

# RESULTS OF EVENT OPENING ACTIVITIES

For background and context about the information that follows, [please read the project update](#).

## WHAT ARE OUR WISHES FOR THE FUTURE?

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### Thriving Arts

- More collaboration and support among local artists - less competitive attitudes
- Healthy, thriving art community
- More arts support from the Town fathers
- Bring back Arts District
- Make Civic Plaza Drive an art/culture walkway
- Build a visual arts center in downtown

### Good Governance

- Political leaders don't listen – own agendas must change
- I wish we had a Town Council that listened to residents
- Hoping for honest leaders
- No confidence in current administration
- Continue listening to all people in Taos - all cultures and ages and points of view
- More respectful openness of information and process will lead to collaboration at all levels
- Elect a different Mayor and bring in new administrator that actually listens to the people
- We can agree to disagree
- That all citizens will thrive and be involved with their community

### Our Community Character Protected

- Clean up Taos
- Clean up trash, junk cars, etc.
- Clean streets
- To keep what is already special about Taos - Art and <illegible word>
- Taos stays heartfelt and a creative community
- Keep Taos, Taos!
- Town and business maintenance
- Keep Taos special - how the people have told you many times to do
- That Taos retain its uniqueness

### Better Community Development

- Vibrant town with honoring the traditions, architecture, scenery that makes people love and live here
- Main Street project
- Thriving pedestrian friendly downtown
- Making the center more vibrant
- More low-cost housing options and freedom from codes that make it impossible to build in the old traditions.
- Taos should grow responsibly under the current laws

## *Strong At Heart Kick Off Meeting Summary of Public Input*

- Intelligent, sustainable land use
- I want to see Taos be a great place for the people who live here, not just for visitors
- Let us encourage development by those who truly care about and love Taos, not those whose primary motive is profit
- That wealthy newcomers don't push the regular folks out
- I hope for short hotels!
- Filling empty buildings with good businesses
- Growth rooted in tradition
- Beautiful parks and bike lanes!
- Infill
- Invest in Taos
- More development

### **Preserve Open Lands and Heritage**

- Taos needs an archives - repository for historic and government documents and photos
- We need local resources for scholars to study us and our history
- More non-alcoholic events
- Keep up the farmers market, Thursday concerts, etc
- I'd like to see the arts and recreation combined into one <?> in the town so sports and arts aren't competing
- Preserve Ag land
- Local agriculture
- Preserve acequias
- Rio Grande Trail - Camino Milagro de la Luz - Like in Spain
- Preserve greenspace
- More green spaces
- Save Couse pasture
- Preserve open spaces
- Protected greenspace
- Maintain and encourage green space
- Taos can keep its uniqueness and save Couse pasture
- Treasure all open spaces

### **A More Diverse Taos Friendly Economy**

- An economy that serves all of us who are residents here
- A balanced economy that includes no more than 20% from tourism
- Stronger economy not reliant on tourism
- More tourists
- A positive, vibrant community with a diverse economy
- Increase agricultural opportunities
- Clean energy jobs
- The minimum salary will increase to \$15 or more an hour
- Livable wages
- More career opportunities, better paying jobs!

## *Strong At Heart Kick Off Meeting Summary of Public Input*

- More jobs
- Better jobs
- Opportunities to have a job that you love
- Employment opportunities
- Livable wages
- More support for entrepreneurs
- Support entrepreneurial community
- Taos County - the biggest distilling center between Missouri and the Pacific - like in the mountain man days
- Outdoor art market
- Major destination for fine arts - education, sales, and instruction
- That Taos will become just a tourist recreational destination
- Economy that supports agriculture and regional health care
- Public improvements that spark private investment
- Keep the heart of Taos with improvement for economic growth in tourism
- Bringing good business to Taos
- A town that looks to a deindustrialized, decentralized, less complex future - the kind we're headed to anyways
- A thriving, healthy, economic thriving/diverse community that celebrates and respects its history and the diversity of this region
- A more vibrant economy
- I'd like to see UNM grow and bring vitality to the downtown
- Would be nice to have more going on in the <unreadable> and more connection with the ski valley aka Telluride
- <unreadable> the ski valley as in Telluride - we need

### **Better Education**

- Better education opportunities
- Better schools
- Better educational opportunities
- Local college that serves Taoseños!
- Fewer middle and high schools - consolidate what we have
- Good, vital, progressive school district
- Strong schools

### **Stronger Community**

- No poverty!
- Less poverty
- Kids/families that don't live in poverty
- Family-friendly activities
- Taking care of our neighbors
- Cohesive populations
- A more cohesive community
- Community integrity

**A Healthier Community**

- Access to healthcare
- I wish we had better healthcare
- Better healthcare
- Wellness
- I wish we had better eldercare

**A More Sustainable Community**

- 100% renewables and selling them to others
- Transition to renewable energy
- Clean energy
- That we move to 100% renewable energy
- I hope for clean water for our community
- Take care of the land!
- Humanity's transition to a sustainable future and stewardship of garden Earth
- Sustainability
- That Taos become an environmentally and socially safe community with opportunity for all
- Sustainability rooted in our traditions

**Better and More Transportation Options**

- Commercial flights from select cities - Dallas, Denver, Phoenix, etc.
- New airport
- Improved walkability
- Safe complete streets for pedestrians and cyclists
- A walkable downtown
- Better sidewalks
- Car free plaza
- Plaza parking
- I wish we had good roads!
- Paseo one-way north
- Placito one-way south and synchronized lights
- Less potholes
- Parking
- Better roads
- More transportation options: buses, walking paths, bike lanes
- More frequent public transportation between the ski valley and the town

