

NOVEMBER 2 - 5, 2009

Arts & Cultural Districts

TAOS ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT
RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT



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CHAPTER 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the passage of the New Mexico Arts and Cultural Districts Act in 2007, the stage was set for providing communities with a framework for broadening economic development through arts and culture. A fast growing movement was underway nationally and globally to examine how arts and culture affect rural and urban economies. Recognizing the state's rich cultural heritage, New Mexico MainStreet had been developing an Arts and Cultural District initiative since 2005. Taos was authorized as one of four "Second Round" communities qualifying for the Arts and Cultural Districts program. The 2008 "First Round" of the Arts and Cultural Districts program authorized the pilot communities of Silver City and Las Vegas for the program's debut. Taos' long history as one of the nation's most prominent artist colonies and as a community where the state's Hispanic, American Indian, Anglo, and various other cultures find creative inspiration in the contemporary and traditional forms of visual arts, performance, music and fine crafts imbues Taos with a distinct identity as an art town with a deservedly stellar international reputation, making it an ideal focal point for this effort.

During a four day visit in November, 2009 a resource team made up of subject matter experts from throughout the state gathered in Taos to pursue an on-site assessment of the community's arts and

cultural infrastructure, institutions, organizations and practitioners. They conducted numerous interviews with a broad spectrum of residents and researched issues to ultimately develop final recommendations. These recommendations are categorized into four areas: cultural planning, marketing and promotions, physical planning and design, and capacity building and finance. A public presentation was given to both the community at large and the Taos Arts and Cultural District Steering Committee at the conclusion of the visit.



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During the concluding public presentation, each group highlighted what it identified as community assets. These observations included Taos' historically significant architecture, its long-established tradition as an arts community, the important impact of its University of New Mexico branch campus, and an international awareness of the creative integrity that thrives in all corners of this diverse and culturally rich town. The presentations also noted areas in which the community could seek improvements or adjustments, including a need for providing better access to the community's creative assets, helping local artists in their efforts to become entrepreneurs; developing a cogent, comprehensive and consistent marketing plan promoting Taos to New Mexico vacationers; upgrading the appearance of Taos' downtown Plaza; and determining the most appropriate Arts and Cultural District boundaries in a community with a dispersed arts and cultural infrastructure.

Cultural economic development is one of many tools for creating jobs and bettering communities across New Mexico. It's most effective when partnered with the resources of a responsive local government, the dynamism of a broad spectrum of local residents, and the commitment of all parties.

CHAPTER 2

NEW MEXICO AND CREATIVE ECONOMIES

Within the past two decades a rapid acceleration of multimedia technology characterized by the global deployment of the Internet has enabled the revitalization and transformation of many downtown business districts and inner-city neighborhoods as culture and arts magnets. While the phenomenon of artists' enclaves is longstanding, only recently have public policies and development incentives been crafted to specifically encourage the growth of cultural economic development in targeted places ranging from rural communities to distressed urban industrial zones.

Pundits and economic forecasters anticipated and analyzed the rise of what's come to be known as the creative economy as a direct result of trends converging to form an interconnected global marketplace. Among the first to describe the needs and attributes of a new generation of creative economy workers flourishing in this emerging marketplace was management guru Peter Drucker, who in his 1993 book "Post-Capitalist Society" predicted the fundamental importance of knowledge and information rather than labor, capital or resources, to the creation of wealth and prosperity in a digital age.

Subsequent studies, including Richard Florida's 2002 book "The Rise of the Creative Class", have confirmed the critical importance of arts and cultural sector professionals in creative economies while describing their specialized technological and infrastructure needs. Rather than narrowly define the roles played by



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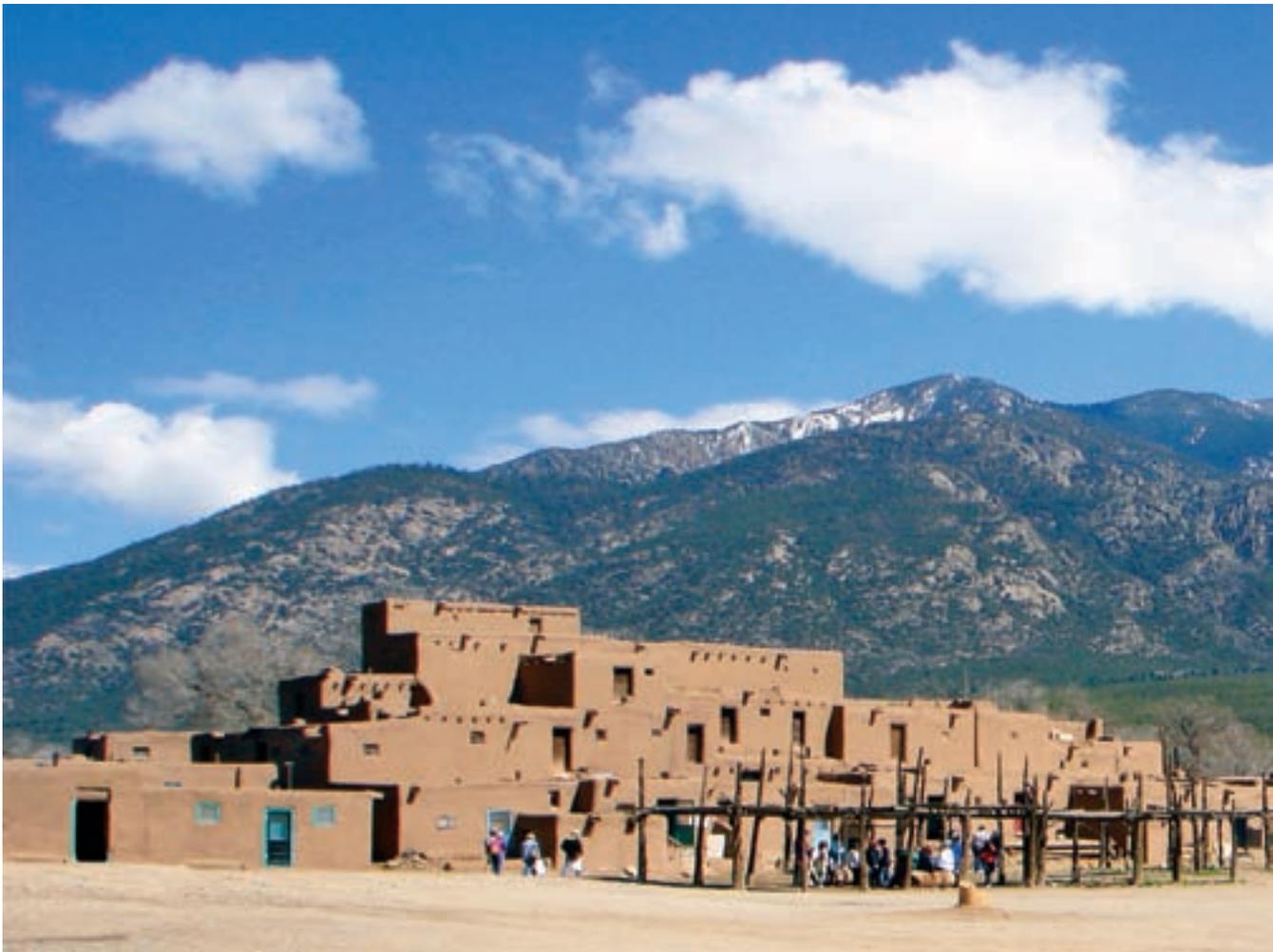
artists in this creative class, Richard Florida broadly described a creative economy's super-creative core as well as allied creative sector professionals employed in fields as diverse as education, sciences, public policy and health care. Detailing the individuals and expertise comprising the Creative Class, Florida pointed to these occupational categories:

