS



- **Connectivity and Street Life** - Reduces traffic congestion and encourages walking or alternate modes of transportation in and around downtown.
- **Community Economic Development** - Improves pedestrian access to local businesses. Increased tax revenue from repurposed lots.
- **Placekeeping and Identity** – Enables the repurposing of superfluous surface parking lots into spaces for people.

PARKING STUDY

Conduct a parking audit during a busy period or major event to inventory peak season parking counts, ownership (public, private), and locations.

PARKING GARAGE

Work with a local property owner to develop a parking facility close to the plaza. The structure would be designed to fit the historic context and could incorporate small businesses on the front to support street life and activity.

PARKING APP

Utilize a mobile parking app to support efficient administration of paid parking and increase revenue potential from visitor parking.

PARKING POLICIES

Discounts or Fee Waivers

Provide discounted parking rates for Taos residents and downtown business employees while parking in city lots, garages, or on-street spaces.

Parking in-lieu fees

The Town could charge fees in-lieu of off-street parking requirements for new developments in the MRA District which would be contributed to a fund to be used for development and maintenance of a centralized parking garage or lot.

IMPLEMENT TAOS WAYFINDING PLAN

Wayfinding is about a lot more than directional signage; it connects people to places. Wayfinding signage helps people to know they've arrived downtown and supports a sense of welcoming and invitation. Signage can help visitors to find parking sooner, get them out of their cars, and exploring downtown by foot. Effective wayfinding signage guides people to the places they seek but can also bring awareness to places they may have otherwise missed such as the downtown's unique network of alleyways and small businesses. Wayfinding signs also provide opportunities for visual branding, interpretation, and storytelling.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Implement Phase 1 of Taos Wayfinding Plan
- Implement Phase 2 of Taos Wayfinding Plan
- Implement Phase 3 of Taos Wayfinding Plan
- Implement Phase 4 of Taos Wayfinding Plan



BENEFITS



- **Connectivity and Street Life** – Supports navigation between key destinations, activating streets and public spaces
- **Placekeeping and Identity** – Helps create a strong visual identity for the downtown and provides opportunities for cultural interpretation and storytelling.
- **Community Economic Development** – Encourages exploration which can increase foot traffic to local businesses, particularly those off the beaten path.



Figure x. Taos Wayfinding Map - GWS.

TAOS WAYFINDING PLAN

Phase 1

Install priority signs which include directional and decision signs.

Phase 2

Install monument and gateway signs.

Phase 3

Develop historic, storytelling, and interpretation content for narrative signage with community. Collaborate with the County's Cultural Asset Mapping project. Develop and install narrative signage.

Phase 4

Develop guidelines for exploratory wayfinding and integrate public art and creative approaches to the wayfinding plan.

IMPROVE STREET LIFE, PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, AND AMENITIES IN PUBLIC SPACES

Downtown Taos has an amazing network of alleyways, side streets, and parking lots which provide connectivity between the Plaza and other downtown destination. These public spaces help to define the downtown's character and reflect the unique history and evolution of the built environment. Making improvements to these spaces – making them more comfortable, welcoming, safe and enjoyable – can play an important role in encouraging Taos residents of all ages to spend time downtown and bringing life back to the heart of the community. Street trees, seating areas, pedestrian scale lighting, and other amenities can help enhance the public landscape for gathering and socializing while also encouraging more pedestrian activity.

The Taos Alleyway Network Report analyzed the existing network and discussed opportunities for improvement throughout the network. These could help to reweave the connections between the plaza and other destinations and strengthen the fabric of downtown. Improvements include signage, green stormwater infrastructure and drainage, as well as lighting, seating, and shade. The report identified three alleyways for a pilot activation project: Bent Street, Des Georges Property, and Tuesday Morning to Taos Plaza.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Plaza engagement
- Plaza improvements
- Expand and care for public infrastructure and amenities
- Pursue Alleyway Pilot Activation Projects
- MOUs with property owners



BENEFITS



- **Placekeeping and Identity** – Sustains the historic character and sense of place downtown while creating places for people to wander, gather, and socialize.
- **Connectivity and Street Life** – Improves pedestrian and cycling connectivity between key destinations and community hubs.
- **Community Economic Development** – Improves access to local businesses and provides opportunities for use of outdoor space (seating, landscaping, or display space)
- **Complete Neighborhoods** – Supports the creation of a walkable complete neighborhood

TAOS ALLEYWAY NETWORK

The Taos Alleyway Network Project is a key component of the Downtown Taos Walkability Initiative. The Alleyway Project further developed the goals for Taos alleys identified in Strong at Heart and engaged stakeholders in the planning, and roll out the implementation of the network improvements in phases.

Alleyway Opportunities Identified:

- Safety and lighting
- Pedestrian access to local businesses
- Authentic Taos history & culture
- Opportunities to socialize
- Improvement in connectivity
- Universal accessibility
- Creative placemaking
- Green space and stormwater catchment

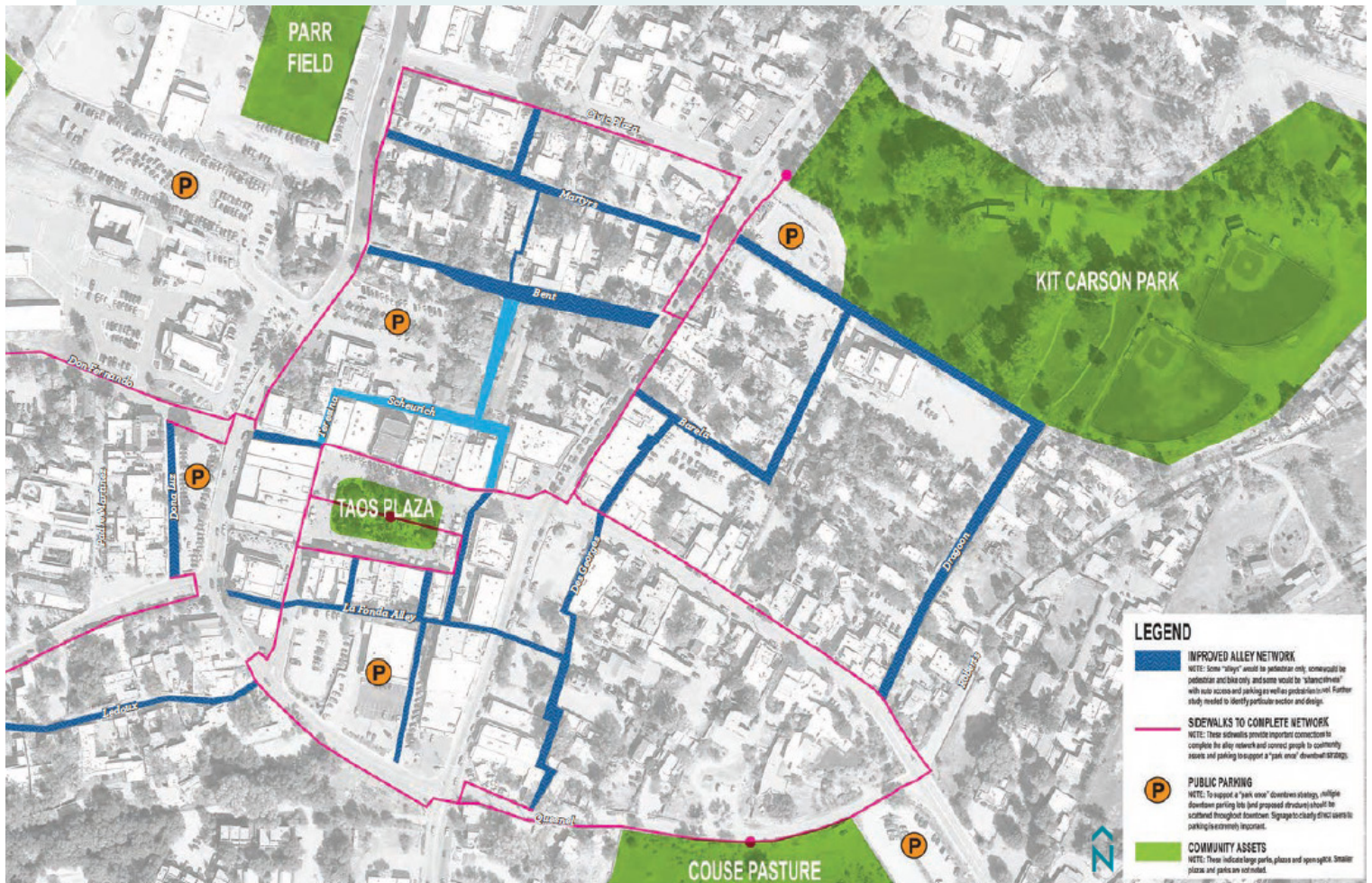


Figure 11. Taos Alleyway Network Map

PLAZA ENGAGEMENT

Engage the community regarding types of improvements that are needed to make the Plaza more comfortable, accessible, and functional.

PLAZA IMPROVEMENTS

Implement improvements identified by the Cultural Landscape Report and during community engagement process.

EXPAND AND CARE FOR PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND AMENITIES

Implement improvements to pavement and sidewalks, lighting, and site furnishings as identified in the Alleyway Network Report. Renovate and provide additional public restroom facilities.

PURSUE ALLEYWAY PILOT ACTIVATION PROJECTS

Partner with Taos MainStreet to pursue Alleyway Pilot Activation Projects. Short-term activation of alleyways and public spaces such as pop-up parklets, art installations, temporary lighting, and events can help make alleyways more inviting and engaging and serve as a test for longer-term solutions such as the installation of lighting, seating, and signage or the development of festival streets which reduce or eliminate access by cars.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH PROPERTY OWNERS TO UTILIZE PUBLIC ROW FOR PLACEMAKING ACTIVITIES

Pursue MOUs with small businesses and property owners to support landscaping, outdoor seating, activities, etc. in the public right of way.



Rendering from SAH reimagining La Fonda Alley including public seating, pedestrian scale lighting, and planters.



Rendering from SAH reimagining new possibilities for Barela Lane



Rendering from SAH reimagining Des Georges including wayfinding, public seating, landscaping, and pedestrian scale lighting.

SUPPORT AND FINANCE YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMMING, ACTIVITIES, AND CULTURAL EVENTS

Year-round programming, including fiestas, arts and music events, and other cultural activities are an important part of what makes Taos a great place to live. Not only do these events bring economic and social benefits to the community, but they can also help instill a sense of pride and knowledge of community history. Events provide opportunities to showcase and sustain important cultural traditions and practices and help ensure that they are passed down to future generations. Supporting and financing cultural events (and the groups that organize them) can help to preserve cultural diversity and prevent the loss of Taos' unique identity.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Develop public art policy for historic district
- Arts and Cultural Grants
- Partnerships for programming at Kit Carson Park



BENEFITS



- Placekeeping and Identity – Helps to preserve cultural traditions and practices
- Community Economic Development – Creates spaces where people want to spend more time, increasing visitation and expenditure at businesses downtown.

PUBLIC ART POLICY FOR HISTORIC DISTRICT

Using successful examples from other communities, develop clear guidelines and identify funding sources to support art in downtown.

ARTS AND CULTURAL GRANTS

Develop a grant program to support arts and cultural programming such as classes, workshops, events, performances, and festivals.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR PROGRAMMING AT KIT CARSON PARK

Partner with organizations and/or businesses to develop event infrastructure, and facilitate activities.





IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

Implementation of the Taos Downtown MRA Plan will require proactive effort, financial resources, and significant organizational capacity to see projects through to completion. This section of the plan provides a roadmap to guide MRA Plan implementation over the next 5+ years.

Implementation of the plan will primarily be the responsibility of the Town of Taos with support from Taos MainStreet. However, one of the overarching purposes of the MRA Plan is to facilitate greater collaboration between the public and private sectors and to encourage partnerships that boost the Town's capacity for implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION

Strategy	Priority Action	Responsible Agency or Partnership	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe
MRA Plan Administration	MRA Board	Town of Taos (Town)	NA	Immediately after plan adoption; ongoing
	TIF Bond Study	Town	Town	Immediately after plan adoption
	TIF District & MRA Fund	Town, MRA Board	Property tax increment, GRT increment	1 year
Update Zoning and Development Approval Process	Update zoning	Town	Town	Immediately after plan adoption
	Pre-approved building design program	Town	Town	3-4 years
Facilitate adaptive reuse and redevelopment of vacant buildings and lots	P3s on 3 Town-owned Properties	Town, NMMS	Private Developer, Town, Tax Credits	1-2 years
	Business Resource Center	Town, MRA Board, Taos MainStreet (TMS), HIVE	Town, Community Grants	Immediately after plan adoption
	Cultural Center	Town, MRA Board, local organizations and businesses	Town, Capital Outlay, Community Grants	1-3 years
	Mixed-use housing development	Town, MRA Board, Property Owner, Private Developer	Private developer, Town, Tax Credits, Housing Grants	4-5 years
Support revitalization and preservation of buildings	Downtown Stewardship Grant Program	Town, MRA Board, NMMS, TMS	Town	1-2 years
	Funding TCA Campus improvements through grant program	Town, MRA Board, TMS	Town	

Strategy	Priority Action	Responsible Agency or Partnership	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe
Implement Taos Wayfinding Plan	Phase 1	Town, TMS		Immediately after plan adoption
	Phase 2	Town, TMS		Immediately after plan adoption
	Phase 3	Town, TMS		1-2 years
	Phase 4	Town, TMS		2-3 years
Improve street life, public infrastructure, and amenities	Plaza Engagement	Town, TMS, NMMS		Immediately after plan adoption
	Plaza Improvements			1 year
	Public Infrastructure and Amenities	Town		1-2 years
	Alleyway Pilot Activation Projects	Town, NMMS		2-4 years
	MOUs with property owners	Town, Property Owners		1 year
Create a Park-Once District	Parking Study	Town	Town	1 year
	Parking fee policy	Town	Town	Immediately
	Parking-App Program	Town	Town, Parking Fees	2-3 years
	Parking Garage	Town, Private Property Owner	Town, Private Developer, Capital Outlay, Community Grants	4-5 years
Support and finance year-round programming, activities, arts and cultural events	Cultural Programming Grant Program	Town, MRA Board		1-2 years
	Partnerships for programming at Kit Carson Park	Town, MRA Board, Local Organizations		1-2 years
	Public Art Policy	Town		3-4 years

ESTABLISHING THE MRA BOARD OR AGENCY

NM Stat § 3-60A-16 (2021) provides guidance on the establishment of a Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency which is authorized to transact business and exercise the powers of the MRA. This public body is appointed by the mayor or manager of the local government.

MRA BOARD STRUCTURE

The MRA Board or Agency will be comprised of five commissioners, all of whom must live within the area of operation of the agency, which in this case would be either the town or county, as deemed appropriate. Commissioners do not receive compensation for their service but are entitled to necessary expenses. Commissioners should include individuals with appropriate experience and knowledge to implement the MRA plan; such as business and property owners within the MRA district, area developers, real estate professionals, and long-standing community leaders. Requirements governing the experience of commissioners may be developed as part of the board's by-laws.

If deemed appropriate, the board may employ an executive director, technical experts, and other agents or employees to oversee the work of the MRA. This is a common approach in larger cities but can be cost prohibitive for smaller towns.

Commissioners shall be appointed to serve staggered terms:

- Two members for three-year terms
- Two members for two-year terms
- One member for a one-year term and thereafter, commissioners shall each be appointed for five-year terms.

MRA Agency Ordinance

A It is crucial to establish an implementation board to oversee MRA projects and secure funding after the MRA plan is completed. An MRA Board or Agency must be established by an adopted Town ordinance which specifies the powers and duties of the agency.

PROJECT FINANCING

The projects outlined in this and previous sections of the plan may support transformative change and revitalization downtown. However, they will only be successful if the Town and partners secure sufficient funding. Many of the projects identified in the Taos Downtown MRA Plan will rely on both the funding tools enabled by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code as well as complimentary tools.

MRA FUND

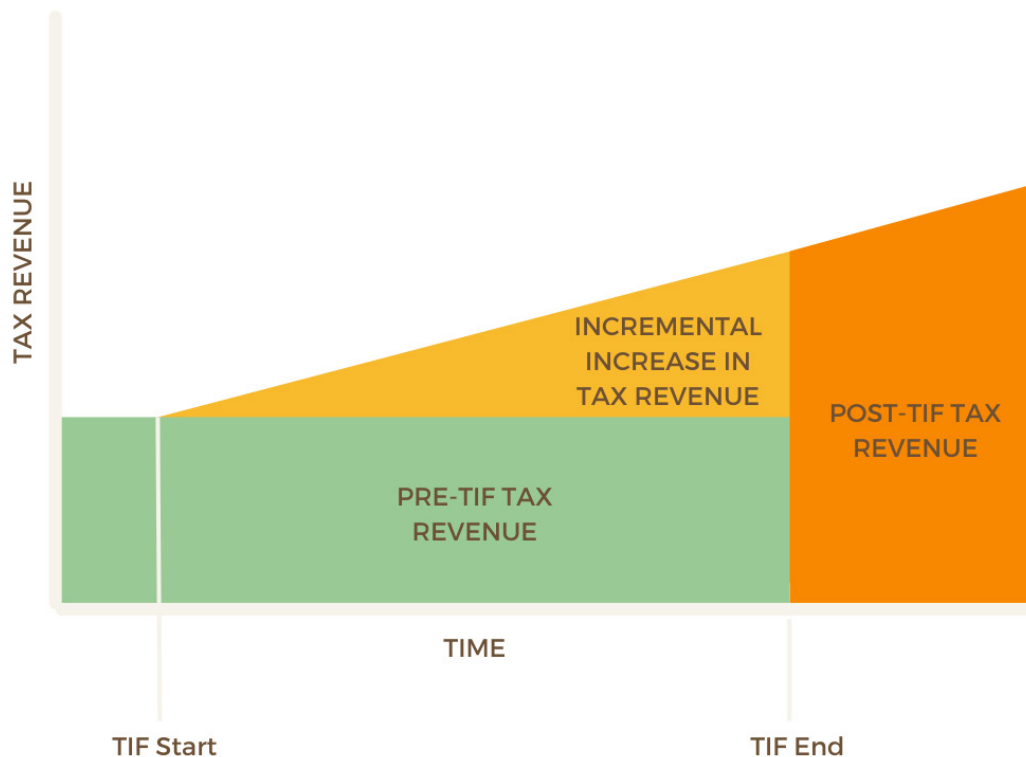
The Metropolitan Redevelopment Code allows for the creation of an MRA Fund to hold redevelopment funds until they are needed for project planning and design, project financing, bond capacity, or investments.