**More Opportunities for Youth**

- A more economically viable town that encourages youth to stay and make Taos home
- To create jobs for the youth
- Keep our youth here
- Healthy, thriving youth
- A place where my grow children will want to return and prosper
- High quality child care for all children and families

## *Strong At Heart Kick Off Meeting Summary of Public Input*

- The young people are leaving. What's here for them????
- We need young people!
- Something for the youth

### **Unclassified Comments**

- Decriminalize recreational marijuana
- Rename this event to something real - maybe in Spanish
- More resources
- Whatever the future is here I've had enough. Tried for 40 years to feel at home here and decided I never will.
- Bringing good people to Taos
- Taos might improve thanks to this process

## **WHAT ARE OUR CONCERNS FOR THE FUTURE?**

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### **Affordability and Housing**

- Lack of affordable housing
- It will become unaffordable for locals
- Affordable housing
- Need more affordable housing
- Housing for workers
- Not enough affordable housing
- Housing (x2)

### **Community Character and Sense of Place**

- We need to clean up the town
- Less dumping
- It's really scruffy with decrepit infrastructure
- That Taos will lose its strong sense of place because of an emphasis on "Economic Development" that doesn't take that importance into account
- Concern is that it is already too late to save any charm or sense of community there might have been
- Taos can't afford to lose any part of its character, especially with what the future will bring
- Dark skies? Where are they?
- Also, keeping Taos local and like Taos

### **Community Cohesion**

- The lack of civility of the public when there are disagreements
- Factionalism
- Separation of culture and places

### **Community Programs**

- More support for traditional communities (less emphasis on new populations and visitors)
- Preserve and support traditional cultures!
- Lack of social services

## *Strong At Heart Kick Off Meeting Summary of Public Input*

- Homeless
- Imbalanced and inadequate funding for programs for children and homeless. As well as equine and pet programs.
- Not enough proactive affordable community based event spaces
- Community building events (like Paseo)

### **Need for Conservation**

- Preserve green space
- Preserve our viewscapes and solar gain
- Need green space
- Loss of green space
- Annexation of agricultural lands
- Urban forest
- Acequias running and used

### **Downtown**

- The Historic District has no maintenance program - never has! We are going into another summer season looking terrible. Weeds, unkept alleys, trash project and plaza - it is shameful!
- Charming plaza that is turning into Las Vegas!
- Plaza construction is ugly!
- Plaza lights are too sensational for a 400-yr old plaza
- Preserve Historic District
- Take down those lights from trees on Plaza - lights belong to Las Vegas not Taos - what happened to the <unreadable>? Why put <unreadable> we can't see them!!!
- Check out Tucson, AZ city lighting!

### **Economy Lacking**

- The economy
- Economy growth isn't all bad.
- No economy
- The economy in general
- Lack of understanding of what creates economic growth on the part of the government
- Economic opportunity
- Too tied to tourism and consumerism
- The economy
- Jobs and property owners to avoid rural ghost towns like Questa
- Economy
- Not enough professionals, socially or in the workforce
- Better jobs
- Wages
- Jobs
- Poor jobs
- Affordable wage

*No Youth Opportunity*

## *Strong At Heart Kick Off Meeting Summary of Public Input*

- Poor economy for youth
- Limited opportunity for young professionals
- No opportunity for kids (college grads)
- We need to encourage our young artists to stay. Give them art it's here. Too many leaving...

### *Type of Businesses*

- Please don't build a Super-Walmart for jobs, grow marijuana instead
- 6) No Smith's Market Place
- Keeping corporate U.S. out
- Need more agriculture and land-based production - food and power
- No corporate America!
- Don't succumb to big business
- Big business

### *Workforce*

- Lack of a workforce that is willing to work and is drug free
- Training the workforce
- Education and job opportunities are weak
- Poor education
- Educational improvement
- Need better quality and more professional engineering, architecture, infrastructure people who actually know their discipline. Lowest bid and cheapest is not good

### *Infrastructure*

- Need good internet for cottage industry

### **Poverty**

- Poverty not being addressed
- Poverty and limited options for young people
- Poverty!

### **Growth Management**

- Growth like all other towns... losing what is already special of Taos
- Spoiling the charm with box hotels and dollar stores
- I want Taos to be a town that reflects its history and culture, not a mere copy of every other town
- Light pollution!
- No more LED <?> dark skies are possible
- Building code
- Unregulated development
- Education regarding animals - more enforcement
- More crap mega-corp. bs. (i.e., hi-rise hotels)
- I'm concerned that 4 story hotels will become plentiful and change the charming town to another anyplace in the USA
- No buildings over 2 stories!

## *Strong At Heart Kick Off Meeting Summary of Public Input*

- No 4-story hotels!!!
- No 4-story allowances!!! Stop Holiday Inn
- No structures over 2-stories
- No buildings taller than 3-stories
- No 4-story hotel or any other buildings too tall;
- Having a clear strategy for growth
- Lack of vision
- I want a community that sees into the future and loses the anger, intentional ignorance and greed of the past
- Way too many people!
- That developers build with concern
- Concern: Overdevelopment of Town
- Sound pollution
- Infrastructure
- Long term planning and responsible growth