Super-Creative Core Occupations:

- Computer and math
- Architecture and engineering
- Life, physical, and social science
- Education, training, and library
- Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media

Creative Professionals' Occupations

- Management
- Business and financial operations
- Legal
- Health care practitioners and technical
- High-end sales and sales management



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New Mexico residents enjoy one of the longest and most influential creativity-based economies in North America. While many visitors to the state are familiar with the arts, performance, music and crafts traditions of our Pueblo Tribes, Navajo Nation and Apache Tribes, far fewer are aware of the rich creative legacies established by New Mexico's Hispanic, African American, Asian and Anglo cultures. Regardless, New Mexico's geographic isolation helped preserve and strengthen its residents' artistic integrity and traditions of fine craftsmanship...a legacy that endures in its influence on today's generation of artists.

Enhancing a Creative Economy and Building a Creative Ecology In Taos

While Peter Drucker and Richard Florida provided uniquely American insights and analyses of the emerging creative global economy, other scholars and economists have added valuable perspectives as the industry matures. Among these, London based consultant John Howkins, in his new book "Creative Ecologies: Where Thinking is a Proper Job (2009),"contributed perspectives on the development of a "cultural ecology" in a city, state or region as the newest way to describe the dynamic creative and innovative economic activity that is changing the manner, means and methods of cultural production and consumption.



In Howkins' estimation, a major challenge confronting the development of a creative economy for any location and government is the transition from traditional hierarchical and formal policy and project implementation structures that support traditional economic development to a new model that is more flexible. A particular concern is the lack of quantifiable data measuring creative economy industries, potential economic impacts, production values and net revenues. This lack of hard data has led to the marginalization of creative economic development as a priority policy initiative.

The dynamics of creative economic production and consumption are often intangible and hard for city leaders to identify and therefore justify in funding support programs. Yet the beneficial effects of a dynamic creative economy are tangible, enjoyed and emulated in creative capitals such as San Francisco, Austin and Denver. Of critical importance to success in creative economic development is an understanding by community leaders and creative workers alike of the fluid, interconnected nature of creative populations and assets (and their nurturing) in contrast to more familiar modes of development.

For Taos and other New Mexico Arts and Cultural Districts, the transition from economic development to creative economic development to nourishing a true and vibrant cultural ecology will require new skills, flexibility and patience for the system to take root and grow. City leaders must look beyond traditional "cultural gatekeepers" such as the symphonies, museums, galleries, theaters (although they must be included at the policy table) and attract diverse constituencies. A new city administration, and a new Taos Arts and Cultural District Steering Committee create an exceptionally fertile environment for a creative ecology to grow.

CHAPTER 3

TAOS AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY



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Taos presents a unique conundrum for the development of Arts and Cultural Districts in New Mexico and also within the community itself. What has recently been acknowledged by many writers, thinkers, and policy makers as "creative economic development," a new and dynamic revitalization and job creation strategy has actually been active in Taos for a century or more.

In many ways similar to Santa Fe, Taos has simply pioneered cultural economic development in the Southwest for decades, and its challenges perhaps represent those of an advanced arts and cultural community seeking to remain competitive in a digital marketplace.

After the symbolic millennium transition in 2000, in fact many leading cities worldwide sought guidance and new strategies to retain their tourism primacy and advantages. "Creative Economic Development," the "Experiential Economy," and "Creative Tourism," are the most recent paradigm innovations that are relevant to Taos.

These strategies build upon a well-established cultural and tourism infrastructure in order to innovate and offer visitors "participatory experiences" emphasizing authenticity, education, discovery, cultural interaction, self-improvement, and other potentially life-changing opportunities highly prized by today's travelers. Many experts predict that various "passive" forms of tourism, recreation, shopping and cultural experiences are becoming outdated or regressive for new and current multi-media savvy generations. This evolution has been succinctly described as the change from a "purchasing" paradigm to an "experiential" paradigm.

The New Mexico Arts and Cultural District Resource Team was impressed by the awareness of many Taos community members and leaders of this critical shift in consumer values and its potential impact on the Taos economy. The challenge of transforming the Taos cultural economy to a more "experiential" platform is complex, but may be fun and exhilarating, suitable to Taos' well-deserved reputation for innovation, resourcefulness and self-reliance.

A new program launched in October 2004 by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) called the "Creative Cities Network" is a good place to investigate. In fact, Santa Fe is UNESCO's first American "Creative City" and hosted the Santa Fe International Conference on Creative Tourism on September 28-October 2, 2008.

Creative Cities within the UNESCO framework designate a thematic area of concentration from among the following: Literature, Cinema, Music, Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Media Arts and Gastronomy. The global partnership includes such distinctive cities as Edinburgh, Melbourne, Bologna, Glasgow, Seville, Berlin, Buenos Aires, Montreal, Nagoya, and others (a total of twenty cities have been designated as of 2010).

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The Taos Arts and Cultural District Steering Committee may be interested in working cooperatively with the city of Santa Fe (contact City Councilor Rebecca Wurzbarger), the New Mexico Arts and Cultural Districts program and other partners to develop new "creative tourism" programming and training opportunities.

It is clear that a new breed of "cultural entrepreneur" is vital to Taos and in fact all of New Mexico's Arts and Cultural Districts. Providing technical support, training, incentives and opportunities is a mutual concern.

CHAPTER 4

NEW MEXICO INTERAGENCY ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT INITIATIVE

In response to economic uncertainties impacting numerous communities across the state New Mexico's Legislature in 1985 adopted the National Trust for Historic Preservation's MainStreet program to address these economic declines. Las Vegas, Silver City, Socorro, Raton, and Gallup were subsequently authorized as the state's five original MainStreet communities.

New Mexico MainStreet began developing an Arts and Cultural District initiative in 2005. Presentations outlining the initiative were made to MainStreet communities and officials of the Economic Development Department. During the decade's middle years several nationally recognized authors released books, wrote articles and published reports analyzing the far reaching social and economic impacts being experienced by communities positioned to take advantage of rapidly expanding economies driven by creative sector entrepreneurs, artists and cultural organizations. Communities across the nation took a keen interest in their local opportunities to participate in this shifting development paradigm. In addition, Santa Fe and Albuquerque commissioned economic analyses of their arts and cultural economies while the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs assessed the impact of the state's creative economy.



