

Narrative

a) introduction

After tremendous success with the state Resource Team Report, the Your Town Charrette (with UNM's Design and Planning Assistance Center), and the Cultural Plan, the Taos ACD Downtown Master Plan (Master Plan) is the next logical step in supporting downtown revitalization and expanding the arts and culture economy in Taos. The Taos ACD is embedded in the state- and nationally- registered Taos Downtown Historic District, and this location in the heart of downtown Taos affords the ACD legal protection against inappropriate architecture. But the preservation of historic buildings is not enough to fully leverage the ACD's economic development potential. The Town cannot rely on the preservation of buildings alone; it needs to promote and develop the ACD to maintain its position as a world-renowned destination for tourists while providing a sense of place and pride for local families, artists, and entrepreneurs. The Master Plan will focus on specific needs, opportunities, and strategies to preserve the historic integrity of the ACD while improving the built environment to support the tourism economy, arts and cultural events, individual artists, and local businesses.

The Master Plan will be a comprehensive document that earns widespread support from property owners, artists, community organizations, and the ACD Physical Planning Sub-Committee. The draft and final Master Plan will be presented to the full ACD Steering Committee, the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Town Council and for review and approval. Public outreach efforts will target arts organizations, schools, businesses, property owners, government agencies, and the diverse cultures (and sub-cultures) in Taos.

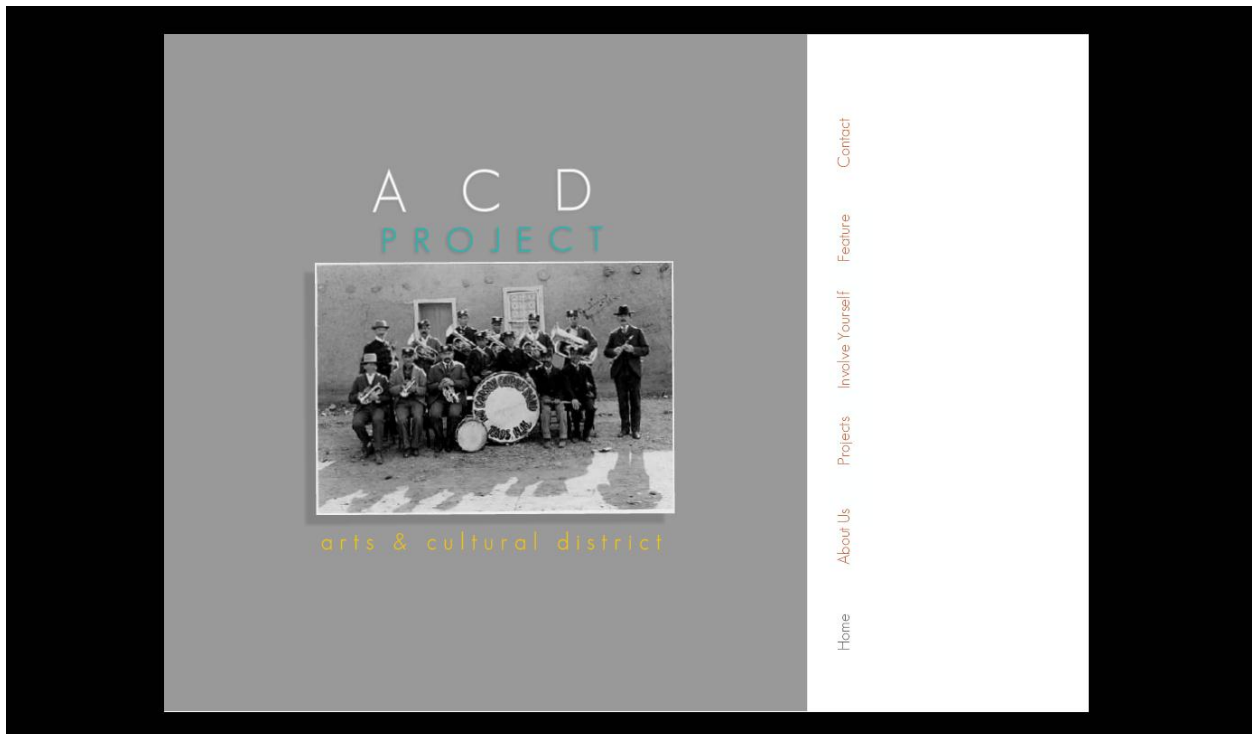
b) clear activities and measurable objectives

