Taos Smart Growth Implementation Assistance:

Concepts for the Paseo del Pueblo Sur Corridor

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May 23, 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The town of Taos requested EPA assistance to help make development along New Mexico State Highway 68, the Paseo del Pueblo Sur commercial corridor, stronger economically and more attractive. Through meetings with residents, town staff and officials, property owners, and others, a vision for the corridor emerged. In particular, residents wanted to preserve Taos' unique character and to receive specific implementation steps toward their vision. Other key desires included:

- Appropriate, attractive design for buildings and streets
- Improved traffic circulation
- Safe and comfortable routes for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Housing that is affordable to working people and near stores and services
- Open space conservation
- Continues to be a place for Taoseños and provides for their needs

In response, the technical assistance Team developed a number of steps the town can take to transform both the feel and the function of the corridor, including:

- Better managing traffic through a combination of strategies, including alternate routes in a connected street network, access management, transportation demand management, better pedestrian and bicycle facilities, better public transit, and more efficient parking management;
- Establishing a distinct character for sections of the Paseo through street design, which also makes the road safer and more pleasant for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists; and
- Making the Paseo a community center by creating nodes of activity, mixing land uses along the corridor, and using building and site design that reinforces Taos' unique sense of place.

The Team developed specific steps the town can take in its regulations and investments that will lead to changes in the built environment. The implementation steps are geared around four opportunities:

- Reviewing the zoning code and subdivision ordinance;
- Working with the state Department of Transportation to use upcoming investments in the Paseo as a catalyst for change along the corridor;
- Creating a development framework that will use the incremental development along the corridor as a lever for transformation; and
- Identifying additional public investments (streets, transit improvements, bike paths and pedestrian connections, open space acquisition) that will support desirable private-sector development proposals.

1. INTRODUCTION: TAOS SMART GROWTH IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE

The town of Taos requested EPA assistance to help improve the quality of development along New Mexico State Highway 68, the Paseo del Pueblo Sur commercial corridor.

The corridor cuts through the center of Taos, leading traffic to the Taos Historic District, museums, and many other destinations in the area. It carries an average daily traffic volume of roughly 23,000 vehicles. Much of the streetscape currently has strip commercial development and underused parking lots with little or no landscaping. The town's application noted that, "This is not the landscape we want visitors to see when first coming to Taos." Residents feel that this style of development along the highway does not fit with Taos' unique historic character.

The town's Land Use Development Code (LUDC) includes a "Highway Corridor Protection Zone," but its design and development standards are the same as for other commercial zones. The highway is a gateway to Taos, so the town wants design and development standards that reflect Taos' history and character and transition well into the historic downtown. Three state highways intersect in Taos, and the town will use the Paseo del Pueblo Sur project as a model to improve development, traffic flow, and pedestrian and bicycle enhancements in the other highway corridors.

Figure 1: The southern end of the Paseo del Pueblo Sur

EPA started the Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program to help communities grow in ways that improve their economy, community, and environment (for more on EPA's Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program, see Appendix A). EPA assembled a Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Team (Team) to work with town officials, local leaders, stakeholders, and residents to develop concepts for improved development along the Paseo del Pueblo Sur corridor. The Team's site visit occurred December 7-9, 2005, and included meetings with the aforementioned participants.

As part of those meetings and consultations, the Team prepared concept plans illustrating approaches that would help produce the results that Taos is seeking along the Paseo del Pueblo Sur corridor. The Team then developed options for actions that the town could take to begin implementing the concepts.

This final report to the town of Taos:

1. Summarizes the Team's work with the town and citizens;

2. Presents the resulting concept plans; and

3. Presents options the town could use to move toward implementing the concept plans.

1.1 Charge to the Team

Concerned with growth pressures and development inconsistent with Taos' character and vision along the Paseo del Pueblo Sur corridor, the town applied to EPA's Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program. The town requested support to create a vision for development along the corridor and to amend the LUDC to make sure new development fits the vision. To create concept plans for the corridor, the town's application called for a multi-day planning workshop to generate development ideas for Paseo del Pueblo Sur.

The Team assembled to conduct the workshop consisted of:

- Tim Van Meter, Architect, Van Meter Williams Pollack
- Jim Charlier, Transportation Planner, Charlier Associates
- Dena Belzer, Economist, Strategic Economics
- Megan Susman, US EPA
- Geoffrey Anderson, US EPA

Additional support was provided by William Schroeer, ICF Consulting.

1.2 Existing Conditions

The study area included Highway 68, or Paseo del Pueblo Sur, between Este Es Road in the south and Camino de la Placita in the north. Most of the development along this corridor is commercial. Between Este Es and Paseo del Cañon (Highway 585), the highway is five lanes (two lanes in each direction with a center turn lane), and development is typically suburban, with large, spread-out buildings. From Paseo del Cañon to La Posta, the highway continues at five lanes, and buildings include large shopping centers and other locally serving stores. The highway narrows to three lanes at La Posta, and traffic slows. The section from La Posta to Camino de la Placita, adjacent to the dense Historic District, is somewhat denser.

Figure 2: Map of the study area

Existing conditions along the Paseo are not good for pedestrians and bicyclists in most places, as Figures 3 and 4 show. Sidewalks are absent or end abruptly, and vehicles go by very quickly and often very close. Pedestrians must often negotiate busy parking lots to get from the sidewalk to the store entrance, or from one store to another next door.

Figure 3: Sidewalks along the Paseo sometimes end abruptly, leaving walkers to find their own way.

Figure 4: This part of the Paseo del Pueblo Sur is dangerous for pedestrians, with no protection from cars.

2. CONTEXT AND COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The Team drew on information from the site visit, planning documents supplied by the town, input from community meetings, and an analysis of economic trends that include an understanding of the town's demographics, real estate market dynamics, and the structure of the local economy.

2.1 Economic Analysis

Demographic Growth Trends

From 1990 to 2000, the town of Taos grew by 16.5 percent, compared to 29.8 percent growth for Taos County. From 2000 to 2005, however, the town's growth outpaced the county's, 7.7 percent versus 5 percent, respectively.

Taos County		Town of Taos		Taos Pueblo	
Absolute change	Percentage change	Absolute change	Percentage change	Absolute change	Percentage change
6,890	29.8%	664	16.5%	77	6.5%

Figure 5: Population trends in Taos[1]

Median income for the town's households was $29,939 in 2005. By comparison, median income for households in the state of New Mexico was $37,587 and in the United States as a whole, $44,436 (two-year average for 2003-2004).[2] Notably, more than 25 percent of Taos residents earn less than $15,000 a year. These incomes have a dramatic effect on the types of retailers who want to locate in the community to serve the residents (as opposed to the tourists) as well as on the need for housing that people can afford.

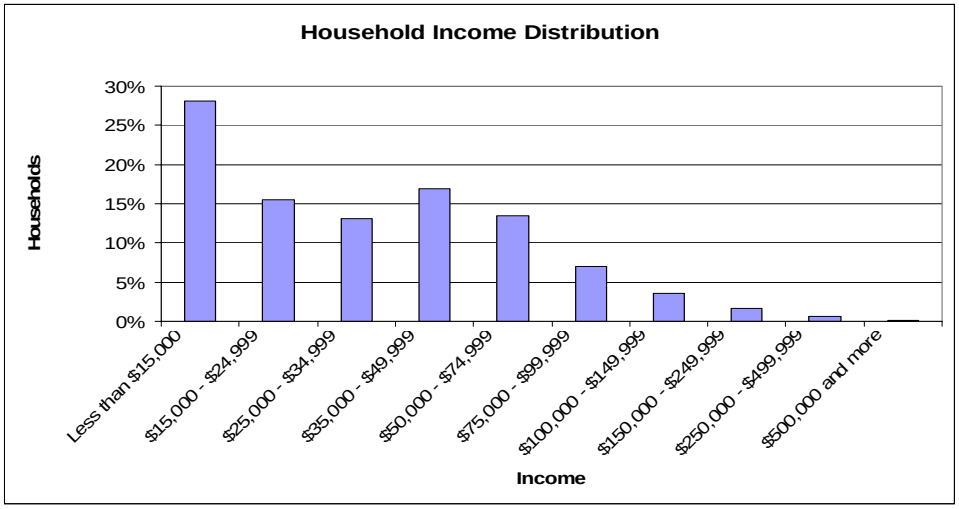

Figure 6: Town of Taos income distribution[3]

[1] U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census; Claritas.
[2] U.S. Census Bureau. *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2004.* August 2005. Page 23.
[3] Claritas (a provider of demographic data based on Census and other data. See http://www.claritas.com/claritas/Default.jsp?ci=3&si=1&pn=demographics).

Residential Real Estate Trends

From 2001 to 2004 the number of residential listings in the town increased from 283 to 421.[4] Between 1999 and 2005, median residential sale prices in the town of Taos have increased by 74 percent, from a median price of $155,000 in 1999 to $270,000 in the second quarter of 2005.[5] The annual income needed for a household to afford a $270,000 home would be about $51,800[6]—about 73 percent higher than the town's median household income of $29,939.

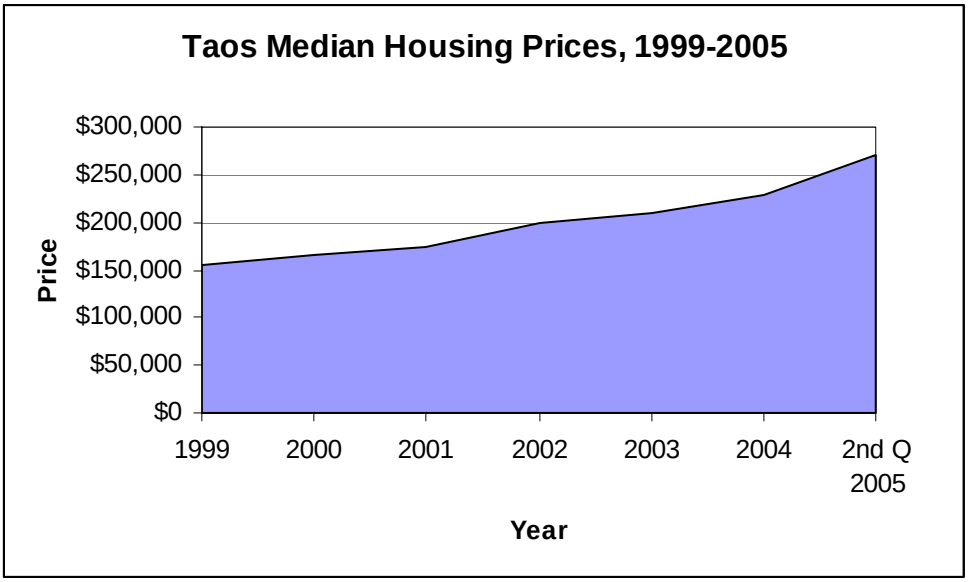

Figure 7: Median sales price of a house

In particular, condominiums aimed at seasonal residents are selling well above the median sales price, driven by an influx of retirees and people looking for a small-town life. These new arrivals are generally wealthier than the local population. So, while Taos has always served an affluent transient population, an increasing number of higher-income people are now buying homes in the area. This is driving housing prices higher than most long-term town residents could afford.

While many current residents own their homes, the increase in housing prices affects several types of households, including current renters who may want to buy a home in the future, young adults who have grown up in Taos and are ready to buy their own homes, and households that would like to upgrade or relocate within the town but can no longer afford to do so.

[4] Mark Cowan and Associates, August 2005.
[5] Taos County MLS, compiled by Mark Cowan and Associates.
[6] Assumes an interest rate of 6% on a 30-year mortgage, with a 20% down payment and a 30% monthly mortgage to income ratio.

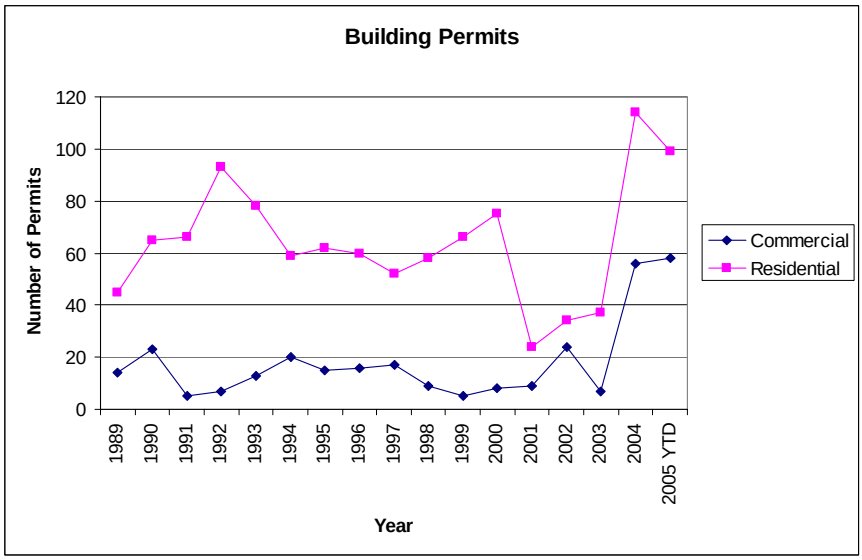

Figure 8: Building permits issued, 1989-2005

The town issued 56 commercial and 114 residential building permits in 2004. Aside from a drop between 2001 and 2002 when building permits were being sent to the Construction Industries Division in Santa Fe, the number of building permits has recently increased over historic levels.

Taos added 362 residents from 2000 to 2005. Based on the number of building permits (383) and the average household size (2.18 persons), the city should have added 835 residents. This difference shows that a high percentage of recently built homes are being built as seasonal rentals or as second homes. Neither of these types of households are permanent members of the community, so they support local businesses, such as grocery stores and restaurants, only periodically. Communities with significant seasonal population fluctuations have difficulty supporting a strong retail base year-round and often also have trouble funding some local government services.