The redevelopment fund can hold general fund contributions, capital outlay, TIF funds, or other revenue for MRA projects. Establishing a permanent MRA fund is something that the Town should consider ensuring that project funds specific to the MRA District remain consistently available regardless of shifting political priorities or budget constraints.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) DISTRICT

Tax Increment Financing is an economic development tool enabled by the MRA and detailed in NMSA 3-60A-20 to 23). TIF districts raise funds by collecting the difference between the existing tax base and the newly generated property and gross receipts tax over the course of a 20-year period. As the Town invests public dollars in MRA projects, the value of properties which

were once vacant or underutilized, increases. Support of new and existing businesses stimulates expanded economic activity. Consequently, the tax base increases and the Town can capture this incremental value to support projects which provide community benefits such as increased jobs and housing downtown.



Senate Bill 251 - Expansion of TIF mechanism

Senate Bill 251 amends the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code to expand the TIF mechanisms for funding MRA projects. The bill would allow the local government to dedicate up to 75 percent of the municipality or county's local option gross receipts and up to 75 percent of the state GRT increment (with legislative approval) over the current tax base to

fund projects, either directly or through bond. Prior to the bill's adoption, TIF districts could only capture the property tax increment for the district, which limited the potential for fund generation. This bill dramatically increases the TIF's ability to generate revenue. The effective start date of the changes introduced in SB251 will be January 1, 2025.

Establishing a TIF District

As per the Redevelopment Code (NMSA 3-60A-21) upon receipt of the letter from the local governing body (Appendix B), the County Treasurer and Assessor "...shall certify...the base value of the property tax revenues." This is not an elective option by the Assessor and Treasurer; the Redevelopment Code requires they establish the baseline and perform the increment collection upon request by the local governing body.

For the life of the TIF, the increment is the revenue that has accumulated above the baseline for each succeeding year. TIF revenue tends to begin relatively small but can increase substantially over time.

TOWN INVESTMENT

Direct investment of Town funds in MRA projects is one way the Town can help finance MRA Plan implementation. Any contribution of public resources to MRA projects must demonstrate community benefit. It is also essential that Town investments are sound and that any new buildings, facilities, or infrastructure developed in the MRA district can be operated and maintained without becoming a burden on the Town's resources or administrative capacity.

Some of the strategies outlined in this MRA Plan include catalytic actions - larger redevelopment projects - the Town and partners can pursue to spur revitalization and create a vibrant and welcoming downtown. TAn agreement to contribute public funds to a project through Public Private Partnerships or other direct contributions can help to entice an interested developer, business, or organization who in return will contribute private funds and capacity towards downtown revitalization.

TIF Bond & Feasibility Study

The Redevelopment Code allows TIF bonds to be issued to pay for MRA projects based on the bonding capacity created by TIF revenue (3-60A-23.1). Once a TIF District and MRA Fund are established, the Town should explore this option to help finance public improvements. Bond feasibility studies help to evaluate how much revenue (tax increment) could be generated over the life of the TIF and whether the TIF would have the ability to repay the debt service if the Town were to issue bonds.

Types of Direct Contributions and Incentives Enabled by the MRA Plan

- Direct contribution of Town assets - Sale or lease of land at fair value rate (below market value)
- Loans or grants
- Tax abatement
- Infrastructure improvements on private property

Direct Contribution of Town Assets

The Metropolitan Redevelopment Code enables the direct contribution of Town assets to private redevelopment projects without violating the NM Anti-Donation Clause. This can include the sale or lease of public properties to private entities at an established "fair value" (see information in the turquoise box on the following page). For example, the Town could choose to lease the U.S. Bank building in full or part to a community organization or other partners at a reduced rental rate to help develop and operate a Cultural Center. This could help ensure affordability for local organizations and support cultural programming and economic development without straining limited Town resources.

NM Anti Donation Clause & Fair Value

The Anti-donation Clause of the New Mexico Constitution (Article IX, Section 14) forbids, with a few specific and limited exceptions, all state and local government subsidies: “neither the state nor any county, school district or municipality, except as otherwise provided in this constitution, shall directly or indirectly lend or pledge its credit or make any donation to or in aid of any person, association or public or private corporation.”

The NM Redevelopment Code, provides an exception to the Anti-donation Clause, and outlines the procedural safeguards that are employed to protect the public sector's interests. Under the Code, any subsidies proposed by municipalities or counties must be adopted by a series of ordinances. This means that the public is given notice of the proposed subsidy and is afforded a hearing to object to it.

Chapter 3, Article 60A NMSA 1978 includes a clause which allows a LGB to pursue the clearly defined tools in the Redevelopment Code (Section

3-60A-10), including selling, leasing, or disposing of public assets; entering into Public Private Partnerships; carrying out MRA projects; investing in MRA project funds; and issuing bonds and/or loans, among other powers. The Redevelopment Code does not grant a local government the power of eminent domain.

In order to provide additional clarity to the means of relief from the Anti-donation Clause, an amendment to the Redevelopment Code was approved by legislature in 2017 providing a definition of Fair Value: “Fair value means the negotiated price or value of an asset or liability agreed upon by a local government and a private entity (Chapter 3.60.A.4.S).” The fair value definition allows more flexibility in negotiating the value of the public assets with the private sector. But these negotiations are required to be in open public meetings to ensure transparency and accountability to the public.

For additional information, see the NMMS MRA Implementation Toolkit.

Tax Abatement and Bonds

The Town may choose to abate property taxes on a new development over a set period of years. This can provide an additional incentive for property owners who are hesitant to invest in improvements that might raise their property taxes.

The Town may also offer Metropolitan Redevelopment Bonds (MRBs) or industrial revenue bonds (IRBs) to developers to help finance projects. Unlike traditional general obligation bonds, the City does not provide the financing directly or offer credit; instead, developers secure funding themselves. The advantage of MRBs to developers is that they provide property tax abatement

for up to seven years on the value of improvements to the property, and may give them additional access to lower interest bonds than those they could receive without municipal support. IRBs may be issued to finance economic development based projects, including the construction of light manufacturing facilities, research and development facilities, some office facilities or the purchase of land and equipment.

These bonds could be helpful in funding the development of a parking garage for the Park-Once District, establishing a Business Resource Center or other larger scale catalytic projects.

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Although some City funds will need to be used for MRA Plan implementation, a bulk of funds will ultimately have to come from private investors and developers. This will come in the form of private equity as well as private loans and tax credits in the context of public-private partnerships (P3s).

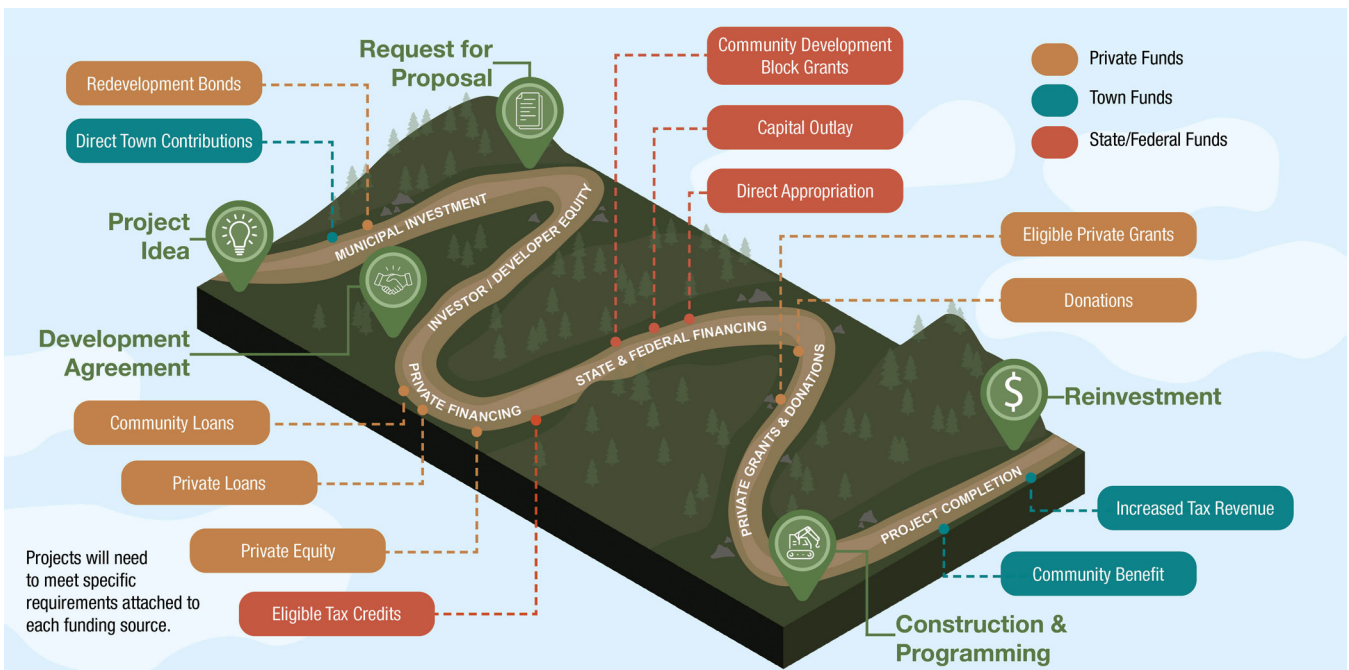
A P3 is a cooperative agreement between the local government (Town, County, etc.) and one or more private sector entities. These partnerships enable the implementation of projects that are too costly or high risk for either sector to pursue on their own. They can bring together a variety of funding sources including private capital, Town funds, state and federal funds, and as well as various grants and tax credits. The following graphic illustrates the various funding sources that can be accessed throughout the public-private partnership process. The illustration demonstrates that while projects require Town investment, majority of the funding for projects will come from the private sector.

The P3 process includes:

- **Project Idea** – The Town identifies an opportunity site and potential redevelopment ideas.
- **Request for Proposal (RFP)** – The Town or MRA Board creates an RFP to solicit developer interest and qualifications to enter a P3 for implementation of an MRA Plan project.
- **Community Benefit Matrix** – The MRA Board evaluates proposals using a community benefit matrix to ensure projects meet minimum community benefit requirements.
- **Development Agreements** - Holds developers accountable for the use of public funding in their projects. Types include purchase, lease, and owner participation agreements. Claw back provisions are usually included.

Prior to entering into development agreements, the Town must issue two public notices which outline the proposed projects and selection criteria. This should be followed by a public hearing to provide opportunity for public comment, although this is not specifically required by statute.

The Public-Private Partnership Journey



FUNDING SOURCES

This section provides a list of local, state, and federal funding sources available to aid in the implementation of MRA projects.

FUNDING SOURCE DATABASES

1. Creative Finance for Smaller Communities – Urban Land Institute <http://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/Creative-Finance-forSmaller-Communities.pdf>
2. Kellogg Foundation Grants List - <https://www.wkkf.org/grants#pp=10&p=1&f3=new-mexico>
3. FUNDIT – New Mexico Economic Development Department <https://gonm.biz/businessresource-center/edd-programs-for-business/finance-development/fundit/>
4. Federal Grants Search <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html>
5. Statewide Grant Opportunities Search https://www.centerfornonprofitexcellence.org/grantmakers-directory?keys=&page=1&order=field_does_the_grantmaker_accept&sort=desc
6. The Grant Plant List of Upcoming Grants <https://www.thegrantplantnm.com/upcoming-grants/>

TOWN TAXATION & BONDING AUTHORITY

General Obligation Bonds/General Funds

Agency: Town of Taos

Type: Capital Outlay

Description: The Town of Taos may choose to fund land acquisition and infrastructure costs using the Town's existing general fund or by issuing new bonds to pay for capital improvements.

Lodgers Tax

Agency: Town of Taos

Type: Tax Funds

Description: The Town may use the existing lodgers tax for promotion of downtown's attractions and events to visitors. The tax may also be used to acquire, establish, and operate tourist-related facilities.

Local Options Gross Receipts Tax (LOGRT)

Agency: Town of Taos

Type: Additional Tax Funds

Description: As part of the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA), residents in Taos may vote to raise the local gross receipts tax to help fund additional economic development projects within the Town. The tax is collected by the State as part of the statewide gross receipts tax and redistributed to the community for local projects. In general, LOGRT provides the community with a source of additional revenue to fund additional services or projects related to arts and cultural activities as well as district revitalization.

CAPITAL OUTLAY

Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan (ICIP)

Agency: Town of Taos

Description: The Town of Taos may fund infrastructure projects through the existing Town budget and its infrastructure capital improvements plan. Although Town funds are limited, they may be used as matching funds to secure larger grants and/or loans by outside agencies (e.g. matching road funds for a street reconfiguration on a state highway).

NM MainStreet Capital Outlay Fund

Agency: New Mexico MainStreet

Website: <http://nmmainstreet.org/>

Description: New Mexico MainStreet receives money from the State Legislature each year that may be requested by MainStreet Communities to implement identified priority catalytic projects in a MainStreet district. Program funds are competitive, and are ranked using an objective scoring system. Applying for these funds for fully developed projects (such as a district wayfinding system), is also a great way to highlight Taos MainStreet's commitment to implementing district-wide projects.

LEDA Capital Outlay Requests

Agency: New Mexico Economic Development Department

Website: <http://gonm.biz/business-resource-center/edd-programs-for-business/finance-development/leda/>

Description: The New Mexico Economic Development Department administers Local Economic Development Act capital outlay (LEDA CO) funds to local to help stimulate economic development efforts. LEDA funds are provided on a reimbursable basis only and must be used to fund those projects that create "stable, full-time, private sector" jobs in targeted industries.

Transportation Alternatives Program

Agency: NMDOT

Website: <http://dot.state.nm.us/en/Planning.html>

Description: The New Mexico Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a Federal-Aid funding program. TAP funds can generally be used for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and activities, in addition to other projects, related to economic development, increased safety, and increased accessibility. The New Mexico Department of Transportation has a competitive process to afford TAP funds, based on how well each project proposal addresses the goals of the program.

Cooperative Agreements Program (COOP) Local Government Road Fund

Agency: NMDOT

Website: <http://www.torcnm.org/downloads/Final%20Approved%20TorC%20Downtown%20Master%20Plan%2010.2014.pdf>

Description: The New Mexico Department of Transportation sets aside money each year for local government road improvements. This program assists local governments to improve, construct, maintain, repair, and pave highways and streets with matching funds from NMDOT

COMMUNITY GRANTS & LOANS

Small Cities Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

Agency: New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration

Type: Community Grant

Website: http://nmdfa.state.nm.us/CDBG_Information_1.aspx

Description: Community Development Block Grants can be used to fund planning projects and the construction of public buildings, community facilities, infrastructure, and housing. Funds are administered by the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration, with a \$500,000 grant limit per applicant. Five percent of matching funds must be provided by the applicant.

Rural Business Development Grants (RBDG)

Agency: USDA

Type: Community Grant

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programsservices/rural-business-development-grants>

Description: Rural Business Development Grants are available to rural communities under 50,000 in population. Grant funds may be used to finance and facilitate the development of small, private, business enterprises which includes any private business which will employ 50 or fewer new employees and has less than \$1 million in projected gross revenues. Programmatic activities are separated into enterprise or opportunity type grant activities.

NM Community Development Loan Fund (The Loan Fund)

Agency: The Loan Fund

Type: Business/Organization Loan

Website: <http://www.loanfund.org/>

Description: The Loan fund is a private, non-profit lender that provides \$5,000 - \$500,000 loans to small businesses and non-profits. The Loan Fund

will finance equipment, inventory, building renovations, operating capital and business expansion expenses. As a private lender, the Loan Fund seeks to support low-income individuals and communities that need additional "bridge funding" to establish or expand their organizations.

ACCION New Mexico

Agency: ACCION New Mexico

Type: Business/Organization Loan

Website: <http://www.accionnm.org/>

Description: ACCION is small-scale micro-lender that makes loans to small businesses that may not qualify for traditional bank loans, and also provides business support services. Loans are primarily intended for low-income borrowers and minority entrepreneurs. Since being founded in 1994, ACCION has financed the start-up or expansion of more than 2,300 new businesses in New Mexico with loans totaling more than \$23 million.

The Public Project Revolving Fund (PPRF)

Agency: New Mexico Finance Authority

Type: Community Loan

Website: <http://www.nmfa.net/financing/publicproject-revolving-fund/about-the-pprf-program/>

Description: The PPRF is an up to \$200,000 revolving loan fund that can be used to finance public infrastructure projects, fire and safety equipment, and public buildings. Both market rate based loans and loans to disadvantaged communities at subsidized rates are made from PPRF funds. Such funds could be used for larger infrastructure projects in the future, including upgrades to the existing public safety buildings in downtown.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

The New Mexico State Affordable Housing Tax Credit (Rental)

Agency: MFA

Website: <http://www.housingnm.org/developers/new-mexico-state-affordable-housing-tax-credit>

Description: This program provides charitable state tax credit for up to 50% of the value of donations (cash, land, buildings or services) for affordable housing projects approved by the MFA, or for donations made directly to the NM Affordable Housing Charitable Trust.

