

Editorial

Taosenos show up, more input needed

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Kudos to the estimated 200 people who packed the conference room at the Sagebrush Inn on Monday to provide comments and thoughts about the future of downtown Taos. They took the time out of their busy schedules, gave up their favorite evening television shows and the NBA championship showdown and set aside their afterwork chores to show up for the “Strong at Heart” forum.

Their input matters. Their effort matters. Their participation is what makes a democracy. Their care is what will help guide town officials who are trying to make the best decisions they can for Taos. Read more in reporter Jesse Moya’s story about the event and watch an archived livestream of the presentations at taosnews.com.

Kudos also to town leaders and the nonprofit Community Builders, which helped organize the event. They are looking for new ways to involve more people in the public process. They did several things right. They provided food because hungry people can’t focus as well. They provided child care so parents could participate.

They found an easy way to calculate who showed up and who was missing. The crowd at the forum was largely white and older than 45. They fell into two economic classes: those making more than \$75,000 and those earning less than \$35,000 a year.

That leaves out huge demographics, especially of younger and middle-income people. The town’s officials have taken on the challenge of reaching those people. But they need help. They have many more events planned to solicit comments in July and the months ahead.

If Taos is going to thrive into the future, it needs its younger generations to show up and speak up. Teenagers and young adults need to know that their elders will listen. They need to tell policymakers what they want Taos to look like, what’s missing and what kinds of jobs would entice them to return to their hometown. Maybe they have some good ideas on how to resolve the community’s most pressing problems.

But they have to make the time to make their voices heard.