Characteristics of the Local Economy

As Figure 9 shows, Taos' economy is currently driven by jobs related to serving tourists. These jobs include those employed by hotels, restaurants, retail sales, and some arts and cultural activities. The majority of other jobs are being generated by employers that serve the local economy, including schools, health care, and other public institutions. Construction is also a strong sector, which is consistent with the recent surge in residential construction. At one time, the town's economy was probably more diverse, as the region has historically had considerable mining activity. However, as the old extractive industries have closed down, the region has become increasingly dependent on tourism. With the increasing population of second-home owners, retail activity that serves people's everyday needs, not just purchases made by tourists, will probably continue to play an increasingly important role in the Taos economy. Although the portion of retail activity from second-home owners will fluctuate, and therefore present challenges, it will nonetheless help diversify Taos' economy.

One measure of economic performance is the gross receipts tax. This tax is levied against all businesses, including all kinds of services, and is based on the gross volume of sales or activity. Data on gross receipts are only available for Taos County, not for the town itself. However, since some of the commercial activity in the county takes place in the town of Taos, the gross receipts

tax trends for the county are probably a good proxy for the town's economic performance. At the time of the Team's site visit, gross receipt tax data were available for the full years 1999-2003 and for only three quarters of 2004. In other words, the reporting on these tax trends lags the current time period by almost one year (the site visit took place in the fourth quarter of 2005). For the five full years report, total gross receipts increased by approximately 30 percent. Although there is not data on population growth for an exactly overlapping time period, from 2000-2005, Taos County grew by only an estimated 5 percent. By "squinting" at these two data sets, it appears that a lot of the recent economic growth in the county does not merely correspond to population growth, but to a general strengthening in various sectors. Looking at the gross receipts tax trends for the three quarters of 2004 indicates that considerable growth was coming from construction and construction-related industries, but also that the accommodations sector (i.e., hotels) was experiencing some weakness. Although it is may not be appropriate to generalize from only three quarters' worth of data, it is interesting to note that these findings support the general premise that new residents to the Taos area are starting to drive the economy more strongly than the traditional tourism-oriented activities.[7]

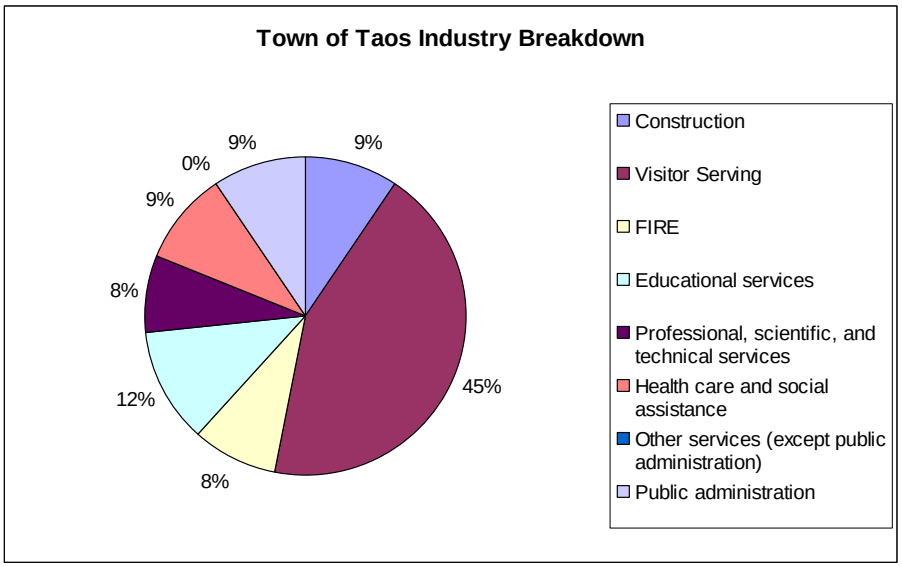

Figure 9: Employment by industry, 2000

Commercial Real Estate Trends

According to the most recent annual survey of commercial real estate space in Taos, conducted by Mark Cowan and Associates, commercial property was performing relatively well in August of 2005 when the survey was completed. Because the Taos economy is seasonal with two high seasons, one in the summer and one in the winter, these numbers from the end of the peak summer season probably reflect the best possible conditions. During the slower months between the summer and ski season, vacancy rates, the performance measure being used for this analysis, are probably more variable. However, if during the peak months most space is occupied, this shows that supply is at least somewhat balanced with demand.

The Cowan survey showed that retail space had a vacancy rate of only 1.4 percent, restaurants had virtually no vacancies, and office space had a vacancy rate of just over 5 percent. The

[7] Taos Economic Report published by the Taos Business Alliance, Taos County Chamber of Commerce, Taos County Economic Development Corporation, and CPA Southwest, December 2004.

performance of commercial space varies in different parts of the town. In the “downtown” around the Plaza and on the north side, vacancies are low for all types of space, whereas on the south side, which includes the Paseo del Pueblo Sur, vacancies tend to be higher. However, most of the underperforming space seems to be older space that is poorly configured. Even the office vacancy rate, which is higher than that of other kinds of retail space, is healthy when compared to the standard rule of thumb that a 10 percent vacancy rate represents a stable market that is at optimal equilibrium.

Retail Sales Trends

An analysis of consumer expenditures and retail sales for the town of Taos shows that unmet retail demand could support approximately 170,000 square feet of retail space in Taos now, and this number will increase over time as the population grows. This number does not take into account people who shop in town but live in other parts of the county. Given both population growth and Taos’ increasing position as a regional retail center within the county, it is likely that there will be ongoing pressure for new retail development along Paseo del Pueblo Sur, and that this pressure will come from retailers who will want to serve the growing number of more affluent households in the area, not tourists. For further description of the methodology used to calculate retail demand and supportable square feet, see Appendix D.

Implications for Taos and the Paseo del Pueblo Sur corridor

Taos’ demographic and economic trends suggest that while the tourist industry is still strong, growing local demand is driving the commercial growth along the Paseo del Pueblo Sur corridor. While this market momentum is strong, it is not overheated, which makes this a good time to plan for the future. However, because future growth pressure is coming from local households, the typical market response will be to follow the standard development formulas uniformly deployed in every other market, which Taoseños have said they do not want. If the town allows generic development types along its main entrance into the historic core, the classic qualities that have made Taos a destination for artists, intellectuals, and seekers, as well as a very special place for its historic families, will be diminished. Over time, this could have a significant negative impact on the town’s core industry, tourism, as well as detracting from the qualities that have made Taos so special over the centuries.

The town wants to be very careful about the character of future development along the corridor. Development along the Paseo del Pueblo Sur corridor, with a few exceptions, has not matched the town’s historic character, a point emphasized by citizens at the public meetings and by the town in its initial application to the Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program. As the town’s population increases, so will pressure for more locally serving stores along the corridor. If the town’s residents want the corridor to reflect their goals and Taos’ identity, then they must make sure that they get the type of stores they need, designed in the way they want. This is particularly critical because the retailers who will want to locate along Paseo del Pueblo Sur will be primarily concerned with easy vehicular access, good visibility, and large parking fields. The town could ask future commercial development to use different development models that deviate from standard products, meeting Taoseños’ goals while also providing retailers with the access and visibility that they require. Otherwise, new growth, which is essential, could erode the very special and unique qualities that give Taos its world-famous identity.

2.2 Community Meetings

The Team's site visit was held from Wednesday, December 7, through Friday, December 9. The schedule included four meetings for community input and feedback. The schedule and attendees for the public meetings are attached as Appendix B.

Residents emphasized two themes in every public meeting:

1. Taos is a unique place whose character should be preserved and enhanced.
2. The town has seen good ideas in the past that have not been implemented; this project must include specific suggestions on how to implement what the community decides to do.

On Wednesday afternoon, the Team met with a group of stakeholders to discuss specific concerns of property owners and businesspeople. On Wednesday evening, the first public meeting introduced attendees to the Team and what the project would produce. Team members shared concepts that have been used to create successful village and neighborhood centers from around the country, as well as an analysis of Taos' economic situation and prospects. Attendees were asked to share what is important to them about Taos and to provide a list of goals that the corridor redevelopment should accomplish.

Taoseños agreed on a list of goals for future development in Taos:

- Transportation
  - Make walking and biking attractive, safe transportation alternatives
  - Allow people to park close to plaza and walk
  - Make places accessible for people who have difficulty walking
  - Address through traffic vs. local traffic
  - Make the traffic on the corridor work better, particularly during tourist season
  - Establish regional bike/pedestrian trails to connect Taos with nearby towns
- Housing/neighborhoods
  - Have a mix of housing types
  - Make sure there are homes that working people can afford
  - Make it easier for people to meet daily needs by putting different uses close enough together for people to walk or bike
- Design
  - Involve artists in planning process
  - Plant seeds economically, culturally, and educationally to ensure longevity of good Taos urban design
  - Make the Paseo more of a boulevard or main street, including landscaped medians that tame the arterial and add greenery
  - Create great streets—consisting of sidewalks and bike paths as well as roads
- Environment
  - Preserve open space
  - Protect environmental quality
  - Provide parks, urban open space, pocket parks

    - Protect dark skies

- Building styles and site design
    - Include a variety of appropriate architecture
    - Build up to the street
    - Use patterns that are historical to Taos
    - Preserve historic structures
    - Consider building styles that reflect Taos' arts orientation
- Other concerns
    - Don't move county functions outside of town
    - Need something that town council and planning commission will approve
    - Perception of outsiders raising housing prices and driving out long-time residents
    - Need to educate community about how the street can improve

Interested citizens had a chance on Thursday afternoon to talk to the Team as they worked, discuss the project one-on-one with Team members, and offer more input. The above list of goals was posted for the attendees' review and comment. On Thursday night at the second community meeting, the Team presented examples of highly traveled corridors in other towns, including many snow-country communities, and briefly described the concepts being developed for the Paseo del Pueblo Sur corridor. Citizens agreed that the preliminary ideas fit with their goals.

On Friday, the Team refined the concepts for the Paseo del Pueblo Sur corridor based on the input from the public meetings. The Team presented the findings to the public at a meeting on Friday night.

3. SOLUTIONS FOR THE PASEO DEL PUEBLO SUR

The options that the Team developed are meant to fulfill the goals stated by Taos' residents and government during the Team's visit and in the Vision 2020 plan. These options together create a vision of Taos where residents can easily get around town, whether by driving, walking, bicycling, or public transit; new development enhances the town's character and creates jobs and housing opportunities; and the town protects its natural beauty and resources. The Paseo would offer more locally oriented stores, services, and homes in buildings that fit with traditional northern New Mexico styles and that are closer to the road, with parking lots behind the buildings. In this vision:

- Residents have more choices of routes to get around town, meeting the goal of reducing traffic on the Paseo and getting residents to their destinations more quickly.
- Biking, walking, and transit use are made safer and more comfortable by putting destinations closer together and making sure the Chili Line goes where residents need it, creating attractive and pleasant sidewalks and paths, and redesigning the Paseo to better accommodate pedestrians and cyclists as well as cars, meeting the goal of giving people more options for getting around town.
- The town mixes land uses along and near the Paseo so that people can live close enough to shops and workplaces to bike or walk there if they choose. Encouraging neighborhood-oriented businesses to locate in these areas meets the goal of encouraging stores and services that the local community needs and can afford.

- The town encourages building homes along and near the Paseo to meet the goal of having more housing choices affordable to working people.
- The town redesigns the Paseo to be a more attractive and functional street. New development along the road fits with Taos' distinctive character in size, scale, and appearance. This built environment announces to visitors that they are arriving in Taos, as the town wants, yet still works as a place where residents work, shop, and live.

The Team's concept is designed to ensure that new growth in Taos contributes to achieving Taoseños' goals. The Team sees a series of options that could work together to accomplish this. Essentially, these options fall into three categories:

- Better managing traffic through a combination of strategies, including alternate routes in a connected street network, access management, transportation demand management, better pedestrian and bicycle facilities, better public transit, and more efficient parking management;
- Establishing the character of each section of the Paseo through street design, which also makes the road safer and more pleasant for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists; and
- Making the Paseo a community center by creating nodes of activity, mixing land uses along the corridor, and using building and site design that reinforces Taos' unique sense of place.

The following sections discuss each of these options separately, but they work together and are mutually reinforcing. The town will choose to implement options in different stages, at different times; the order in which they appear in this report is not intended to define any specific order in which they should be implemented.

3.1 Better Traffic Management

Among the goals that Taoseños identified in the public meetings were making traffic on the Paseo del Pueblo Sur corridor work better, making walking and biking safe, and addressing through traffic versus local traffic. These all generally fall under the category of better managing traffic, which includes seven main tactics:

- More route choices;
- Neighborhood streets;
- Parcel access management;
- A Transportation Demand Management plan;
- Improved walking and biking;
- Improved public transit; and
- A better parking strategy.

These options work best together, but not all of them may need to be used.

More route choices

Residents indicated that traffic on the Paseo is heavy, and that they often do not feel safe walking or biking along it. The Team observed that this is in part because there are few route choices.

Right now, Taoseños have few options for getting around town unless they get on the Paseo, because so few of the streets that intersect and parallel it connect with each other.

One option for addressing this issue is to create a more connected network of streets. Experience suggests this would alleviate auto traffic on the Paseo by:

- giving local drivers more route choices;
- giving bikers and walkers quieter and perhaps more direct streets to use besides the Paseo;
- allowing more access from side and back streets to parcels along the Paseo.

Figure 10: A conceptual street grid, with arterials at 1-mile intervals

Giving locals a choice of other ways to get to stores, homes, and work means less time waiting in traffic for residents and for visitors. Tourist traffic would continue to use the Paseo; Taoseños could avoid the congestion.