The BUILD IT! Loan Guaranty Program

Agency: MFA

Website: <http://www.housingnm.org/>

Description: This program was created to encourage other lenders to provide interim financing for “high risk” or unconventional projects when they might not otherwise do so for “high risk” or unconventional projects, unfamiliar types of borrowers or unfamiliar markets. The program offers MFA guaranties of up to 50% of the risk of loss in the underlying loan. BUILD IT! Loan guaranties can be used for owner-occupied or rental developments or special needs facilities. Sites must be responsive to demonstrated community needs, and zoning must be pending or completed. Commitments for matching contributions from other public sector entities, equal to 10% of the total development costs, must be in place. Finally, at least 40% of the units in the development must be affordable to households earning no more than eighty percent of adjusted area median income.

The NM Housing Trust Fund

Agency: MFA

Website: <http://www.housingnm.org/developers/nm-housing-trust-fund>

Description: This program provides flexible funding for housing initiatives that will provide affordable

housing primarily for persons or households of low or moderate income. Non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, governmental housing agencies, regional housing authorities, governmental entities, governmental instrumentalities, tribal governments, tribal housing agencies and other entities as outlined in the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). Costs of infrastructure, construction, acquisition, and rehabilitation necessary to support affordable single family or rental housing as outlined in the NOFA. MFA mortgage may be in first or junior lien position on the property. Rental projects must serve households earning 60% or less of AMI

The MFA Primero Loan Program

Agency: MFA

Website: <http://www.housingnm.org/developers/primero-loan-program>

Description: This program is a flexible, low cost loan program created to finance the development of affordable rental or special needs residential facilities in New Mexico that would be considered “high risk” by traditional lenders. Its goal is to leverage other public and private funds, and to expand the housing development capacity of New Mexico’s nonprofit, tribal and public agency housing providers. The program can be used to finance all types of projects that cannot be accommodated by existing sources. Funding may be approved for specific housing developments, or for programs to be operated by agencies to meet local housing needs. Rental, owner occupied and special needs projects of any size maybe financed under this program, during any stage of the development process. New construction, conversion, and acquisition/rehabilitation projects may be financed.

Low-income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)

Agency: Mortgage Finance Authority

Website: <http://www.housingnm.org/developers/low-income-housing-tax-credits-lihtc>

Description: The Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC) provides federal income tax credits to individuals or organizations that develop affordable housing through either new construction or acquisition and rehabilitation. The tax credits provide a dollar-for-dollar reduction in the developer's tax liability for a 10-year period. Tax credits can also be used by nonprofit or public developers to attract investment to an affordable housing project by syndicating or selling the tax credit to investors. In order to receive tax credits, a developer must set aside and rent restrict a number of units for occupancy by households below 60 percent of the area median income. These units must remain affordable for a minimum of 30 years

TAX CREDITS/INCENTIVES

The State Income Tax Credit for Registered Cultural Properties

Agency: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division

Type: Tax Credit

Website: <http://www.nmhistoricpreservation.org/programs/tax-credits.html>

Description: The State Income Tax Credit for Registered Cultural Properties program was established in 1984 to encourage the restoration, rehabilitation and preservation of cultural properties. Since then, more than 800 projects have been approved for New Mexico homes, hotels, restaurants, businesses and theaters that benefited from one of the few financial incentives available to owners of historic properties. In a recent five-year period, the statewide program saw approved rehabilitation construction projects totaling \$7.4 million, spurred by the catalyst of \$1.4 million in taxpayer-eligible credits. To be eligible, buildings must be

individually listed in or be listed as contributing to a State Register of Cultural Properties historic district. The maximum amount of project expenses eligible for the tax credit is \$50,000. The total cost may exceed this amount. Maximum credit is 50% of eligible costs of the approved rehabilitation or 5 years of tax liability, whichever is least. The credit is applied against New Mexico income taxes owed in the year the project is completed, and the balance may be carried forward for up to four additional years.

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program

Agency: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, National Park Service

Type: Tax Credit

Website: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm>

Description: The National Park Service administers the Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program in cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Office. It is a three-part application process. Participation in the program is initiated with the State Historic Preservation Office. The building must be individually listed in, or contribute to a historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In some cases, the property may be determined eligible for listing, but has not yet been listed at the beginning of the rehabilitation project. The eligible expenses of a rehabilitation project must be at least equal to the adjusted basis of the building (value of building minus value of land). The project must be an income producing property and expenses for any portion used for personal residence do not qualify. The program generally allows up to 20% of the eligible costs of rehabilitation work to be credited against Federal income taxes. The credit is applied against federal income taxes owed in the year the project is completed, and can be carried backward 1 year and forward 19 years. Some provisions of the Internal Revenue Service Code may affect a taxpayer's ability to utilize the full credit. Taxpayers should seek professional tax advice concerning their specific circumstances.

New Markets Tax Credits

Agency: New Mexico Finance Authority

Type: Business Loan

Website: <http://www.nmfa.net/financing/new-markets-tax-credits/>

Description: The New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) is designed to increase private investment to businesses and low income communities with poverty rates higher than 20% by providing a tax credit to investors in business or economic development projects. By making an equity investment in a Community Development Entity (CDE), an investor receive a tax credit against their federal income tax worth 39% of the total equity contribution. Community Development Entities are certified by the CDFI Fund. New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC) loan funds are intended to help business investment in low-income census tracts. The fund will help finance the development of commercial, industrial and retail real estate projects (including community facilities), and some housing projects. Loans for up to 25% of the project are available at low interest rates. NMTC loans are combined with other sources of funding that is secured by the applicant and managed by Finance New Mexico.

CHARITABLE GRANTS & LOANS

New Mexico Clean and Beautiful Program

Agency: NM Tourism Department

Type: Small Scale Grant

Website: <https://www.newmexico.org/industry/work-together/grants/clean-and-beautiful/>

Description: by providing funding and technical assistance to municipalities, counties, Tribal Governments, and units of government on litter eradication, waste reduction, and community beautification initiatives. The Clean and Beautiful Program is a competitive grant, whereas applications are subject to be funded in whole, in-part, or not at all.

Eligible entities the Clean and Beautiful Grant include municipalities, counties, Tribal Governments, and units of government. travelers.

Destination Forward Grant Program

Agency: NM Tourism Department

Website: <https://www.newmexico.org/industry/work-together/grants/destination-forward/>

Description: The purpose of the Destination Forward Grant Program is to support the development and implementation of tourism infrastructure projects throughout New Mexico. The Destination Forward Grant (DFG) is a competitive grant that supports the long-term destination development and rejuvenation of community-based, sustainable tourism infrastructure projects across New Mexico. The DFG helps to empower New Mexican communities to become viable, welcoming, and high-quality destinations, as well as to enhance existing destinations, for tourism.

McCune Foundation Grants

Agency: McCune Charitable Foundation

Type: Community and Organization Grants

Website: <http://nmmccune.org/apply>

Description: The McCune Charitable Foundation awards grants to communities, non-profits, public schools, and government agencies that are engaged in community-based projects related to the Foundation's nine foundational priorities. This includes projects that build capacity in the non-profit sector, promote economic development, education and childhood development, healthcare, local food, the arts and community engagement, natural resources, urban design, and rural development are all considered. The average grant award is \$15,000, with some as large as \$25,000.

National Endowment for the Arts Our City Grant

Agency: National Endowment of the Arts

Type: Community and Organization Grants

Website: <http://arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-City/introduction>

Description: The National Endowment for the Arts offers the “Our City” Grant to fund creative placemaking projects that showcase the distinct identity of their community. The grant will pay for cultural planning efforts, design of projects, and arts engagement efforts. The grant will not fund construction, renovation, or purchase of facilities. Projects must involve a partnership with a local non-profit organization. Grants range from \$25,000 to \$100,000

COMPLIMENTARY TOOLS

In addition to the tools enabled through the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code, there are a number of complementary tools that can be used to support the MRA. Integrating the benefits, partnership opportunities, and additional funding made available through these tools will be essential to promoting successful MRA Plan implementation.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)

A BID is a defined area within which businesses elect to pay an additional fee which helps fund supplemental public services and maintenance of the district. This could be particularly helpful in supporting the regular cleaning of streets and public restrooms and the activation of the plaza and other public spaces through public entertainment and events.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACT (LEDA)

As with the MRA, LEDA allows local governments to contribute to private projects that assist in expanding or attracting businesses to stimulate economic development and produce public benefits.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN & ORDINANCE

As with the MRA, LEDA allows local governments to contribute to private projects that assist in expanding or attracting businesses to stimulate economic development and produce public benefits.

INDUSTRIAL REVENUE BOND (IRB)

IRB is a tool that private developers can use to secure tax exemptions for larger-scale economic development projects. It is a complex, but effective tool for incentivizing redevelopment that involves the IRB project site being deeded from the benefitting company to the IRB issuer (the Town). The Town then leases the project property back to the company for the term of the bond at which time the company is required to purchase the property. This allows for tax abatement during the life of the bond.

VACANT BUILDING ORDINANCE

A vacant building ordinance outlines the penalties, inspection procedures, standards for maintenance, and enforcement procedures for vacant properties. This can be used to maintain a registry of vacant buildings, require property owners to develop an improvement plan, and impose registration renewal fees to encourage redevelopment action.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Community capacity mapping helps identify the individuals, organizations, and institutions that can support implementation of this plan. Capacity may include financial resources, property, human capacity, regulatory power, services, expertise/knowledge, etc. that can be leveraged to support community economic development activities. The public sector, non-profit sector, and private sector are all included in this capacity analysis. These partnerships are central to the successful implementation of the Taos Downtown MRA Plan and related planning efforts.

NON-PROFIT SECTOR CAPACITY

There are more than 50 nonprofit organizations listed with the Chamber of Commerce in Taos. These nonprofits regularly partner with the public sector to achieve their mission, strengthen community fabric, and help to provide many essential services. They bring various resources including staff expertise, technical assistance, programmatic capacity, access to grant funding, membership bases, and volunteers. However, many organizations in Taos operate with limited budgets, few paid staff, and a high level of competition for limited funding. The MRA increases the Town's flexibility to share resources that help organizations achieve their goals, while expanding Town capacity for implementing revitalization activities.

Taos MainStreet is a key partner in implementing the Taos Downtown MRA. As an accredited MainStreet community, they are able to engage New Mexico MainStreet technical assistance for planning, design, promotion, finance strategies, business innovation, economic analysis, building rehabilitation, and more, at no cost to the Town. Taos MainStreet can also assist with access to financial resources such as NMMS Capital Outlay, LEDA, and other grant programs through their partnership with the Town.

PRIVATE SECTOR CAPACITY

There are over 250 businesses in downtown Taos, many of which rely on locals and tourist foot traffic for business. They have an interest in improving the downtown to be more attractive, welcoming, and vibrant.

Private property owners and developers are key for downtown revitalization. The MRA Plan will make it easier for the private sector to partner with the Town to improve building façades and streetscapes, redevelop vacant buildings, and promote infill development in underutilized lots. Many of the large private employers in Taos also have an interest in revitalization, as it can provide workforce housing and increased job opportunities which promotes workforce retention.

Because of the lack of funding mentioned previously, private foundations and businesses, such as Centinel Bank, the LOR Foundation, Kit Carson Electric Co-op, and Taos Ski Valley Corporation, often provide financial support to nonprofit work in Taos.

PUBLIC SECTOR CAPACITY

The public sector includes entities such as the Town of Taos, Taos County, Taos Pueblo, and the State of New Mexico. They hold regulatory power and can encourage positive redevelopment through regulatory actions. Government funding and tax revenue is an important funding source for revitalization projects. The Town also owns several key pieces of property in the downtown MRA district, allowing for redevelopment projects that can provide significant community benefit. It is important consider Town staff capacity, and decisions often require approval from Town Council, HPC, and/or P&Z which can slow the implementation of projects. The MRA Plan enables public-private partnerships that will be essential in leveraging the resources and capacity of each sector to create a thriving downtown.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY

This section provides an overview of the ecosystem of agencies and organizations involved in revitalization work in Taos that could provide resources and expertise to support MRA Plan implementation across the four goal areas.

CONNECTIVITY & STREETLIFE



Public Sector

- NM Department of Transportation (NMDOT)
- New Mexico Economic Development Department (EDD)
- NM Outdoor Recreation Division
- Town of Taos

Non-Profit Sector

- Enchanted Circles Trails Association (ECTA)
- Taos MainStreet
- The Paseo Project
- LOR Foundation

Private Sector

- Downtown businesses and property owners



PLACEKEEPING & IDENTITY



Public Sector

- Town of Taos – Planning, HPC, P&Z
- Taos County
- Taos Pueblo
- New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD)

Non-Profit Sector

- Taos MainStreet
- Taos Community Foundation
- Taos Art Council
- The Paseo Project
- Taos Center for the Arts (TCA)
- Community Alliance for Sustainable Adobe (CASA)
- Taos County Historical Society
- Taos Farmers Market
- Taos Auto Cruise Association
- Taos County Chamber of Commerce
- Taos Valley Acequia Association
- Amigos Bravos
- Lions Club
- True Kids 1
- Rocky Mountain Youth Corps
- Inspire!
- UNM-Taos
- LOR Foundation
- Taos Fiesta Council

Private Sector

- Downtown businesses and property owners
- Historians

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Public Sector

- NMEDD
- New Mexico MainStreet (NMMS)
- Taos County
- Town of Taos

Non-Profit Sector

- Taos MainStreet
- Taos County Chamber of Commerce
- Taos HIVE
- Taos Entrepreneurial Network (TEN)
- UNM Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- Taos County Economic Development Corporation (TCEDC)
- Taos Community Foundation
- LOR Foundation

Private Sector

- Downtown businesses
- Investors

COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS



Public Sector

- New Mexico Economic Development Department (EDD)
- Taos County
- Town of Taos

Non-Profit Sector

- Taos Housing Partnership
- DreamTree Project
- Las Cumbres Community Services
- Taos Coalition to End Homelessness
- Community Alliance for Sustainable Adobe (CASA)

Private Sector

- Property owners and developers
- Taos Ski Valley Corporation



TOOLKIT

The following documents can be used as templates to aid in various aspects of MRA Plan implementation. Digital versions will be made available to the Town upon completion of the plan.

A. Sample MRA Board Ordinance

B. Sample TIF Letter to County Treasurer

C. Sample TIF Ordinance

D. Template RFP

E. Project Ranking Tool & Community Benefit Matrix

F. Development Agreement

G Sample Property Disposal Resolution

H. Sample Clawback Clause Language



A. SAMPLE MRA BOARD ORDINANCE

Farmington example:

ARTICLE 4. - METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Sec. 22-4-2. - Board of commissioners.

modified

- (a) The metropolitan redevelopment agency shall be governed by, and act through, its board of commissioners composed of five members appointed by the mayor with the advice and consent of the city council as provided in NMSA 1978, § 3-60A-17.
- (b) The members of the commission shall be residents of the City of Farmington or within the MRA district.
- (c) Commissioners shall be subject to and comply with the conflict-of-interest provisions as set forth in NMSA 1978, § 3-60A-17.

(Ord. No. 2007-1179, § 1, 4-10-07; Ord. No. 2023-1347, 2-28-23)

https://library.municode.com/nm/farmington/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CICO_CH22PLD_E_ART4MEREAG_S22-4-2BOCO

Example edits for Town of Taos:

Sec. [##]. - Board of commissioners.

- (a) The metropolitan redevelopment agency shall be governed by, and act through, its board of commissioners composed of five members appointed by the mayor with the advice and consent of the Town council as provided in NMSA 1978, § 3-60A-17.
- (b) The members of the commission shall be residents of Taos County.
- (c) Commissioners shall be subject to and comply with the conflict-of-interest provisions as set forth in NMSA 1978, § 3-60A-17.
- (d) [additional provisions as deemed appropriate by Town]

(Ord. No. [#####])

Farmington's amended Ordinance:

Ordinance No. 2023-1347

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING A CERTAIN PROVISION OF THE METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY COMMISSION

WHEREAS, the City of Farmington has a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) commission; and

WHEREAS, the City's ordinance establishes the criteria for being a commissioner for the MRA; and

WHEREAS, the City has found a need to update and clarify the requirements for a MRA commissioner.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF FARMINGTON:

A. SAMPLE MRA BOARD ORDINANCE

Section 22-4-2 shall now read as follows:

- (a) The metropolitan redevelopment agency shall be governed by, and act through, its board of commissioners composed of five members appointed by the mayor with the advice and consent of the city council as provided in NMSA 1978, § 3-60A-17.
- (b) The members of the commission shall be residents of the City of Farmington or within the MRA district.
- (c) Commissioners shall be subject to and comply with the conflict-of-interest provisions as set forth in NMSA 1978, § 3-60A-17.

PASSED, SIGNED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 28th day of February, 2023.

Signature

Seal

Attest:

Signature

B. SAMPLE TIF LETTER TO COUNTY TREASURER

March 3, 2017

McKinley County Treasurer

Gallup City, NM

Re: Notification of City of Gallup Metropolitan Redevelopment Area for Tax Increment Financing Purposes

Dear (Treasurer),

Please be informed that the Gallup City Council on February 28, 2017 approved Resolution No. 2017-8 (attached) in accordance with the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (NMSA 3-60A-1 to 3-60A-48), which established the Gallup Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district.