The main activities of the Master Plan include the selection of the consultant, scheduling public outreach and education activities, conducting a thorough inventory of all existing plans, maps, reports, and projects, then assembling the information into goals, policies, and objectives to be articulated in the draft and final Master Plan. The Master Plan will be much more than a collection and re-organization of previous ideas and proposals. While it will certainly borrow from previous work (e.g. – the Town's Comprehensive Plan, the state's Resource Team Report, the DPAC Charrette, and the Cultural Plan), the Master Plan will include a list of specific priority projects and cost estimates. The projects will be defined as short-term and long-term capital improvement projects, such as pedestrian improvements and storm drainage solutions for the Taos Downtown Plaza or the detailed design for the construction of a garden wall along the Guadalupe Plaza. Perhaps the best way for the planning team to fully understand the needs and opportunities in the ACD is to make direct observations during a walking tour. The details of sidewalks, intersections, building facades, signage, and a host of planning issues will become evident and incorporated into the Master Plan as a result of the tour. The elements and outline of

the Master Plan in Appendix H of the NM EDD RFP will also be utilized as an outline and the basis for the scope of work in the RFP used to select the Master Plan consultant.

Another activity and objective of the Master Plan is to address the parking crisis in the ACD. The grant will pay for an expert parking management and traffic consultant to find lasting solutions to parking management problems. The parking consultant will work closely with the entire project team to understand and address the reinforcing and overlapping issues related to parking. These include way-finding, parking meter revenue potential and alternative metering technology, aesthetics, traffic circulation, police enforcement, outdoor lighting and pedestrian safety. The New Mexico Department of Transportation will be consulted throughout the process to coordinate any proposal for roadway improvements that impact state highways as will the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division be consulted for any potential adverse impacts to historic properties.

We will utilize the ACD web page to maximize public awareness in addition to print and radio advertisements. Events held on Taos Plaza (e.g. - Taos Plaza Live, Farolitos, and the Fiestas de Taos) are excellent opportunities to inform the public about the Master Plan and the benefits of the ACD. These and other public events will be targeted for extensive public outreach and education opportunities. The image below is the home page of the ACD web site.



The ACD Steering Committee will attend one of the NM MainStreet Institute’s training sessions to learn more about fundraising (e.g. – the Fundraising Tune-Up), master planning, tourism, and the wide variety of topics discussed during the training sessions.

c) timeline

The main activities and objectives will be completed according to the following timeline:

Activity / Objective	Start Date	End Date	Responsible Party
Announce Award to Taos ACD & Town of Taos	March 2012	March 2012	NM MainStreet Coordinator
Sign Grant Agreement *	May 2012	May 2012	NM MainStreet Coordinator & Town of Taos Mayor
Issue Master Plan Consultant RFP	May 2012	May 2012	Town of Taos Procurement Officer
Select Consultant	June 2012	June 2012	ACD Physical Planning Sub-Committee
Kick Off Meeting	June 2012	June 2012	ACD Steering Committee & Consultant Team
Prepare Public Outreach Plan	June 2012	July 2012	ACD Steering Committee & Consultant Team
Conduct Inventory	July 2012	July 012	Town of Taos Long Range Planner & Consultant Team
Take Walking Tour	August 2012	August 2012	ACD Steering Committee & Consultant Team
Prepare Draft Parking Plan	October 2012	December 2012	Parking Consultant
Prepare Draft Master Plan	October 2012	December 2012	Consultant Team
Public Presentation & Outreach of Draft Plans (includes NM DOT and HPD)	January 2013	March 2013	ACD Steering Committee & Consultant Team
Historic Preservation Commission Presentation of Draft Master Plan	March 2013	March 2013	Historic Preservation Commission
Town Council Presentation of Draft Master Plan	March 2013	March 2013	Taos Mayor and Town Council
Approve Plan	April 2013	April 2013	Taos Mayor and Town Council