### **Health**

- Healthcare
- Drugs

### **Local Government**

- Realistic town planning with local residents in mind. Stop following \$\$
- Sell out of Taos to corporate interests by some of our public officials
- Local government officials bought out by special interests and non-Taos interests
- Citizens; needs over movidas (some corrupt) by corporate <unreadable> re: Mayor, Bellis, Hahn and Evans
- Rick Bellis should be terminated
- This project will have no lasting impact / It will be another good idea with no real result
- Political will and progressive thinking
- The process used by the Town to move projects forward is undemocratic!!!
- Transparent, inclusive, honest city government
- Listen to the people: 1) Get rid of Bellis and his deceitful agenda; 3) Have 2 hearings at P&Z before a vote; 4) Get rid of stacked P&Z; 5) Get rid of Barrone, Hahn
- Government transparency
- I am distrustful of the current administration
- Corrupt administration
- Local government doesn't listen
- Lack of strong leadership
- Government conflict

### **Public Safety**

- I wish we had more patrol cars

### **Social Cohesion**



## *Strong At Heart Kick Off Meeting Summary of Public Input*

- "Factions"
- Where are my Hispanic neighbors? Something has to be done to get us all together and talking
- Segregated community
- Inabilities of the three cultures to get along
- Have and have not split
- I am concerned about how fragmented Taos can be, with groups that do not interact
- Apathy contention that continues to lead to no concrete action

### **Sustainability**

- Climate change
- Community and ecological resilience in face of climate change
- When the national (world?) economy collapses (which may be in the not too distant future), how will Taos take care of its own? Sustainability is critical
- Water!
- Water quality and quantity
- Water
- Lack of water
- Self-sustaining

### **Transportation**

- Not enough or convenient free parking, for locals who want to shop downtown
- Lack of parking creates traffic backups
- Lack of sidewalks and walking paths
- Sidewalks
- Keep Taos walkable!
- Sidewalks
- Potholes
- Better roads!
- Abusive behavior by motoring public. Cars and trucks kill, pollute and destroy
- Roads are awful
- Too much traffic - too few roads
- Traffic!
- Bike lanes
- More bike paths and bike lanes
- Trails
- Public transportation to doctors, dentists, groceries for people who don't/can't drive. Subsidized so ordinary people can afford it.
- Too many cars, need more bicycles and public transportation
- Lack of public transportation, especially for disabled and elderly

### **Youth**

- Not enough child care for infants and toddlers
- Lack of child care
- Fruitfulness for our youth. They are the future.
- The quality of education here
- Not enough support for young adults

**Unclassified Comments**

- Kut the krap
- We are watching
- Chemtrails
- "It's just Taos"
- Being lied to by men/women with bad hair dyes and bad ideas
- They won't <?> the style
- Backwards thinking
- Progress is impossible!
- No focus

**HOW DO WE THINK THE ECONOMY IS DOING?**

<b>1. Overall, the economy in Taos is doing well. (128 responses)</b>				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
24%	58%	12%	5%	1%

  

<b>2. The local economy works well for individuals and families who live in Taos. (126 responses)</b>				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
25%	59%	13%	3%	0%

  

<b>3. The people who live here have opportunities for upward mobility in the local economy. (128 responses)</b>				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
39%	45%	10%	6%	0%

**We Need a Plan**

- We need a true economic development department/plan with action items, targets, goals with the goal of diversifying the economy and attracting geographic neutral businesses
- Not ready for the large influx of south-central and south-western Americans who escaping heat! Crime, high prices and property taxes will buy up Taos. Plan, plan, plan.

**We Have Inequity**

- Home/land ownership is inaccessible, children are hungry, how do we help?!
- Affordable housing
- Great! For the white and privileged
- Disparity
- Uneven - haves, have nots and barely squeaking by
- I'm still poor
- It is lame. Capital-poor.
- Poorly - people live paycheck to paycheck with no benefits
- Poorly - need more opportunity

**There are Barriers**

- It might do better if the town looked clean and prosperous. There is no program for maintenance here. We look and act poor! Not good.
- Less red tape to start business
- By and large it's very expensive here

**We Are Declining**

- Taos is losing its prominence
- Very poorly! Just look at all the empty businesses
- Poor (economy)
- Poorly
- Poorly, but the work effort doesn't help support growth
- Poor services
- Lagging behind. Too reliant on tourism. Retail declining.
- Lagging in tourism
- Poorly
- Tourism leaks
- Lacks diversity
- Poorly
- Poorly - behind many areas of U.S.
- Could be a bit more robust
- What economy?
- What economy?
- Haven't been here long enough to know... lots of empty, derelict buildings all around, however "Casa Europa" ex.
- Poorly
- Far below potential

**We Need To Diversify**

- Overly reliant on tourism
- Give money to theater and visual arts, not just concerts
- Poorly - why keep supporting corp. welfare Walmart jobs? Need a living wage, training - Diversify - not just depend on tourism
- We could do better - decisions, regulations, community and shopping local
- Need real businesses and tech jobs
- Poorly - we have little to offer professionals seeking to relocate or locals seeking to stay
- Economy - I'm glad that Taos does not have too many "career" type jobs. Nice that people are not solely focused on jobs. Hard to make a living means less people who don't really want to be here. Well, that and the rich...
- Our best tourists are baby boomers and older retirees. We need to promote art and history for them.
- Too few opportunities to attract dual-income families
- Few career opportunities available to residents.
- Too many buildings without local business... revenue share will help <?> local business

**Downtown Needs Enhancement**

- Parts ok - but Taos Plaza is being badly misused and under-utilized

## *Strong At Heart Kick Off Meeting Summary of Public Input*

- No parking free close to downtown shops, hurts businesses there
- Needs a vibrant downtown for locals. Tourists follow locals.