As required by the State Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (Section 3-60A-21), we are forwarding this notification to your office, the McKinley County Assessor, and the State Taxation and Revenue Department, the following information: (1) the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area, (2) the taxable parcels within the TIF district, and (3) that the tax increment method should be applied to the parcels included in the district.

Please establish the property tax increment base for the City of Gallup for the parcels identified in the TIF district for the year of 2017.

Should you require additional information related to this notification please contact me at XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

City Mayor

Cc: McKinley County Assessor NM Tax and Revenue Department

C. SAMPLE TIF ORDINANCE

Sample TIF Resolution: Gallup, NM

RESOLUTION NO. [##]

A RESOLUTION MAKING CERTAIN FINDINGS AND DETERMINATIONS PURSUANT TO THE NM METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT CODE, AND APPROVING THE GALLUP DOWNTOWN TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICT.

WHEREAS, Section 3-60A-8 NMSA 1978 of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (Sections 3-60A-1 through 3-60A-48 NMSA 1978) states: “the local governing body of a municipality may elect by resolution to use the procedures set forth in the Tax Increment Law [3-60A-19 to 3-60A-25 NMSA 1978] for financing metropolitan redevelopment projects. Such procedures may be used in addition to, or in conjunction with, other methods provided by law for financing such projects. The tax increment method, for the purpose of financing metropolitan redevelopment projects, is the dedication for further use in metropolitan redevelopment projects of that increase in property tax revenue directly resulting from the increased net taxable value of a parcel of property attributable to its rehabilitation, redevelopment or other improvement because of its inclusion within a metropolitan redevelopment area plan”.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Sections 30-60A- 19. and 20. NMSA 1978 of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code, the Council elected to create by resolution a Tax Increment Financing District: and

WHEREAS, the boundaries of the Gallup Downtown tax increment financing district are delineated on Exhibit A, (Map of Metropolitan Redevelopment Area), as an irregularly shaped area of approximately 40 blocks generally described as south of the Rio Puerco, north of West Mesa Aye, east of Cliff Street, and west of South Seventh Street.; and

WHEREAS, the Council has approved the Gallup Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan and the redevelopment projects which exist in the approved Gallup Metropolitan

C. SAMPLE TIF ORDINANCE

Redevelopment Area Plan, which may be funded or financed through the proposed tax increment financing district.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL,

The **City Council**, after having conducted a public meeting, approves the **Gallup** Downtown tax increment financing district, as attached hereto as **Exhibit A** and incorporated herein.

All resolutions, or parts thereof, in conflict with this Resolution are hereby repealed; this repealer shall not be construed to revive any resolution, or part thereof, heretofore repealed.

If any section paragraph, sentence, clause, word or phrase of this resolution is for any reason held to be invalid or unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions of this resolution. The Council hereby declares that it would have passed this resolution and each section, paragraph, sentence, word or phrase thereof irrespective of any provisions being declared unconstitutional or otherwise invalid.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED **this 28th day of February, 2017.**

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk

D. TEMPLATE RFP

**CITY OF RATON
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
No. 2022-1024**



METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Utilizing the Existing

COORS BUILDING STRUCTURE

SEALED PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE
NO LATER THAN 2:00 P.M., Tuesday, January 10, 2023

D. TEMPLATE RFP

The City of Raton, New Mexico

**Request for Proposal (RFP) No. 2022-1024
Metropolitan Redevelopment Project
Coors Building Structure**

The City of Raton is accepting proposals for commercial/ business/ work-live occupancy of the existing Coors Building structure and site for the purposes of meeting the established goals of downtown revitalization, pursuing public/ private partnerships to rehabilitate and redevelop vacant, abandoned or underutilized downtown properties and incentivizing development that brings more activity, businesses and housing to the designated metropolitan redevelopment area.

This Request for Proposals invites each potential Offeror to perform its own investigations and make its own assessments as to the extent and nature of the commercial opportunity best suited for the Raton economic market area while adhering to applicable statute relating to the New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code; NMSA Chapter 3, Article 60A, 1 through 48 (inclusive), and the 2015 Raton Downtown Master Plan / MRA Designation Report.

In order to achieve the desired objectives, the City of Raton will offer the Coors Building and Site through a sale or long-term ground lease to the selected Developer for a “fair value,” which considers the community, economic and social benefits of the planned redevelopment.

The City of Raton shall receive sealed proposals in the office of the City Clerk until 2:00 P.M., on Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at the following location:

Raton Municipal Building
224 Savage Avenue
Post Office Box 910
Raton, New Mexico 87740

The RFP shall be available at <http://www.ratonnm.gov/>, or by contacting the office of the City Manager. A Pre-Proposal Conference will not be held, Offeror s may obtain additional information by contacting the City Manager at (575) 445-9551. The scope of work and the criteria for selection are described in the Request for Proposals (RFP). City of Raton reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or waive any irregularities in any proposal or the proposal process.

Scott Berry, P.E.
City Manager
October 31, 2022

D. TEMPLATE RFP

PART 1 – PROJECT INFORMATION

A. INTRODUCTION

The Coors Building is owned by the City of Raton. The building is located at 216 South First Street and is constructed on a portion of Lot 8, Block 9 of the Original Township of Raton, New Mexico. The Coors Building is generally described as a two-story brick and wood framed structure with a stone masonry basement and nominal dimensions of 25 feet wide x 78 feet in length. The building was constructed in 1906 and was utilized as a warehouse for the Coors Brewing Company. The Coors Building was donated to the City of Raton by the Tinnie Mercantile Co. and was subsequently used for the Raton Museum for a period of time. The Coors Building is located within a designated C-1 Central Business District in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Raton, New Mexico. The C-1 Zoning District allows zero setback distances, and the Coors Building shares common walls with neighboring structures. The C-1 Zoning District has no off-street parking requirements and allows living quarters on second stories and above in commercial buildings.

The building had a roof surface replacement consisting of a TPO membrane roofing system installed in 2020. Otherwise, the building is in a substandard condition currently with improvements anticipated to be needed for occupancy including heating, plumbing, electrical, windows, doors, stairs, minor structural works and interior finishes including walls, ceilings, floors and partitions/ floor plan revisions. Fire suppression system and accessibility requirements will be determined based proposed usage and occupancy load calculated. It is anticipated that professional services shall be required to determine design criteria and may be required related to some or all of the elements listed above. The City of Raton retained Alpha Design architectural firm to draft a floor plan of the facility. Additional environmental, appraisal, engineering, architectural, or structural data or information regarding the building is not currently available.

The City of Raton commissioned several planning documents that address the importance of downtown revitalization, including:

- Raton Downtown Master Plan, 2015
Prepared by Sites Southwest Ltd. Co.; funding through New Mexico MainStreet
- City of Raton Economic Development Strategic Plan, 2021
Prepared by Better City consulting firm
- City of Raton Comprehensive Plan Update, 2021
Prepared by Consensus Planning Co.; funding through New Mexico Finance Authority

D. TEMPLATE RFP

These planning efforts recommend prioritization of downtown investment, entrepreneurial support and diversification and improvement of the community's housing stock. The planning efforts recommend additional strategies in downtown retail and hospitality offerings to bring tourists and visitors to the area and/or export goods.

The Raton Downtown Historic District is a historic district listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The district contains 95 significant buildings. The Coors Building was listed on the New Mexico State Register as Site No. 461 on 8-27-1976.

B. THE NEW MEXICO METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT CODE

The State of New Mexico has adopted the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code authorized under NMSA Chapter 3, Article 60A, 1 through 48 (inclusive), which finds that slum areas and blighted areas constitute a serious menace and may be injurious to the public health, safety, morals and welfare of the residents of the state. The Metropolitan Redevelopment Code also provides that portions of the slum or blighted area may be suitable for rehabilitation efforts by government assistance, when necessary; and the individual benefits accruing to persons as the result of the powers conferred by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code and projects conducted in accordance with its provisions are found and declared to be incidental to the objectives of that code and are far outweighed by the benefit to the public as a whole. Activities authorized and powers granted by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code are hereby declared not to result in a donation or aid to any person, association or public or private organization or enterprise. The necessity for these provisions and the power is declared to be in the public interest as a matter of legislative determination.

As stated in §3-60A-6, NMSA 1978, a local government shall afford maximum opportunity for the rehabilitation or redevelopment of the metropolitan redevelopment areas by private enterprise. A local government shall give consideration to this objective in exercising its powers provided by the Redevelopment Law [3-60A-5 to 3-60A-18 NMSA 1978], including the approval of metropolitan redevelopment plans consistent with the general plan for the local government.

C. THE 2015 RATON METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Raton City Commission approved the MRA Designation Report by Resolution 2015-40 on 11/10/2015 and adopted the Raton Downtown Master Plan/ Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan ("the MRA Plan") by Resolution 2015-45 on 11/24/2015. The location of the Coors Building is within the designated Metropolitan Redevelopment Area approved by the Raton City Commission, which generally consists of the commercial district of Raton's Original Townsite.

D. TEMPLATE RFP

Since adoption of the MRA Plan, the City of Raton has completed 14 infrastructure and public works improvement projects in the downtown area. Additional downtown public projects are currently in the planning and early implementation stage. Since 2015, a number of businesses have become established in the downtown area and the level of business activity in the area has improved significantly.

The MRA Plan was developed as a component of the Raton Downtown Master Plan. The Downtown Master Plan recommends that the creative community approach “seeks to shift the economy away from declining traditional industries, and grow the arts, performance, music, crafts, film, and other creative industries”. This strategy builds upon existing community assets (such as historic buildings and natural scenery) to attract more visitors seeking a unique, “authentic” experience that cannot be found elsewhere. This strategy promises not only economic benefits but also improves the quality of life and livability of a place.

In addition to the MRA Plan, the City of Raton has completed a Comprehensive Plan update and an Economic Development Strategic Plan. Both plans were adopted in 2021 and recommend that the City should focus on creating catalytic projects in downtown that are of significant scale to attract follow-on investment. The planning strategy states that the City should continue to prioritize capital improvements and work with Raton MainStreet on pursuing public/ private partnerships that bring more activity, businesses, and housing to make downtown a 24-hour destination.

With reference to the statute and MRA Plan, each Offeror is invited to submit its proposal for commercial/ business operations related to the development. Proposals shall be received from organizations, businesses or individuals proposing design, development and implementation of the Coors Building conforming to the character of the historic downtown commercial district and goals identified in the MRA Plan and Selection Criteria.

D. TEMPLATE RFP

PART 2 – PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL DETAILS

D. DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES REQUESTED

The City of Raton seeks to enter into a public-private partnership with a qualified developer in order to achieve the goals outlined in this RFP and in the MR Plan. In accordance with the New Mexico Redevelopment Code, §3-60A, NMSA 1978, the City of Raton requests proposals from an interested developer who will finance and construct a high-quality commercial project that conforms with the character of the historic downtown area and meets objectives of the MRA Plan and other plans discussed herein.

With reference to the statute and MRA Plan, each Offeror is invited to submit its proposal for commercial/ business operations related to the development. Proposals shall be received from organizations, businesses or individuals proposing design, development and implementation of the Coors Building conforming to the character of the historic downtown commercial district and goals identified in the MRA Plan and Selection Criteria.

Any sale price and/ or lease terms will be considered, providing that the City of Raton can show fair value was obtained as described in §3-60A-12, NMSA 1978.

Successful Offeror shall operate as an independent Developer and shall hire and supervise employees who are utilized to meet requirements and objectives. Offeror must identify key personnel to be assigned to the project, their qualifications and representative experience.

The City of Raton shall consider any type of proposal that meets objectives of the initiative. Offeror shall detail specific plans or proposed actions intended to achieve measurable success in meeting one or more stated objectives, and shall discuss anticipated sustainability of proposed measures. Offeror shall address the proposed structure and plan for implementation of actions and measures.

E. SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Development Concept Plan	25
2. Fair Value/ Community, Economic and Social Benefits of the Proposed Redevelopment	25
3. Consistency With Project and Downtown Plan Goals	20
4. Development Team Experience, Structure and Capacity	20
5. <u>Schedule</u>	10
	100

D. TEMPLATE RFP

F. PROPOSAL CONTENT AND SUBMITTAL

Offerors shall prepare submittal including narrative, data, renderings, drawings, details, or any applicable information the Offeror deems as necessary to the City's consideration of the proposal. Details of the criteria established for selection are detailed as follows:

- 1) **Development Concept Plan** – the Offeror is requested to provide information describing the proposed renovation and proposed usage of the building. The Offeror may provide information identifying the sustainable uses or mixed-usage that can viably be established and operate in the building for the projected 5 year to 10 year term of interest.

Offeror is asked to detail plans to assess building deficiencies, plan and design processes, and implement renovations and construction of improvements.

Offeror may discuss terms of building usage to include potential leasing to commercial or residential tenants and the basis of tenancy in the building. Include five year pro forma statement discussing operating analysis, assumptions and profit/ loss goals.

Offeror may discuss the proposed project's draw to local, regional and interstate visitors to the downtown commercial area. Discussion of business need and demand, store front design, signage or other strategies may be detailed.

- 2) **Fair Value/ Community, Economic and Social Benefits of the Proposed Redevelopment** – Submit proposal detailing terms proffered by Developer regarding purchase/sale or lease/rent of the building and real estate. Offeror may provide a detailed discussion, data demonstrating the "fair value" calculation of the proposal which considers the community, economic and social benefits of the planned redevelopment. The proposal shall consider elements of the development related to building a more vibrant community and related factors such as job creation, tax base expansion, economic development or economic activity and potential return to the city.

- 3) **Consistency with Project and Downtown Plan Goals** – Demonstration of knowledge of and conformance with goals established by Downtown Master Plan, Economic Development Strategic Plan, Comprehensive Plan and other planning efforts related to downtown revitalization. Stated goals include catalyzing further redevelopment and economic activity, enhanced place making in the area and increasing housing options.

- 4) **Development Team Structure, Experience and Capacity** – Past performance and overall experience of individuals or project team on similar projects. Provide description of proposed team structure with focus on components related to business planning and

D. TEMPLATE RFP

development, investment and capital access, historic building renovation and project management ability.

- 5) **Schedule** - Evaluation of the achievability of the Offeror’s time schedule and the Offeror’s ability to complete the project satisfactorily in a timely manner. Provide detail on proposed schedule of implementation of milestones including facility renovations and business development.

PART 3 – PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL PROCEDURE

G. PROPOSAL CONTENT

- 1. Offerors shall submit one (1) original, and five (5) copies of their proposal in a sealed envelope identifying their response to RFP No. 2022-1024.
- 2. Include Attachment 1, Campaign Contribution Disclosure Form.

H. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Written proposals responding to the Request for Proposals RFP No. 2022-1024 should be mailed or hand delivered to:

Hand Delivered:

City of Raton
Michael Anne Antonucci
City of Raton Procurement Officer
224 Savage Avenue
Raton, New Mexico 87740

Mailed:

City of Raton
Michael Anne Antonucci
City of Raton Procurement Officer
Post Office Box 910
Raton, New Mexico 87740

I. PROPOSAL DEADLINE

Proposals pursuant to RFP No. 2022-1024 must be submitted on or before January 10, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. MST. Proposals received after the date and time set fourth will be marked as "Late Submission" and will be returned unsealed to the respondent. No form of amendment will be accepted by the City of Raton after that time.

D. TEMPLATE RFP

J. SELECTION

1. The City of Raton Selection Committee will review and evaluate proposals.
2. The City will undertake negotiations with the top rated Offeror or multiple Offerors as determined to be in the best interest of the City of Raton.
3. Interviews will not be held with any of the Offerors. However, the City reserves the right to hold interviews if it deems necessary.

K. TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. The City of Raton will offer an Agreement for Development of the Project to the Offeror that best meets the City's requirements. The Project Developer shall be the Offeror that is recommended by the Selection Committee and selected by affirmative action of the Raton City Commission. The Development Agreement shall only become effective upon affirmative approval of the Raton City Commission.

The Development Agreement for the Project will include performance requirements and reversionary/clawback provisions that will be triggered if the performance requirements are not satisfied. Performance and reversionary provisions notwithstanding, additional terms of the Development Agreement of the sale or ground lease may be negotiated between the Developer and the City of Raton.

2. The Developer agrees to indemnify and save harmless the City against and from any and all claims by or on behalf of any person or persons, firm or firms, corporation or corporations, arising from the conduct of the Developer and will further indemnify and save the City harmless against and from any and all claims arising from any breach or default on the part of the Developer in the performance pursuant to the terms of this agreement or arising from any act or negligence of the Developer, or any of its agents, servants, employees or licensees, and from and against all costs, counsel fees, expenses and liabilities incurred in or about any such claim or action brought thereon; and in case any action or proceeding be brought against the City by reason of any such claim. Developer agrees to carry insurance appropriate to proposed services and contractual relationship with the City of Raton.
3. The Developer shall agree that certain powers of approval will be reserved to the City of Raton. Among these powers are zoning and community development authority, promotion of the health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community, conformance with community development objectives and criteria, protection against the unauthorized use of public money and other public resources, compliance with audit and financial requirements, and to protect and conserve public funding accountability.

