

Report suggests open design — and more — for Taos Plaza

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The Taos News, 6/9/2016

According to the authors of a new report, less is more when it comes to redesigning Taos Plaza.

A recently completed “cultural landscape plan” for Taos Plaza suggests renovating the town’s main square to better reflect its “historic open character.”

Denver-based planning firm Mundus Bishop — a contractor hired by the town — recently presented a 160-page report on the Plaza that analyzes its historic look and use and various options for changing the design.

To download a copy of the report, find this story at taosnews.com.

The report was prepared after six months of public meetings and interviews with longtime locals recounting the historic uses and look of the Plaza. The findings are meant to serve as a guide for town officials to evaluate proposed changes and improvement to it.

Among the central recommendations in the report is to remove a lot of the brick, ramps and steps and instead create a level, open space. The report also suggests building an open-air shade structure on the Plaza’s west side and constructing a low adobe wall around the Plaza perimeter.

The report does not propose closing the Plaza to traffic. Suggestions of creating a pedestrian-only Plaza have created controversy in the past. The report does suggest the Plaza continue to accommodate its “traditional uses” as an everyday meeting spot and as a location for markets and larger events.

As for what should go, the report suggests removing the information kiosk, war memorial and Padre Martinez statue, which it calls “non-contributing structures.”

“These structures are not in historically appropriate locations and are of a scale and mass that diminishes the integrity of the plaza,” the report reads. “Historically, structures were few, and modest in scale.”

According to the report, the structures could be relocated, though it acknowledges they may not be moved because of their significance to the community.

The report will purportedly be used, and perhaps some of its recommendations implemented, once funds are designated and approved.



Images of Taos Plaza from 1880 to present show how it changed from an open, grassy area to a multilevel, bricked square. The authors of a new report suggest returning the Plaza to the simpler design in the future in order to maintain its historic character while maintaining its usefulness as a meeting place and location for community events.

Photos courtesy Mundus Bishop Cultural Landscape Plan

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