The community's goals suggest that the town should think of traffic circulation in terms of a network, not just one road. One reason traffic gets heavy on the Paseo is that most of the local

traffic must use it, even for very short trips, because there are few other options. Even bicyclists and pedestrians end up on the Paseo because there are few connections for them to use elsewhere. Figure 11 illustrates the extra distance a person must travel to get to the same destination when roads are not adequately connected.

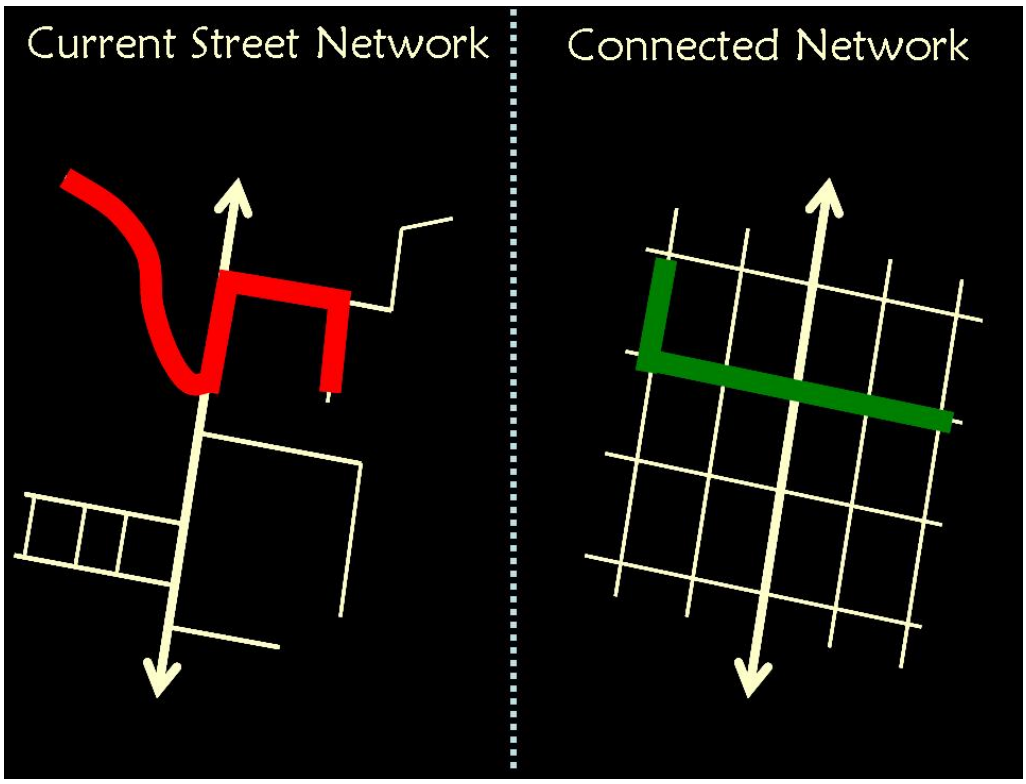

Figure 11: Illustration of how well-connected streets can shorten trip distance

The Team suggests connecting existing roads around the Paseo into a network, giving residents the options they requested to use different routes (whether by car, bike, or foot) to get around town and avoid the traffic congestion on the Paseo. The area bounded by La Posta to the north, Este Es Road to the south, Salazar Road to the west, and Gusdorf to the east is where new connections are most needed.

Incremental investments in a few connecting streets could improve the network dramatically. Each small segment that connects existing streets to the Paseo and to other neighborhoods will support a grid with more options for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. This will allow residents to cross between neighborhoods without using the Paseo. It will also provide the neighborhoods with more direct access to the shops and buildings along the Paseo.

The map in Figure 12 shows what the area around the Paseo would look like if it had been built on a traditional network. Not all of these streets will be, or need to be, created. It is difficult to create a street network where there is already development. This illustration is a starting point; the town must determine if it wants to go this route and where it can work with property owners to get land for new streets, where connections are most needed, and where it wants development to happen over the next several decades.

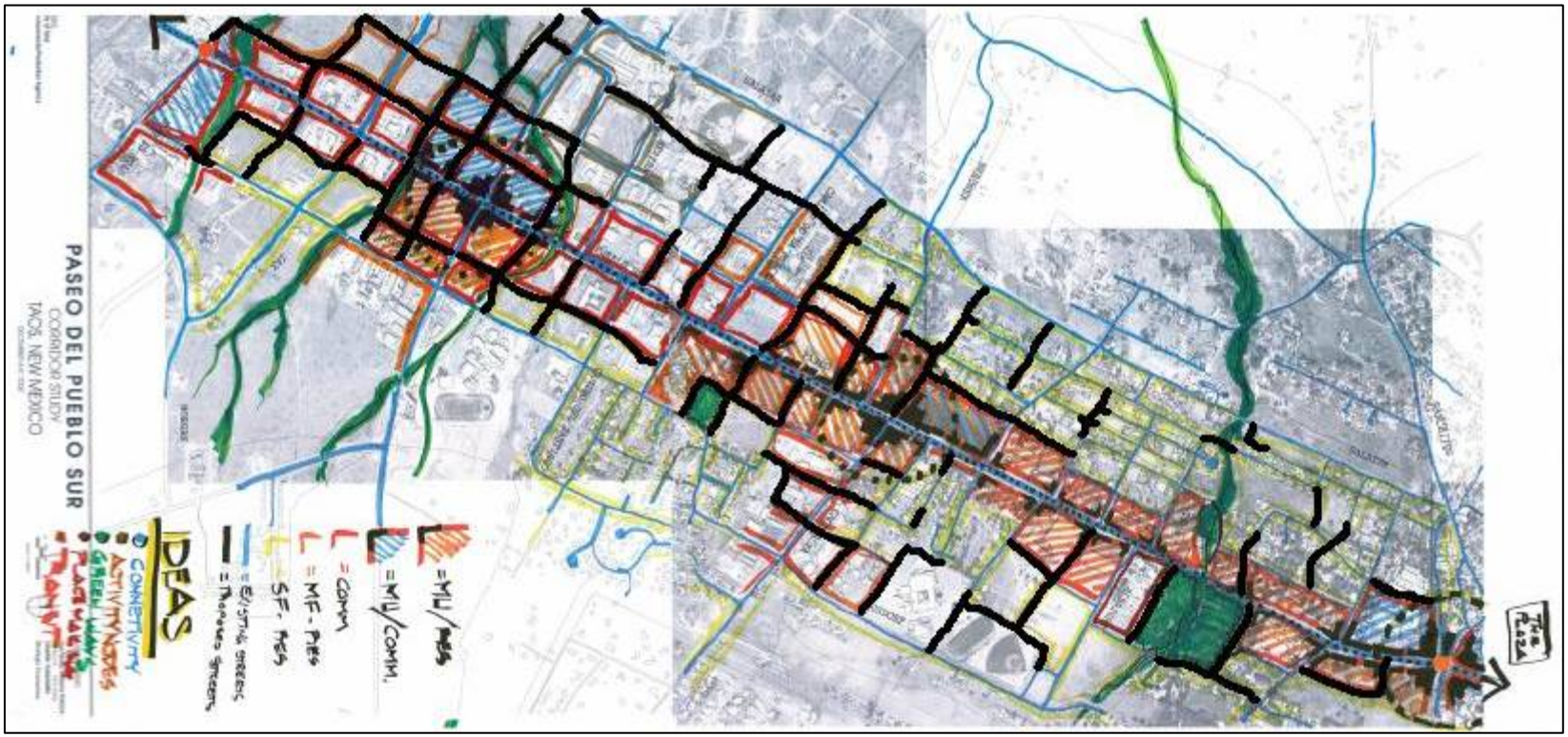

Figure 12: Map with potential new street connections highlighted in black. New streets are conceptual only; this map illustrates small, strategic street connections that could help traffic to circulate more easily, not specific places where the team is recommending new streets be built. (Thick lines are used to make the potential streets easier to see; they are not intended to suggest any specific street width.)

Neighborhood streets

If the town chooses to build more streets, design will be key. Most of these new connecting streets would be narrow neighborhood streets, designed for a mostly residential area with low traffic volume at slower speeds. They would have sidewalks, on-street parking, and strips of grass, trees, or other vegetation between the sidewalk and the street. Figure 13 shows how one of these streets might look. Each design element supports a more pleasant neighborhood street for both driver and pedestrian. The narrow lanes and on-street parking encourage drivers to drive slowly and look out for oncoming cars. The on-street parking and vegetation between the sidewalk and street protect the sidewalk to make bikers and pedestrians feel more comfortable. The street could be 8 to 10 feet wider if the town wants to allow parking on both sides of the street.

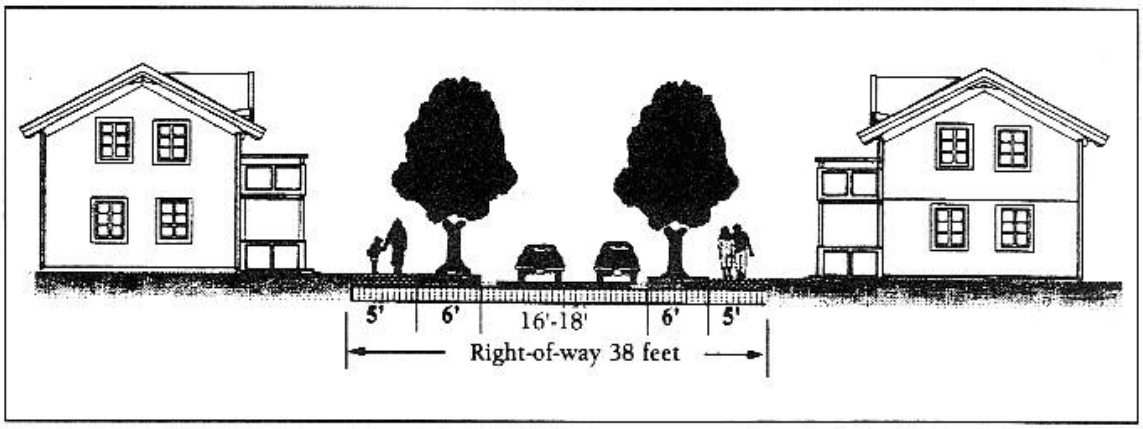

Figure 13: Sample cross-section of a neighborhood street (from Dan Burden *et al.*, Street Design Guidelines for Healthy Neighborhoods, Local Government Commission, 1999)

To help keep neighborhood-serving streets safe and to minimize cut-through traffic, street connections can be designed at a slight offset. Offset intersections help ensure that approaching drivers must stop before proceeding to the next street.

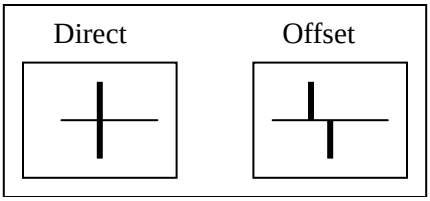

Figure 14: Illustration of direct vs. offset intersection

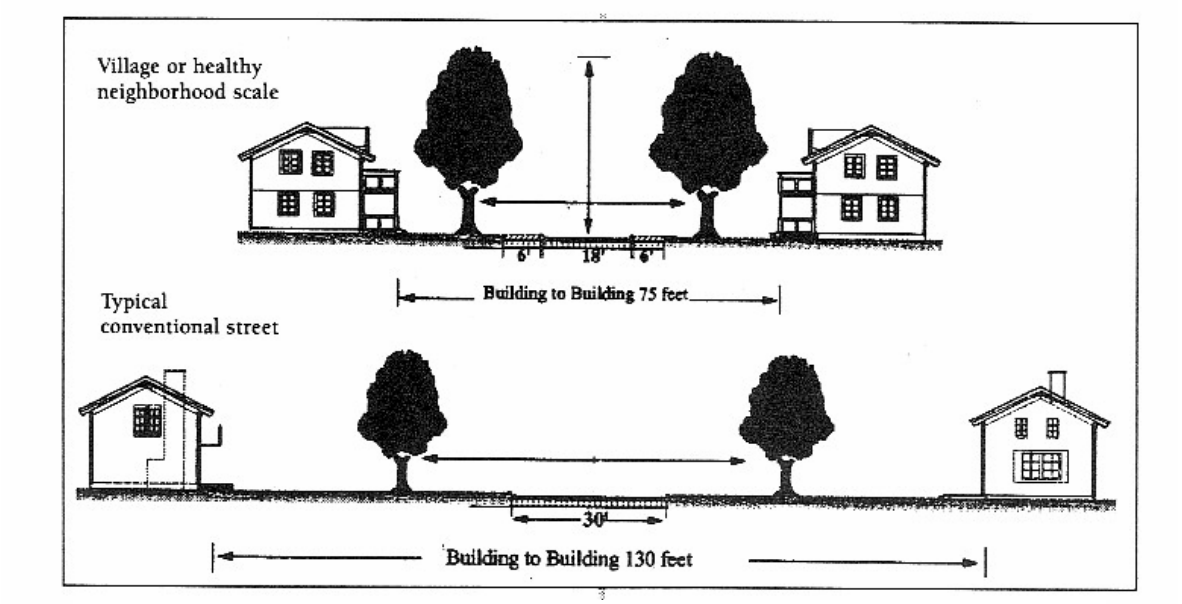

Figure 15: Sample cross-sections show how the design for a neighborhood street differs from conventional street design (from Dan Burden *et al.*, 1999)

Parcel access management

A street network with more intersections is usually good for businesses. It creates more block faces, corner lots, and smaller parcels for stores and offices. Improved visibility to the street, more sidewalk frontage, and additional storefront on-street parking supports local businesses.

Most of the businesses along the Paseo have their own curb cut, contributing to congestion as vehicles enter and exit at dozens of spots along the road. A median could substantially smooth traffic flow by consolidating left-hand turns and access (medians will be further discussed in the section on establishing character through street design).