D. TEMPLATE RFP

4. Incurring Cost
Any Cost incurred by the Offeror in preparation, transmittal, presentation of any proposal or material submitted in response to this RFP shall be borne solely by the Offeror.
5. Amended Proposals
Offerors may submit an amended proposal before the deadline for receipt of proposals. Such amended responses must be complete replacements for a previously submitted proposal and must be clearly identified as such in the transmittal letter. The City of Raton personnel will not merge, collate, or assemble proposal materials.
6. Offeror's Rights to Withdraw Proposal
Offeror will be allowed to withdraw their proposal at any time prior to the deadline for receipt of proposals. The Offeror must submit a written withdrawal request signed by the Offeror's duly authorized representative addressed to the Procurement Officer.
7. Proposal Offer Firm
Responses to this RFP, including proposal prices, will be considered firm for ninety (90) days after the due date for receipt of proposals or sixty (60) days after receipt of a best and final offer if one is submitted.
8. Disclosure of Proposal Contents
The proposals will be kept confidential until contract is awarded. At that time, all proposals and documents pertaining to the proposals will be open to the public, except for the material that is proprietary or confidential. The City of Raton will not disclose or make public any pages of a proposal on which the Offeror has stamped or imprinted "proprietary" or "confidential" subject to the following requirements.

Proprietary or confidential data shall be readily separable from the proposal in order to facilitate eventual public inspection of the non-confidential portion of the proposal. Confidential data is normally restricted to confidential financial information concerning the Offeror's organization and data that qualifies as a trade secret in accordance with the Uniform Trade Secrets Act 57-3A-1 to 57-3A-8 & NMSA 1978. The price of products offered or the cost of services proposed shall not be designated as proprietary or confidential information. If a request is received for disclosure of data for which an Offeror has made a written request for confidentiality, the Procurement Officer shall examine the Offeror's request and make a written determination that specifies which portions of the proposal should be disclosed. Unless the Offeror takes legal action to prevent the disclosure, the proposal will be so disclosed. The proposal shall be open to public inspection subject to any continuing prohibition on the disclosure of confidential data.

D. TEMPLATE RFP

9. No Obligation
This procurement in no manner obligates the City of Raton or any of its departments to the use of any proposed development services until a valid written contract is awarded and approved by the appropriate authorities.
10. Termination
This RFP may be cancelled at any time and any and all proposals may be rejected in whole or in part when determined such action to be in the best interest of the City of Raton.
11. Sufficient Appropriation
Any contract awarded as a result of this RFP process may be terminated if sufficient appropriations or authorizations do not exist. Such termination will be effected by sending written notice to the awarded vendor. The City of Raton's decision as to whether sufficient appropriations and authorizations are available will be accepted by the awarded vendor as final.
12. Legal Review
The City of Raton requires that all Offerors agree to be bound by the General Requirements contained in this RFP. Any Offerors concerns must be promptly brought to the Raton Procurement Officer.
13. Governing Law
This procurement and any agreement with Offerors that may result shall be pursuant to the State of New Mexico Procurement Code, or other applicable statute or ordinance.
14. Basis for Proposal
Only information supplied by the City of Raton in writing through this RFP should be used as the basis for the preparation of Offeror proposals.
15. Contract Terms and Conditions
The City of Raton reserves the right to negotiate with a successful Offeror (or Offerors) provisions in addition to those contained in this RFP. The contents of this RFP, as revised and/or supplemented, and the successful Offeror's proposal will be incorporated into and become part of the contract.

Should an Offeror object to any of the City of Raton's terms and conditions as contained in this section, the Offeror must propose specific alternative language. The City of Raton may or may not accept the alternative language. General references to the Offeror's terms and conditions or attempts at complete substitutions are not acceptable to the City of Raton and will result in disqualification of the Offeror's proposal.

D. TEMPLATE RFP

16. Offeror's Terms and Conditions

Offerors must submit with the proposal a complete set of any additional terms and conditions which they expect to have included in a contract negotiated with the City of Raton.

17. Contract Deviations

Any additional terms and conditions, which may be the subject of negotiation, will be discussed between the City of Raton and the selected Offeror and shall not be deemed an opportunity to amend the Offeror's proposal.

18. Right to Waive Minor Irregularities

The City of Raton Procurement Agent reserves the right to waive minor irregularities. The City also reserves the right to waive mandatory requirements provided that all otherwise responsive proposals failed to meet the mandatory requirements and/or doing so does not otherwise materially affect the procurement. This right is at the sole discretion of the Procurement Agent.

19. Bribes, Gratuities & Kickbacks

Pursuant to §13-1-191 NMSA 1978, reference is hereby made to the criminal laws of New Mexico (including §30-14-1, §30-24-2, and §30-41-1 through §30-41-3 NMSA 1978) which prohibit bribes, kickbacks, and gratuities, violation of which constitutes a felony. Further, the Procurement Code (§13-1-28 through §13-1-199 NMSA 1978) imposes civil and criminal penalties for its violation.

20. Protest

Any Offeror who is aggrieved in connection with a solicitation or award of an Agreement may protest to the City of Raton's Procurement Officer and the City Manager in accordance with the requirements of the State Procurement Code. The protest should be made in writing within 24 hours after the facts or occurrences giving rise thereto, but in no case later than 15 calendar days after the facts or occurrences giving rise thereto (§13-1-172 NMSA 1978).

21. Agency Rights

The City of Raton reserves the right to accept all or a portion of an Offeror's proposal.

22. Ownership of Proposals

All documents submitted in response to this Request for Proposals shall become property of the City of Raton.

D. TEMPLATE RFP

23. Contact with the City of Raton Officials or Staff Members

Any inquiries regarding the scope of work outlined in this RFP may be made to Michael Anne Antonucci, City of Raton Chief Procurement Officer: 224 Savage Ave. Raton, NM 87740 or mantonucci@cityofraton.com. No inquiries shall be allowed after 5:00 P.M. MST on December 14, 2022.

24. Responsibility of Offeror

At all times, it shall be the responsibility of the Offeror to ensure its proposal is delivered to the City of Raton by the proposal due date and time. Proposals arriving late will not be considered.

25. Campaign Contribution Form

Offerors shall complete Attachment No. 1 - Campaign Contribution Disclosure Form and submit with each copy of the proposal. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in rejection of proposal.

26. Disclosure Regarding Responsibility:

Any prospective Offeror and/or any of its Principals who seek to enter into a contract greater than sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000.00) with any state agency or local public body for professional services, tangible personal property, services or construction agree to disclose whether they, or any principal of their company:

- Are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, or declared ineligible for award of contract by any federal entity, state agency or local public body.
- Have within a three-year period preceding this offer, been convicted of or had civil judgment rendered against them for: commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state or local) contract or subcontract; violation of Federal or state antitrust statutes related to the submission of offers; or commission in any federal or state jurisdiction of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, tax evasion, violation of Federal criminal tax law, or receiving stolen property.
- Are presently indicted for, or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by any (federal state or local) government entity with, commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph B of this disclosure.
- Have preceding this offer, been notified of any delinquent Federal or state taxes in an amount that exceeds \$3,000.00 of which the liability remains unsatisfied.

The Offeror shall provide immediate written notice to the Procurement Officer if, at any time prior to contract award, the Offeror learns that its disclosure was erroneous when submitting or became erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.

D. TEMPLATE RFP

A disclosure that any of the items in this requirement exist will not necessarily result in withholding an award under this solicitation. However, the disclosure will be considered in the determination of the Offeror's responsibility. Failure of the Offeror to furnish a disclosure or provide additional information as requested will render the Offeror nonresponsive.

Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render, in good faith, the disclosure required by this document. The knowledge and information of an Offeror is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.

The disclosure requirement provided is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when making an award and is a continuing material representation of the facts. If during the performance of the contract, the Developer is indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by any government entity (federal, state or local) with commission of any offenses named in this document the Developer must provide immediate written notice to the Procurement Officer. If it is later determined that the Offeror knowingly rendered an erroneous disclosure, in addition to other remedies available to the City of Raton, the Chief Procurement Officer or City Manager may terminate the involved contract for cause. Still further the Chief Procurement Officer or City Manager may suspend or debar the Developer from eligibility for future solicitations until such time as the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of the Chief Procurement Officer or City Manager.

E. PROJECT RANKING TOOL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MATRIX

Community Benefit Matrix Development Proposal Evaluation Tool

Total Points

Out of X Total Points Possible

Sustainability	Potential points	Points earned by applicant	What to submit with application if qualifying for points
Reuse of Existing Structures.	<i>can only receive points in one line item</i>		
25% of project footprint utilizes existing structures	20		
50% of project footprint utilizes existing structures	25		
75% + of project footprint utilizes existing structures	30		
On-Site Solar	<i>can only receive points in one line item</i>		
Roof top is built to be solar-ready with necessary electrical infrastructure and structural support	20		
On-site generated renewable energy meets at least 20% of the building's anticipated energy needs.	30		
Integrate Net Zero Water and Energy approaches in the construction and operation of the building.			
Permeable Surface or Cool Pavement Parking	10		
Shift to Electric and Energy Efficient Appliances: housing units do not include gas hookups. Units include energy efficient electric appliances	5		
Water efficient appliances (For Redevelopment Only): install high efficiency WaterSense-labeled fixtures and water efficient equipment: 1.28 GPF toilets, 5 gpf urinals, 1.5 gpm aerators, 2.0 gpm showerheads and washing machines with an integrated water factor (WF) of 3 or less.	10		
Water efficient landscaping : landscape installed with desert-adapted xeriscape			
Encourages Alternative Transportation (walking, biking, transit)	<i>can receive points for all line items. Maximum of 55.</i>		
provides bus shelter	10		
provides exterior bicycle facilities	5		
provides interior bicycle facilities	10		
widened sidewalks	15		
increased landscaping	15		
	205		

Total for category

Community Wealth Building	Potential points	Points earned by applicant	What to submit with application if qualifying for points
Generates Gross Receipts Taxes (Includes Retail)	15		
Housing			
Encourages a diversity of housing types including townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, small apartments, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), tiny homes	20		
Encourages a diversity of housing types including townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, small apartments, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), tiny homes	20		
New Housing Units Added	<i>can only receive points in one line item</i>		
2 - 10 units			
11 - 21 units			
21 - 50 units			
Commercial or industrial projects	<i>can only receive points in one line item</i>		
350 - 10,000 interior square feet			
10,001 - 25,000 interior square feet			
25,001 - 50,000 interior square feet			
Affordable housing	30		
Employment			
General contractor and/or design firm is a local business or has a local consultant on the team	15		
Generates local employment during construction	5		
Generates sustained employment	10		
Development provides spaces for local businesses and entrepreneurs	15		
Applicant is a local, minority, LGBTQ+, veteran or women-owned business	15		
Generates work in traditional, culturally appropriate industries			
Generates work in new, desired industries			

E. PROJECT RANKING TOOL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MATRIX

OTHER			
Total for category			

Community Identity & Culture/Placekeeping	Potential points	Points earned by applicant	What to submit with application if qualifying for points
Opportunities for community to be involved in design	10		
Opportunities for community to be involved in programming	10		
Promotes and supports youth driven initiatives culturally appropriate and relevant messaging and activities	10		
Inclusion of other community infrastructure that is free or affordable for public use (e.g. library, community meeting rooms, community hall)	5		
Includes a program of organized activities that are affordable/free and appropriate for a range of users			
Potential to activate spaces and attract people at a range of times for a range of activities			
Other			
Historic Preservation	20		
Consistent with Town planning and design outcomes/goals			
Contributes to neighborhood revitalization			
Design is culturally responsive and reflects local values			
Provides a visitor information centre and/or interpretive signage			
on-site public space (plaza, pocket park, playground, garden or performance area)	15		
acequia restoration or interpretation	15		
adds street furniture	10		
adds public art	10		
pedestrian scale lighting	10		
storytelling installations and/or memorials	15		
Other			
Total for category			

Community Health & Wellbeing	Potential points	Points earned by applicant	What to submit with application if qualifying for points
Results in improved access to healthy food choices such as fresh produce (e.g. community gardens or fresh food outlet)	5		
Provides easy and convenient active transport opportunities (pedestrian, cycle and public transport) including end of trip facilities	5		
Design includes provision of comfortable and safe walkable pedestrian environments			
Total for category			

F. DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

Ordinance NO. 542

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF LOVINGTON AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A PROJECT PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT PROVIDING FUNDING TO THE DRY LANDS BREWING COMPANY - \$80,000 FOR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE A BREWERY IN LOVINGTON, LEA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Local Economic Development Act, NMSA 1978 §§ 5-10-1 through 5-10-13, (LEDA), the City adopted the Ordinance #495, authorizing the City to consider applications for economic development assistance, to include cultural facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Lovington Economic Development Corporation project meets the requirements for economic assistance and is a qualified entity as stated in Ordinance No. 495; and

WHEREAS, the City of Lovington City Commission wishes to enter into an agreement with the Dry Lands Brewing Company, in the form of a Project Participation Agreement, as provided for in Ordinance No. 495.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF LOVINGTON, NEW MEXICO:

Section 1. That the Mayor is authorized to execute on behalf of the Lovington City Commission an Project Participation Agreement with the Dry Lands Brewing Company that will provide funding in an amount not to exceed \$80,000.

Section 2. Repealer. All ordinances or parts of ordinances or provisions of the City of Lovington Code in conflict or inconsistent herewith be, and the same hereby are repealed to the extent only of such conflict or inconsistency, and as to all other ordinances, this ordinance is hereby made cumulative. This repealer shall not be construed to revive any ordinance or parts of any ordinance heretofore repealed.

Section 3. Severability. If any section, paragraph, clause or provision of this ordinance shall, for any reason, be held to be invalid or unenforceable, the invalidity or unenforceability of such section, paragraph, clause or provision shall not affect any other part of this ordinance.

Section 4. Effective date. This ordinance shall be effective thirty days after publication.

PASSED, ADOPTED, AND APPROVED this 9th day of May, 2016.

PAUL CAMPOS, MAYOR

ATTEST:

CAROL ANN HOGUE, CITY CLERK

F. DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

PROJECT PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

The Dry Lands Brewing Company (“Company”) and the City of Lovington, a municipal corporation organized and existing under the law the State of New Mexico (“City”), agree:

1. Recitals:

A. Pursuant to the Local Economic Development Act, NMSA 1978, §§ 5-10-1 through 5-10-13, (LEDA), the City adopted the Ordinance #495, authorizing the City to consider applications for economic development assistance, to include cultural facilities, and Ordinance No. 533 approving an economic development project for the Lovington Theater.

B. The Company has submitted an application to City for assistance under the LEDA Program. In the application, the Company has proposed that the project provide for the purchase and installation of brewing equipment and facility infrastructure for the Company. The Company shall be operated in Lovington, New Mexico

C. The City has adopted Ordinance No. 542 finding that the Company is a qualifying entity as defined in Section 5-10-3 (G) NMSA 1978 and approving this Project Participation Agreement (this agreement) as meeting the requirements of LEDA.

2. Substantive Contribution by the Dry Land Brewing Company: A minimum of five full time jobs will be created at the Dry Lands Brewing Company within the first year of operation. Additionally, the Company will begin brewing operations within 12 months of signing this agreement. The Company will also be required to maintain the five newly created jobs and remain in operation for a minimum of three years from opening of the brewing location. The terms and obligations of the parties under the Ordinance and Application are incorporated into this Agreement by reference.

3. Security Provided to City: City will require a Security Interest Document. Should the Company cease operation of the Dry Lands Brewing Company during the term of this agreement, it will repay \$80,000 to City. Any property or equipment acquired as a result of this Project, shall be transferred to the City and used by the City for future economic development purposes only.

4. Review: City will review the project timeline, progress and job creation annually until the three-year anniversary of this agreement. Job creation reporting will be supported by reports and documentation from the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions demonstrating the headcount of the operation to demonstrate compliance with this Agreement at each review cycle annually, and another at thirty (30) days prior to the anniversary date of this Agreement, for a period of one year.

5. Ratification: City and the Company hereby ratify all actions consistent with this Agreement that they or their respective agents may have taken in furtherance of the Project.

6. Miscellaneous: This Agreement binds and insures to the benefit of the parties and their respective successors and assigns. This Agreement may be amended or modified, and the performance by any party of its obligations hereunder may be waived, only in a written instrument duly executed by the parties. This Agreement may be executed in any number of counterparts, each of which is an original and all of which taken together constitute one instrument. This Agreement is

F. DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

governed by and is to be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New Mexico, without giving effect to its choice-of-law principles.

7. Transfer of Funds: Funds will be transferred to the Dry Lands Brewing Company upon their submittal of an invoice to the City that includes proof of payment for the equipment purchased for the brewing operation and an itemized statement or receipt listing the equipment purchased, to include model numbers and serial numbers.

8. Term of Participation Agreement: Will be agreed upon through City and the Company by the of until the third year anniversary.

Adopted by the City of Lovington

On the ____ of _____, 2016

For the City of Lovington

For the Dry Lands Brewing Company

Paul Campos, Mayor

Andres Arreola

Attest: Carol Ann Hogue, City Clerk

Daniel Torres

Patrick McMahon, City Attorney

WHEREAS, development of the Property shall begin within twelve (12) months of acquisition of the Property from the City; and

WHEREAS, business operations shall begin within eighteen (18) months of acquisition of the Property from the City; and

WHEREAS, the City shall retain the right of first refusal should Mr. Arreola and Mr. Torres desire to sell the property; and

WHEREAS, prior to the sale of the Property to another individual or group, the sale must be approved by the City of Lovington; and

WHEREAS, any additional or change of use of the Property by Mr. Arreola and Mr. Torres or any future owners must have prior approval by the City of Lovington; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Arreola and Mr. Torres or any future owner(s) shall not violate any ordinances or other regulations of the City of Lovington or County of Lea, or any other state or federal rule, regulation or law, now in force or hereinafter adopted, which in any manner shall affect the use of the premises.