### **Some Doing Well, Some Not**

- My retail is doing well in 2017
- Real estate stinks
- The art/merchant economy is suffering <?>
- Real estate is also in the tank
- Bring back arts
- McDonalds doing well, art galleries not so much

### **What Is Our Priority?**

- If I read statistics - not so great. But there are also other ways to define value.
- Why is the economy the primary focus? Beyond the basics (food, clothing, shelter) study after study has shown that greater wealth does not equal greater happiness
- What are our principles and values? If we are basing our decisions primarily by bowing to the almighty dollar, we are misguided.

### **Types of Business?**

- Keep out corporate run business
- We need to make it easier for people to have cottage industries without so many regulations
- Quit focus on tourism and diversify
- Could use an organic marijuana niche market
- Need local food, power and service enterprises
- It's threatened by corporate influences with no vested interest in the community
- Support the arts
- Need more entrepreneurs and less corporate box business
- Need good paying clean energy jobs and no big box stores
- Green jobs
- Doing fine with local owned businesses. Don't need larger corporations (Holiday Inn).
- The Farmers Market is a thriving success
- Local economy - agriculture needs more encouragement, land is overvalued and overpriced, locals cannot afford land, we need to preserve farm land
- Sustainable art and local based economic development needs nurturing

### **Need Better Paying Jobs**

- Poor pay for too many
- Need living wage - people cannot make it on minimum wage!
- We need a living wage
- We need possibility of higher wages for willing workers. Do statistics exist for job availability vs. wages offered? I see help wanted signs, but may be for low wage jobs.
- Need higher minimum wage and more year-round jobs.
- Diversity and living wage needed

**Need Opportunity for Youth**

- Youth not well addressed
- Not enough opportunity for young people
- The youth need more opportunity for work and education
- Need more decent jobs for young people
- Economy could be better if there were more opportunities for group (or young?) tourists that would employ local people
- Children's poverty rate in Taos is 30%. 1 in 6 kids here do not have a parent who works. We need more development and jobs. Not only people against any development.

**HOW ARE WE DOING WORKING TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY?**

<b>1. As a community, we need to improve our ability to work together on challenging issues and decisions. (125 responses)</b>				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
2%	0%	2%	24%	73%

<b>2. As a community, we are able to share our opinions and disagree respectfully within our public discourse. (119 responses)</b>				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
31%	47%	10%	9%	3%

**Decision Making Processes and Collaboration are Not Done Well**

- No trust in leadership
- Not good. Divisive attitude from Council toward citizens - no respect, openness, integrity, honesty from some officials
- Not well - the Council does not listen to the community
- Dishonest Town Manager
- Lack of respect for citizens
- Too many meetings/forums not enough action/follow thru
- It seems like nothing ever gets done. We talk about it. But really it isn't working.
- Room to improve.
- I think in some areas we do well and in others we don't listen or act
- Many citizens are unconcerned while there are a few loudly vocal on issues
- Very poorly! Sense of community is being replaced by corporate greed
- Need more publicity
- It's dangerous to speak up
- We need town employees to live here and have a history here.
- Short sighted
- No legacy

**We Want to Work Together Well Across the Community, But Currently Do Not**

## *Strong At Heart Kick Off Meeting Summary of Public Input*

- As a community, we need to "get it together"
- Try to include everyone - all races and ages involved
- I feel meetings could be more accessible
- Although I think most residents want to work as a community, we don't seem to have created adequate structures and support for doing so.
- My smaller community works well together! Don't know what the broader Taos community focuses on as a group? Does the community as a whole have similar goals?
- Largely working in silos
- Severely divided community
- We need to improve working together. "How?" and "What works?" are good places to start.
- Not nearly as good as we could considering we have so many concerned citizens. Need cohesion!
- We continue to argue over pointless divisions. Newcomers as know it alls. Old families asking "Where are you from?" etc, etc. A real dialog means getting over our fine selves and being part of a community.
- The demographics here tonight answer this question
- Demonstrate cultural awareness - go into the community for events like this - our Hispanic and native don't attend these events and are under represented
- Very divided - culturally, economically, racially
- Factionalized
- Where is the Hispanic community tonight!! We need them!
- Very siloed
- Pocket living

### **Not Doing Well, Room for Improvement**

- Poor communication in general.
- Terrible!
- Lots of room to improve
- Poorly. Citizens are ignored at P&Z and Council meetings.
- Poor - need to improve
- Bad job - boo
- Badly
- Poorly.
- Poorly
- Poorly
- Horrible
- Fair - need improvement, this is a good start
- In crisis, community is very supportive
- Getting better
- Non-existent
- If we had more opportunities we generally work well together
- Early childhood sectors collaborate well

### **Unclassified**

- Need a better perception
- There's work being done, really had no idea.

- Education is the key tool for progression - Our children of their children
- Healthy lifestyles

## HOW ARE WE DOING WITH COMMUNITY SUPPORT?

<b>1. As a community, we need to improve our ability to work together on challenging issues and decisions. (125 responses)</b>				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
2%	0%	2%	24%	73%

<b>2. We support our local businesses. (106 responses)</b>				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
15%	18%	23%	39%	6%

<b>3. People of different cultural or economic backgrounds are equally supported. (108 responses)</b>				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
23%	30%	30%	18%	0%

<b>4. We create opportunities for youth in the community. (117 responses)</b>				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
23%	47%	14%	15%	2%

### Not Enough Support For Business Sectors

- The visual arts community needs more support from the Town fathers - take a look at Moab for example
- Support local artists
- Agriculture not supported
- Schools could use more support statewide and in Taos
- Some groups are recognized and others are not. Does it depend on how tourism might be affected?