Appropriate right-hand access can be provided in two ways:

- By placing common-access curb cuts at intervals of between 200 and 600 feet, as in a traditional street network pattern. The location of these cuts and the location of median breaks should be identified well in advance of development, so that development plans for and builds to them.
- Through a system of side and rear interconnection.

The network creates more access options for the retail areas along the Paseo. Parking is provided behind the line of shops and offices along the Paseo. The network streets connect these lots behind the retail parcels. This allows drivers to cross through parking lots and provides shoppers with an additional route parallel to the Paseo.

Rear parking access and the parallel street network will allow Taos to remove most of the curb cuts along the Paseo and improve the streetscape for pedestrians and bicyclists. Fewer curb cuts will help to improve the flow of traffic on the Paseo because it will reduce the number of cars turning off the road. Taos could remove some turn lanes from the Paseo and limit left turns to major intersections. Access to the rear parking areas would be provided at fewer intervals along the road in a way that better supports both drivers and pedestrians alike.

A specific study (most likely part of a larger access and circulation study) would be necessary to determine the most effective locations for connections. For new development projects, the town could require access easements, and site plans could be required to accommodate desired circulation patterns. For existing properties, securing rear and side connections would require negotiations with existing businesses and property owners. For some property owners, the benefits of improved access will be obvious. Others may require incentives from the town, county, or neighboring businesses. A Business Improvement District or strong local chamber of commerce can help facilitate these types of negotiations, allowing merchants and property owners to sort through their priorities without government interference. In redevelopment areas, the government may have the authority to require additional access easements on existing properties, but compensation would be required for any loss of value that such an easement would create.

Transportation Demand Management plan

Working with the county and major employers, the town could develop a transportation demand management plan. This plan could reduce the amount of automobile traffic by focusing on programs to accurately predict travel demand and meet it through transit, biking, and walking. For examples of Transportation Demand Management and other traffic reduction ideas, see the National Center for Transit Research's National TDM and Telework Clearinghouse at http://www.nctr.usf.edu/clearinghouse/index.htm.

Improved walking and biking

The changes that will be discussed in the next section, on establishing the character of the Paseo through street design, will also help make walking and bicycling easier. As homes are built near stores, services, and workplaces, people are more likely to walk or bicycle to their destinations. In addition to having destinations within walking distance, more attractive and comfortable sidewalks will allow walking. Many citizens at the Team's public meetings said they wanted to be able to bicycle safely around town to take care of daily errands as well as for recreation and exercise. Some people specifically requested ideas for connecting Taos with nearby towns on or near Highway 68, such as Ranchos de Taos, Talpa, and Arroyo Seco. Towns across the country have found that creating a "tourist" bicycling route not only attracts visitors, but also creates paths that locals use to get around town. Bicycle lanes can easily be incorporated into the redesign of the Paseo del Pueblo Sur corridor.

Figure 16: The planted buffer makes the sidewalk feel safer and more comfortable for pedestrians.

Improved public transit

Public transit becomes important to most communities as they pass 5,000 in population. It is particularly important to resort communities because people commute at home; they don't want to commute when they're on vacation. In addition, over the next few decades, fuel costs may continue to rise, and people and businesses need to be able to continue to thrive regardless of fuel

prices. Transit's role in Taos may grow in the future, and the town should build in a way that prepares for this increased role. Public transit should be coordinated with land use; in other words, it needs to connect stores, civic buildings, hospitals, schools, churches, and homes.

A better parking strategy

A parking strategy could help reduce the amount of land devoted to parking lots. This is critical to getting the kind of development the town has said it wants. Part of the strategy is to encourage businesses to share parking where appropriate. For example, a complex that included residences and offices could use the parking lot for the offices during the day and the residences at night.

A good parking strategy also helps to reduce traffic. Putting stores, services, workplaces, and homes closer together, as well as sharing parking among several businesses, allows people to park once to accomplish their errands, instead of having to park at one business, then pull out of the parking lot, drive a short distance, and park again. This pattern of many relatively short trips and frequent turns out of and into parking lots can substantially worsen traffic in the corridor. The resulting congestion is a direct effect of single-use, unconnected parcels with individual parking lot entrances.

Another helpful technique is to connect parking lots, especially behind buildings, and work toward a system of rear-access lanes. This strategy fits well with the concept of connecting Taos' streets more completely and with better managing access points. Cars would pull in and out of the parking lots onto rear-access lanes, where traffic is slower, rather than onto the Paseo, where it is more dangerous to enter and exit parking lots. People can run their errands by walking or with short car trips through interconnected parking lots, off the main road.

A note on bypasses: For several years, the town has been discussing a bypass around Taos to alleviate traffic congestion. The Team did not study a bypass option, but the idea came up in the public meetings. The Team suggested that the town consider all the effects a bypass would have, not just its effects on traffic. Traffic studies show that in places similar to Taos, a large majority of traffic is local and would be unaffected by a bypass, so the bypass would not reduce traffic in the way people hope (see Appendix E for several examples of Western mountain towns that have considered a bypass). The town might also ask: if the bypass did reduce traffic along the Paseo, what effect would it have on businesses there? Much of the commercial business on the Paseo relies on auto traffic. The bypass may have two effects on business: it might encourage new development adjacent to the bypass, robbing the corridor of new development that is the engine for changing the corridor, or it might depress businesses already on the corridor. A more connected street system would stimulate development in town and create more concentrated activity in already-developed areas.

3.2 Establishing Character Through Street Design

The town and the citizens in the public meetings expressed a desire for the Paseo to be a great street that would serve as an attractive entry to Taos, introducing visitors to the town's unique identity. In addition to aesthetic considerations, goals for the Paseo also include functional goals such as a better environment for walking and biking and improved transportation performance. The Team identified options for redesigning the roadway itself that can help the town reach these goals. The state DOT is scheduled to conduct work on the road in about five years with concept planning beginning now. The town is fortunate to have this work scheduled so soon. If it is done well, it will be a catalyst to transform the corridor and create an incentive for supportive private-sector development adjacent to the road.

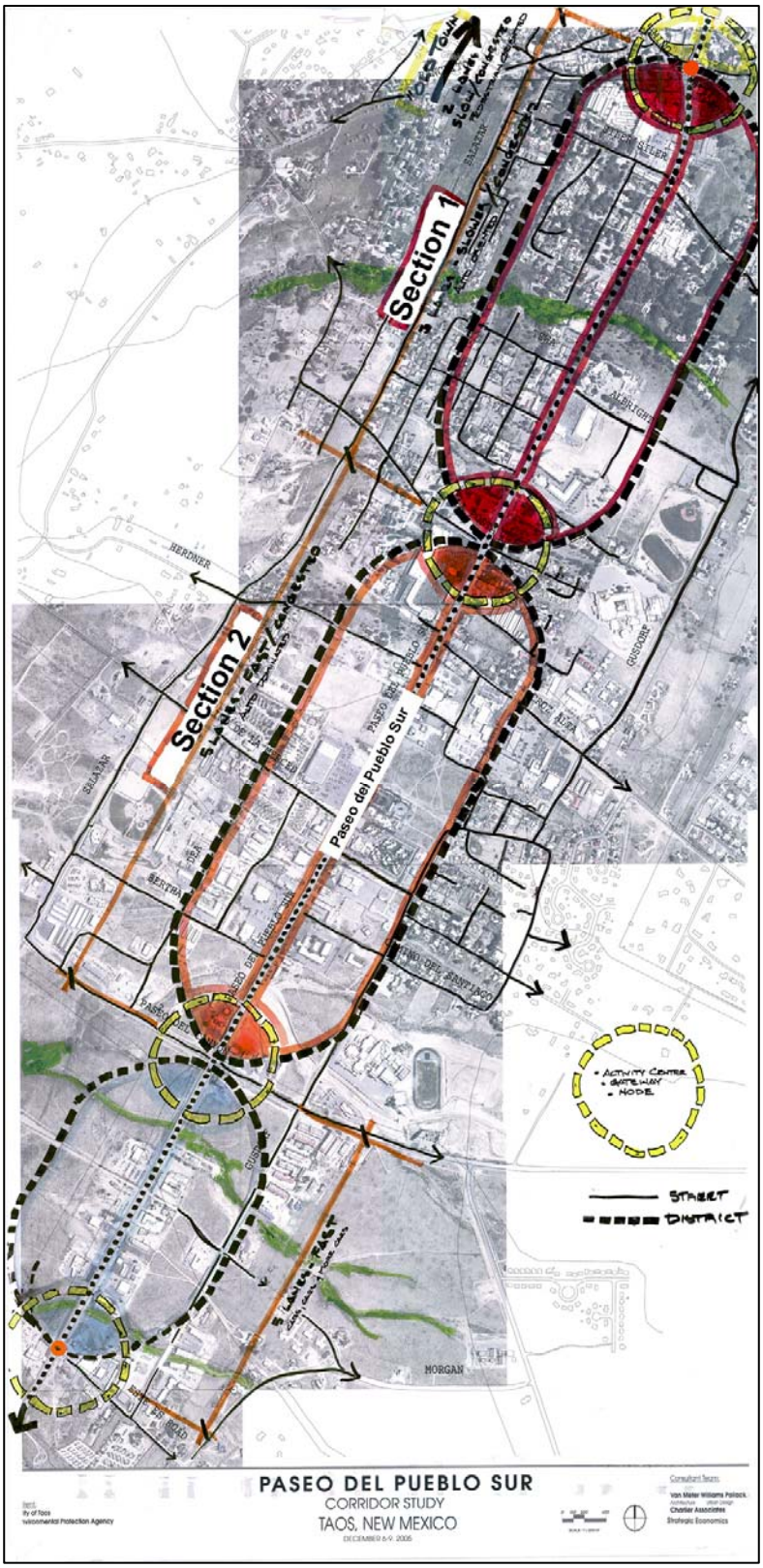

Figure 17: Map showing Paseo del Pueblo Sur segments and nodes

The Paseo naturally divides itself into segments with different characteristics. The five-lane segment (referred to here as Section 2) is fast-moving with large, set-back buildings and minimal accommodation for pedestrians or bicyclists—traffic moves quickly; most of the road has no bike lane; sidewalks are incomplete, inadequate, not buffered from cars, or lined with parking lots instead of buildings; there are long distances between destinations; and nothing frames the street to make it more comfortable for walkers and bicyclists. In the three-lane segment (referred to here as Section 1), traffic slows, giving drivers more opportunity to see what's on each side of the road and making pedestrians and bicyclists feel a little safer. When the Paseo drops to two lanes and enters the historic district, its character changes again, to that of a main street.

The Team offered different ideas for redoing Sections 1 and 2. Each option attempts to meet the goals that Taoseños laid out: an attractive entrance to the town, providing housing and stores for Taoseños, easier traffic circulation, more comfortable walking and biking environments, preserving the town's character, and preserving green space by accommodating development in the existing community. The concepts build off of and further define the existing character of each segment. These are illustrative options designed to show the town what elements of the street design it can manipulate and what effect those manipulations might have on speed limits, pedestrian safety and comfort, building design, and other aspects. (For more information on street design resources, see Appendix F.)

Section 1

The three-lane segment from La Posta to Camino de la Placita is a transition from the faster, wider highway to the historic district. It could become almost an extension of the downtown, a sort of downtown just for locals, with shops and services geared more toward them than toward tourists. The state highway department is planning to revamp this section in about five years and seems amenable to input from Taos. The Team developed options for either a "main street" or a "suburban street" approach.

- The **"main street"** approach would redesign the road to make it two undivided lanes with turn lanes and would add on-street parking. It would also bring buildings up to the sidewalk. The Paseo del Pueblo Norte (see Figure 18) looks like this, a well-defined major street with appropriate width. Sidewalks, some street trees, curbside parking, and buildings orienting themselves to the street edge define the street, creating a comfortable atmosphere for pedestrians. The Team suggested that the town could look to the Paseo del Pueblo Norte as a possible model for Paseo del Pueblo Sur.
    - ***Pros:*** The "main street" design creates a more engaging pedestrian environment, making it comfortable, safe, and interesting to walk around, as Taoseños have requested. The on-street parking buffers pedestrians from the traffic. Extra touches like strips of vegetation, portales, benches, and bus shelters would make it even more welcoming to walkers and bicyclists and more attractive to everyone who passes by. It encourages businesses to create lively storefronts that would draw in passers-by. The road already narrows to two lanes at Camino de la Placita, so this option simply moves the narrowing point a short distance down the road, creating the opportunity for a longer stretch of development that feels more like the walkable downtown.
    - ***Cons:*** This design would narrow the road, which can draw public opposition because people perceive that more traffic will be crowding into fewer lanes. However, the design shouldn't change overall capacity very much because it is simply shifting the choke point, where the Paseo narrows from three lanes to two, a short distance. The options discussed in the traffic management section—managing access to parcels,

creating alternate routes, sharing and connecting parking lots, and making other transportation modes easier and safer—will also help mitigate any traffic issues. This design would also require gradually eliminating curb cuts or driveways on the Paseo. One way to mitigate the drawback of less direct access from the Paseo is to create more access points from the side and rear of businesses, so that Taoseños can use side roads to get to their destinations and will not need to get on the Paseo. The on-street parking in this design also provides front access. Again, connecting and sharing parking lots behind businesses will also help reduce the amount of traffic that must use the Paseo. The town might also consider building clearly marked parking lots at the perimeter of this new downtown so that people could park there and walk around. It could encourage more bus service in this area to relieve traffic.

Figure 18: Examples of a “main street” design. Top photo is the Paseo del Pueblo Norte in Taos. Bottom photo is Pearl Street in Boulder. In both, note the on-street parking, the lack of driveways, and the vegetation that makes the street more attractive and comfortable for pedestrians.

