Proposed Pedestrian/Vehicular Movement

The Intersection at Paseo del Pueblo Norte and Kit Carson Rd. is a confluence in which automobiles and pedestrians vie for unimpeded movement with conflicting results. Businesses on the east side of Paseo between Bent St. and Kit Carson suffer from a lack of pedestrian flow due to the difficulty in safely maneuvering across streets. Even businesses located east of Paseo within short distance from the central plaza accept a reduction in foot traffic because of the convoluted means of crossing the main street of Taos.

Simply reducing traffic with a bypass may facilitate pedestrian circulation, however, vehicular movement along the Paseo is a critical component to the urban vitality, commercial strength and cultural relevance to Taos.
Proposed public arts building to occupy southeast corner.

Realigning the Paseo/Kit Carson intersection will improve both pedestrian and vehicle circulation. Traffic lights will be pushed back from the intersections to increase a pedestrian friendly zone. Northbound Paseo traffic is reduced to one lane with traffic bumps prohibiting left turns into the plaza. The overall width of the road is reduced to 24’ allowing easier cross pedestrian traffic and shorter walk signals. The width of Kit Carson road is reduced to 36’ total width without any traffic islands. The perpendicular intersection accommodates safer pedestrian movement from all directions. The improvement of this junction is critical to circulation, connectivity and walkability in downtown Taos.

View looking northeast toward intersection.
TAOS PLAZA

TAOS PLAZA
CHARRETTE

PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS
EVENTS:
Old Taos
Senior Citizen Day
Taos Plaza Live
Drumming Circle
Art Making
Farmers’ Market
Movies
Yoga Classes
Tai Chi
Dancing

EVERYDAY:
Buskers
Food Venders
Places of Shade
Gypsy Wagons
Photography History
Horno

ADAPT AND RE-USE SUGGESTIONS
COURTHOUSE:
Visitor’s Center
Gallery Exhibit
Preservation of Frescoes

MOVIE THEATER:
Performance Space
Bar/Restaurant

ADDITIONAL:
RV Parking
Technology-History Tours
Mayordomo “Plaza Steward”
“Localize” Fiesta
Veteran’s Memorial
Father Martinez Statue

PHYSICAL SPACE SUGGESTIONS
FLOOR/GROUND:
Level Space
Resurface
Regrade

CEILING:
String of Lights
Tree Canopy

FURNISHINGS:
Native Plants
Shade Benches
Drinking Fountain
Water Feature
Art Pedestals
Bollards
Alley Arches
**Current Water Flow**

*Brings Plaza Floor to Grade With Current Vegetation. Handicap Accessibility on Entire North Side*

**Plaza Solutions**

*Splitting the Difference Allows Handicap Accessibility Naturally on Opposite Corners + Less Grade Change*

*Cut Plaza into Surface Brings Plaza Level to South Side. Handicap Accessibility on South Side*

**Key -**

- Exaggerated Slope
- Water Flow

**Water Flow After Regrading**

*Sheet Flow Away From Store Fronts*

*Trench Drains to Catch and Direct Flow towards Planters*

**Creative Solutions -**

*Passive Three Stage Cleaning System*

*Spill Point 4" Above Grade*

*Top of Planter*

*Plaza Surface*

*Bowl and Drain Pipe Below Grade*
The vision for the Taos Arts and Cultural District is the same as that for the Plaza: reveal the living history of Taos and plan for a self-sustaining future. The primary methods for achieving these design goals are conservation and connectivity.
Revealing

The Plaza improvements focus on an opening up of the space. There is already a structure to the Plaza, to Taos, so a reinvention is not needed; but a revealing, of what it has been and what it could be, could help create a dynamic civic space of community and commerce.

- Highlighting native species in the planters and street trees.
- The pedestrian and vehicular circulation are clarified and clearly differentiated.
- Maintaining key historic trees, primarily the Pueblo gift tree and the largest, central cottonwood.
- Expressing how water travels through the plaza with an integrated system of stormwater management tying into a cistern buried under the plaza used to water the plantings.