### Not Enough Support for Those Most In Need

- Poorly - help for the children
- Support early childhood
- Children are our future - let's start there with support
- Children and families largely underserved
- Need for housing and childcare
- Poorly - for working families, substance use, behavioral health
- We need more for children, artists, teens, underprivileged
- Need more healthy food available
- Mental healthcare needs support
- Depends on the topic - varies greatly!
- More funding and support for programs for children and housing
- Step up the recycling.
- You could offer more resources
- Living wage

### **General Perceptions About Our Community**

- Don't know - my wife and I haven't felt that welcome
- Dogs and cats have the best advocates
- Not sufficient (community support)
- Lots of who knows who!
- Put the needs of many ahead of the greed of a few and their agenda
- The Council does not listen to the community - all decisions have been made without public input - yes we talk but it does no good
- When and how do you collect and pay attention to public comment?
- Community support in Taos? My community is supportive, but the town has little to do with that. People here are willing. Would help if town got the ball rolling.
- This community can't stand up for anything sensible. The locals (generational) don't show up for these things. Sad!!
- Mostly supportive
- Need to develop a better sense of community throughout by bringing the community as a whole together
- Need more volunteer opportunities
- Taos Tree Board is active and ready to help
- Generally good support

### **Options to Cars Not Supported**

- Ok. But town is too fragmented in terms of walkability -> car-centric nature inhibits community connection
- Severe lack of bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure. No sidewalks!!?!?! No real, proper, protected bicycling infrastructure. Painted "bike lanes" are not.
- Bike lanes. Sidewalks.
- Police were very supportive of critical mass/slow roll bike party ride. Police also not enforce enough of the traffic laws.

### **The Nonprofit Sector Provides Support**

- Focus on immediate, deep needs of folks and all the 501(C)(3) that benefit them
- Too many good groups vying for too few resources
- Many nonprofits to pick up slack

### **Some Things Good**

- Great activities
- I like plaza events

### **Unclassified**

- Over-worked systems with under-appreciated staff and resources
- More connective within the green industry and green communities



# RESULTS OF SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

## Our Strengths

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Key community assets identified were cultural, social, and physical:

- Artistic culture
- Cultural heritage
- Agricultural traditions and landscape
- The people who live here and their acceptance of differences
- Strong sense of community
- The natural beauty and public lands
- Our institutions (small businesses, nonprofit, larger organizations)

Our strengths are:

1. People work hard, bring a wealth of experience, are extremely creative, and are committed to seeking solutions and making things happen.
2. Our community is oriented towards:
  - Being accepting of diversity of opinions, cultures, socio-economics, and people choosing to express themselves differently.
  - A more relaxed and slower pace of life.
  - Politically engaged citizens and oriented towards more progressive ideas.
  - Caring for our families.
3. We have a strong sense of community that comes from a small town. We know each other. The sense of community manifests in helping and caring for each other when in need, participating in community social events, and generosity.
4. Our Town has institutional assets (nonprofits, the hospital, UNM, TSV), social assets (restaurants, cafes, community events, small businesses, the people), and natural assets (landscape, national monument, USFS, BLM).
5. We all take pride in our rich cultural heritage and traditions that make Taos unique. These cultures have all contributed to the strong creative and agricultural culture. Our cultural heritage is reflected in what our community looks like: our architecture, the plaza, and infrastructure (acequias).
6. We have cultural and natural assets to build upon.
  - We have a strong arts and creative community with a history of famous artists, institutions, events, and individuals.
  - We have a tie to the land. There is a long history here of cultures living on the land and agricultural traditions and products.
  - Taos is located in an exceptionally beautiful landscape with a great climate and healthy environment.

- We have a recreation oriented community taking advantage of the incredible access to natural assets (public lands, trails, ski areas, rivers).
- Our tourism industry is diverse and reflects our diverse cultures: agritourism, cultural tourism, culinary tourism, creative, sustainable design, alternative medical.

## Our Weaknesses

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### **Lack of Affordability, Livability, and Opportunity**

- Affordable housing (IIII )
- Housing (III)
- Landlords are pricing artists out of town. Look at number of vacant galleries and stores (I)
- Overpriced rental markets
- Low wages (III): need minimum wage of \$13/hr.
- Lack of Jobs (IIII)
- Jobs that meet cost of living (IIII)
- Good paying jobs
- Job/Career Opportunities
- Lack of Industry
- Cost of living (II)
- Low cost housing (II)

### **Concern Over Losing Identity**

- Taos to set the stage; not follow other place's footprints
- Remaining true to who we are
- Over marketing of Taos! Intentional importation of people from outside
- Gentrification

### **Our Community Is Not Cohesive**

- Ethic/Cultural tensions
- Newcomers not taking time to learn about locals
- Lack of civility in public meetings
- Intercultural communication
- Lack of overlap between groups in the community.
- Community cohesiveness
- Inability of 3 cultures to respect each other
- Divided community
- Understanding our cultures/racism

### **Inadequate Social Services**

- Access to adequate healthcare (mental and physical)
- Lack of quality child care
- More child care
- More day care

- Lack of recycling (I)

### **Concern About How We Develop**

- Zoning: Where do things go?
- Free market development: regulations targeting businesses specific
- Unchecked corporate development guts small town downtowns. Locally owned businesses keep downtowns alive and pay better than corporations.
- Zoning and Planning:
- Commercial development with respect to current business climate
- Direction of, and process of town development
- Holiday Inn- not wanted, not appreciated
- Construction at wrong times of day
- Growth vs. Capacity and Infrastructure
- We aren't in balance for the growth (II) we've had growth too fast for infrastructure
- Town condemns run-down properties, gives them to developers to rehab them with constraints on design.
- Integrity of historic overlay zone.
- Keep the plaza (not downtown) historically correct.
- Keeping historical awareness