WHEREAS, Mr. Arreola and Mr. Torres proposal is that they would purchase the Property for one hundred dollars (\$100); and

F. DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

WHEREAS, the City desires to sell the Property to Mr. Arreola and Mr. Torres for the remuneration described as it is located in a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area and the described use conforms to the City of Lovington Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City has published notice of this sale prior to the consideration of this Ordinance as required by N.M.S.A 1978, Sec. 3-54-1(D)(1999);

NOW THEREFORE, be it ordained by the Governing Body of the City of Lovington, County of Lea, State of New Mexico, as follows:

1. The sale of the Property as described on Exhibit "A" by the City of Lovington to Mr. Arreola and Mr. Torres for one hundred dollars (\$100) for a total purchase price of one hundred dollars (\$100) is hereby approved.
2. The total purchase price shall be due and payable to the City at closing.
3. The City shall purchase Title Insurance in the amount of the total purchase price. All other costs shall be borne by Mr. Arreola and Mr. Torres
4. The Mayor and City Manager are authorized to execute all documents necessary to implement the terms of this ordinance.
5. Notice shall be published pursuant to the terms of N.M.S.A. 1978, Sect.3-54-1 (1999).

ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF LOVINGTON ON THE 23RD DAY of NOVEMBER, 2015.

SCOTTY GANDY, MAYOR

ATTEST:

CAROL ANN HOGUE, CITY CLERK

G. SAMPLE PROPERTY DISPOSAL RESOLUTION

ORDINANCE NO. 540

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SALE TO ANDRES ARREOLA AND DANIEL TORRES OF A TWO LOT PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED ON THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF MAIN STREET AND JEFFERSON AVENUE.

WHEREAS, the City of Lovington, hereinafter “City”, holds title to two (2) lot parcel of certain real property located in Lovington, Lea County, New Mexico and being more particularly described as Lots 5 and 6, Block 2, Original Lovington Subdivision as found in Book 004, Page 340; and

WHEREAS, the City finds that this real property is no longer essential to any municipal purpose and the City’s interests would be best served by the sale of the property; and

WHEREAS, in Request for Proposal No. 102215 the City requested proposals for the purchase of this real property; and

WHEREAS, all proposals received in response to RFP No. 102215 were evaluated based upon the proposed utilization of the property, proposer’s capacity to achieve the proposed use, the economic impact of the proposed use, and the purchase price offered; and

WHEREAS, Andres Arreola and Daniel Torres, hereinafter “Mr. Arreola and Mr. Torres“, submitted a response to the RFP in which they offered to purchase this real property, with such property more particularly described on Exhibit “A” attached hereto and incorporated herein and hereinafter referred to as the “Property”; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Arreola and Mr. Torres proposed to use to construct and operate a brick oven pizza restaurant and craft brewery; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Arreola and Mr. Torres acknowledges that development and construction of any structures on the Property must be designed to conform with the character of the downtown district and such designs must be reviewed and approved by the Lovington City Commission; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Arreola and Mr. Torres shall make no offensive use of the Property; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Arreola and Mr. Torres shall not use or lease the Property, or any part thereof for permanent or temporary residences or RV or trailer parks; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Arreola and Mr. Torres shall not use or lease the Property, or any part thereof for any use that is extra hazardous on account of fire, chemical waste or for any purposes that is a nuisance or that is offensive to other tenants or occupants of other structures in the vicinity; and

H. SAMPLE CLAWBACK CLAUSE LANGUAGE

CABQ: SOMOS Development Agreement

"Section 6.3. Claw Back of Land Value. Subject to Force Majeure, in the event that Developer has not completed construction of the Project within twenty-two (22) months from the Date of Conveyance, Developer shall remit back to the City a maximum amount equal to the value of the land contributed for the Project, which has been determined to be Five Hundred Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$535,000.00). Developer shall procure a performance bond for this Project in the amount of Five Hundred Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$535,000.00) prior to the Date of Conveyance as described in Section 9.5 below. Upon Construction Completion as described in Section 3.2.D. or payment as provided in this section, Developer shall have no further obligations concerning the Claw Back of Land Value."

Sample Clawback Clause Language

"Notwithstanding any provision herein to the contrary, in the event that the Developer no longer meet one or more conditions of the grant of the economic development incentives hereunder, then the City shall have the right to clawback any economic development incentives granted, paid, or issues from and after the dates the Developer failed to meet that condition or those conditions and shall have the authority to eliminate or to reduce proportionally the amount of economic development incentives being granted, paid, or issued until the termination of this Performance agreement."

APPENDICES

A. Plan Review

B. Community Engagement Plan

C. Community Input Summary

D. Demographic Overview

E. Market Index

A. PLAN REVIEW

Plan Name	Year
Town of Taos Comprehensive Plan	2022
Strong At Heart: Downtown Strategy Report	2018
Town of Taos Parks + Recreation Master Plan	2018
Town of Taos Affordable Housing Plan	2020
Town of Taos Bicycle Master Plan	2017
Town of Taos Community Tree Care Plan	2019
Enchanted Circle Trails Plan	2017
US 64-NM 68 Cultural Resource Survey	2018
Taos Congestion Relief Study Phase 1B	2016
Airport Master Plan	2020
Rio Fernando De Taos Watershed-Based Plan	2019
Taos Arts & Culture District Plan	2012
Taos Arts & Culture Districts: Taos Arts & Cultural District Resource Team Assessment	2009
Taos County Community Conservation Plan	2017
Taos Historic Plaza Cultural Landscape Report	2016
Taos Walking Map of Historical Architectural Styles	2016
Community Economic Development Strategic Plan	2011
Region 7: Taos Regional 40-Year Water Plan	2016
Taos Youth and Family Center Master Plan	2018
Town of Taos Facility Condition Assessment	2019
Vision 2020 Master Plan	1999
Water And Sewer Master Plan for the Town of Taos	2015
Historic Taos County Courthouse Condition Assessment & Preservation Plan	2013
Taos Destination Stewardship Plan: Draft Situation Analysis Report	2023
Weaving Together Past, Present and Future: Identifying Opportunity within the Arts + Cultural District of Taos, NM	2010
Taos Smart Growth Implementation Assistance: Concepts for the Paseo del Pueblo Sur Corridor	2006

A. PLAN REVIEW

Town of Taos Vision 2020 Master Plan (1999)

In 1999, the Town of Taos adopted The Vision 2020 Master Plan (Master Plan) to guide future growth and development for the next twenty years. The Master Plan seeks to protect and enhance Taos' unique landscape, character, neighborhoods, and natural resources while bolstering traditional economic pathways and developing new opportunities. The Master Plan's goals include street design and usage that are reflective of Taos' history and that enhance neighborhood connectivity. The Master Plan lays out the vision that in Taos, a family with median income can afford a home of the average-price. Supportive of this vision, important housing goals and strategies identified in the plan include the prioritization of density, infill, mixed-use zones, and development of a mix of housing types to increase housing access and affordability. Economic development goals include encouraging and supporting small, sustainable economic industries without negative environmental impacts or detriment to the rural character of the area.

The plan's recommendations subsequently inform and are in line with the contents of more recent plans such as SAH and this MRA Plan. Business owner incentives enabled by the MRA designation and plan can help meet the economic goals put forth by the Master Plan. These include the MRA code's authorization of loans and grants from the local government for building repairs, remodels, and modifications. MRA enabled tools like expedited development review processes and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) apply to the Master plan's economic goal to "combine a mixture of thriving tourist and local-serving businesses, cottage industries and home businesses".

Town of Taos Bicycle Master Plan

The 2002 Town of Taos Bicycle Master Plan (Bike Plan) aspires to build a bicycle friendly community in Taos, meet the town's growth needs, discourage excessive vehicle speeds, and increase transportation and recreation opportunities in Taos. The Bike Plan advocates for cooperation between local, state, and federal governments and local "bicycle advocates, landowners, and the general public." Strategies presented in the Bike Plan for making Taos bicycle-friendly include creating a number of bike lanes and bike routes, some of which could be incorporated over time; increased development of bicycle facilities ; and loop ride development, which dovetails with MRA connectivity recommendations.

Taos Congestion Relief Study: Phase 1B Report

The Taos Congestion Relief Study: Phase 1B report, submitted to the town circa 2007, establishes the purpose and need for transportation improvements, and, based on substantial traffic increases in Taos over the past several decades, offers a detailed evaluation of traffic alternatives. The study assesses traffic relief alignments to address the safety requirements of the traveling public and minimize interruptions to the community via engagement activities like stakeholder working groups. Specific goals are to increase road safety and decrease congestion. The plan identifies areas with deficient infrastructure and congestion. There was not funding available to advance beyond the relief study and into environmental analysis of relief studies.

A. PLAN REVIEW

Historic Taos County Courthouse Condition Assessment & Preservation Plan

The 2013 Historic Taos County Courthouse Condition Assessment and Preservation Plan (Courthouse Assessment) provides a comprehensive study of the history and, at the time of its writing, current conditions of the Courthouse. The Courthouse Assessment identifies threats and opportunities for the structure, determines locally advocated-for uses, and establishes appropriate preservation measures. The historic courthouse is now, in 2024, in the ongoing process of being renovated, as was recommended by the Courthouse Assessment. Upon completion, the courthouse will be architecturally restored and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. What an MRA designation and plan can contribute to the courthouse is dependent on courthouse ownership and the timeline in which the renovations are completed. The Courthouse Assessment posits a goal of keeping the Courthouse in the public realm and encouraging “long term occupancy by appropriate tenants which may include but are not limited to: Nonprofit organizations, Arts organizations and/or museum groups, Local artisans and/or manufacturers.” The Courthouse Assessment offered cost estimates for rehabilitating the Courthouse building so that it can continue to be utilized and enjoyed by the community. In the future, the MRA fund and other business owner incentives could be of benefit to tenants of the Courthouse and its ongoing maintenance.

Taos Historic Plaza Cultural Landscape Report

The 2016 Taos Historic Plaza Cultural Landscape Report (2016 Report) recognizes the importance of the Plaza as a gathering space for cultural events and programming. The report was created to steward the integrity of the plaza and make recommendations for how it can once again become a place people want to be. MRA designation is applicable to making physical improvements to the plaza, such as “Reestablish(ing) the Plaza as a level, open space, with clear lines of sight” and can assist with the preservation and repair of features that contribute to the form and scale of the Plaza. Applicable MRA-enabled tools include the MRA fund, authorized use of bonds, and creation of a Business Improvement District (BID)

Enchanted Circle Trails Plan

The 2017 Enchanted Circle Trail Plan (Trails Plan) promotes awareness of local trails and their associated economic benefits. The plan identifies new priority trails for a variety of user groups and skill levels, including seniors, youth, and those with disabilities. The Trails Plan identifies active transportation routes, both in-town and in the backcountry, in an effort to connect communities and provide access to Taos’ unique amenities. The plan promotes increased trail usage via the safe separation of bikes and pedestrians from traffic; Supported by 51 percent of respondents to surveys associated with this plan, separation of bikes and pedestrians from traffic is deemed integral to increased trail use. The survey respondents advocated for infrastructure such as sidewalks, wide shoulders, and bike lanes. Plan goals include developing a community-based trail plan that guides future trail development efforts and facilitates cooperation among land managers, property owners, and diverse stakeholder groups.

A. PLAN REVIEW

Strong at Heart (SAH)

The 2018 Strong at Heart Plan (SAH) brought Taoseños together to create a shared vision for downtown Taos. SAH seeks to generate and implement practical place-based strategies to achieve its vision through open and inclusive dialogue about heritage, belonging, and economic vitality. Broadly, SAH recommends creation and implementation of an MRA to foster “the financial and organization capacity needed to encourage good projects in good places,” (p. 67) such as Taos-appropriate development downtown. SAH lays out recommendations that include regulating short-term rentals, increasing housing downtown, creating missing middle housing, enacting a form-based code, improving street connectivity, addressing local policy barriers, creating infill, convening local property owners to establish a coordinated parking strategy, and increasing capacity for Public-Private-partnerships. The MRA can address SAH’s specific zoning recommendations on a site-specific basis. With the support of the town government, adoption of recommended district-wide zoning changes identified first in SAH and then in the MRA plan can take place.

Town of Taos parks and Recreation Master Plan

The purpose of the 2018 Taos Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Parks and Rec Plan) is to develop an informed and well-researched framework for stewarding Taos’ unique collection of parks and open space. “These areas help reinforce community values and provide locations for community interaction, recreation, and cultural events.” (ex. Summary); they also offer health benefits and economically benefit the residents of Taos. The Parks and Rec plan indicates that an effort is being made to achieve code compliance, increase climate resilience, offer activities in the parks for different ages and interests, develop a realistic operating budget, and assess park distribution. Implementation of the MRA can inform walkway and path improvements and increased connectivity proposed by the Parks and Rec Plan. Recommendations in the MRA Plan suggest land-use and programming in Taos’ Parks.

2019 Town of Taos Community Tree Care Plan

The 2019 Town of Taos Community Tree Care Plan (Tree Care Plan) is a community-derived tree care plan that aspires to “two basic principles: Caring for what we have and planting for the future.” (p. 4) Goals put forth in the Tree Care Plan include establishing tree inventories and developing strategies and standards for tree pruning, protection, and risk management. The Tree Care Plan recommends development of a Tree Planting Program to shore up populations of trees appropriate to a changing climate and educate the public on the importance of tree species diversity in the urban canopy. The Tree Care Plan’s goals include conducting extensive tree identification, growing a “sustainable urban forest in the town of Taos” (p.7), increasing stakeholder collaboration in the region, offering educational programs to the public, and developing a heritage tree program. One of the plan’s important strategies is the development of a functional leadership structure for tree care decision makers, which it posits will be enabled by researching funding mechanisms and developing land-use regulations (p.12).

A. PLAN REVIEW

Town of Taos Affordable Housing Plan 2020

The 2020 Town of Taos Affordable Housing Plan (Housing Plan) enables the local government to contribute to affordable housing development, for which the State of New Mexico requires either an affordable housing plan or an MRA. Affordable Housing Plans and MRAs are tools that have different, intersecting utility and are more potent when paired. An affordable housing ordinance legally enables city-wide affordable housing development. The MRA can contribute to affordable housing development by also circumnavigating the state anti-donation clause and enabling a local government to partner with a developer and donate land or sell a facility at a fraction of its market value. The Housing Plan examines the housing needs of ... and recommends developing workforce housing and inclusionary zoning.

2022 Comprehensive Plan

The 2022 Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) updates the 1999 Vision 2020 Master Plan and attempts to incorporate subsequent community plans, studies, reports, ordinances, and policies.

Incorporating the recommendations from SAH, the Comp Plan notes that an MRA designation would aid implementation of downtown goals. The Comp Plan lays out a goal of gathering community input to develop policies and actions supportive of local businesses and entrepreneurs; the plan posits doing this through the creation of an MRA designation and Plan, which can help Taos meet economic development goals and offer incentives for maintenance of vacant buildings. The Comp plan identifies Taos MainStreet as a partner to work with. Pros of an MRA are listed in various sections, such as the ability to enter public and private partnerships, development agreements, fund projects through revenue bonds, acquire funding through community development block grants and other state and federal sources, Implement tax increment financing districts (TIF) and employ the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) (p. 75). The importance of the plaza is noted on p. 76. LEDA can be implemented without an MRA, but the presence of an MRA can increase its effectiveness by opening site-specific opportunities for what is otherwise LEDA's broader approach. The New Mexico MainStreet MRA Implementation Toolkit characterizes LEDA as being useful for town-wide business development, for instance, while MRA can be used for physical development projects in a district.

B. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Taos MRA Plan – Public Involvement Plan

Contents

Taos MRA Plan - Project Purpose	1
Planning History	1
Public Engagement Objectives	2
Engagement Objectives	2
Equity Considerations.....	2
Public Engagement Approach.....	3
Outreach Tools.....	3
Engagement Methods & Activities	4
Engagement Phases.....	4
Project Leadership and Participation.....	5
Stakeholder Groups	5

Taos MRA Plan- Project Purpose

The Town of Taos, along with Taos MainStreet, applied for and received a New Mexico Finance Authority (NMFA) planning grant to support the preparation of a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) Plan for the designated downtown Taos MRA. The Taos MRA Plan will be guided by a community process to define the community’s vision for the MRA District and identify strategies, projects, and programs that will stimulate economic development and help to create a thriving downtown. When adopted by the local government, the MRA Plan is used to guide district revitalization.

Planning History

This plan builds on previous planning efforts such as *Strong at Heart*, which included extensive community dialogue that helped to:

- Identify what Taoseños love about their community and why that matters.
- Develop a shared vision for our downtown and the role we want the downtown to play in our prosperity and quality of life.
- Identify solutions for ongoing community challenges of pedestrian and cyclist safety, declining downtown economic vitality, transportation and parking congestion, and protection of the historic district’s character.
- Define what type of development is appropriate for downtown, where that development should happen, and how it should occur in a way that is consistent with our community’s values.

Strong at Heart identified the designation of an MRA district and the development of an MRA Plan as important strategies to enable quality downtown development guided by community values. Participants in the planning process identified economic development goals which could make Taos more livable and complement its unique sense of place. Goals included building a stronger, more diverse, and resilient economy, expanding housing choices

and affordability, improving employment opportunities, expanding options for local businesses, and protecting historical character and natural resources.

The Taos MRA Plan will jump back into this conversation with the intention of providing the community with the financial tools and organizational capacity needed to guide and manage future growth, ensuring residents can flourish in their home community.

Planning Coordination

Taos MRA Plan public engagement will coordinate with parallel planning efforts, including the Destination Stewardship Plan and the Taos Plaza community involvement.