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In the 2007 Legislative session the New Mexico Arts and Cultural Districts Act was passed and signed into law by Governor Bill Richardson. The enabling legislation outlined a process by which communities could apply for a designated arts and cultural district and receive approval from the New Mexico Arts Commission. Incentives to be applied within these districts were offered to municipalities and private property owners. The

director of New Mexico MainStreet was designated as the Arts and Cultural Districts Coordinator. State agencies including New Mexico Arts, the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Department of Tourism and the New Mexico Scenic Byways program have joined New Mexico MainStreet in its efforts to present the Arts and Cultural Districts program to communities statewide. Other founding partners in the Arts and Cultural Districts program include the Museum of New Mexico Foundation and the McCune Charitable Foundation.

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New Mexico MainStreet's regularly scheduled quarterly meeting of MainStreet communities in late 2007 introduced the Arts and Cultural districts application and authorization process to prospective candidate communities. In January 2008 Silver City and Las Vegas, the two communities that submitted the highest rated Arts and Cultural District applications were authorized as pilot communities for the program's implementation.

Silver City's influential group of visual artists, musicians, performing artists and creative economy entrepreneurs was viewed as offering notable opportunities for expanding the community's wide range of creative enterprises. Las Vegas' emphases on historic and cultural preservation as well as its proximity to Santa Fe and Taos were factors viewed as offering substantial heritage tourism marketing opportunities.

CHAPTER 5

RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT PROCESS

During the first week of November, 2009 a Resource Team of thirteen subject matter experts under the direction of New Mexico MainStreet met in Taos to conduct a Resource Team Assessment of the community's strongest arts and cultural assets, its most promising potentials, most immediate weaknesses and leading issues requiring long term solutions. The background expertise of the Resource Team members reflected the inter-departmental structure of the Arts and Cultural District Program's authorizing legislation as signed into law by Governor Bill Richardson. Additional expertise was brought into the Resource Team through local and national consulting authorities in fields such as cultural planning, urban planning, and economic development.

Throughout its four days of on-site research and analysis the Resource Team gathered in a dining room of the Taos Inn for early morning and late evening strategy sessions in which each of the Resource Team's four focal groups discussed their findings and objectives. The focal groups pursued these areas of inquiry: cultural planning, marketing and promotion, physical planning and design, and capacity building and finance.

During its time in Taos the Resource Team was provided with background community information as well as key community contacts by the local leadership of the Taos Arts and Cultural District Steering Committee. In its efforts to assemble, analyze and evaluate a wide range of information concerning the community's arts and cultural successes and challenges the Resource Team emphasized strategies and objectives that could be developed and achieved within timeframes not exceeding 24 months. In practical terms many objectives could be realized sooner.

Each of the Resource Team's four focal groups engaged with numerous members of the community through open public meetings held at the Taos Convention Center, as well as guided tours of the community led by members of the local steering committee, walking tours of downtown Taos, and social events and casual conversations. In the evenings, the Resource Team members met to share their findings with other team members in an intensive effort to discover common themes and craft a comprehensive vision for recommendation to the Taos Arts and Cultural District Steering Committee.

The Resource Team concluded its four-day visit with a public presentation at the Taos Convention Center. During this multi-media presentation, which lasted for one hour including questions from audience members, each of the Resource Team's four focal groups delivered a brief summary of its findings and recommendations. This report provides an in-depth format for further developing each focal group's findings.

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CHAPTER 6

RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT PURPOSE



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Informing community residents, organizations, businesses and public officials about local impacts and expectations pursuant to being authorized by New Mexico MainStreet for an Arts and Cultural District is one of the primary purposes of the Resource Team Assessment process. As a new program impacting one of New Mexico's most prominent economic sectors it's understandable that individuals and businesses, especially those whose residences, studios, performance venues and retail establishments happen to be located within the anticipated boundaries of the Arts and Cultural District seek to discover whether the district will have a noticeable change on their lives and businesses.

The Resource Team agendas developed in collaboration with the Taos Arts and Cultural District Steering Committee presented numerous opportunities for local residents to directly voice their questions and concerns to Resource Team members. Members of the Taos Arts and Cultural District Steering Committee were present throughout most Resource Team forums and forays, providing valuable local perspectives in response to questions from community members and businesses.

The authorization of Taos as a New Mexico Arts and Cultural District opened a vibrant community conversation which embraced issues such as local government policies, state tourism development strategies, educational opportunities and the proliferation of summer art festivals.

The public forum at Taos Convention Center provided an important opportunity for developing in-depth conversations on the need for Taos to carefully draw the boundaries of its Arts and Cultural District with an emphasis on contiguous and walkable areas. Other concerns included the scarcity of arts education opportunities and creativity experiences available to Taos youth, and the need to develop a readily accessible access point in downtown Taos where visitors could find information on galleries, museums, performing arts events, art festivals, and also local restaurants and coffee bars exhibiting Taos art works.

CHAPTER 7

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Taos is an American art treasure. With more than eighty art galleries, art museums and historical sites its position as one of North America's oldest art towns traces its roots to the 1898 founding of the Taos artist colony by Ernest L Blumenschein and Bert G. Phillips, who had followed a traveler's tip from their revered colleague Joseph H Sharp. One broken wagon wheel and more than a century later the place Sharp described as having an "enchanted atmosphere" has earned itself an international reputation as a center of creative genius.

Long before the likes of Sharp, Phillips, Blumenschein and many others established their studios and residences along the rambling pathway that later became Ledoux Street, the adobe structures surrounding Taos Plaza resonated with the vibrant culture of a Spanish Colonial trading center, the northernmost extension of the legendary Camino Real, or "Royal Road", connecting the New Mexican territories of the Rio Grande basin to the cathedrals of Zacatecas, Mexico City, and the might of the Spanish empire. Present-day Taos preserves the creation, performance and exhibition of traditional Hispanic art forms in media ranging from music to hand crafted furniture to elegantly carved and painted retablos and bultos, to finely woven textiles.

What elevates Taos to a position of creative and cultural uniqueness in North American art history is the presence of Taos Pueblo, a center of American Indian cultural and creative expression whose connections to the region date back at least 1000 years. From its earliest years the culture of Taos Pueblo revolved around holistic expressions of creativity, which is why the contemporary art world considers today's generation of Taos Pueblo artists, including musicians, designers, painters, potters, jewelers and weavers, as representative of excellence in American Indian art..

Though it's a small town in terms of its 5100 residents population, Taos enjoys an international reputation as a place where creative integrity thrives. Visitors from across the globe travel here year-round in search of art in the galleries clustered along Ledoux Street, Kit Carson Road, Paseo del Pueblo Norte and points in between. Others venture here for events such as the Taos Pueblo Pow Wow, Taos Fiestas, museum exhibitions and the summer art festivals staged in Kit Carson Park.