* Grant agreement in May 2012 when funds are anticipated to be available.

d) project budget

	GRANT	TOWN MATCH	TOTAL
CASH LINE ITEMS			
Master Plan Consultant	\$55,000	\$2,000	\$57,000
Parking Plan & Management Consultant	\$16,500	\$1,750	\$18,250
Public Outreach Media Advertisements	\$1,500	\$0	\$1,500
Printing	\$0	\$250	\$250
Travel & Training for ACD Steering Committee	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000
CASH LINE ITEM SUB-TOTAL	\$75,000	\$4,000	\$79,000
IN-KIND LINE ITEMS			
ACD Physical Planning Sub-Committee (4 members x \$17.10/hour x 48 hours)	\$0	\$3,283	\$3,283
ACD Steering Committee (7 members x \$17.10/hour x 16 hours)	\$0	\$1,915	\$1,915
ACD Coordinator (\$25/hour x 120 hours)	\$0	\$3,000	\$3,000
Town of Taos Planning Director (\$30/hour x 12 hours)	\$0	\$360	\$360
Town of Taos Long Range Planner (25/hour x 80 hours)	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000
Town of Taos Grants Administrator (20/hour x 12 hours)	\$0	\$240	\$240
Town of Taos Development Review Committee (8 staff x \$25/hour x 4 hours)	\$0	\$800	\$800
Historic Preservation Commission (5 members x \$17.10/hour x 6 hours)	\$0	\$513	\$513
Planning & Zoning Commission (7 members x \$17.10/hour x 2 hours)	\$0	\$239	\$239
Town Council & Mayor (5 members x \$17.10/hour x 4 hours)	\$0	\$342	\$342
IN-KIND LINE ITEM SUB-TOTAL	\$0	\$12,693	\$12,693
GRAND TOTAL	\$75,000	\$16,693	\$91,693

e) matching contribution

The Town will dedicate \$3,750 in cash toward the consultant contract with another \$250 to cover printing costs. An additional \$12,693 will be from of in-kind contributions through Town of Taos staff and volunteer time. The Town’s match represents 19% of the total budget.

f) feasibility

The Town of Taos has an established and rigorous process for approving plans such as the Downtown Master Plan. Although not all plans are developed by consultants or receive the added expertise of a Steering Committee, all planning documents are evaluated by the staff of the Planning and Zoning Department, the Development Review Committee, and the Town's Legal Department. Because the ACD boundaries (and therefore the Master Plan) is located in the Historic Overlay Zone, the Town of Taos Historic Preservation Commission will contribute to the implementation of the Master Plan, particularly because the recommendations of the Master Plan will augment the planning efforts of the Commission and could benefit from their expertise in architecture, historic preservation, real estate, and tourism. The Town Council's policy is that the Planning & Zoning Commission must review all planning documents regardless of their location or focus. The Town's Land Use Development Code requires the Planning and Zoning Commission to recommend approval, denial, or amendments to a plan brought before the Town Council for consideration. The members of the Town's Development Review Committee consist of members of the Fire, Police, Public Works, Public Utilities, and the Planning and Zoning Departments. This committee reviews plans for technical feasibility and consistency with on-going projects, budgets, development requirements and regulations (e.g. – historic preservation design standards) and Town policies. Finally, the ACD Steering Committee and the consultant team, with the assistance and recommendations of the ACD Physical Planning Sub-Committee, will ask the Town Council to approve the Master Plan at a public hearing.