- The **"suburban street"** option would divide the road with a center median and consolidate left turns into a smaller number of access points by creating left-turn bays at certain points. It would add landscaping in between the sidewalk and the buildings to give the street a more suburban look. Parking lots would be behind the buildings.
    - ***Pros:*** The left-turn bays in this option would be safer than the current continuous left-turn lane. The speed limit could be higher than on a "main street" because there would be no turn lanes or on-street parking. Pedestrians would have a "refuge" on the center median so that they could stop in the middle of crossing the street if necessary. The landscaping would make the street look more attractive.
    - ***Cons:*** The transition could be difficult for existing businesses as they potentially lose customers who are traveling on the other side of the road and can no longer make left turns directly at the business's driveway or parking lot entrance. This problem could be mitigated by providing side and rear access points from connecting roads. More importantly, however, this design does not solve the problems that residents expressed concern about: buildings would still not have a relationship to the street, and it would still be dangerous to cross the street because traffic would be moving quickly. The sidewalk design separates pedestrians from businesses, and if the street has no on-street parking and pedestrians are separated by 5-10 feet of landscaping, the businesses have no reason to engage with the street. Instead, they would focus their entrances and energy on the rear entrance that faces the parking lot, with perhaps a small side entrance for pedestrians if required. The result would be what Taoseños have said they do not want, which is buildings that essentially turn their backs on the public street and pedestrians.

Figure 19: An example of a suburban-style street. The version suggested for this section of the Paseo would have fewer lanes than shown here: two travel lanes in each direction and one left-turn lane at major intersections.

Section 2

The five-lane segment from Paseo del Cañon to Cruz Alta already has many of the stores where local residents shop, so it has more of a "local service" character than further up the highway, where the road approaches the historic district and starts to have more tourist-serving shops. For Section 2, the Team developed options for either a boulevard or a parkway.

- A **boulevard** would include a center median with vegetation, two travel lanes in each direction, side medians with vegetation, side access streets with on-street parking, a set of vegetated strips to buffer the sidewalk, and sidewalks. Figure 20 illustrates and gives sample measurements for each part of the boulevard.
    - ***Pros:*** This design is more comfortable for walkers and bicyclists than what exists now because it protects people on the sidewalk from the fast-moving through traffic, allows bicyclists to use the protected access lanes, offers the "safe harbor" of a median halfway across the street, and reduces left turns, which can often be dangerous for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists alike. It also makes access to stores easier because shoppers could use the access streets instead of the highway.
    - ***Cons:*** The boulevard is an elegant and attractive solution, but it would require significant investment, and the population density in Taos may not be high enough to justify the cost for the state transportation department. The town might also need to add more right-of-way width to build a boulevard. Taos might also need to pay to maintain the planted medians, although using native plants that require little to no extra watering could mitigate this cost.

- A **parkway** would also have a vegetated center median, two travel lanes in each direction, and sidewalks, but no side access roads and no parking. Buildings would be up against the sidewalk. It would include turn lanes as needed. Figure 21 shows a sample cross-section.
    - ***Pros:*** Because it is more similar to the current configuration, it would probably be less expensive (but still not insignificant) to build. This design could provide many of the same benefits as a boulevard—attractive design, tree-lined streets that frame the mountains, a more comfortable environment for walkers and bicyclists, and the same speed limit and number of lanes that exist now. Although Figure 21 does not show it, on-street parking is a possibility here as well. On-street parking would improve the relationship between the buildings and the street by encouraging businesses to orient themselves to the street, rather than to a parking lot behind the building.
    - ***Cons:*** Access to businesses from the parkway would be reduced, which can be mitigated by providing access points at the side and rear of parking lots with connecting streets. As with the boulevard, the town might need to spend money to maintain the vegetation in the medians.

A note about trees and other vegetation in median strips: Several of these options include medians and sidewalks with trees and other landscaping. At the public meetings, some people suggested that in Taos' arid climate, the town cannot afford to water this vegetation. One potential solution is to use bio-swales. Bio-swales are areas of grass or other plants that are slightly indented to collect stormwater. The water then naturally filters through the ground instead of running into a sewer. As an added benefit, the collected stormwater can supplement irrigation of the vegetation in the bio-swale. If the town uses native plants that are adapted to the climate, they should need relatively little care and will add to the uniquely Taos character of the street.

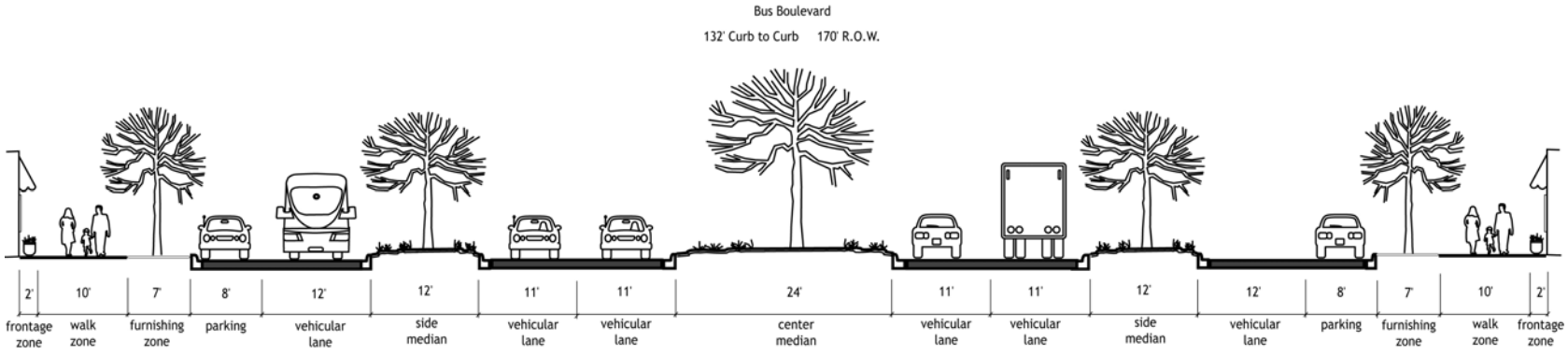

Figure 20: Boulevard cross-section

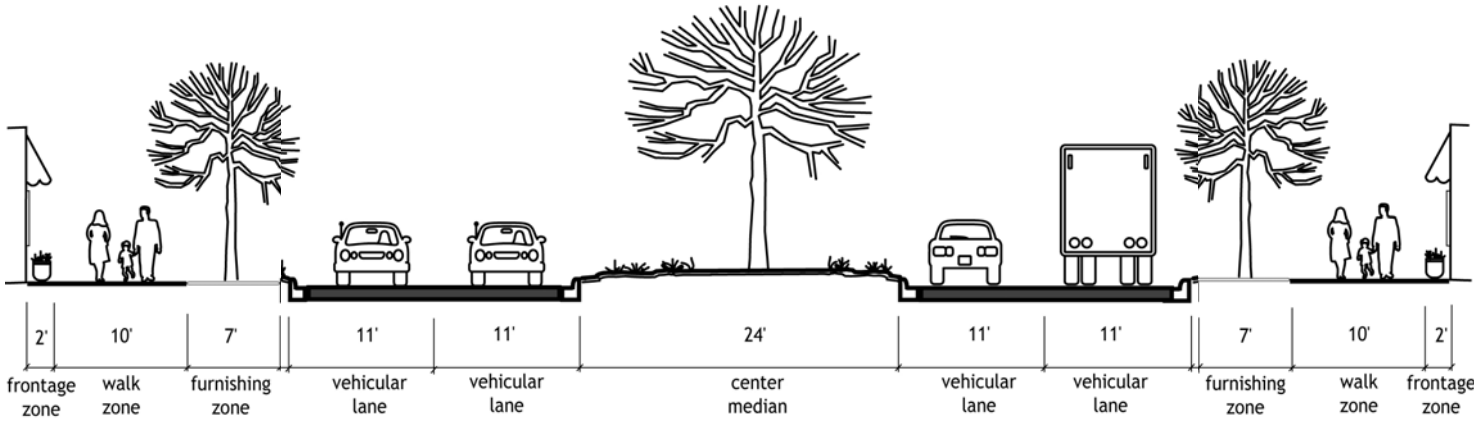

Figure 21: Parkway cross-section. Note: This drawing does not show on-street parking, but the parkway could accommodate it.

3.3 Making the Paseo a Community Center

Taoseños told the Team during the public meetings that they wanted neighborhoods where homes, stores, restaurants, and other uses were close enough together that they could meet their daily needs by walking or biking if they chose. They also wanted a mix of housing types and more homes affordable to working people. Protecting undeveloped land and natural resources were important to them, as was preserving Taos' historic buildings and making sure that new buildings were appropriate to the town's culture and heritage. The Team developed ideas to meet these goals:

- concentrating activity in nodes along the Paseo to create "town centers" where people can walk between stores, homes, and workplaces;
- mixing land uses to encourage more housing and create neighborhoods where people can meet their daily needs easily; and
- encouraging building and site design that reinforces Taos' sense of place.

Nodes of more concentrated activity

The Team's concept proposes three nodes, or town centers, along Paseo del Pueblo Sur (see Figure 17). The southernmost node is at the Paseo del Cañon intersection, the middle node is at the Cruz Alta intersection, and the northernmost node is where Paseo del Pueblo Sur narrows to two lanes, at Camino de la Placita, just before the historic district. At each of these nodes, development would concentrate along the intersection and the cross street, taking pressure off of the highway and offering residents access through side and back streets so that they do not have to get on the highway to take care of their daily needs.

The team proposed these nodes because they are in economically viable locations, on major cross streets where potential exists for development along the intersecting street as well as on the highway. The nodes concentrate development, which allows people to walk between stores or from their home to a store. Mixing the uses—shops, services, and homes—in these nodes gives people places to walk to and lets them take care of shopping and other errands without having to get on the highway. With less traffic on the road, highway congestion lessens, and people can get to their destinations more easily, whether they are walking, biking, taking the bus, or driving.

The nodes provide a transition between the different segments of the Paseo. The southernmost node, at Paseo del Cañon, would act as a gateway, letting highway drivers know that they were arriving in Taos. It would serve as notice that they were passing from a rural area into a more developed one. At the next node, at Cruz Alta, the character would change again to transition people into an area with more of a neighborhood feel. The northernmost node, which already essentially exists, is the gateway to the historic district, showing the character change as the street narrows.

The nodes also concentrate development energy to create places, centers for activity. Right now the only town center Taos has is the historic downtown, which is more geared for tourist activity. These nodes would not only spur economic development and help with traffic, they would also be great places for Taoseños to work, shop, and gather.

An attendee at the second public meeting suggested an additional node around the county buildings at the intersection of Paseo del Pueblo Sur and Albright. This "institutional" node would be a more civic area and could possibly include a park created from the nearby undeveloped land, if the landowner is amenable. Some Taoseños were concerned about the

proposal to move the county buildings currently at this location to a place outside of town; keeping them in this location could create the basis for a civic node.

Concentrating development also allows growth without consuming undeveloped land on the outskirts of town. Putting more development along the highway corridor means the town can put less development elsewhere, in areas the citizens want to keep low density or undeveloped, including small parks in neighborhoods, connected green spaces, and larger parcels of open space along the highway that the community wants to protect. This design option helps preserve the mountain views, green space, and natural environment that Taoseños said were important to them.

The Team designed a prototype of a node (Figure 22) to demonstrate how good site planning at the nodes might look. This sample design shows how the patterns and development types the Team has discussed can be built in Taos' current environment. Each block would be about 500' by 500', or roughly one-quarter the size of many of the blocks currently along the Paseo del Pueblo Sur. The buildings would be set against the sidewalk with some on-street parking in front and more parking in the back. This traditional courtyard style separates the buildings but creates one development that works together. For example, shops might be at the front, facing the highway, and offices or apartments in the back.

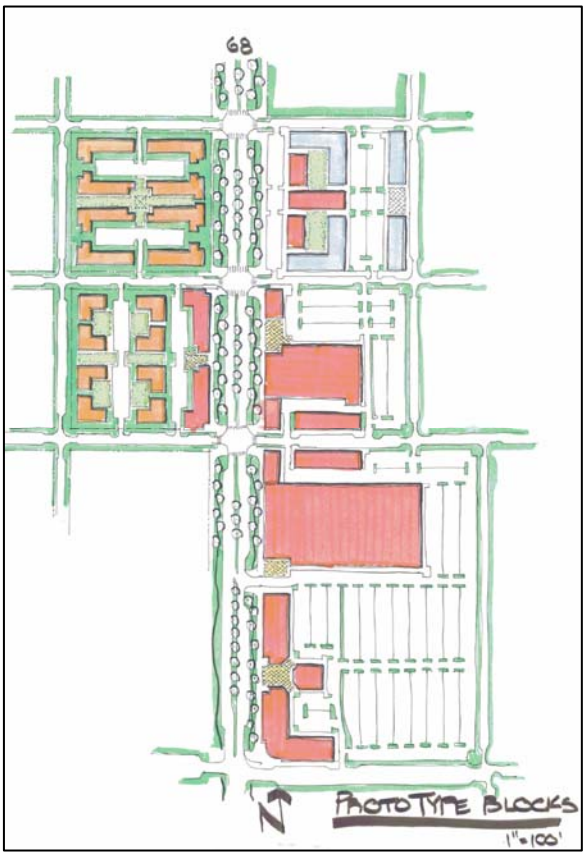

Figure 22: Image of prototype blocks at a node

"Big box" stores have been the subject of much debate in Taos. The Team suggested that Taos has two basic options: maintain its current policy of keeping the "big boxes" out, or allow them in—but require them to fit in with the town's building and site planning guidelines. If Taos decides that it wants "big box" stores but wants them to conform to the town's goals for development, the prototype node design in Figure 22 includes, in the bottom block, a possible design for a "big box" store. The store would, like other shops, be up against the sidewalk and would be designed to fit in with the streetscape. Most of the parking would be in the rear, hidden from the street. Pedestrians would not have to cross a large parking lot to get to the store entrance, and drivers would be able to access the parking lot from the highway or, if they preferred to stay off the highway, from side streets. Entrances would be at the front and back of the store so that access would be equally easy from the sidewalk or the parking lot.