But Taos isn't the nation's only community offering Rocky Mountains vistas, sophisticated restaurants, top tier art galleries, year-round art festivals and traditions of creative expression to prospective visitors. As competition for tourists from places such as Jackson, Wyoming, Park City, Utah, Ketchum, Idaho and Vail, Colorado continues to intensify there's an ever-present need for Taos to be innovative in the ways it promotes its creative economy and serves the interests of visitors attracted by the community's artistic traditions.



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CHAPTER 8**FINDINGS ON CULTURAL PLANNING****OVERVIEW**

One of the keys to success for a business pivots around its physical location. The same axiom can apply to communities, where a town's location can determine its destiny.

By all measures Taos is a memorable place. Framed by towering mountains and broad vistas this northern New Mexico community is where nature's majesty blends with the traditional wisdom of American Indian culture. Its centuries-old community of Hispanic families built a thriving center of commerce whose graceful residences along winding streets continue to provide creative inspiration for artists from all cultures.



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Taos deserves its reputation as one of the nation's best art towns. Its pedestrian-friendly streets brim with sophisticated art galleries, innovative shops, inspiring museums, and energetic cafes. Art collectors come here to purchase works of fine crafts, jewelry, fiber art, and fine art whose qualities meet demanding standards. For tourists and local residents alike, Taos' unique blend of artistic creativity, cultural diversity, architectural elegance, and natural majesty are qualities worth protecting.

While Taos has achieved great success, its peer communities have worked diligently to attract the same cultural tourists whose patronage underpins Taos' arts and cultural sector. Retaining the patronage of cultural tourists is one of Taos' biggest challenges. Another challenge involves the opportunities younger Taos residents have in arts education from both the in school and after school perspectives.

This analysis of how a cultural planning perspective can guide the proposed Arts and Cultural District's impact on both the community itself and Taos' cultural tourists is broken down into short term and long range observations and recommendations. Making Taos a better place for local residents will elevate the quality of experience enjoyed by everyone.

STRENGTHS AND CONSTRAINTS

- When the Taos Visitors Center was located along Paseo del Pueblo Sur, the residents and business owners of Taos began enjoying the benefits of being served by one of the state's best facilities of its type. However by locating the center several miles away from Taos Plaza, printed information important to Taos visitors (maps, guides, schedules, and brochures) was no longer readily available in the Taos Plaza commercial zone. Visitors typically visit here first, seeking orientation, introduction and

information...but unless they have first stopped in at the Taos Visitors Center, their visit to Taos Plaza can be unsatisfying.

- Taos' younger generation of artists is challenged by the reduced offerings of arts education across all disciplines in local schools. Students are deprived of the availability of opportunities to channel and grow their creative energies. Economic realities have compelled local schools to limit the range and number of art classes offered, while nonprofits dedicated to cultural development have also scaled back their youth programs.
- Reflecting the influences of historic property boundaries, distinguished architecture, enduring fine craftsmanship and the foresight of civic planning, the commercial zones located in and around Taos Plaza are uniquely attractive in both their design and scale. But in the eyes of visitors whose own communities are sited along traditional urban grids, the undulating charm of Taos' twisting, turning sidewalks and streets presents navigational obstacles resulting in those all-too-familiar questions beginning with "where is...". Though the community's core commercial zones are within walking distance of Taos Plaza, there are numerous art museums, performance venues, exhibition sites, commercial art galleries, and studio spaces "hidden" just beyond the ready reach of downtown Taos' pedestrian zones.
- The community of Taos reflects a demographic and ethnic diversity that challenges notions of small town homogeneity. Taos proudly presents itself as the traditional home of one of North America's most enduring American Indian tribes, as the centuries-old home of one of the continent's most established communities of families of Hispanic heritage, and as a place whose modern day influx of residents ranges from the Anglo descendants of early Taos painters to today's African American professionals to European and Asian immigrant business owners.
- As a result of the contemporary influences exerted by both Taos' historic significance and the community's high artistic standards, tourists arrive with an expectation that what's exhibited, presented, performed, and erected in Taos will reflect a high degree of sophistication. Within that expectation is an awareness that differences of opinion as to the merits of individual creative expressions are embraced.
- In offering a lively slate of year round activities inclusive of all art genres, music, and performance forms, the Taos arts community has become skilled in its ability to distinguish well executed creative expressions from mediocre expressions. While Taos remains an attractive place for established artists of regional and even national stature, it also serves as an important incubator for the careers of many local emerging artists.
- Some local gallery owners and retail merchants view the outdoor art fairs as having a negative impact on the local art scene. These concerns are connected to three main issues: first being the quality of art sold at some of the art fairs; second is the siphoning of sales taking place during the art fairs at the expense of Taos galleries and retail shops; and thirdly some of the artistic vendors are from outside the Taos area. It's important to realize that many local artists participate in the art fairs and consider them a key source of income. Even gallery owners disagree on the impact these events have on sales. The intensity of feelings on both sides of this issue seems deeply divisive.

NEXT STEPS – SHORT TERM STRATEGIES

As an important step towards connecting the community's arts and cultural resources and amenities there should be a pilot project in the form of a shuttle van offered for a few hours during a limited number of key creative community events or during high volume tourist periods.

Even though the Taos Visitors Center is strategically located on Paseo del Pueblo Sur, there should also be a tourist information facility located on the Taos Plaza or immediately adjacent to the plaza. This facility could be as large as a storefront or as small as a temporary kiosk or even a rollaway cart. The purpose is to provide visitors with updated and on-site information about and directions to events, pedestrian routes, cafes, galleries, museums, parking and restrooms.

An assessment of the effectiveness of the signage displayed primarily for the benefit of guiding visitors to and around downtown Taos and its pedestrian zones would be useful. While the current wayfinding signage is attractive and effective we feel it could be improved.

There should be a public process where the benefits of and concerns regarding the arts and crafts fairs can be discussed. Since these events take place on community property, the town's Community and Economic Development Department or the Taos Arts and Cultural District Steering Committee could facilitate this process, which may result in recommendations for new policies or procedures. Consideration could be given to requiring that a percentage of participants are local artists and to the possibility of a creating a fair for only local artists.

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NEXT STEPS – LONG RANGE STRATEGIES

In order to ensure that tomorrow's generation of Taos artists and creative professionals is comprised of young people who were born, raised and educated in this community, we recommend a community-wide dialogue on arts education and how the substantial resources of Taos can effectively be utilized to nurture emerging talents and enhance facility development.

CHAPTER 9

FINDINGS ON MARKETING AND PROMOTION

OVERVIEW

As a cultural destination that continues to attract creativity-inspired visitors from across the globe, Taos remains a place offering a wide range of artistic, cultural, and quality of life assets. Its impressive attributes include a plentiful and diverse range of lodging options, innovative and entertaining dining and drinking establishments, a variety of intriguing retail shops, and enough spectacular natural beauty to address tourists' four seasons of outdoor recreation pursuits. In all corners of its diverse population the residents of Taos are engaged in year-round creativity that's reflected in local art galleries, coffee bars, bed and breakfast inns, and performing arts events.