Public Engagement Objectives

The project team believes that inclusive and participatory planning approaches are essential to the development of a place-based, meaningful, and action-oriented revitalization plan. As per the New Mexico Redevelopment Code [P.O. 5/82C/4243](#), there are specific public notice and public hearing requirements for an MRA plan. These requirements are meant to provide the community with an opportunity to review the draft plan and provide comments to be considered by the local government prior to the preparation and adoption of the final plan.

We are committed to going above and beyond the requirements of the MR Code to ensure robust opportunities for public participation and decision-making throughout the Taos MRA Plan process. Our approach is designed to:

- Broaden community engagement to include stakeholders that are historically underrepresented or left out of planning conversations.
- Provide opportunities for the community to participate in shaping the future growth and development of a vibrant and livable downtown.
- Acknowledge the layered histories, diverse cultures/identities, as well as changing landscapes that shape what the Town of Taos is today and where it is going.
- Build trust in the planning process and foster collaborative decision-making.
- Strengthen civic capacity and local leadership.

Engagement Objectives

The objective of the Taos MRA plan public outreach and engagement activities is to:

- Inform the community about the project.
- Provide transparency about the purpose of the MRA Plan as well as what it can and can't do.
- Develop an understanding of community concerns, strengths, values, and priorities.
- Provide information about and gather input about revitalization and redevelopment approaches.
- Identify preferred strategies, projects and programs designed to reflect Taos' unique character, challenges, and opportunities.
- Engage key stakeholders that could support the implementation of the MRA plan.

Equity Considerations

Inclusive and equitable public engagement allows community members, particularly those who have historically been left out of planning conversations, to provide place-based knowledge and input that influences the development of

the specific revitalization strategies, projects, and programs recommended in the final plan. Engagement with community members from diverse backgrounds and perspectives throughout plan development also improves the quality of the plan, and helps build community buy-in.

It is important to acknowledge that different groups of people experience community change in Taos differently. During the *Strong at Heart* planning process, public input indicated growing concerns over the impacts of future economic development and growth on the people, place, economy, and environment. Community members identified challenges of growing economic inequity, residential and small business displacement, loss of cultural heritage, and impacts to the local landscape and ecosystem. These concerns are being taken seriously and will be central to Taos MRA Plan conversations.

This planning process seeks to foster greater collaboration between residents, local government, local businesses, and community organizations to develop a downtown revitalization plan that “enhances quality of life, creates pathways out of poverty, and complements Taos’ unique character.”

Public Engagement Approach

The Taos MRA Plan engagement approach will include a variety of methods to broaden public participation. We will use both traditional and creative outreach methods which offer various depths of interaction and involvement tailored to ensure equitable engagement.

- **Build Awareness/Provide Transparency** - We will use social media, a project website, email lists, and information sessions to keep the public informed about the purpose, activities, and outcomes of the Taos MRA Plan.
- **Seek Feedback** - We will identify opportunities to participate in existing events and activities to meet people where they are and connect with community members who aren't traditionally involved in town planning efforts. We will use questionnaires, preference boards and other creative methods to gather feedback and input on the MRA Plan.
- **Facilitate Collaboration** – We will use targeted stakeholder engagement such as stakeholder interviews and focus groups to discuss concerns, strengths, values, and priorities as well as identify targeted revitalization strategies.
- **Build Capacity** - Ongoing engagement will be designed to encourage collaborative decision-making, strengthen local leadership, and build capacity to act on the Taos MRA Plan.

Outreach Tools

- **Project Website** – We will use a StoryMap website to provide information about the project, planning history, community questionnaire, and other project documents.
- **Social Media** – We will use the Town and Taos MainStreet social media to spread the word about the Taos MRA Plan
- **Email List** – Meeting sign-in sheets, project website sign-up, and existing stakeholder lists will be used to develop a contact list for the project. The project team will send emails about important phases in the project and opportunities to get involved.
- **Flyers and posters** – Printed materials will be distributed around Town to share website and questionnaire links as well as events and other opportunities to get involved.
- **Media Announcements** – Local radio and newspapers will be used for public notices and project promotion.

Engagement Methods & Activities

- **Outreach at Community Events** – We will identify existing community events throughout the planning timeframe to participate in and connect with the Taos community. These events will primarily be used to spread awareness about the Taos MRA plan and gather basic information from the community about values and vision.
- **Information Session** – We will host an in person or virtual information session, as appropriate, to share information about metropolitan redevelopment, the proposed MRA boundary expansion, the goals and opportunities of the MRA plan, and ways for the community to get involved.
- **Community Questionnaires** – Online surveys will be used to collect input and feedback from different stakeholder communities during the planning process. Public surveys will be used to assess the relevance of past plans, identify goals and concerns for downtown Taos, and prioritize community benefit requirements for redevelopment projects. Surveys for local businesses and property owners will help to identify the types of supports and incentives that could be used to encourage the creation of affordable housing, mixed-use, and infill development.
- **Community conversations** – Focus group sessions with small groups of stakeholders will assess the relevance of past plans, discuss aspirations and concerns for downtown Taos, identify strategies and projects to create a thriving downtown for everyone, and prioritize community benefit requirements for redevelopment projects.
- **Stakeholder Interviews** – Interviews with local property and business owners and other stakeholders will help to assess what types of programs and incentives could help to stimulate economic development and identify the types of financing tools and strategies that are appropriate in downtown Taos.
- **Community Workshop** – Once a draft of the Taos MRA Plan has been developed, a community workshop will provide a venue for community members to learn more about the plan process, provide feedback on recommended strategies and projects, and provide input that will inform the final plan.
- **Public Hearings** – The Taos MRA boundary expansion and the Taos MRA Plan will be discussed at Public Hearings, that will provide time for community comment prior to council adoption. The boundary expansion hearing will be in December and the MRA Plan adoption hearing will be in August.

Engagement Phases

August – October: Establishing a collective vision - Where do we want to go? Jumping back into the conversation from *Strong at Heart*. Assess where we are now. Establish our guiding principles for the project. Determine whether the vision, goals, and strategies from SAH are pointing us in the right direction. Community capacity mapping. Understanding the network of nonprofits, community orgs, small businesses, etc. that can support redevelopment.

- Engagement activities – Community Events, Info Session, Community Questionnaire, Stakeholder Interviews
- Outcomes – Taos MRA vision statement draft

November – January: How do we get there? – Ongoing community capacity mapping. Getting more specific about strategies, projects, and programs. Linking our goals with specific strategies, catalytic projects, and action items.

- Engagement activities – Stakeholder Interviews, Community Conversations, Public Hearing
- Outcomes – Community Capacity Map; Draft strategies, projects, and programs

February – April: How can we make it real? – Exploring different financing and implementation strategies. Developing a phased implementation approach. Developing the plan document

- Engagement Activities – Community Questionnaire #2, Community Conversations

4

- Outcomes – Financing and implementation approach, implementation resources, MRA Plan document draft

May – August: Building capacity –Building capacity to hit the ground running and implement catalytic projects after plan adoption.

- Engagement Activities – Draft Plan Community Workshop, Public Hearing
- Outcomes – Final plan

Project Leadership and Participation

The Taos MRA Plan is being led by a project team composed of the following Town staff and officials as well as a consultant team from Groundwork Studio.

- Chris Larsen, Town of Taos (TOT)
- Dinah Gonzales, TOT
- Andrew Gonzales, TOT
- Mayor Maestas, TOT
- Charles Whitson, Taos MainStreet
- Amy Bell, Groundwork Studio (GWS)
- Maren Neldam, GWS
- Claire Jordy, GWS
- Jim O’Donnell, consultant

The process will receive guidance from a Steering Committee composed of the following local leaders, business representatives, and community advisors:

- Linda Montoya, Town of Taos (TOT)
- Elizabeth Palacios, TOT HPC
- Norbert Mondragon, TOT Planning & Zoning Commission (P&ZC)
- Jessica Stern, Taos County
- Anita Bringas, UNM
- Warren Houser, downtown property owner
- Lindsey Pfaff-Bain, Taos County Chamber of Commerce (TCCC)
- Mona Nozhackum, Taos Ski Valley

Stakeholder Groups

The planning team is working to identify stakeholder groups and community leaders, particularly amongst underrepresented groups. Stakeholder groups will include:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| • Community organizations and coalitions | • Residents |
| • Arts & cultural organizations | • Youth & education |
| • Business community | • Taos Pueblo |
| • Real estate & developers | • Underrepresented stakeholder |

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C. COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY

Taos MRA Community Input Summary

03.26.24

Community Involvement

Robust community engagement helped to ensure the Taos MRA Plan was developed with and for the community.

- 10 steering committee members, monthly meetings
- 678 residents took the Community Survey which was available in English and Spanish.
- 75 businesses, property owners, and organizations took the Business and Organization Survey.
- 1200+ community members were engaged at events in and around downtown Taos.
- 17 high school students and young adults participated in a focus group focused on youth vision for downtown.
- 5 high school students from Taos High School Travel Club went through MRA outreach training and led community outreach activities around Taos and the Taos Ski Valley
- 21 community leaders participated in a focus group to discuss MRA Plan goals and strategies
- 10 community leaders participated in interviews
- 20 community members provided feedback on the draft MRA Plan at the Community Open House

Outreach and Engagement Activities

Outreach Tools

Various outreach tools were used to spread the word about the MRA Planning process and provide educational materials about how an MRA Plan could support the Town in realizing community goals for the downtown.

- Project Website – ArcGIS Storymap Website
- Social Media
 - Taos MainStreet FB and Instagram
 - Facebook groups – AskTaos!, Taos Roundtable, Taos Roots
- Email distribution – Taos MainStreet mailing list
- MRA Zine – small, pamphlet-like publication that includes text, images, artwork.
- Flyers and posters
- Media announcements

Surveys

Online surveys were used to collect input and feedback from different stakeholder groups. A community questionnaire, open to the broader public, was used to assess the relevance of past plans, identify concerns and aspirations for downtown Taos, and learn more about the types of future development people would like to see (or not see). The survey was provided in English and

1

Spanish. A survey for local businesses, organizations, and property owners helped to identify the key challenges of operating downtown and the types of support the Town could provide to help businesses thrive. Incentives were offered for both surveys, and students from Taos High School Travel Club were paid to collect survey responses.

- Community Survey – 678 responses
- Business Survey – 75 responses
- Open from September 16, 2023, to January 31, 2024

Community events

Community events offered opportunities to connect with the broader Taos community, spread awareness about the Taos MRA Plan, and have conversations about community concerns and aspirations. The MRA Plan team tabled at 3 community events, connecting with over 1200 people in Taos. MRA “zines” were distributed which included information about the goals of the MRA planning process and links to the website and community survey. At each event, a large QR code banner was used to gather information about what people love about downtown Taos. Event participants wrote about feelings, places, and events on colorful stickers and added them to the banner which served both as a data gathering tool and collaborative art piece.

Farmers Market - September 13, 2023

- ~30 people engaged
- PASEO – September 13, 2023
 - ~200 people engaged
- Halloween on Taos Plaza – October 31, 2023
 - ~1000 people engaged

Community Conversations

Focus group sessions with small groups of stakeholders helped to identify community concerns and aspirations, identify strategies and projects to create a thriving downtown for everyone, and prioritize the community benefit requirements for MRA projects. Community Conversations took place in person, lasted approximately two hours, and were facilitated using interactive boards in small and large group conversations.

- True Kids 1 – October 23, 2023
 - 17 attendees, high-school aged students
- Projects & Strategies – December 13, 2023
 - 21 attendees, mostly representatives of local government, organizations, and businesses in Taos
- Finance & Implementation – January 9, 2024
 - 7 attendees, mostly civic sector leaders

Public Open House

A Public Open House was hosted at the Taos Civic Center to facilitate conversations about various topics including community identity and priorities, connectivity, transportation, placemaking, economic development, and housing. These topics were informed by the Strong at Heart Downtown Strategy Report. Conversations helped revisit and update the goals from SAH and

ensure that the MRA Plan identifies specific strategies and priority actions to support these goals. 26 attendees signed in and approximately 35 were in attendance throughout the evening.

- Public Open House - December 13, 2023
 - Open to public, 26 attendees

Interviews

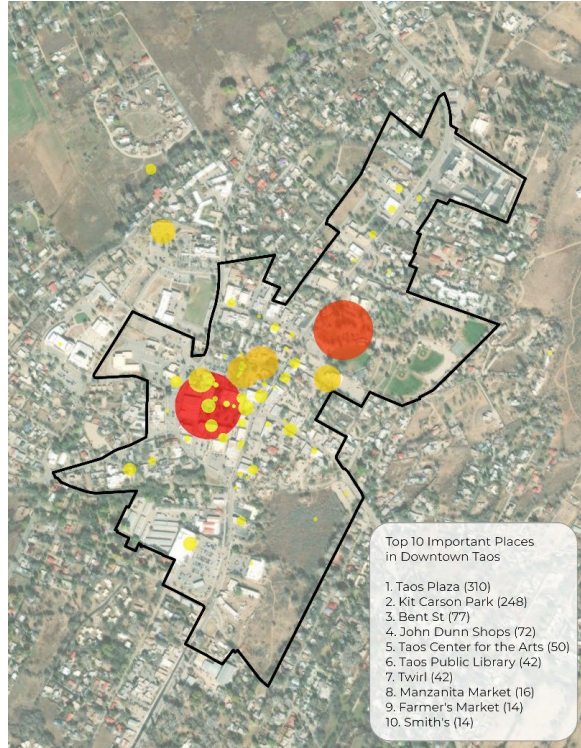
Interviews with local property and business owners, community leaders, and long-term Taos residents provided opportunity to dig into survey topics more deeply, get background information on community sentiments, and fill gaps in information about downtown policies, programs, projects, and partnerships.

- 10 1:1 interviews

What we heard

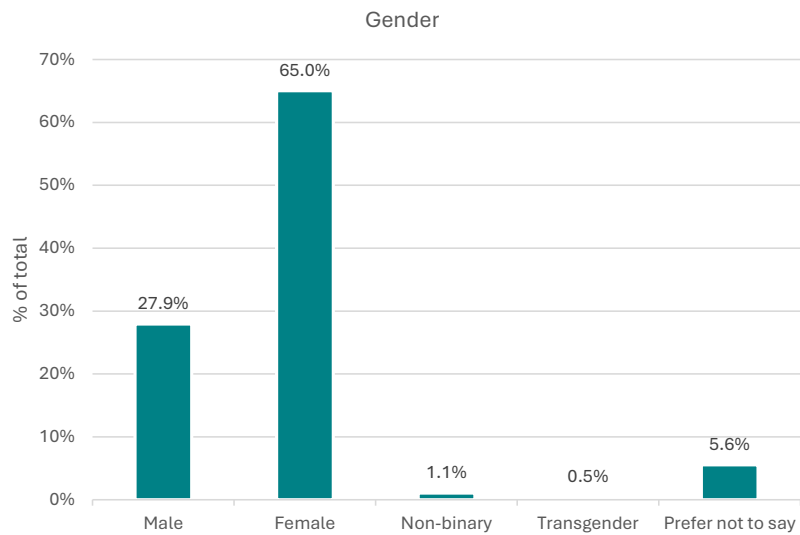
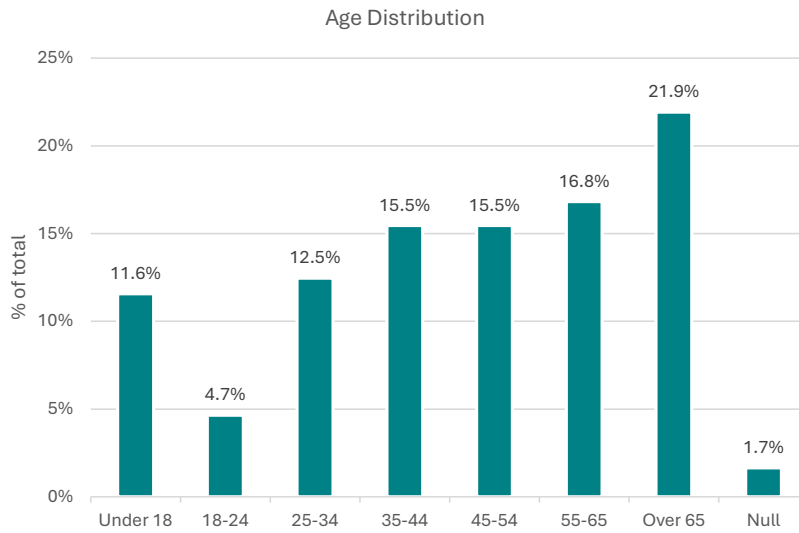
Community Input Highlights

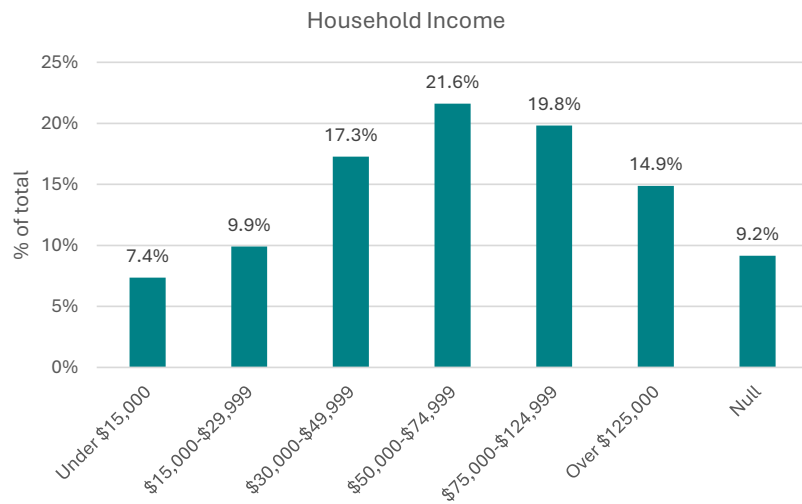
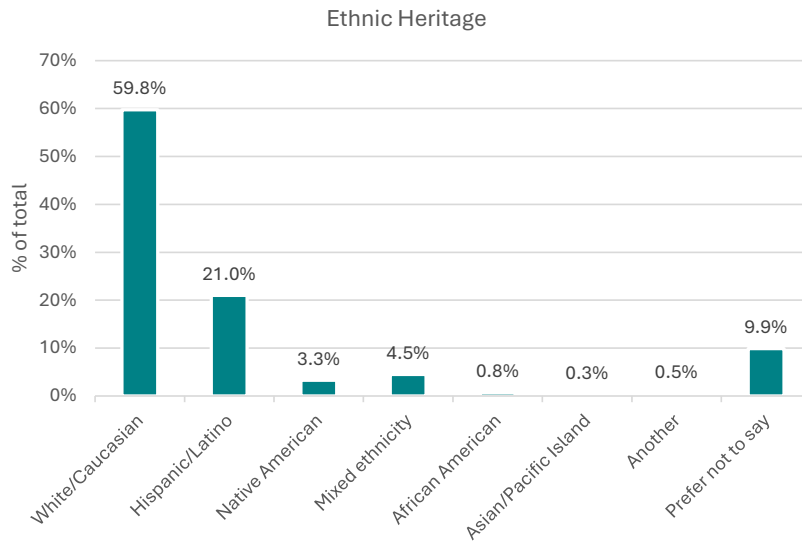
1. Overwhelmingly, community engagement participants shared that the plaza is their favorite place downtown followed closely by Kit Carson Park. Other important areas include Bent St, John Dunn Shops, TCA, and the Library.