g) historic preservation ethic

The ACD boundary encompasses two state and federally listed historic districts and numerous historic properties. The Town of Taos is a Certified Local Government (CLG) by the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs – Historic Preservation Division. The criteria for being designated as a CLG is that the Town must have an ordinance that protects historic resources, that it has a Commission to implement the ordinance, and must also possess historic resources such as buildings and structures which are worthy of preservation. The Town has received several GLC grants to enhance the Town's design criteria and protect historic resources. Furthermore, the Town has adopted the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Any alterations to contributing (e.g. – historic) buildings or proposed streetscape improvements that may impact the integrity of a contributing property will be identified in the Master Plan. A map of the individually listed or contributing properties will be provided to the entire project team and to HPD to identify the location and sensitivity of historic properties within the ACD. The Town, the ACD Steering Committee, the ACD Coordinator, and the state Historic Preservation Division have close relationships. In fact, the ACD Coordinator is the Chairperson of the Town of Taos Historic Preservation Commission and a business owner in the Taos Downtown Historic District. The Town of Taos Long Range Planner has managed

several HPD grants and is the principal author of the Town's design guidelines and development standards for new construction in the Town's Historic Overlay Zone.

h) ability to administer the project and grant

The Town of Taos is the fiscal agent for more than \$10 million in federal grants. Miranda Quintana and Matthew Foster of the Town staff have extensive experience in managing grants, including several Historic Preservation Division CLG grants, a \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant, and an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant of \$490,490. Ms. Quintana will be responsible for reporting to NM MainStreet regarding the match requirements and financial statements. She will work closely with Mr. Foster to ensure that all progress reports are delivered on time.

The ACD Coordinator is responsible for working effectively with the Town staff in delivering reports to the Town Council, organizing ACD Steering Committee meetings, and coordinating a variety of projects that benefit the businesses within the ACD. The ACD Coordinator worked effectively with the Town's Facilities Services Department and dozens of volunteers on the Friends of NM MainStreet curb appeal project called "Places of the heART" and two \$1,500 grants from the local gardening club, Los Jardineros, for landscaping improvements in the pedestrian alley north of Taos Plaza. The ACD Coordinator is currently working under a professional services contract with the Town of Taos.

i) operating budget

The Town and the ACD have an adequate operating budget to successfully manage the project. A copy of the budget is included. The Town will dedicate the time of the Long Range Planner, the Planning Director, the Development Review committee, and the Grant Administrator to assist the ACD Coordinator in all aspects of the project.

j) committed and active board involvement in the project

The ACD Steering Committee is very committed to the success of the Master Plan. The Steering Committee will commit at least 16 hours to assist the consultant team in collecting information, attending public meetings, giving feedback and ideas, reviewing the draft and final plan, and attending Commission and Council meetings to support its approval and implementation. The Steering Committee decided to break into sub-committees to provide more focus and direction to the ACDs project priorities. The ACD Physical Planning Committee will commit at least 48 hours of volunteer time to the Master Plan.

The ACD has nurtured many partnerships since it was first designated in 2009. These include the Taos Center for the Arts, the Taos Project, the Taos Tourism Council, the Harwood Museum, the Taos County Chamber of Commerce, the Taos Chapter of the New Mexico Green Chamber of Commerce, the Los Jardineros Garden Club, and many private businesses, artists, vendors, and volunteers.

k) local community involvement

The community has been deeply involved in the ACD, particularly with the state Resource Team Report, the DPAC charrette, the “heART of Taos” events. The Resource Team Report was completed over a three day period of focus groups and community meetings which were well attended with over 250 participants. The ACD worked collaboratively with UNM’s Design Planning Assistance Center to spend two and a half days and evenings with thirty six (36) community members from all walks of life and a varied age range to examine the current status of and possibilities for the Taos ACD, starting at the Taos Plaza and working outward to the limits of the ACD. More than 40 volunteers worked for two days on a variety of improvements to the Taos Plaza during the “heART of Taos” event during the Fall of 2011. Known as “The Taos Project,” a group of downtown merchants have been intimately involved in the ACD. The Taos Project meets regularly to discuss the challenges and opportunities for business development in the downtown with a focus on the creative economy. The ACD has been the topic of countless meetings. The Master Plan process will repeat the high level of public involvement. The timeline and the budget indicate the minimum levels of commitment by the ACD Committees, the Historic Preservation Commission, the Town Council, and Town staff. Letters of support from individuals and community organizations are included in the appendix.