### **Our Community Has Social and Health Challenges**

- Drug problems (III)
- Drug/alcohol epidemic links to poverty
- Opiates are a big and growing problem"
- Low wage jobs/no jobs increasing rates of drug abuse, property crime, violence in our community
- Epidemic of Alcohol/Crime/Drugs
- Substance abuse
- Homelessness: Nothing for homeless men to do in the day.
- Homeless people around Kit Carson Park and Manby's estate (couldn't ready name of estate)
- Little cooperation from police in homeless issue
- Hunger (III)
- Poor diets
- Food insecurity
- No emergency shelter for non-battered women
- Young people's suicides
- Youth- depression, addiction, suicides"
- Wellness of citizens
- Allow clustered eldercare
- Lack of opportunity for people
- Poverty (III)
- High % of kids in poverty
- Economic disparity

### **We Sometimes Don't Respect our Assets**

- respect for land
- trash
- Lack of pride in what we have- trash all over or community and land
- Lack of pride of what we have
- Lack of love for our community, of Mother Earth

### **How We Make Decisions Lacks Transparency**

- Making choices that are consistent with our unique community
- Free fair democratic govt open to all equally. The people do the people's business; not the council or mayor
- Officials too often not putting citizens' needs as priority. Focus on corporate development/tourism.
- Planning and Zoning Board transparency
- Lack of transparency with council
- Council (City Manager) making decisions with no input from citizens
- Governance
- The process used by town government to bring projects forward is undemocratic
- Total distrust of town government
- the need for values that reflect open community involvement (II)"
- We are a 65% Hispanic community. Look at the dots of who showed up tonight. Attendance is 70-80% Anglo.
- Go to the people who are under-represented"
- All groups Anglos/Hispanics/Native Americans need to be included and represented equally in city decisions and representation of ideas/decisions.
- Town policy of ten attacks self-determination. It is nearly impossible to operate an acequia in town despite lip service currently, being paid by town govt. Why? It is way easier in county
- Lack of diversity in the process. Open invitations consistently to the Pueblo make them feel invited and welcome
- Hostile personal interactions with town and council"
- Concerns: an understanding of what Taos values
- Our greatest challenge is that some of our public officials want to short cut having more revenue by seeking to sell our future to corporate interests with deep pockets (example: the 4-story hotel)
- Lack of Direction: The town governing body is highly responsive to interests of outside developers and corporate interests, but much less so to individuals and residents

### **Our Economy is Not Thriving**

- Economic vitality of community/downtown
- Lack of support in the entrepreneurial community
- Excessive red tape in obtaining business licenses.
- All our economic eggs are in the tourism basket. Diversify
- Visitor perceptions- vacant commercial space and failed businesses"
- Declining art market
- Small businesses

## *Strong At Heart Kick Off Meeting Summary of Public Input*

- Artists need more support and a consistent county-wide studio tour inclusive of all
- Bringing in Big Box Businesses (listed on a challenges page)
- Resistance to new business- (growth)
- Little-to-no development
- Ineffective use of the plaza creates division of business owners on plaza
- Lack of capital (private & govt)
- Seasonal economy
- Economy
- Health of economy
- Economy
- Economics
- Negative merchants who are unfriendly and unwelcoming
- Diverse economy
- Empty Store Fronts
- Sustainable jobs: create green jobs, gardens and ways to address the future

### **Education Could Be Better**

- Lack of quality across K-12
- Better High School curriculum
- Public schools are too rigid.
- Quality of education in public schools- dropout rate
- Changing models of education which reduce cohesion in the community.
- Adult education- not enough support
- Too large a portion of the community doesn't value education.
- Funding resources for education
- Charter school lottery. Automatic. School choice.
- Too many charter schools at expense of the public
- Low student enrollment @UNM
- Cancellation of UNM/Taos classes from Main Campus in Albq
- Apprenticeships
- Ask local talent to help school and have schools to facilitate

### **Our Town Needs to be Fiscally Healthy**

- Low property tax receipts
- Not enough \$ in town coffers
- Funding for town improvements and survival

### **We Need Better Infrastructure**

- Parking meters unfriendly to tourists
- Infrastructure (III): Roads, buildings, parks
- Dilapidation of prominent buildings and road conditions
- Infrastructure needs (public transportation, traffic- II, walkability
- No real bike protected, separated lanes - (I)
- Bike paths, busses and ways to ease traffic

## *Strong At Heart Kick Off Meeting Summary of Public Input*

- Traffic (III): an issue for 40 years
- Sync stop lights. Heavy traffic (trucks) difficult route"
- Gas clogged little streets through Taos due to transportation

### **There is a Lack of Regional Collaboration**

- Town and county not working together
- Poor communication between town and county
- Gross receipt tax-revenue
- Outlying areas annexation as it relates to taxes"
- Social Issue of cooperation between ski valley and town
- As town expands, it overtakes or abuts formerly independent communities. The town govt does not adequately consider the interests of these neighborhoods. Seems "They Don't Count"
- Town doesn't pay attention to out of town limits residents

### **We Are Losing Traditions**

- Losing traditions
- Lack of respect for cultural traditions in Taos

### **We Are Experiencing Change**

- Demographics changing
- Change is wearing down the town

### **There is No Future for Youth**

- The youth have nothing to inspire them
- Exodus of youth
- Reason for youth to stay