Community Survey

Survey Participant Demographics

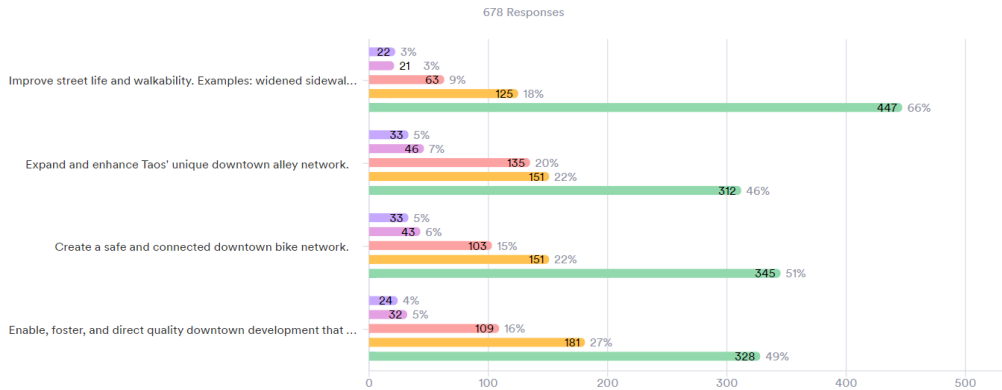




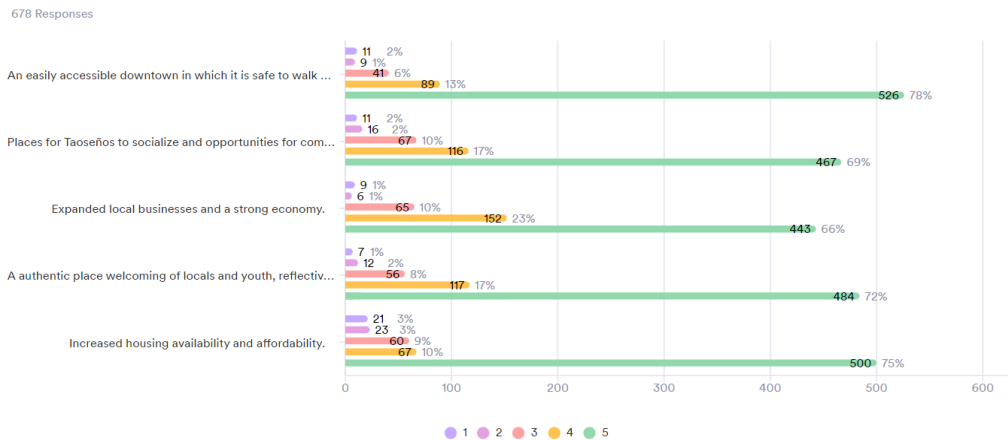
Survey Results

Checking in on the goals and strategies from Strong at Heart: Survey participants were asked to rank the goals and strategies identified in the SAH Downtown Strategy Report. Survey respondents tended to resonate with the SAH goals, on average rating the goals between 4.5-4.6 in importance. Based on goal ranking and write-in responses, the top downtown goal related to connectivity, with a focus on creating an easily accessible downtown with a safer and more comfortable pedestrian and cycling environment. Respondents resonated slightly less with the strategies, rating them on average between 4.0-4.4 in importance

On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being not important at all and 5 being extremely important, how important are the following STRATEGIES for downtown Taos?



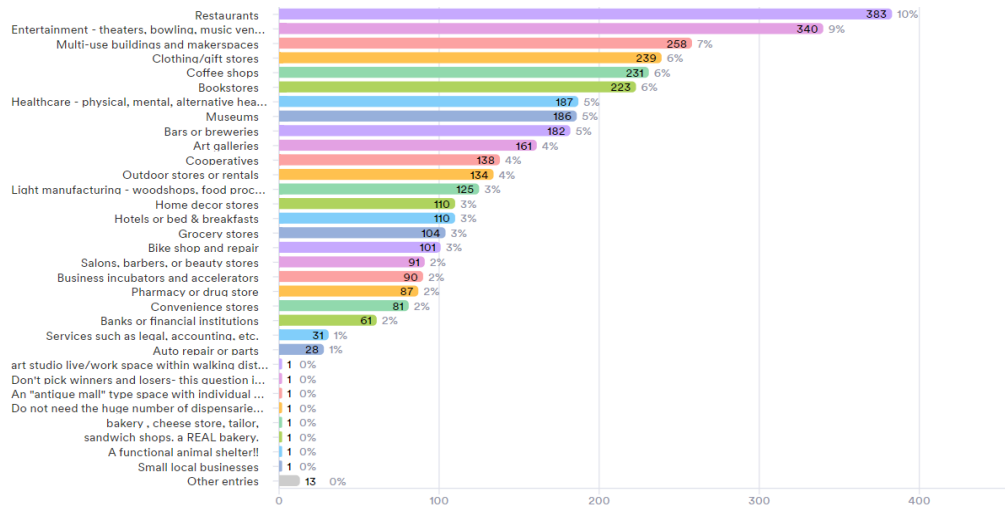
On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being not important at all and 5 being extremely important, how important are the following GOALS for downtown Taos? (Goals are from the Strong at Heart downtown report.)



Types of businesses and services that people would like to have downtown:

Which business or service types would best compliment existing establishments in downtown Taos? Select your top 5.

3702 Responses - 11 Empty

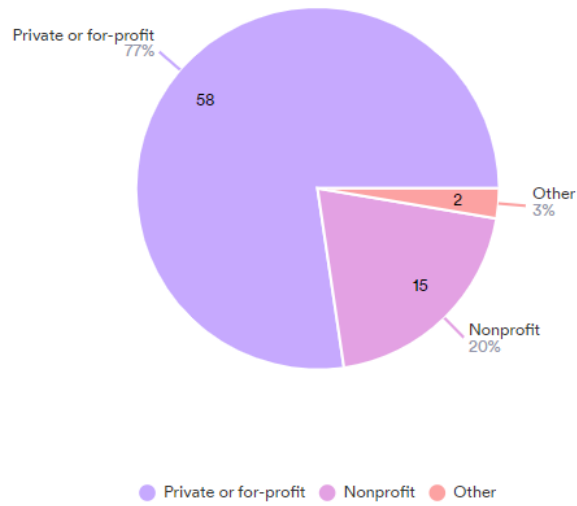


Business Survey

Business Survey Results

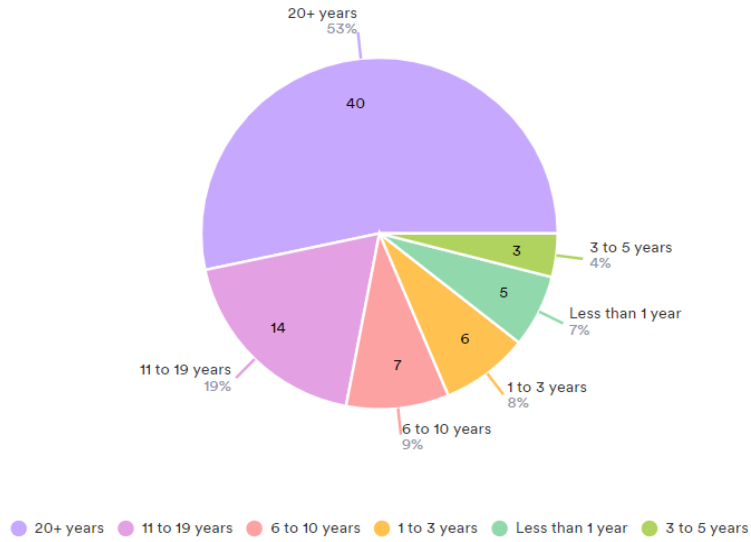
What type of entity best describes your business/organization?

75 Responses



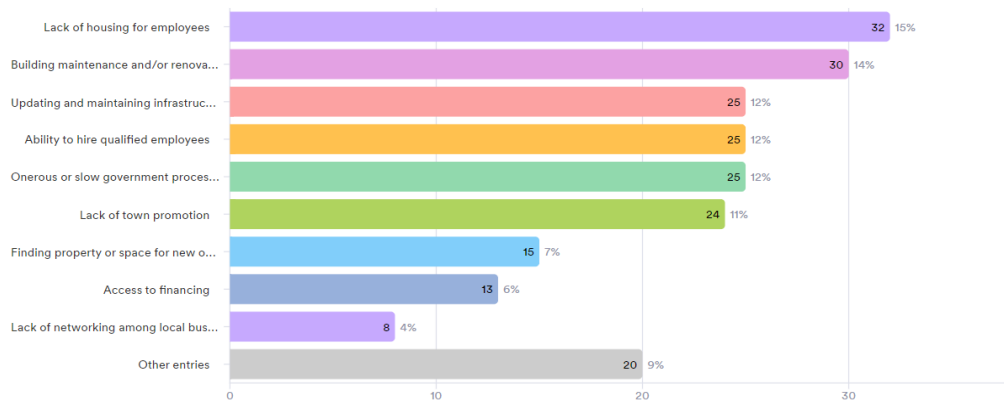
How long has your business/organization been in operation in Taos?

75 Responses



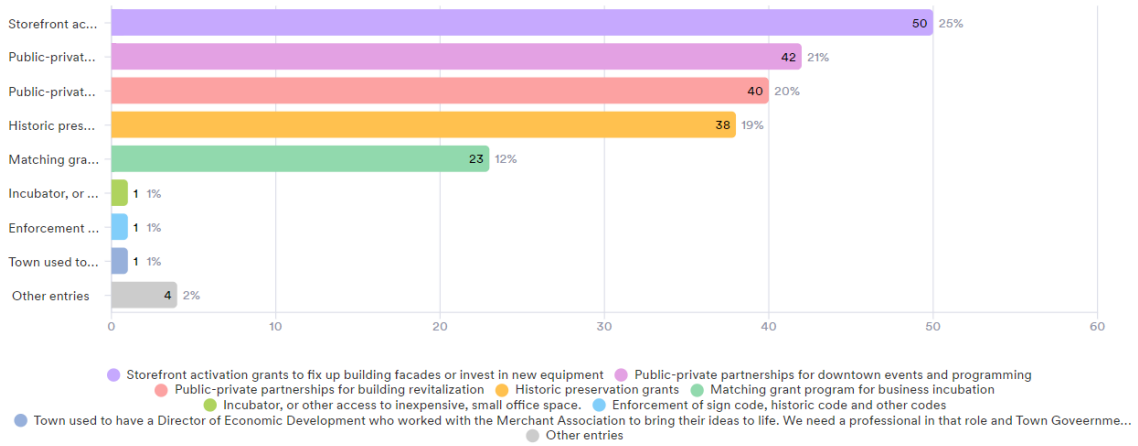
What are the 3 biggest challenges, issues, or concerns faced by businesses and organizations in downtown Taos (choose top 3)

217 Responses



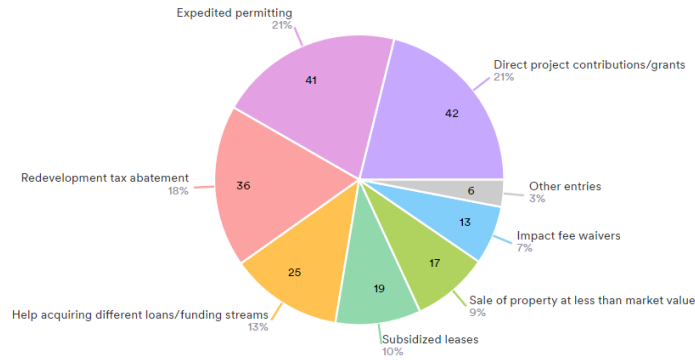
What types of programs and campaigns would be helpful to support downtown community economic development, locally owned businesses, and entrepreneurs? (choose top 3)

200 Responses- 1 Empty



What types of incentives could the Town offer to encourage (re)development? (choose top 3)

199 Responses- 5 Empty



Opportunity Sites: The repurposing and redevelopment of vacant buildings and lots throughout the downtown is a top priority. Focus group participants and interviewees had many ideas about the types of development that would be welcome downtown including housing, mixed-use, parks, public spaces, and parking, as well as redevelopment ideas for specific properties. These ideas can inform what types of projects the Town chooses to incentivize and support in the future.

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D. DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW	MRA DISTRICT	TOWN OF TAOS	TAOS COUNTY
2023 Total Population	273	6742	34802
2020 Total Population	34802	6522	34489
2010 Total Population	258	6058	32937
The following data is from the 2020 Census			
% Female	52%	53.5%	51%
% Male	48%	46.5%	49%
% Over 65 years old	30%	30%	27%
% Under 21 years old	18%	20%	20.50%
Median Age	52.1	50.4	50
% White	51%	59%	55%
% Two or More Races	16%	23%	22%
% Native American	23%	5%	7%
Some Other Race		11%	
Asian		1%	
Black		1%	
% Hispanic	32%	44.3%	51%
Household Data			
Total Households	114	3178	15747
Average Household Size	2.43	1.99	2.17

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW	MRA DISTRICT	TOWN OF TAOS	TAOS COUNTY
% Family Households	50%	50%	56%
% Non-Family Households	50%	50%	44%
% of Non-Family Households Living Alone	81%	84%	83%
Median Annual Household Income	\$41,757	\$46,170	\$49,481
Housing Data			
Total Housing Units	170	3825	20904
% Vacant	19%	17%	25%
% Occupied	81%	83%	75%
# Owner Occupied	38%	42%	54%
# Renter Occupied	29%	41%	21%
Median Monthly Owner Costs, with Mortgage		\$1,552	
Median Monthly Owner Costs, without Mortgage		\$437	
Median Monthly Rental Costs, with utilities (2021)	\$875	\$905	\$927
The following data is from the 2000 and 2010 Census ESRI Forecasts for 2023			
2023 Civilian Population 16+ in the Labor Force	109	2,832	14,782
2023 Population 16+ Employed	89%	93.5%	93.7%
2023 Population 16+ Unemployed	10.2%	6.5%	6.3%
2023 Employed Population 16+ by Industry	97	2,468	13,850
Services			
Construction			

E. MARKET POTENTIAL INDEX (MPI)

Market Potential Index (MPI), Retail – Categories 7 or more points above the U.S. average of 100 in either the Taos MRA and/or the Town of Taos		
Product/Consumer Behavior	MPI, Taos MRA District	MPI, Town of Taos
HH owns 1 cellphone	124	114
HH spent \$1-499 on most recent home computer	112	111
HH spent \$500-999 on most recent home computer	112	107
Spent \$51-99 at Convenience store over 30 days	115	93
HH Has 1 Vehicle Covered with Auto Insurance	112	106
HH Did Home Improvement/12 Mo	107	105
Used Maid/Prof Cln Svc (+Furn/Carpet)/12 Mo	108	105
Owns shares in Mutual Fund (Stock)	112	109
Owns shares in Mutual Fund (Bonds)	118	114
Have Interest Checking account	107	106
Have Non-Interest Checking Account	109	106
Avg. \$1-110 Monthly Credit Card Expenditures	112	113
Avg. \$701-1000 Monthly Credit Card Expenditures	113	107
HH Used Turkey (fresh or frozen)/6 mo.	102	109
HH Owns Cat	105	122
Buying American is Important: 4-Agr Cmpl	110	107
Bought Digital Book/12 Mo	103	109
Bought Hardcover Book/12 Mo	107	106

Market Potential Index (MPI), Retail – Categories 7 or more points above the U.S. average of 100 in either the Taos MRA and/or the Town of Taos		
Read Daily Newspaper (Paper Version)	120	112
HH Owns Portable GPS Device	113	114
Own Digital Point and Shoot Camera/camcorder	120	115
Own E-Reader	111	110
Own Portable MP3 Player	106	108
HH Owns 1 TV	115	109
HH Owns 2 TVs	110	106
HH Subscribes to Cable TV	116	104
Data collected from MRI Simmons by ESRI; ESRI forecasts for 2023 and 2028		



COURTESY OF GWS