For more than a century Taos has been talked about, advertised, described in countless newspaper and magazine articles, and promoted through the efforts of both state and local tourism development entities as an art town. The result of these dynamic forces has been the successful embedding of the Taos identity as an arts-specific identity in all corners of the globe. "Taos" is a powerful global marketing "brand" that is well established.



In the context of New Mexico communities approved for the Arts and Cultural Districts program Taos has the unique opportunity to build upon the marketing assets of a rich legacy of positive image development and a long standing reputation for artistic excellence. And even more importantly, in the context of other communities in the Rocky Mountains West that seek to promote themselves as places of significant stature when it comes to the depth and diversity of their local arts and cultural sectors, few communities or districts can rival Taos' legacy.

In today's fast moving and hyper competitive climate of tourism development and promotion it is crucial for Taos to maximize the powerful appeal of its natural, cultural, and artistic assets. Strategies for marketing the proposed Arts and Cultural District should realize the powerful appeal instilled within the concept of Taos as a unique place not only in terms of its storied past but more importantly in the context of its present day quest for artistic and cultural achievement.

Taos works tirelessly and effectively to meet the challenge of attracting the significant numbers of tourists necessary to maintain the prosperity of its many hospitality industry and non-profit ventures. The community's imaginative approach to promoting itself through integrated marketing themes stretches across print, online platforms, and other media.

STRENGTHS AND CONSTRAINTS

- As a result of its historic role as one of the country's most influential and longest-standing art towns, Taos has become home to a talented population of artists, musicians, weavers, writers, jewelers and digital artists. Self directed and creatively inspired, these individuals are difficult to organize as a unified constituency when it comes to participating in efforts to foster civic, private, or political change.
- While the promotional campaigns intended to increase awareness of Taos in the minds of prospective visitors are innovative and far reaching, it appears there could be improvements made in the ways consumer responses to those campaigns are evaluated, especially in regards to specified consumer interests.

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NEXT STEPS - SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend exploring more computer based social networking as part of the community's overall marketing strategy, possibly pursuing a shift of funding out of traditional marketing media into social networking. Organizers of the proposed Arts and Cultural District could provide help to local non-profits in developing their social networking efforts and reaching specific markets.

Build on the potential uses of the Taos Express, which ties to the Rail Runner, to increase visitation from Santa Fe, Albuquerque and points south. Raise awareness of the Taos Express with hotel concierges in Santa Fe and Albuquerque.

The proposed Arts and Cultural District could coordinate a major annual (signature) event as part of its mission. The district might consider hiring a grant writer and event planner to assist in the planning and execution of this event.

The proposed Arts and Cultural District should build on the efforts of Historic Taos in developing district walking tours. These walking tours might accommodate the abilities of visitors of all ages and be instrumental in efforts to develop effective signage throughout downtown.

NEXT STEPS – LONG RANGE RECOMMENDATIONS

Because experiential events (aka "Creative Tourism") have proven effective ways to build tourism, within the marketing strategy of the proposed Arts and Cultural District there should be a strong workshop, training, and educational story. Local organizers might work with subject matter experts at UNM-Taos, Southern Methodist University, Taos Art School, local restaurants, and regional art groups in developing educational options covering recreational, historic, healing, spiritual, culinary, and other cultural experiences. Sell the idea of "a week of experiences, a lifetime of memories" as a powerful story to build this idea.

A good starting point would involve networking through existing resources such as the well designed "taosvacationguide.com", a website containing vast amounts of visitor information from resources such as the Town of Taos, Taos Pueblo, Taos County Chamber of Commerce, Taos Visitor Center, and Taos Ski Valley Chamber of Commerce. Throughout the website's categories (Recreation>Summer, Events Calendar>Events by Month>Jun 2010, What to Do>Dining, etc) there are impressive amounts of information addressing the basic who/what/when/where levels of inquiry. But in order to make a positive impression on prospective visitors whose planning decisions might be influenced by options including experiential tourism there should be a dynamic interface designed into the website that would pop up experiential-specific details as these visitors navigate their cursors throughout the website. For example, a visitor to the website's section on dining could encounter a pop up box describing an upcoming series of cooking classes or a wine tasting event. Similarly, visitors to the website's section on Indian Ceremonial Dances might be presented with a pop up detailing hotel packages timed to coincide with the Pueblo's public events schedule. In a community-wide effort aimed at making certain the experiences of Taos visitors are as rewarding as possible, there should be a hospitality training workshop that certifies the skills of workers involved in Taos' tourism businesses.

CHAPTER 10**FINDINGS ON PHYSICAL PLANNING
AND DESIGN****Context**

Taos presents a planning and design environment of exceptional quality and originality; for many visitors and residents the town is awe-inspiring and unforgettable. Founded upon a Spanish Colonial plaza nearing three centuries old, Taos has grown organically over time, gracefully expanding into its spectacular valley setting.

The contemporary town site lies just a mile or so from the ancient Taos Pueblo, a multi-storied adobe residential community that is a pinnacle of adobe architectural expression in the Southwest. The picturesque Taos Pueblo is nestled beneath soaring peaks of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains – astonishing scenery and a cultural milieu that have inspired countless artists and writers.

Taos Pueblo preserves the grandeur and design syntax of the region's prehistoric Pueblo communities and has been a continual source of references for architects and builders. This influence is evident in the pioneering work of architect John Gaw Meem and also the modernist profiles of the Taos County Courthouse of the 1960's.

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The arrival of Anglo-American and European artists a century ago led to the founding of the Taos Arts Colony, which grew in prominence before World War II. Artists in turn fashioned homes and architectural details that reflected a variety of cultural traditions, including Russian folk art, Victorian, social realism of the WPA era, streamlined modernism, and the whimsical inspirations of the counter-cultural hippie movement of the 1960's and '70's.

Throughout its history, Taos has been isolated by distance, geography, and climate and developed distinctive traditions in Hispanic religious art, furniture, carpentry and textiles. The northern Pueblos of Taos and Picuris maintain proud cultural traditions. Most recently, after 1980, Taos artists, craftsmen and designers developed a distinctive "Taos Country Style" that is often detected from the streets in hand-painted fences, doors, window trim, and other embellishments.

The compelling adobe architecture radiates outward from the plaza and is protected by two National Historic Districts: the Taos Downtown Historic District and the La Loma Plaza Historic District. These historic districts are also protected by local ordinance, and a design review process for development projects is enforced by the Town. The commercial buildings that ring the plaza reflect the mercantile architecture of the Twentieth Century, influenced by the Santa Fe style Spanish Pueblo Revival design with covered portales on the street.

Streets converge on the plaza in a radial pattern, and the organic, curvilinear nature of most streets has an inherent "traffic calming" effect. The main arterial thoroughfare through the Taos Valley, Paseo del Pueblo, is heavily used, sometimes congested, and has been the focus of much planning work since the population grew significantly after 1960.



RECOMMENDED
ARTS AND
CULTURAL DISTRICT
BOUNDARY

The Resource Team recommends a Phase I Core District shaded in blue nestled within the overall proposed Taos Arts and Cultural District (outlined in red dash).