### **Law Enforcement is Good and Bad**

- Lack of law enforcement. Red lights, speeding, unsafe vehicles, no signals, rolling stops, parking on sidewalks, smoke-rolling, noise, cell abuse, pollutions
- Law enforcement: good relations with police

### **Workforce Issues**

- Aging workforce
- Unqualified workforce

### **Unclassified**

- Anger
- Weak communications
- Communication between court dispatcher and police
- True concern on the part of many people to try and change state, local, and national policies for the good of more citizens.
- Taking local assets for granted (poor stewardship)
- Family structure is crumbling
- smell at (unreadable)
- Post Office

- Agriculture
- water (III)
- Permaculture drive eco villages
- Environmental crisis

## What Are the Major Threats To Our Community?

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### **Nature of development**

- Exporting builders into the area
- Do we have enough electric infrastructure/internet to even support growth?
- Losing farmlands  
Loss of land to Ag development"
- Historical Preservation Commission is way too strict for people & expensive
- Taxing empty buildings. No incentive to rent.

### **Our economy**

- We are not competitive in health care access (specialists)
- 2nd home owner economy

### **Water quality and quantity**

## What Are Our Opportunities?

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### **Make Taos More Affordable/Livable**

- Affordable shopping; local is too expensive
- Low wages for too many people combined with high cost of living.
- Poverty- Low wages-need living wage (I)
- Raise minimum wage to a living wage however we can do it. (II)

### **Support Agriculture**

- Agricultural tax incentives
- Agriculture
- Planting gardens
- Support small farms & locally sourced products
- What about agricultural industry development? Food security/local.

### **Clean up the Community**

- Community street cleanups
- 3 goats on your land to clean up :)
- Community involvement in keeping up the town

### **Foster Community Cohesion**

- Supporting one another rather than competing with one another. Comfort and willingness to move beyond your own interest area.

## *Strong At Heart Kick Off Meeting Summary of Public Input*

- Acknowledge all viewpoints/populations"
- Community learning to treat tourists much better
- Integrate Anglo/Hispanic/Pueblo communities
- Integrate point of view of Hispanics and natives"
- Integration of the three cultures
- Intercultural exchange learning from others
- More sharing of stories by Taoseños, old & young, all cultures

### **Support More Community Collaborative Problem Solving**

- Reserve town meeting space for citizens to get together to discuss issues (neighborhood groups)
- Form specific task groups that are intentionally diverse in composition
- Local businesses, farmers, healers, etc. working together for the good of all and to remove barriers.
- Not-for-profit orgs to join forces, communicate effectively, share resources, and become more effective
- Reach the people who are not at the meeting and find out what they want and need, what part they want to take and where they need help. Small group interaction.

### **Foster a Healthy Community**

- Health care workforce development
- More health care providers
- Drug/Alcohol Rehab Center
- Outlaw alcohol shot sales in county

### **Manage Growth**

- Simplify codes and all regulations
- Adjustments to code for outside businesses; not residents
- Consistent architecture throughout town and county
- Habitat, Heritage of Taos, Grants, zone a district
- Tiny houses? Senior living Centers (Kendall?)
- Build housing on 9 acres of R-14 in Couse Meadow. Mix of low income work force and retirement
- Lots of Land. Room for improvement. Smart, progressive development. (Not everything old or even historical still \_\_\_\_\_ today)
- Make Taos a college town with dorms. Grow UNM
- Repurposing unused buildings
- Offer tax credits/breaks to those building with \_\_\_\_\_ zones in mesa to allow for new road to be built for future production
- Tax increase to fund positive change
- Tax breaks for restoration



- Town & County offer tax breaks, huge incentives to get companies to relocate here. Look @ Golden Triangle in Mississippi for examples"

### **Revitalize Our Downtown**

- Car-free plaza. Encourage public park and ride (lots of space outside of town)
- Create adequate affordable parking near plaza.
- Develop History museum in old courthouse on the plaza to "ground" the plaza and tell our amazing history
- Downtown is deserted at night.
- Make downtown more walkable
- Make plaza more inviting for locals
- Plaza exists; improve its look
- Put \$ into a fund to maintain the historic district: hire the homeless and youth corps etc. to work under this program
- Rebuild downtown hotels

### **Develop a Diverse Economy that Supports Locals**

- Economic development stimulated by TSV
- Stimulate economy
- Economic development
- Create econ. Dev. Committee of locals
- Econ Dev - support local businesses and entrepreneurs that are poised to grow"
- Robust job creation and business growth. (Now tourism, make it easy to do business)
- Education as an Industry: Learning annex model for short term adult education. support from community for adult ed

### *Promote sectors/activities*

- Focus on being an ecologically sustainable community, an eco-tourism destination. A healthcare mecca (holistic)
- Tourism to focus on local artists/Pueblo and not out of town businesses
- Better marketing of Taos. Tell the story.
- Make art/culture appeal to younger audience. Better messaging. Better understanding of what we have.
- Reestablish Taos as an art colony
- Taking advantage of art and culture
- Chili cookoff on the plaza
- Mardi Gras pig roast
- Events (I)
- Music festivals
- Free chamber covered at Kit Carson Park
- Hire musicians to play in plaza

*Strong At Heart Kick Off Meeting Summary of Public Input*

- Legalize marijuana (at least a dozen suggestions of legalizing and growing medical)
- Small business growth downtown.

*Promote alternative energy*

- Solar and wind energy jobs/corporations to move here.
- Solar highways streets
- Do more to encourage solar energy
- IT/Solar jobs
- Local renewable energy. Solar capital of the world! (II)
- Add more green energy (I)
- Support Kit Carson's initiative to power all Taos with solar.