Mix of land uses

Essential to the concept of nodes is mixing uses within them. Putting homes and stores in the same node gives the stores customers and employees within walking distance. The node takes on the feel of a town center, with activity throughout the day. Taoseños have spoken about their concerns that working people cannot afford homes in town, and creating these compact, mixed-

use nodes makes it easier to provide apartments and houses that working people can afford, simply because it creates more housing opportunities.

The town can also encourage more residential development along the Paseo in between the nodes. More housing is important to making the Paseo a more vibrant place that truly serves the local population, as well as to meeting residents' needs for homes they can afford. The town could concentrate commercial and office development in the nodes and focus residential growth in between the nodes. This enables synergy and makes maximum use of incoming retail/commercial development. With a streetscape that is more comfortable for walking, bicycling, and taking the bus, residents along the corridor could find that they don't need to drive as much as they used to. When they do want to drive, connected local streets that they can reach from the rear or side of their residential parking lot will give them other options than the highway for getting around town.

Figure 23 illustrates possible land-use zones around the Paseo del Pueblo Sur corridor. Along the road is mostly commercial and mixed use, with residential use increasing in the northern part of the corridor. This blend of uses creates the economic vitality the town wants, along with new housing options for Taos residents. The building and site design guidelines described in the next section will help make the corridor feel like a neighborhood, even with commercial development and multifamily residences.

Commercial uses extend along the major cross streets like Paseo del Cañon and Cruz Alta, then transition into residential areas. Behind the row of commercial or mixed use buildings that front on the Paseo would be residential districts, either multifamily or single family. In other words, residents can live in a neighborhood of single-family homes, yet just a short walk away would be stores and workplaces. Using the ideas described in section 3.1 of connecting parking lots in the rear and building neighborhood streets will help transition commercial areas into residential neighborhoods. Meanwhile, people who want to live in a single-family home, out of earshot and eyeshot of stores but within easy reach of them, will have that choice. And people who want to live in a more vibrant area, close to shops and restaurants, will have that option as well.

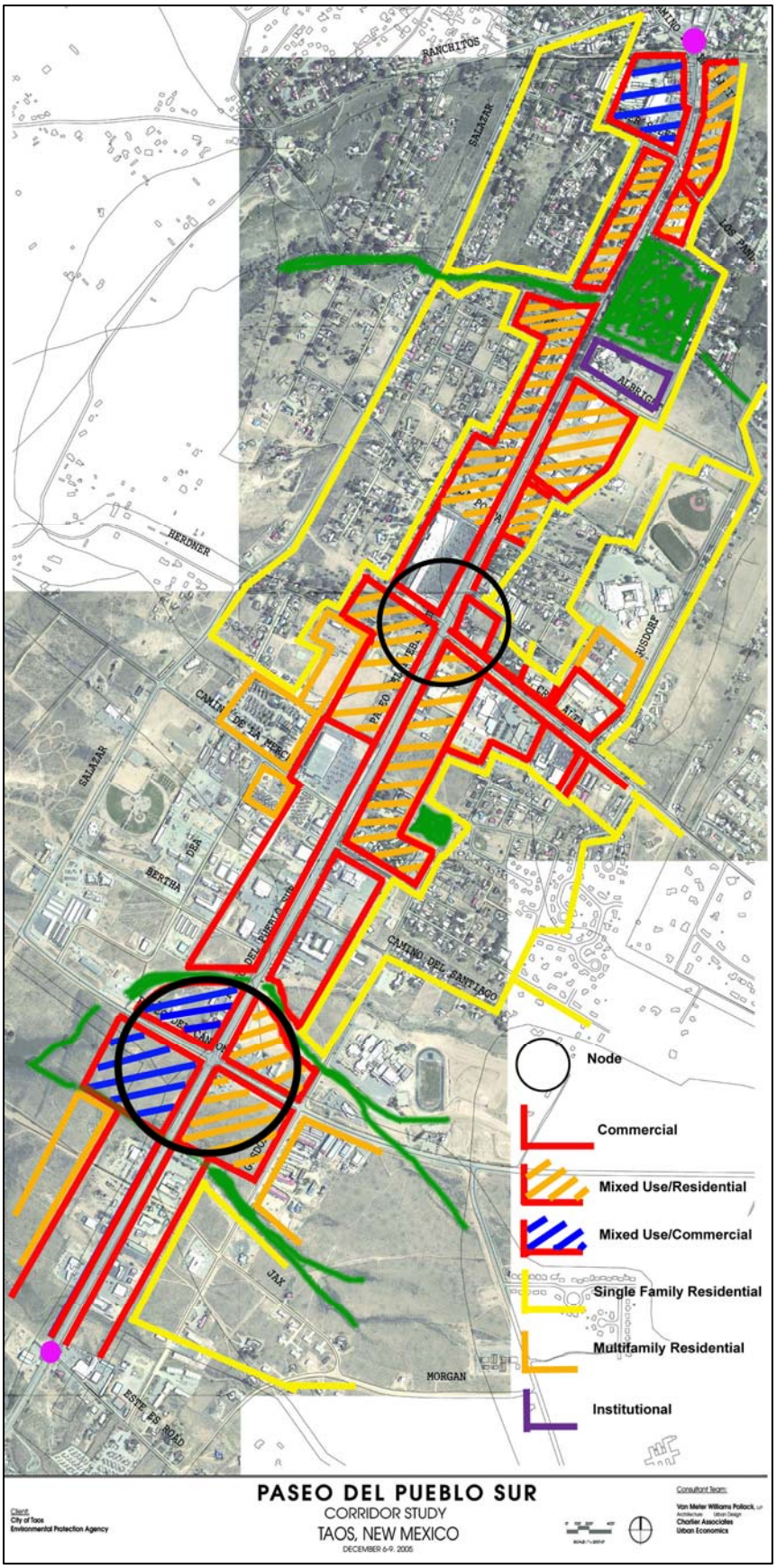

Figure 23: Map of the Paseo del Pueblo Sur corridor with potential zones outlined. Zone boundaries are approximate.

Building and site design that reinforces Taos' unique sense of place

The town's application to the Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program, as well as several citizens at the public meetings, mentioned that the buildings along Paseo del Pueblo Sur do not reflect Taos' character and heritage. Much of the blame goes to the current zoning code. Its current setback requirements, single uses, building design guidelines, and other components do not allow the town to accomplish its goals. As the town revamps the LUDC, it might also consider design guidelines that would describe in words and images what type and quality of development the town wants and will approve. El Camino Real in Palo Alto, California, found success with design guidelines along a similar stretch of highway. The development community supports the guidelines, not least because property values along the highway have risen since it was instituted (see Appendix G for a case study).[8]

Two aspects of building and site design in particular relate to Taos' character, heritage, and goals: distinctive architectural styles and bringing buildings up to the street. Both of these are key to maintaining Taos' unique sense of place, as is evident from the value residents and tourists alike place on the historic downtown, where buildings are in traditional architectural styles and are close to the street. But both are also important to economic vitality, not only because Taos' character attracts tourists, but also because residents appreciate well-designed buildings as much or more than tourists do and want to live, work, and shop in buildings that respect and enhance the town.

Architectural styles: At the first public meeting, the Team presented examples of buildings in other northern New Mexico towns that were built in traditional, but not pueblo, styles. The attendees liked the architectural styles, including Victorian, Territorial, Craftsman, contemporary, and other variations, and agreed that they would fit with Taos' character. They agreed that buildings did not have to be in the pueblo style to be traditional and to enhance Taos' identity. Examples of these building types appear in Appendix H. Currently, the town's zoning code allows only "Taos Style," which is defined as "Pueblo/Spanish Revival and the pitched-roof appearance of Territorial Revival." Most of the styles that the meeting attendees liked and agreed would fit with Taos' character do not fall into either category, nor would they be permissible under the current height and other design restrictions. The town can continue conversations with its citizens about what type of architecture they would like to see in the town and amend the building guidelines accordingly as part of the code revision process.

Figure 24: An example of how buildings in the historic downtown area are built up to the street

Bringing buildings up to the street: The building and site design discussion should include development along the Paseo at the nodes and along the rest of the corridor, but also on cross streets. The type of development the town

[8] The design guidelines are online at http://www.city.palo-alto.ca.us/planning-community/el-design_guidelines.html.

wants will ultimately guide its decisions about street design. One key element that works with every option discussed here is building up to the street/sidewalk. Bringing buildings up to the street, with parking lots behind them, makes the street a more intimate, engaging place. It makes access easier for pedestrians and bicyclists because they no longer have to cross a wide parking lot to get to the store or office. It is key to maintaining Taos' sense of place, as it creates an atmosphere similar to the historic downtown, where buildings frame the street.

4. NEXT STEPS: OPTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The scope of change in the options presented by the Team may seem overwhelming. To help the town get started quickly on making changes, and to address the concern that many attendees at the public meetings emphasized about the need for clear, attainable implementation options, the Team developed the following list of initial steps the town can take. These are presented roughly in order of potential impact:

- Review and make revisions to the zoning code and subdivision ordinance
- Work with New Mexico Department of Transportation on Highway 68 redesign
- Build strategic missing street connections
- Create an Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan
- Map, prioritize, and preserve trails and natural land
- Conduct a regional traffic circulation study
- Make the Chili Line bus service more reliable and attractive
- Encourage public art

Review and make revisions to the zoning code and subdivision ordinance: Typically, zoning codes do not allow many of the options suggested by the Team, making them illegal under standard zoning. The Team did not conduct a thorough review of Taos' zoning to see to what degree this is the case in Taos. However, based on conversations with city staff and knowledgeable citizens, the zoning requirements for minimum setbacks, single uses, and other elements of Taos' zoning are likely to be barriers to transforming the corridor. In fact, they are probably largely responsible for producing the development that currently exists.

The town's current review of the Land Use Development Code is an essential step in getting the type of development Taoseños want. The review should take into account the elements presented in this report, including mixing uses, bringing buildings closer to the street, and allowing an appropriate variety of architectural styles. In addition, the town should look for other elements that typically preclude the type of corridor transformation discussed in this report, such as inflexible parking standards, prescribed block lengths, or lack of pedestrian-friendly sidewalk and crosswalk standards. The town may also consider different zoning for the nodes along the corridor, to encourage denser development.

Taos can look to several sources for model codes that can help guide the LUDC revision:

- The American Planning Association has model smart growth codes available at *www.planning.org/smartgrowthcodes*. These codes encourage mixing land uses, preserving open space and environmentally sensitive areas, providing choices in housing and transportation, and making the development process more predictable.

- The Local Government Commission's *Smart Growth Zoning Codes: A Resource Guide* studies codes that have been implemented in communities around the country. Its main areas include "traditional neighborhood design," which encourages walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods; mixed-use and live/work codes, which help diversify land uses; street and block design that makes it easy and comfortable for people to walk, bike, or drive; parking guidelines that use land more efficiently; and design regulations that help maintain or create attractive, distinctive, safe places. The resource guide is available on the LGC Web site, *www.lgc.org*.

- Some communities have found a form-based code to be useful. Form-based codes emphasize the appearance and qualities of buildings and blocks rather than their uses. They encourage great public participation because they are more visual than traditional zoning codes, making it easier to understand what type of buildings they will allow. They encourage a mix of uses and a mix of housing types. A good introduction to form-based codes is at *www.lgc.org/freepub/PDF/Land_Use/fact_sheets/form_based_codes.pdf*. One example of a form-based code is the Smart Code, developed by urban-design firm Duany Plater-Zyberk. The Smart Code combines zoning, subdivision regulations, urban design, and basic architectural standards. It is intended to be customized to local needs. It is available at *www.dpz.com/pdf/SmartCodeV7.0-6-06-05.pdf*.

- The state of Colorado has a model code for small communities (*www.dola.state.co.us/smartgrowth/resources.htm*).

- Envision Utah offers guidance on zoning (*www.envisionutah.org/plans.phtml?type=ordinances*).

- Nashville, Tennessee, recently revamped its subdivision regulations (*www.nashville.gov/mpc/expanded_subdiv_regs_doc.htm*).

Work with New Mexico Department of Transportation on Highway 68 redesign: The state highway department seems amenable to input from the town on how to redesign the segment of Highway 68 between Camino de la Placita and La Posta. The town should take advantage of this relationship and, with its residents, work with the highway department to develop a design that meets the town's needs. The design options discussed in this report could be a starting point for discussion. Some useful street design materials are listed in Appendix F.

Build strategic missing street connections: Several steps are involved in determining where to build new streets to provide access to businesses and create good walkable connections to the neighborhoods and new route options for Taoseños.

- **Map local and collector streets:** The town should have a comprehensive map of the streets around the Paseo del Pueblo Sur. This map can help the town determine where new, connecting streets would be most useful.

- **Require interior streets on large parcels:** Part of creating more street connections may mean requiring large developments to include internal roads that connect to the larger network.

- **Plan exactions from development and redevelopment:** The town should work with property owners when they develop or redevelop a parcel to exact land to create new streets, if necessary.

Create an Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP): This plan would provide a road map for the town to prioritize what monies could be spent from local sources on land acquisitions both for new roads and for parks and open space. In addition, this plan would enable Taos to work directly with the state to access statewide funds that have been set aside specifically to assist local communities in making infrastructure investments.

The town should consider other infrastructure financing mechanisms to implement this plan. Such mechanisms could include:

- **Creating public improvement districts:** While these districts provide an potential revenue source, they require that 51 percent of the property owners within the district agree to forming the district and paying the additional levy.