l) relationship between the proposed activity and local MainStreet/ACD steering committee work plan

The annual goals of the ACD Steering Committee are articulated in the annual work plan. The Master Plan is clearly a priority for the ACD. A copy of the annual work plan is included.

m) status of offerer as a nationally accredited MainStreet Community

The Taos ACD is not a nationally accredited MainStreet Community; however, the ACD is awaiting an opportunity to pursue an “emerging” status as recommended in the ACD’s Cultural Plan and the Town’s Economic Development Element of the comprehensive plan.

n) relationship between proposed activity and locally adopted planning documents

The Town of Taos adopted the Vision 2020 Master Plan as the community's comprehensive plan. It calls for "Master planning, on-going education, and support to diversify the Taos economy and attract small, sustainable industries with high-paying jobs." Vision 2020 is bursting with vision statements, policies, and "implementation strategies" that support the Master Plan. Furthermore, Vision 2020 will be used as a guideline for developing the Master Plan. For example, the overall vision statement for land use is that....

"GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL RESOURCES, UNIQUE LANDSCAPE, HISTORIC CHARACTER, DISTINCT NEIGHBORHOODS, AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES OF THE TAOS VALLEY."

More specifically, Vision 2020's Goal #1 for the Land Use element is "Taos encourages the use of community design that is traditional, sustainable, has little impact on the natural environment, and enhances the quality of life for residents." One of the Community Design policies is "The Town of Taos will consider the re-design of the street pattern around Taos Plaza to improve traffic flow, increase pedestrian safety, and create enhanced visual amenity."

The vision statements, goals, and policies within Vision 2020 set the direction for the Town to develop the Master Plan, as all of these aspirations will be fulfilled upon its completion.

The Community Economic Development element of Vision 2020 is even more explicit in its support to the ACD. It states that the Town will "support the development of the Taos Art & Cultural District" and will "provide reasonable financial support to the Taos ACD to continue coordination of the activities of the ACD and to continue access to state assistance."

The recently approved ACD Cultural Plan and the ACD Steering Committee annual work plan not only call for the development of the Master Plan, but they identify the individuals who will be primarily responsible for managing the planning process. A copy of the relevant sections of the ACD Cultural Plan and the ACD Steering Committee work plan are included.

The need for a parking plan in downtown is clearly identified in Vision 2020 and the Cultural Plan. The relevant pages of the Cultural Plan that reference the parking plan are included. The DPAC charrette report is also full of illustrations for parking lot improvements and an inventory of existing parking spaces.

o) relationship between proposed activity and Design Planning Assistance Center (DPAC) report

In March 2010 a group of graduate students and professors from UNM's Design Planning and Assistance Center (DPAC) traveled to Taos to participate in a three-day design charrette with local residents, business owners, and community leaders. The purpose of the exercise was to assist the community in identifying the design and planning issues facing the town, and in

articulating ways in which community members would like to see them addressed. The geographic core of the charrette, the Taos Arts and Cultural District, was pared into discrete zones, and several primary sites were identified within this matrix.

The DPAC report includes numerous illustrations and renderings that depict potential capital improvement projects, but the proposals were not fully prioritized or completely developed for technical or financial feasibility. However, there will be a strong and direct relationship between the vision of the Design Planning Assistance Center (DPAC) report and the implementation of the Master Plan. The ACD Steering Committee and the consultant team will rely in the DPAC report as a guide to give the Master Plan a greater sense of priorities, strategic next steps, and budget estimates to the proposed projects of the Master Plan.

p) ICIP listing

The Town of Taos 2012 Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan (ICIP) identifies the Downtown Master Plan. A copy of the ICIP is included in the appendix.

q) ability to promote job creation and economic development

The Master Plan will help organize private sector industries and form partnerships among private, public and non-profit sectors which will support an overall effort to increase, diversify, and stabilize Taos' economy. The designation of Taos as an ACD has created a natural partnership between the state departments of tourism, cultural affairs, and economic development, the Town of Taos, and all segments of the creative economy. The impacts of the Master Plan towards job creation and economic development can be summarized by the tourism industry, arts and crafts productions, and festivals and events.