*Promote recreation tourism*

- Coordinate the recreational potential and economic possibilities.
- Develop bike trails similar to Durango and Breckenridge
- Develop bike trails, outdoor rec activities as business ventures with support of Town and County
- Loads of unmaintained trails could provide jobs
- trails, biking...

*Recruit IT and Tech*

- Due to our climate, we attract IT service companies to set up shop in Taos
- IT specialists would be happy to move their families to Taos if their firms open shop here"
- Capture global tech waves- cyber security work remotely
- Mini solar powered silicon valley. Barriers: initiative

**Improve Education**

- Affordable classes
- Continuing ed
- Dual credit program
- UNM or other school increase offerings (I) to draw people in to learn sustainable agriculture.
- Business Opp: internet training
- Training in natural resource management
- Training for forest service/BLM jobs. Directly impacts/helps environmental concerns"
- Early childhood (II), Public Ed, Vocational workforce,
- Mental health training. Communication youth & adult.
- UNM educational training
- UNM faculty teach in other locations so they wouldn't have expenses at night.
- Night classes (II)
- Alternate teaching locations that are smaller so UNM can afford to offer night classes"
- Municipal schools to help identify goals/pathways for their students

- Subsidize housing for educators

### **Support Youth**

- Create a youth job corps to help with infrastructure (like the Rocky Mtn Youth Corps) to provide income and training."
- Flexible hours for jobs so youth can get to college classes (II)
- Attract millennials to sustainable community of the future
- Attracting young professionals to Taos
- Attract young people. Retain the ones we have.
- Clean jobs for young people
- More activities for youth
- Stuff for kids/youth to do"
- More connection to the outside world for youth who are from here
- Build and finance our houses here. Keep and create value. No more mobile homes. Empower our young to build their own value.
- Teach the youth, license the youth, permit the youth to build and create their community's value.

### **Strengthen Local Government**

- More meetings
- More round-table talks
- Value the voice of citizens equal to those without actual voting rights (i.e. town council)
- Values not compromised for the sake of money
- There is an opportunity for the town to take public input from "Strong at Heart" and act on these concerns instead of using them as a PR cover Create a community vision that guides decisions and require buy-in for elections instead of discarding plan after plan
- Election in March 2018; opportunity to elect new officials
- Have all town meetings after the work day so citizens can attend
- Honesty- to ensure our officials are held accountable
- Integrity- upheld to the public and surrounding areas"
- Ensure capital from tourism is used for the citizens of the town.
- Provide a detailed report each six months and how much is received and how much is spent by class; and all salaried staff salaries should be named and itemized individually. The number of staff by department and total staff payment budget by department.

### **Protect Our Heritage**

- Acequia Rejuvenation (II) (with school kids)
- Emphasize the historical importance of the Acequia culture as it relates to community identity and historical significance
- Acequia system is king- people don't understand
- Keep ditch systems alive

- Community involvement about our history

### **Invest in Infrastructure**

- Broadband/remote working
- Improve Infrastructure
- Internet Access
- Need for more extensive broadband (too slow installment) so that we can attract satellite computer workers.
- Utilities
- Airport access and expansion
- Sidewalks,
- More multi-modal/less single use sidewalks
- Well planned traffic: 1-way traffic split around downtown with bike lanes. Follow thru with plan.
- Create parking structure at edge of town center to encourage walking, town shuttle, relief from traffic congestion
- Fewer traffic lights. Build roundabouts where possible
- Overall planning with support from infrastructure

### **Conserve Land**

- Preserve open/green space
- Taos Land Trust's new property

### **Leverage Financial Resources**

- Grants for infrastructure, education, small business (Taos Mtn Energy Bar), venture capital.
- Integrate the federal govt in our problems. Get smarter about how we attract grants and other resources
- Create angel investor program to stimulate econ. Dev.
- Grant writers
- Asking our top 1% to spend a portion of their philanthropic dollars in Taos.

### **Manage Wildlife Resources**

- Learning about Prairie Dogs, The Keystone Species, here in Taos
- Clean the river

### **Support Workforce Development**

- Mentoring- matching youth expectation to business needs.
- Paid internships
- Mentorship because of diversity. More jobs could be brought in.
- set youth expectation of job responsibilities and requirements
- Creation of vocational degrees
- Vocational training

- Culinary arts program/great restaurants
- Educate & inform employers of needs of students
- Employer training
- Employers need to invest in their workforce by paying for trainings and certificates
- Expand training for firefighters and forestry.
- Town to subsidize classes
- Trade skills and service training.
- Workforce training (II)"
- Workforce development

**Unclassified Comments**

- Accommodating retirees along with the existing population
- Air B&Bs to supplement motels
- Get more people involved by telling local churches and employers
- TDEPC is helping people startup businesses based on using local agricultural products with some successes.
- User-friendly

**Who Participated In The Kick Off Event?**

Strong At Heart is using basic demographic data to evaluate whether we are doing a good job reaching out the diverse population of Taos. Here is the summary data for the public meeting. Please note that this data is voluntary and not everyone who participated filled out this information.

1. My Age Is.... (171 responses)			
<18	18 - 44	45 - 65	Older than 65
2%	22%	34%	42%

2. My Household Income Range Is.... (155 responses)			
< \$35K	\$35 – 49K	\$50 – 75K	Greater than \$75K
37%	12%	18%	34%

3. I describe my Race/Ethnicity as..... (175 responses)			
Hispanic	Anglo	Native American	Other
15%	68%	5%	11%

4. I live here.... (155 responses)		
Full-time	Part-time	Visitor
96%	4%	0%