- **General Obligation Bonds:** Taos may have additional bonding capacity based on its existing revenue stream. Over the next few years, the town will be paying off several existing bonds. Once these bonds are retired, the same revenue stream could be dedicated to paying new bonds which could then finance various improvements along Paseo del Pueblo Sur.

- **Impact fees:** As mentioned above, the town could require future development projects to pay impact fees. These fees could then provide revenues for some capital projects. However, the town would have to enact an impact fee ordinance before it could start charging such fees.

Map, prioritize, and preserve trails and natural land: The town and its citizens need to know the location of critical environmental land, biking and walking trails and paths, natural drainage corridors, “pocket” parks in neighborhoods, and other areas they may wish to preserve. Residents can help with this task, as the Taos Trails Alliance did with bike paths. With this reference in hand, the town can work with property owners and other citizens to determine which areas are most important to protect, then set about preserving the most urgent ones.

- **Open space acquisition program:** The town can buy open space or buy development rights on undeveloped land. It can get funding for land conservation from the state by updating its ICIP, as noted above, to guide growth into desired areas and designate land to be preserved. The town residents could also vote to increase the sales tax to fund land acquisition if they think it’s an important enough priority. If the town chooses to go this route, it must define an open space conservation program and its priorities very clearly to get support.

- **Transfer of development rights programs:** The town can also start a transfer of development rights (TDR) program. Taos’ zoning doesn’t currently allow mixed use, but in return for being allowed to build mixed use at the nodes, a developer could trade development rights with a parcel the town wants to protect. More information on TDR programs is in Appendix I.

- **Bicycle and pedestrian enhancements program:** The town can seek funding from the state for pedestrian and bicyclist enhancements, such as sidewalks, trails, benches, lighting, bike racks, and other facilities. More funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities will soon be available through the new federal transportation funding bill, SAFETEA-LU. Taos should identify places for bicycle lanes on the streets and paths off the streets, prioritize projects, and draw up plans for these projects to take to the New Mexico Department of Transportation. Having plans in hand when the town requests funding makes success more likely. More information about funding for enhancements is in Appendix J.

- **Revenue sharing with Taos County:** The competition between the town and the county for the gross receipts tax can discourage each entity from enacting measures to get the type of growth it wants, for fear of losing new development to the other jurisdiction. Many towns and counties in similar positions have joined to share revenue from the gross receipts tax so that they do not have to compete against each other. The state legislature would have to grant that power.

Conduct a regional traffic circulation study: The town's information on regional traffic circulation is poor. A better understanding of traffic counts and patterns throughout the region will help the town and the county determine where to invest in streets and how they should be designed.

Make the Chili Line bus service more reliable and attractive: Some attendees at the public meetings raised concerns about the dependability and convenience of the Chili Line buses. They noted that schedules are hard to find, the buses often do not follow the schedule, and the routes "don't go where people live." These problems are relatively easy to fix with commitment from the appropriate town officials. The town should publish schedules and maps for the Chili Line, make them easy to find, and then stick to them. When they know they can depend on the bus to be on time, residents will be comfortable riding it and will support its expansion to other areas. Town officials can also fund a ridership study to determine where bus service is needed. Sprucing up the bus stops would help encourage people to ride. Currently many of the stops consist of a pole and a worn area of grass to stand on, perhaps a bench. If the bus stops were sheltered from the elements, included copies of the bus schedule and map, had benches in good condition, and were attractive additions to the street, people might be more willing to take the bus. They would certainly be more comfortable while waiting for it.

Figure 25: A Chili Line bus shelter

Encourage public art: For decades, Taos has attracted artists and other creative people, yet there is surprisingly little public art throughout the town and along the corridor. Some artists at the public meetings asked about the possibility of a public art program, which the town may want to

consider as a way to promote its local artists, enhance its unique character, and further define the identity of each segment of Paseo del Pueblo Sur. Resources and ideas for establishing a municipal art program are listed in Appendix K.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR OTHER COMMUNITIES

5.1 Environmental Outcomes

Taos has a distinctive natural landscape that sprawling development patterns will gradually damage, aesthetically and environmentally. The Team's development options feature more compact, mixed-use projects that allow people to walk, bike, or drive to stores and services. The more development goes along the study area within the highway corridor, the less it will encroach on the outlying, natural areas of Taos Valley.

The development options that the Team has devised use land and existing infrastructure more efficiently and take advantage of infill opportunities along the highway corridor. Research shows that low-density, spread-out development generates more traffic than does compact development. It also consumes more land, reducing green space and potentially degrading water resources locally and regionally. Water costs more to deliver to homes that are spread out and distant from central water treatment facilities; leakage increases as water has to be delivered longer distances, meaning that more water is wasted when it has to travel further.[9] Water is a major issue in the arid West, and Taoseños noted that protecting it is important to them.

Many Taoseños noted that they enjoy walking or bicycling but find it unpleasant and unsafe along the Paseo del Pueblo Sur. If a redesigned highway corridor includes attractive walking and biking paths that are protected from traffic, more people may choose to walk and bicycle, taking cars off the road and reducing air pollution from vehicle emissions.

A highway median with trees and other vegetation could include a bioswale, which would collect rainwater and snowmelt to help water the median's plants. These bioswales also allow precipitation to filter into the ground instead of running off of paved surfaces, where it picks up pollutants and debris and contaminates ponds and streams.

The town could also repair and restore the natural drainage corridors that cross the Paseo. In addition to better managing water drainage, these corridors can become part of an integrated open space, natural habitat corridor, and bike and walking path system.

[9] For more information about water and development patterns, please see U.S. EPA, *Growing Toward More Efficient Water Use: Linking Development, Infrastructure, and Drinking Water Policies*, 2006, available at http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/water_efficiency.htm.

Figure 26: The mountains are part of the natural beauty Taoseños want to protect.

5.2 Opportunities for Other Communities

Communities around the nation are dealing with many of the same issues as Taos. They may not have the distinctive Pueblo architecture, the thriving artistic community, the arresting mountains encircling the valley, or the nearby ski resorts and hiking trails, but they have their own unique character and assets that they want to preserve. They want homes that their working families can afford. They want a strong economic base and easily accessible stores and services. They want transportation options. They want visitors to their town to have an experience they can find nowhere else.

Taos' example is perhaps most easily transferable to other towns with highways running through the town. These towns all share the challenge of balancing through traffic with local traffic. Their options also depend in large part on the state highway department. Many places are struggling with retrofitting a commercial highway corridor to give it more of the town's character and to make traffic circulation easier for residents and pass-through visitors alike.

APPENDIX A: EPA SMART GROWTH IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Communities around the country want to get the most from new development and to maximize the return on their investments. Frustrated by development that gives residents no choice but to drive long distances between jobs and housing, many communities are bringing workplaces, homes, and services closer together. Communities are examining and changing zoning codes that make it impossible to build neighborhoods with a variety of housing types. They are questioning the fiscal wisdom of neglecting existing infrastructure while expanding new sewers, roads, and services into the fringe. Many places that have been successful in ensuring that development improves their community, economy, and environment have used smart growth principles to do so (see box). Smart growth describes development patterns that create attractive, distinctive, and walkable communities that give people of varying age, wealth, and physical ability a range of safe, convenient choices in where they live and how they get around. Growing smart also means that we use our existing resources efficiently and preserve the lands, buildings, and environmental features that shape our neighborhoods, towns, and cities.

As these approaches have grown in popularity more and more communities want to pursue them. In many cases, they may need additional tools, resources, or information to achieve these goals. In response to this need, the Environmental Protection Agency's Development, Community, and Environment Division (DCED) has launched the Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Program to provide technical assistance—through contractor services—to selected communities. The goals of this assistance are to improve the overall climate for infill, brownfields redevelopment, and the revitalization of non-brownfield sites—as well as to promote development that meets economic, community, and environmental goals.

EPA, with its contractor ICF Consulting, assembles Teams whose members have expertise that meets community needs. While engaging community participants on their aspirations for development, the Team can bring their experiences from working in other parts of the country to provide best practices for the community to consider.

Principles of Smart Growth

1. Mix land uses.
2. Take advantage of compact building design.
3. Create housing opportunities and choices.
4. Create walkable communities.
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
7. Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities.
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices.
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective.
10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

From the Smart Growth Network, www.smartgrowth.org

APPENDIX B: SITE VISIT DETAILS

Consultant Team

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Town of Taos Staff

Matthew Foster, Long Range Planner, Town of Taos

EPA Staff

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Geoffrey Anderson, Director, Development, Community and Environment Division

Workshop Participants

Participants in the workshops represented a wide range of view points and interests, including property owners, businesspeople, artists, interested citizens, and others. This list of participants was gathered from sign-in sheets that were circulated during the public meetings and is included for reference purposes only. It may not represent the full number of attendees, as individuals may not have seen the sign-in sheet at the meetings or may have chosen not to sign in.

Elisabeth Bamberg
Seth Brown
Alberto O. Cantu
George Chacon
Jacquelyn Chase
Roy Cunningham
Allan Davies
Francesca Davies
Charlie Deans
Paula R. Ervin
Flowers Espinosa
Jock Fleming
Phil Gallegos
Joel Gottlieb
John C. McLoughlin
Thomas Miera
Rich Montoya
Juan Navarrete
Patty Navarrete
Jim O'Donnell
Dorothy Randall
Pat Randall
Barbara Scott
Allen Vigil
Peter Wengert

Schedule

EPA SMART GROWTH IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE WORKSHOP

December 7-9, 2005

	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:30 AM – 12:00 PM	TOUR OF PASEO DEL PUEBLO SUR CORRIDOR	TEAM DESIGN WORK	TEAM DESIGN WORK
12:00 –1:00 PM	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
1:00 – 2:00 PM	1:30: STAKEHOLDER MEETING	COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOP – OPEN TO PUBLIC	TEAM DESIGN WORK
2:00 – 5:00 PM	STAKEHOLDER MEETING UNTIL 4:00	COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOP – OPEN TO PUBLIC	TEAM DESIGN WORK
5 – 6:00 PM	PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING (5:30-6:30)	BREAK	BREAK
6:30 – 8:00 PM	COMMUNITY DISCUSSION #1	COMMUNITY DISCUSSION #2	COMMUNITY DISCUSSION #3

APPENDIX C: ONLINE SMART GROWTH INFORMATION RESOURCES

For more information about smart growth tools and techniques, please visit the following websites:

EPA's Smart Growth Program: http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth
This site includes research, publications, and other resources from the U.S. EPA's smart growth program.

Smart Growth Network: http://smartgrowth.org
Smart Growth Online is a Web-based catalogue of smart growth-related news, events, information, and resources. The site is a service of the Smart Growth Network, a coalition of more than 35 environmental, real estate, development, academic, historic preservation, equity, and government groups working together to improve the quality of development in America's communities.

Smart Growth America: http://smartgrowthamerica.org
Smart Growth America is a coalition of national, state, and local organizations working to improve the ways we plan and build the towns, cities, and metro areas we call home.

Smart Growth Leadership Institute: http://www.sgli.org
The Smart Growth Leadership Institute helps state and local elected, civic, and business leaders design and implement effective smart growth strategies.

Affordable Housing Design Advisor: http://www.designadvisor.org
This site was developed to help anyone involved in the production of affordable housing achieve higher design quality. It is full of useful information and shows examples of affordable, well-designed, high-quality homes.

APPENDIX D: RETAIL GAP METHODOLOGY

The Claritas Retail Market Power Report estimates retail leakage from a given geography. Claritas uses several sources to estimate if there is a gap or surplus between the consumer buying power and retail sales in an area. The main data sources for the report are the Census of Retail Trade and the Consumer Expenditure Survey.

Retail Sales data are benchmarked on the 1997 Census of Retail Trade and use monthly and annual retail trade surveys as well as wage and employment data from the BLS ES-202 survey to update the data in the 5-year interim between Censuses.

Consumer Buying Power is benchmarked on the 2001 Consumer Expenditure Survey and uses data from Claritas' current year demographic estimates and a regression model of household expenditures to provide current-year estimates of buying power. Data from Global Insights, a national provider of consumer expenditure data, and trade associations are used to verify and refine the results of the model.

"Retail market power" allows you to compare supply and demand to determine potential sources of revenue growth at any standard or user defined geographic level. Such comparison can be achieved at the retail-outlet level or the merchandise-line level. An opportunity gap appears when household expenditures levels for a specific geography are higher than the corresponding retail sales estimates. This difference signifies that resident households are meeting the available supply and supplementing their additional demand potential by going outside of their own geography. The opposite is true in the event of an opportunity surplus—that is, when the levels of household expenditures are lower than the retail sales estimates. In this case, local retailers are attracting residents of other areas to their stores.

APPENDIX E: BYPASSES IN WESTERN MOUNTAIN TOWNS

Because of the topography of mountain valleys and the history of development in mountainous areas, it is common for western mountain towns to be bisected by state highways. In many cases, these highways are the town's "main street," setting the stage for challenging planning and design issues. Examples include Park City, UT; Jackson, WY; Flagstaff, AZ; and many of Colorado's mountain towns, including Breckenridge, Crested Butte, Steamboat Springs, Glenwood Springs, Aspen, Durango, and Winter Park, among others.

As these towns wrestle with issues related to these important streets, one of the alternatives that may be considered is a proposal to bypass the core of the town with a new street or highway. This section provides a brief overview of some of these proposals and how they have been resolved (so far).

Crested Butte, Colorado (2000 pop: 1,629)

SR 135 northbound into Crested Butte

Crested Butte is on State Route 135 at the upper end of the Gunnison Valley in southwestern Colorado. State Route 135 ends, becoming a north-south town street (6th Street) in Crested Butte, and then becoming a county road (Gothic Road) for the remainder of the way up to Mt. Crested Butte, 3 miles north and 800 feet above Crested Butte. Crested Butte's east-west "main street" is Elk Avenue, which meets 6th Street at a right angle about a quarter mile from the core of the downtown.