TOURISM: It is impossible to quantify the economic, financial, or employment impacts of the Master Plan; however, what is clearly understood and quantifiable is the importance of tourism to the Taos economy. The quarterly Taos Economic Report defines tourism as “a collection of industries that in total indicates those business activities that are mainly dominated by services to tourists.” The North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) identifies proxy industries for the tourism economy. These include amusement, gambling & recreation industries, services, accommodation, full-service restaurants, and drinking places (alcoholic beverages). For 2004 through 2009, the annual average change in the Tourism Indicator was negative at -1.8% per year (-4.3% adjusted for inflation/deflation). Accommodations had the largest decline at -9.3% annual average change, amounting to \$10,692,075 in total. When used in combination with the Cultural Plan, the Master Plan will help reverse these negative trends by setting priorities, coordinating efforts, and re-defining Taos as a world class destination for authentic and meaningful tourism experiences.

Northern New Mexico's rich artistic and cultural traditions have served as a foundation for economic development over the past half century. Emerging global and national trends have begun to alter the dynamics of culture-based development in the region. Communities across the

U.S. and, indeed, globally, have begun to invest heavily in cultural development, increasing competition and accelerating change. The maturation of Baby Boomers and the associated growth in the number of part-time and retired residents is restructuring the regional geography of development, with consequences that affect not only principal sites like the Town of Taos but smaller, more rural and traditional communities such as Chimayo, Dixon and Questa. The complexity of these trends poses a difficult challenge – to align development with global and national trends in order to draw resources and energy to the community while simultaneously protecting and nurturing the qualities and traditions that give value to culture and place.

ARTS AND CRAFTS PRODUCTION: The production of art and crafts, ranging from classical visual arts, to healing arts, to performance arts, to pottery, to jewelry making, to literary arts and all points between, has been a basic economic engine for Taos since its establishment as an art colony and a writer’s colony starting with the establishment of the Taos Society of Artists in 1915.

The sale of art has also changed dramatically in the last few years. Galleries are no longer limited to their physical location. To be competitive galleries are creating an Internet presence, and may even participate in open air fairs and events. This is particularly true of artist owned and operated galleries. Cultural markets and artist cooperative galleries are beginning to become more viable. Changes to the function and regulation of uses on the Taos Plaza have been forwarded through the recent work completed by the ACD, which if implemented through the Master Plan could add the Plaza to the list of available venues for selling art and crafts produced in Taos County. What is clear from the Town’s recent Artist Housing Market Survey is that not only are affordable studio spaces needed and desired, but accessible and reasonably priced venues for the sale of art and crafts is a need of the emerging artist.

EVENTS AND FESTIVALS: Events and festivals can provide significant increases in visitation and can drive increases in gross receipts taxes. The most popular and apparently productive festivals and events have been:

- Solar Fest in mid-June; music events at the Solar Center
- National touring acts and performances at the Taos Community Auditorium
- The theatrical offerings at the Space and Metta theatres and the Anglada’s event center
- Taos Fiestas
- Quickdraw, Wool Festival, Fall Arts, and other events held at Kit Carson Park
- The Artwalks and the TAO Artist Studio Tour

These events, festivals, tours, and fairs generally generate foot traffic, which usually involves lodging, restaurant, and other retail sales in the community in addition to the sales at the event.

The Town’s role in this should be to facilitate the organization among event, festival, and fair hosting organizations to ensure that there is coordination and mutual support among these organizations. It may also be appropriate for the Town to consider entering into project participation agreements with event promoters to waive use and rental fees provided when an event or events can show direct economic benefit to the community that exceeds the value of the public support and participation that is provided.