For many people, "Taos" is not a single community but a remarkable aggregation of several communities and neighborhoods, each with long-standing traditions, populations, landmarks and cultural roots. From Ranchos de Taos and Talpa on the south, to the town and its plaza, Taos Pueblo, Arroyo Hondo on the north, and even farther to Taos Ski Valley, Taos represents much more than the collective sum of its interconnected communities. Planning for a new arts and cultural district within this dense cultural matrix is both daunting and exhilarating.

Strengths and Constraints

- Currently the Town of Taos boasts a highly capable and progressive Community Development and Planning Department staff that is proactive in seeking beneficial programs for appropriate development. The town has placed a high priority on protecting its unique architectural and cultural assets by designating a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone, achieving Certified Local Government (CLG) status, and initiating three Rural Historic Landscape Districts.
- A significant advantage for the new Arts and Cultural District is the number and proximity of key publicly owned properties within the district and nearby to the plaza. These properties include the historic Taos County Courthouse, Taos Elementary School, University of New Mexico-Taos branch, the Town Police Station, the Taos Convention Center, Town Hall, Kit Carson Park, and of course the plaza itself.
- High quality design as a community value is also evident in the attractive way finding signage system and by the evident pride of place demonstrated by business owners who create welcoming storefronts with inventive window displays, benches and landscaping.
- As in many communities, parking supply and its management are a point of contention in downtown Taos. The plaza itself is a study of contrasts, fluctuating between lively businesses, vacant buildings, and a public square that appears to be underutilized as a gathering venue.
- The Taos Plaza has been a powerful attraction and destination for travelers since before the fabled "Taos Lightning" brandy lured mountain men and traders in the 1800's. Ironically, Taos lacks notable entrance gateways and a central facility connecting visitors and locals to the rich culture, arts and history, regional destinations or current events.
- From an urban design perspective, the Plaza presents challenging patterns of access and comfort for the pedestrian, appearing to be a "hard" environment lacking comfortable seating. In general, important landscaping elements including the acequias require careful consideration.
- Like many tourism resort destinations, real estate in the center of Taos is expensive and has squeezed out many artists and residents. Emerging artists struggle to survive by living in rural locations across a wide expanse of the Taos valley.

Physical Planning and Design Recommendations

- Create a Phase I Core Area to focus initial resources – We recommend establishing a larger Arts and Cultural District boundary incorporating the Town of Taos Historic Overlay Zone in order to take advantage of enhanced state historic preservation tax credits. The Taos Arts and Cultural District boundary will include the La Loma National Register Historic District and the Taos Downtown Historic District. Approved rehabilitation projects within the Arts and Cultural District for contributing or significant historic properties will qualify for up to \$50,000 in state income tax credits. A Phase I Core Area should be based upon walkability (a 5-10 minute pedestrian radius) with the Plaza as the center – “the heart”. Projects and resources should be concentrated on the Core Area for the next three years. The overall Arts and Cultural District boundary should include key properties for redevelopment and also vibrant community places such as Kit Carson Park, churches, museums and schools.
- Prepare the Taos Cultural Revitalization Plan – A comment heard during the Resource Team visit that resonated was that “the Creative Economy in Taos is stagnant”. We encourage the community and the Arts and Cultural District Steering Committee to develop a “Cultural Revitalization Plan” to upgrade infrastructure and pedestrian amenities in the core area. The Taos Cultural Revitalization Plan should provide a comprehensive master plan for the core area that integrates parking, pedestrian enhancements, and landscaping. It should include these elements and enhancements:
 - ❖ Restore and re-green the plaza to function as a major public gathering space and a place for increased daily interaction;
 - ❖ Identify and enhance key gateways for both pedestrians and cars, creating a sense of arrival to the district;



PHASE ONE CORE AREA

The Phase I Core Area is anchored by the historic plaza (in green). Major opportunity sites (outlined in yellow and orange) include the former elementary school and historic County Courthouse on the plaza. Key gateways to the district are illustrated by stars.

- ❖ Initiate a comprehensive parking study;
- ❖ Identify and enhance the pedestrian network to connect the plaza to other community assets:
 - Repair and widen sidewalks
 - Integrate pedestrian network with restored acequias and heritage landscape elements. The network of acequias is described as a "hidden system" that could be used to incorporate walking paths and water feature into the district.
 - Enhance pedestrian crossings at key intersections and gateways
 - Integrate the pedestrian network with recommendations from the parking study
- ❖ Enable the establishment of a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) as a funding source.
- Catalytic projects to expand uses within the district and position the area for the creative economy – The proposed core area immediately surrounding the plaza is home to several key buildings or complexes which may be redeveloped to provide new anchors and destinations for creative economic development. A few of these critical projects are:
 - ❖ Rehabilitation of the historic Taos County Courthouse on the plaza as a public "reconnection" site for locals and visitors. The former Courthouse could include historic exhibits, art displays, tourist information, and an updated community calendar of events;
 - ❖ Develop the opportunity site at the Taos Elementary School;
 - ❖ Develop the existing Police Station as a Technology and Innovation Center that utilizes the technology offered by the Qwest Switch Station;
 - ❖ Encourage and support the rehabilitation of the historic Plaza Theater;
 - ❖ Consider public-private partnerships that can optimize underutilized town-owned properties including town hall, the convention center, and properties leased by the University of New Mexico;
 - ❖ Use partnerships such as Safe Routes to School to compliment the Taos Arts and Cultural District. Grant money has already been awarded (\$250,000). These funds could be used to improve routes for school children and enhance the overall pedestrian network.
- Facilitate Historic Preservation Education and Programs in the Arts and Cultural District – Taos' Certified Local Government (CLG) status with the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division provides funding support for historic preservation education in the community. This is an appropriate time for new historic preservation programs including:
 - ❖ Host educational workshops on historic tax credits, low-interest preservation loans, and the New Market tax credit programs;
 - ❖ Streamline the design review process for the Historic District Overlay Zone. Support efforts by builders to meet both Historic Overlay Zone regulations and High Performance Building Ordinance regulations.

CHAPTER 11

FINDINGS ON CAPACITY BUILDING AND FINANCE

Context

Taos' unique status as New Mexico's original arts colony and a premier Southwestern tourist destination has yielded a remarkable flow of creative talent to the community over the past century. The resident Hispanic and Pueblo populations in turn have contributed strong legacies of leadership, particularly in religion, conservation, land management, and politics, which have shaped the region. Perhaps in no other Southwestern community have the diverse traditions of New Mexico interacted at such close quarters.



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These unique circumstances have blessed Taos with exceptional human talent and resources for generations, and so the context of "capacity" in the Taos Valley is both a personal and historic evaluation.

A monumental bronze statue of Padre Antonio José Martínez towers over the Taos plaza, a remembrance of the defiant vicar's championing of education, social justice, literacy and other causes in the mid-Nineteenth Century. Turbulent events during this time, including the murder of Territorial Governor Charles Bent and the ensuing "Taos Revolt" of 1847, which led to a military attack on Taos Pueblo, caused deep rifts of mistrust and suspicion which continue to influence community life.

