

Town of Taos moves for ward with parks master plan

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Parks in Taos have been getting some much-needed attention, and the town of Taos is inviting the public in for a discussion about their future.

The town will hold its meeting for public comment from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturday (Feb. 24) at the town council chambers to discuss the draft plans for park improvements in Taos. The discussion began with the first public meeting in December when community members were able to give their input on the parks situation.

Currently four parks lie within the town limits, including the Youth and Family Center, totaling 65.9 acres with different features at each.

“The end goal of this project is a parks and recreation master plan for the town that will help guide improvements to the park system and Kit Carson, Fred Baca, Taos Eco Park, and the Youth and Family Center in particular,” said Claudia Horn, principal of Design Office, the planning and landscape design company working with the town on the plan.

The master plan will be useful for the town when applying for grants to present the needs at town parks based on the public input.

The parks improvement plan began with focus groups and determining the need for improvements in Taos’ public spaces. The community is now invited to glance over the draft plans for the parks and provide input on the designs.

Initially, Design Office gathered around 900 survey responses to their questions and built a draft plan from the suggestions in the surveys. Finalization of the plans is roughly set for the end of March, which will mean the plans will go in front of the town planning and zoning commission as well as the town council.

According to town officials, the public involvement has helped in identifying the concerns and needs of the community regarding Taos parks.

“The benefit has just been the better understanding about what people care about in Taos,” said Town Senior Planner John Miller. “It’s understanding the community better.”

Safety, accessibility, upkeep and maintenance have been primary concerns of the public, and the plan will seek to address those as well as looking at the availability of parks and where the biggest need for them is.

According to Horn, Saturday’s meeting will be the best time to have public comments and input considered for the final plans although suggestions can be taken later in as well.

“Taos has some very unique parks that each have their own specific characteristics,” Horn said. “I think that’s something we’re hoping comes out in the final plans.”



**Birders take to the field at Fred Baca Park in Taos.
File photo**

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