Weaving

The Plaza itself must be weaved into the broader context of Taos. The weaving analogy emerged from the design charrette as a useful concept for integrating the Taos Community. This integration will be encouraged through a visual reinforcement of continuity.

- Weaving a respect for the past with a progressively designed future
- Attracting tourists while enhancing amenities for locals.
- Balancing the culture of consumption with a culture of craft
- Allowing the constructed earth to celebrate the New Mexican sky
Douglas Fir
Beautiful evergreen given by the Taos Pueblo to the town will remain a cared-for specimen.

Cottonwood
Gnarled historic tree will also remain a central feature for as long as it lives.

Siberian Elms
High maintenance shade trees will gradually be replaced by less disruptive Ash and American Elm.

Stormwater Management

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High maintenance shade trees will gradually be replaced by less disruptive Ash and American Elm.

Resource Management

The management of sustainable resources is critical to the long term viability of the Taos community. The focus of the Plaza design was the conservation of trees, water, and history.
Proposed
The management of sustainable resources is critical to the long term viability of the Taos community. The main focus of the Plaza design is the conservation of the trees, water, and history. Historic and significant trees on the Plaza are preserved and protected. Re-grading of the Plaza allows for the collection of stormwater so that is may be re-used in the maintenance of trees and other vegetation in the Plaza. Plaques and signage commemorate trees and other items or areas of significance.
Circulation within the Plaza
The walkable green streets and alleys around the Plaza will connect a dynamic collection of civic spaces to encourage a confluence of diverse users and help foster a stronger sense of place and community.

Pedestrian Circulation
- primary pedestrian circulation
- secondary pedestrian circulation

Vehicular Circulation
- primary vehicular circulation
- secondary vehicular circulation

Looking east from the Plaza through a proposed allee of White Ash trees.
Plaza Circulation Enhancements

- system wide sidewalk and crosswalk improvements
- pedestrian clarity and prioritization through wayfinding and streetscape improvements
- street narrowing and realignment
- cohesive street furniture
- increased pedestrian connectivity from parking lots to Plaza
- improved vehicular mediation in the Plaza

Plaza road surface: possible paving patterns.

CONNECTIVITY OF SPACES
Outlying areas in the Arts and Cultural District connect to the Plaza through to the Plaza, creating a vivid community fabric. Connections are enhanced by greening existing spaces, creating a legible streetscape, adding pedestrian amenities, and mediating vehicular traffic in pedestrian dense areas. The historic courthouse, reinterpreted as a new Visitor’s Center, connects pedestrians to the rest of Taos by providing them with information.

In the proposed Carson Square area, at the intersection of Paseo and Kit Carson, vehicular access to Plaza Drive is restricted to a right in/right out only condition. A speed table through the entire square elevates and prioritizes the pedestrian.
PROPOSAL 1: ALLEY GALLERY

Proposal 1: alley gallery

PROPOSAL 2: ALLEY CAFE

Proposal 2: alley cafe
Alleyway Solutions
Greening the alleyways makes these passageways enjoyable spaces, creating a pleasant experience for the pedestrian as they move from destination to destination. Programming alleyways turns them into habitable corridors, a vibrant and active condition that exists between that of node and corridor.

Legend
1. permeable pavement material
2. high albedo concrete paving with recycled aggregate and slag
3. pipe under drain
4. energy efficient and New Mexico Dark Sky compliant lighting fixtures
5. shade and weather canopy
6. lighted display stands
7. energy efficient string lighting
taos PLaZa

Kit Carson Square: looking north along Paseo

SCALE: 3/16" = 1'

plaza road surface: possible paving patterns

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Connectivity of Spaces:
- circulation within the plaza
- primary pedestrian circulation
- secondary pedestrian circulation
- pedestrian circulation
- primary vehicular circulation
- secondary vehicular circulation
- vehicular circulation

looking east from the plaza through a proposed allee of ash trees

east / west plaza section, 1:20

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Carson Square

alleyway connections
courthouse

outlying circulation

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Lighting of the Tree
TAOS PLAZA
Fiestas de Taos
Autumn Tuesday