Building consensus in the Taos Valley is thus a challenging endeavor, as the Pueblo, Hispanic and Anglo/European power centers maintain strong and independent networks. Taos politics operates and fluctuates within an ideological spectrum ranging from the conservative poles of Taos Pueblo and the strong Catholic congregations to the liberal and progressive outlooks of artists, "hippies," and wealthy retirees who savor the Valley's bohemian spirit.

Taos cultural icons and patronesses Mable Dodge Luhan and Millicent Rogers inspired charitable giving in the relatively poverty-stricken region, and this legacy has matured into a generous private sector bounty (in comparison to other New Mexico towns). Taos' estimated \$5 million in annual support for non-profit organizations and charitable causes is a significant resource for capacity building, but serious social, health and cultural needs consume the lion's share.

As a renowned community with exceptional quality of life amenities, Taos has developed a base support of generous private sector individuals, charities and foundations to sustain essential services. Despite the economic downturn, this private support seems steady.

However, Taos may face a capacity and leadership challenge of a different order. Taos' highly successful and long-lived creative economy, based upon visual arts, architecture and home design, and cultural diversity, is now at a crossroads as popular global culture is being transformed by digital multi-media and

experiential preferences. Passive consumption of arts and culture that has served Taos so well is rapidly becoming an outdated luxury.

Strengths and Constraints

- Taos and the "Creative Economy" in New Mexico are virtually synonymous; and the roster of exceptional creative individuals who have gravitated to the Taos Valley is long and illustrious. A bohemian spirit and lifestyle critical to free expression and entrepreneurship thrives in the Valley, and the community has functioned as a de facto arts and cultural district for well over a century.
- Community leaders and institutional partners all recognize the value of the creative economy to Taos' prosperity, and currently the Town is well served by visionary and capable elected officials. Taos' strengths in capacity building feature a rich matrix of institutional partners including several community oriented foundations, the University of New Mexico-Taos branch, and a nucleus of quality museums, including the Millicent Rogers Museum, the Harwood Foundation, the Martinez Hacienda and landmark historic homes of Mabel Dodge Luhan, Ernest Blumenschein, and Nicolai Fechin.
- Although the creative economic sector in Taos is large and significant, other important components of the Valley's economic base, notably the agricultural and service sectors, have remained vulnerable to other "global" economic influences related to industrial food production and mass tourism. The current economic recession has exposed structural flaws in Taos' base economy (as it has elsewhere) and exacerbated tensions between perceived "rich outsiders" and locals struggling to survive and find gainful employment.
- The prosperity of the past several decades nourished idealistic individuals and organizations, resulting in a profusion of more than a hundred non-profit groups. The economic sustainability of many non-profit organizations, as well as sustaining the livelihoods of many self-employed artists and entrepreneurs is a vital concern facing the community.
- To date, Taos is the only New Mexico community to be designated a state Arts and Cultural District without having a Main Street program in operation. Taos participated briefly in the Main Street program in the late 1980's; but downtown Taos, buffered by its robust tourism, never faced the stigma of store closings and boarded-up storefronts that crippled other nearby communities as "big-box" retailers, Internet commerce and changing consumer preferences impacted downtowns.
- More recently, the lack of an organized downtown merchant's organization has given rise to perceived miscommunications with city government. Other "downtown" issues such as parking, retail and business mix, infill and redevelopment projects, were addressed by the community in the "Taos 2010" plan. The implementation of these projects and goals along with those of the new Arts and Cultural District is a pressing opportunity and quest.
- The historic Taos County Courthouse on the plaza is a key "catalytic" property. Political differences between Taos County and Town of Taos officials, symbolized by a public restroom debate, may hamper planning and rehabilitation of the Courthouse and its potential as a strategic anchor for the Arts and Cultural District. Resolving personality and policy conflicts amongst elected officials is a vital goal of capacity building for the Taos Arts and Cultural District.

Recommendations – Capacity Building

The newly formed Taos Arts and Cultural District Steering Committee will confront the necessity for developing and implementing downtown revitalization strategies in concert with the creative economic development techniques of an arts and cultural district. While there are many approaches to downtown revitalization, the National Main Street Center's "Four Point Approach" has proven successful in hundreds of rural communities nationwide.

The "Four Point Approach" encourages coordinated programs in (the four points of) organization, promotion, design and economic positioning. A non-profit organization is developed by a volunteer board of directors and paid professional staff. Four committees are formed in each point consisting of volunteers from the community with skills and affinities to each particular point. The secret of Main Street success is the capability and effectiveness of the organization to undertake compelling projects in each "point" simultaneously and sustain progress over a period of time.

We recommend that the Taos Arts and Cultural District develop a "supercharged" Steering Committee with some characteristics and responsibilities of a Main Street organization. A logical structure could be a representational and inclusive steering committee empowered as a Board of Directors overseeing the activities of several subcommittees. These committees in turn might be organized around the "points" or thematic areas addressed by this Resource Team report, namely: Cultural Planning; Marketing and Promotion; Physical Design and Planning; and Capacity Building and Finance. The Steering Committee may also build upon the downtown revitalization work developed by the Taos Project sponsored by the Taos Business Alliance from 2005-07.

Funding for staffing, operations, projects and programs is necessary, and the development of a fund-raising plan by the Steering Committee is essential. New Mexico Main Street has considerable expertise in organizational development, fund-raising and other capacity building and sustainability issues and may provide technical assistance to Taos upon request.

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Other resources for operational assistance may be researched, including the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Development programs. USDA's Rural Business Opportunity Grants (RBOG) and Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG) are worth investigating. For longer term funding of the Steering Committee and District, we recommend studying the potential of a Business Improvement District (BID) for Taos. A BID is an assessment and taxation tool whereby business and property owners contribute funds on a pro-rated formula for the overall benefit of the district. BID funds may be used for operational and staffing expenses, promotional campaigns, public safety projects, hospitality services and other important district programs. Albuquerque's Downtown Action Team is utilizing a BID effectively (for their new Arts and Cultural District), and Gallup has begun the implementation of a BID in 2009.

The creation of a new community economic development organization in Taos with the Arts and Cultural District Steering Committee may strain community resources and priorities, especially in a difficult economy. Considering the many non-profit organizations currently operating in the Taos Valley, some planning, dialogue, or perhaps a non-profit organizational "summit" with funders may be useful.

Recommendations – Creative Financing

Currently the primary municipal incentive for Arts and Cultural District financing is the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA). Enacted by the Legislature in the 1990's as a correction to the state constitution's "Anti-Donation" clause, LEDA enables municipalities to invest public funds in certain private enterprise development projects. In 2007, the New Mexico Arts and Cultural Districts Act expanded the allowable range of LEDA projects to include state designated Arts and Cultural Districts.

Amendments to LEDA by the Arts and Cultural Districts Act specify potential public support for creative economic enterprise businesses, cultural institutions, and also creative enterprises sponsored by non-profit organizations. LEDA project application and review procedures as specified in state statute, including an appointed economic development commission, adopted economic development plan, business plan and economic impact/benefit analysis, will be required of projects in an Arts and Cultural District.

This is an opportune time for the Town of Taos to review its LEDA policies and procedures and determine potential opportunities to provide financial support for development projects in the Arts and Cultural District.

While supplemental gross receipts taxing authority in Taos County and the Town of Taos appears to be nearly maximized, the community's leadership has been willing to explore new options such as the Quality of Life Tax and enhanced Lodgers Tax increments as well as enhanced Impact Fees for new developments that could be reinvested in the Arts and Cultural District.

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The severe recession of 2008-09 has restructured federal, state and municipal financing policy and funding streams with the result that local governments will need to be even more resourceful than ever to finance major projects. Traditional "pork" project funding such as the state's capital outlay system appears to be minimized in the near and foreseeable future, with the consequence that community and state leaders are openly discussing taxation policies that were unthinkable a few years ago. With a local economy heavily dependent on tourism and "outside" dollars, Taos has much to gain by reform of local taxation incentives by the State Legislature.

CHAPTER 12**SUMMARY**

The competitive nature of today's tourism market compels communities of all sizes to constantly search for ways to gain an advantage over their peers. For large cities there are options ranging from baseball



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stadiums to zoos. Small communities, which have far fewer options for adding infrastructure, look for inspired ways to enhance their existing assets and experiences.

The Arts and Cultural Districts program offers communities the size of Taos opportunities suited to their limited capacities and specific needs. Rather than being capital intensive and focused on infrastructure, the strategies emphasized in an Arts and Cultural District prioritize low-impact

approaches such as tax credits and design enhancements for upgrading the attractiveness of a community's Arts and Cultural District.

Our work in Taos was undertaken as a Resource Team for the New Mexico Arts and Cultural Districts program. The team's individual skills were applied to evaluating downtown Taos, including places adjacent to the boundaries of the proposed Arts and Cultural District. It's important to note that with the exception of one member the Resource Team was comprised entirely of New Mexico residents who all want Taos to retain its reputation as a nationally important creativity center.

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NEXT STEPS

- We recommend that the Taos Arts and Cultural District develop a "supercharged" Steering Committee with some characteristics and responsibilities of a Main Street organization. A logical structure could be a representational and inclusive steering committee empowered as a Board of Directors overseeing the activities of several subcommittees. These committees in turn might be organized around the "points" or thematic areas addressed by this Resource Team report, namely: Cultural Planning; Marketing and Promotion; Physical Design and Planning; and Capacity Building and Finance.
- Prepare the Taos Cultural Revitalization Plan – A comment heard during the Resource Team visit that resonated was that "the Creative Economy in Taos is stagnant". We encourage the community and the Arts and Cultural District Steering Committee to develop a "Cultural Revitalization Plan" to upgrade infrastructure and pedestrian amenities in the core area. The Taos Cultural Revitalization Plan should provide a comprehensive master plan for the core area that integrates parking, pedestrian enhancements, and landscaping.
- Funding for staffing, operations, projects and programs is necessary, and the development of a fund-raising plan by the Steering Committee is essential. New Mexico Main Street has considerable expertise in organizational development, fund-raising and other capacity building and sustainability issues and may provide technical assistance to Taos upon request.

- The proposed Arts and Cultural District should coordinate a major annual event as part of its mission. The district might consider hiring a grant writer and event planner to assist in the planning and execution of this event.
- In order to ensure that tomorrow's generation of Taos artists and creative sector professionals is comprised of the artistically inspired young people who were born, raised and educated in this community, there should be a community-wide dialogue on the subject of arts education and how the substantial resources of Taos can be utilized in terms of both facilities and participants toward the goal of nurturing the community's emerging talents.
- Facilitate Historic Preservation Education and Programs in the Arts and Cultural District – Taos' Certified Local Government (CLG) status with the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division provides funding support for historic preservation education in the community.
- While supplemental gross receipts taxing authority in Taos County and the Town of Taos appears to be nearly maximized, the community's leadership has been willing to explore new options such as the Quality of Life Tax and enhanced Lodgers Tax increments as well as enhanced Impact Fees for new developments that could be reinvested in the Arts and Cultural District. This is an opportune time for the Town of Taos to review its LEDA (Local Economic Development Act) policies and procedures and determine potential opportunities to provide financial support for development projects in the Arts and Cultural District.
- In a community-wide effort aimed at making certain the experiences of Taos visitors are as rewarding as possible, there should be a hospitality training workshop that certifies the skills of workers involved in Taos' tourism businesses.
- Even though the Taos Visitors Center is strategically located on the community's most heavily traveled south entry point, there should also be an information distribution facility located on the Taos Plaza or immediately adjacent to the plaza. This facility could be as large as a storefront or as small as a temporary kiosk or even a rollaway cart. The purpose is to provide visitors with updated and on-site information about and directions to events, pedestrian zones, cafes, galleries, museums, parking and restrooms.

CHAPTER 13

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Taos Arts and Cultural District Resource Team enjoyed the legendary hospitality of the community during our visit in early November 2009. We are indebted to the staff of the historic Taos Inn, including Chris Smith, Jamie Tedesco, and Julie Sena, for their friendly patience and graciousness as our team frantically processed three days of intense impressions. Ed Ramsey, John Thompson and Alan Vigil of the Town of Taos expertly guided us on an overview of the Valley's many nooks and crannies. The team appreciates Mr. Ramsey's hard work in synthesizing several centuries of community development for our benefit. Mr. Larry Torres, raconteur extraordinaire, gave us a passionate and insightful walking tour of downtown Taos, a highlight of which was an insider's look at the Ernest L. Blumenschein house and studio on Ledoux Street hosted by Carmen Zacharias. Antonio's Restaurant hosted an unforgettable reception for the Resource Team, animated by refreshments and also music donated by Alan Vigil and Ed Ramsey, where community members freely mingled and offered their hopes and dreams for the new Arts and Cultural District.

The team was impressed by the support of city and county elected officials and staff during our visit. Mayor Darren Cordova and Taos County Commission Chairman Dan Barrone both enthusiastically participated and support this initiative. We also wish to thank Town Council members Amy Quintana, Gene Sanchez, Michael Silva, and Rudy Abeyta. Our meetings and presentation at the Taos Convention Center flowed smoothly thanks to the assistance of staff members Jeanne Kitzman, Jim Simmons, and Jon Evans.

A tour of Taos Pueblos was a highlight for many team members, and we are grateful to the Taos Pueblo Tourism Department, including Marcie Winters and our tour guide April Winters for their expert assistance.

We lost count of the many "Taoseños" who showed up for interviews, receptions, presentations, and kibitzing, but 250 is a conservative guess. We greatly appreciate your time and interest!

Finally, the leadership and initiative of Taos Community Development Director Matthew Spriggs and Taos Arts and Cultural District Steering Committee Coordinator Cindy Spray is an inspiration to us, and we deeply appreciate their hard work and assistance in support of our visit.

CHAPTER 14

APPENDICES

Taos Arts and Cultural District Steering Committee

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