While 6th Street is not Crested Butte's "main street," it is an important local street, providing access to the local school campus, and is the civic center of the town, with an art center, ball fields, and the town hall. 6th Street also is the location of about half of the commercial space in town. This corridor is important regionally and is the route skiers must take to get through Crested Butte to Mt. Crested Butte ski resort base area.

SR 135 in Crested Butte carries about 6,400 vehicles per day (average annual daily traffic) with about 9% trucks.

During peak tourism seasons (June through September and January through March), SR 135 is heavily traveled, carrying up to 8,000 VPD or more (vehicles per day). The intersection of 6th and Elk is currently a stop-sign-controlled intersection; it is a matter of some local pride that there is no traffic signal in Crested Butte. However, studies have shown that traffic will continue to grow in this corridor and will soon exceed the estimated 10,000 VPD that can be handled without signalizing the intersection. At the same time, Gothic Road is steep and often icy in the winter, presenting operational and safety challenges for access to the ski resort and the town of Mt. Crested Butte.

The town of Crested Butte (with financial support from Mt. Crested Butte, Gunnison County, and the ski resort) operates a well-patronized and successful local bus service (Mt. Express) that carries skiers in the winter and provides local circulation within Crested Butte and between the two towns. During peak ski season, ridership is so high that Mt. Express operates peak-period service to the mountain base with two-bus platoons to meet demand.

From 1998 through 2000, the towns of Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte, along with the city of Gunnison and Gunnison County, developed a Transportation Master Plan for Upper Gunnison Valley. One of the issues considered in this plan was whether to build a road bypass of Crested Butte, replacing the 135/6th St./Gothic Rd. route with a new corridor farther east.

The arguments for doing this included reducing congestion at the intersection of 6th and Elk and improving safety by reducing the grade of the main route up to Mt. Crested Butte. The arguments against a bypass included environmental impacts in the wetlands and sage country east of town, loss of commercial activity in Crested Butte, and cost (cost of construction and future costs of additional maintenance). The Transportation Master Plan (TMP) concluded that a bypass would not be the right answer and recommended a feasibility study of a gondola from Crested Butte to Mt. Crested Butte ski base area as a follow up to the TMP.

The "Mountain Passenger Transport Feasibility Study" was completed in 2000. In addition to a gondola, it evaluated a number of alternatives, including light rail and expanded bus service. The feasibility study showed that a gondola would be physically feasible, and was the preferred alternative among those studied. However, the financial means to implement a gondola were in question, and many of the citizens of Crested Butte were concerned about the visual impacts of an aerial gondola on the side of the hill above town. Finally, the town of Mt. Crested Butte and the ski resort were concerned about the feasibility of parking systems to support the gondola and were resistant to playing a direct role in funding the project. In the end, the gondola project was put on hold with a recommendation that the route be preserved through maps of reservation.

Additional information:

Upper Gunnison Valley Transportation Plan
August 1998

Gunnison County Mountain Passenger Transport System Feasibility Study

As of this writing (February 2006), Crested Butte has experienced a series of dry winters from 2001 through 2005, with an associated drop in ski season business and winter revenues. The ski resort came under new ownership in 2004. A slowdown in the local economy, associated with weak ski seasons and the 9/11 effect, took much of the pressure off traffic growth in the 135/6th St./Gothic Rd. corridor (temporarily).

Now, the ski resort is proposing a major expansion (Snodgrass Mountain), and summer tourism is on the rise. Crested Butte is seeing a surge in second-home and vacation-unit construction with the result that the hillside above town is rapidly becoming dotted with large homes. The route for the gondola has been lost to development and the county has proposed updating the 1998 Transportation Master Plan.

Breckenridge, Colorado (2000 pop: 2,408)

SR 9 in downtown Breckenridge

Breckenridge, in central Colorado, is bisected by State Route 9, which until recently followed Main Street within the town. Like most mountain towns, Breckenridge has two tourist seasons—summer (June to September) and ski season (December to early April). Summer is the busiest time of year, with the heaviest traffic, but ski season is busy as well. On certain holiday weekends during the early spring, skier traffic is bumper-to-bumper during peak periods. Breckenridge Ski Resort is one of several Colorado ski destinations that are heavily patronized by day skiers from the Front Range (Colorado Springs – Denver – Boulder – Fort Collins). Virtually all of these skiers come in personal autos and tend to arrive and depart within narrow periods of time, causing long queues and slow travel on weekends and holidays.

Breckenridge sees itself as a resort community—a place that is squarely in the tourism business. However, the town's essential appeal is its authenticity as an historic mining town with many intact 19th century buildings. Much of the core downtown area has been designated a National Historic District.

Thus, state and local policy in Breckenridge is guided by dual concerns: attracting and serving visitors, while at the same time preserving and enhancing the town's historic character.

For years, Breckenridge chafed at Colorado DOT control of SR 9. The state's approach to operation of the highway and its policies with respect to design seemed at odds with the town's need to have its Main Street function like a commercial downtown "main street" and with the urgent need to protect the historical character of the downtown. The state, too,

Main Street (old SR9) in Breckenridge carries about 13,000 vehicles per day (average annual daily traffic) with about 3% trucks.

has been less than comfortable with Main Street as a state facility, given the complicated local political situation and a complex regulatory environment associated with the historic district. The town has been interested in improving the pedestrian environment along Main Street. Both the town and the state recognized a need to rebuild underground utilities in the corridor (especially storm sewers).

In 2000, the town undertook a "Transportation, Circulation and Main Street Reconstruction Plan" that addressed Main Street traffic, along with a number of other mobility issues—including bus transit coordination and consolidation, a town-to-mountain gondola, and extension of the Blue River "riverwalk" corridor. One of the recommendations of the plan, completed in May 2001, was that the town should attempt to negotiate a corridor swap with CDOT. The state would turn over jurisdiction of Main Street to the town and in return would accept jurisdiction of a parallel corridor—Park Avenue—as the new SR 9.

Park Avenue connects to Main Street north of downtown and south of downtown, looping around downtown a few hundred feet to the west along the base of the mountain. In between, Park connects to the primary route up to the ski mountain (Ski Hill Road) as well as to several parking lots that host skiers' cars in the winter. The core area of town is well gridded, with numerous cross streets, including Ski Hill Road, connecting east-west between Park and Main.

Park Avenue for years was on the west side of the developed area of town and has not been as fully built up as the downtown and other areas (although that is quickly changing). Sufficient right of way is still available throughout most of the corridor to accommodate four or five vehicle lanes. By contrast, Main Street has been a two-lane facility, with left turn lanes at certain intersections and on-street parking. From the state's perspective, Park Avenue was a corridor that could be more highway-like in the future than would be possible for Main Street.

The state was open to the idea of the jurisdiction transfer and was initially willing to make some upgrades to Main Street before turning it back to the town. Most local interests felt "getting Main Street back" would be good for the town, although there was some concern that the state would overemphasize traffic capacity on Park and that skiers would not find their way into downtown at either the beginning or the end of their ski day.

The town and Colorado DOT recently completed the "jurisdiction swap," and SR 9 now follows the Park Avenue corridor. Main Street has been designated as "Old SR 9" and is under the town's control. As part of the trade, the DOT is rebuilding the intersections of Park and Main (north and south) at a cost of about $7.5 million. The south intersection is a modified "T," and the north intersection will be a roundabout.

The town was not able to secure state funding of the underground work on Main Street because the state took the position that Park Avenue has more lane miles than Main Street, and thus the DOT is in a cost-negative position with respect to future maintenance costs. So the town is funding reconstruction of Main Street, seeking some outside grant assistance. Because of the importance of tourism to the local economy, Breckenridge cannot close all of Main Street for construction during peak visitation periods. Instead, the town is proceeding with a segmented approach to rebuilding Main Street two blocks at a time, with underground work in the spring shoulder season and surface/finish work during the fall shoulder season. In this manner, the town expects to complete the reconstruction over the course of several years.

Additional information:
Town of Breckenridge Transportation, Circulation and Main Street Reconstruction Plan, May 2001

It is important to note that designating Park Avenue as SR 9 is not expected to reduce traffic on Main Street. Most traffic in Breckenridge has an origin and/or a destination within the town. This traffic will take the most direct and convenient route, whether signed as a state highway or not. Pass-through traffic is not a major factor, amounting to less than 10 percent of the traffic stream on both Park and Main. Summer tourists and local workers do take SR 9 over Hoosier Pass south of town, but both groups tend to have a destination within the town, often in the downtown. Thus, moving the SR 9 designation to Park will not affect overall traffic levels on either street. The route swap allows the town to designate Park as a truck route and discourage through truck traffic from using Main. However, only a relatively minor amount of the daily truck traffic in Breckenridge is pass-through.

Steamboat Springs, Colorado (2000 pop: 9,815)

US 40 in downtown Steamboat Springs

Steamboat Springs is located in north central Colorado, west of the Continental Divide and about 3 hours from Denver. The city has a long history as a regional commercial center for the ranching region of north central and northwestern Colorado that predates its current status as a ski and resort destination. Consequently, Steamboat residents and workers tend to balance their view of town as a resort environment with their desire to have it be a livable place.

Steamboat Springs is connected to the world via US 40, which becomes Lincoln Avenue within town—the de facto local "main street." Lincoln Avenue is one of those western small town streets designed to be wide enough to turn a horse- or mule-drawn wagon. Currently it is striped for four through lanes (two each direction) with parallel parking on both sides and left turn lanes at intersections.

Lincoln Avenue in Steamboat Springs carries about 22,000 vehicles per day (average annual daily traffic) with about 3% trucks.

The town has long debated what to do about the heavy traffic on Lincoln Avenue. Because the street is so wide and carries so much traffic, downtown has to some degree been effectively divided into two half-downtowns, one on each side of the street. This reduces the economic synergies in downtown and also discourages pedestrian travel. On the other hand, the town has been focused on community character issues, recognizing that its authentic "western ranch town" image is key to its success as a destination. Marketing for the ski mountain has capitalized on this image, with photos of the ski hill rising above horse barns and skiers wearing cowboy hats in its brochures and ads. Also, the town has worked hard to ensure the downtown area benefits from the visitation and economic activity generated by the ski resort just east of the main traditional town.

In 1997, Steamboat Springs undertook a "Mobility and Circulation Plan" to address these and other issues. Ultimately, 13 different alternative approaches to the "traffic on main street" issue were considered. These included bypasses around the town, bypasses within the town, one-way couplets, and a variety of other street construction and reconstruction strategies.

Additional information: Steamboat Springs Mobility and Circulation Plan, June 1998

However, the final Plan's Phase I program (which is being implemented) includes only marginal changes to streets, with most investment emphasis going into transit, pedestrian and bicycling. The major street capacity alternatives were shown as later "phases" in the plan and confined to an appendix. The quote below gives a sense of the public and local political response to the major street capacity alternatives:

> *"Figure A-16 in Appendix A illustrates potential expansion of roadway capacity through the community. This information has been included in the Appendix to aide in future discussions if necessary. However, it should be noted that the Steamboat City Council did not support the addition of roadway capacity given the impacts on the community."(1998 Mobility and Circulation Plan)*

Glenwood Springs, Colorado (2000 pop: 7,736)

SR 82 in downtown Glenwood Springs

The city of Glenwood Springs is in western Colorado at the confluence of the Colorado and Roaring Fork Rivers. The town is bisected by Interstate 70 and by the mainline of the Union Pacific railroad, which carries Amtrak and freight trains. The old rail corridor up the Roaring Fork Valley, which connects into the mainline in a large "Y" just west of downtown, has been abandoned and is now owned by the Roaring Fork Rail Holding Authority (RFRHA).

Glenwood is physically unique, occupying the floors of two narrow river valleys and laid out much like a "T" with most of the town situated within a few blocks of I-70 (which runs along the Colorado River) or State Route 82 (which runs parallel to the Roaring Fork River). SR 82 runs south from I-70 through town and on up the Roaring Fork Valley to Carbondale, Basalt, Snowmass Village, and Aspen.

SR 82 is designated Grand Avenue in Glenwood and is the town's de facto main street. The Colorado River, the railroad corridor, and the interstate highway run next to each other east-west through town. SR 82 runs briefly along the north side of the river from its interchange with I-70 and then turns south, crossing the two major transportation corridors and the river on a long, high bridge, passing into and through downtown as Grand Avenue.

Grand Avenue is a four lane roadway through downtown and throughout much of its length including on the bridge. Traffic on Grand Avenue reaches 30,000 vehicles per day in the summer peak season.

Grand Avenue (SR 82) in Glenwood Springs carries about 25,000 vehicles per day (average annual daily traffic) with about 5% trucks.

The combination of the width of the street and the heavy traffic volume presents the downtown with a serious challenge, bisecting the commercial district and subtracting from its economic potential. However, at the same time, at least some of the business in downtown is thought to be derived from traffic passing by. Although Glenwood Springs has significant cachet in its own right as a destination (with its hot springs pool, historic hotels, Amtrak station and stunning scenery), it also draws economic activity from traffic to and from Aspen and the other Roaring Fork Valley communities.

The idea of a bypass route for SR 82 is more than 20 years old and has been the subject of numerous feasibility studies and alternatives analyses. The most recent was a "Glenwood Springs State Highway 82 Alternatives" study completed in 1999. The recommended alternative from this study was a new route connecting to an I-70 interchange west of town, crossing the river and mainline railroad at that point, proceeding east back to the RFRHA corridor and then following the railroad line south to a point south of downtown, where it would connect back into the existing SR 82 corridor. Cost estimates for this project range from $53 to $74 million.

The bypass project is controversial for many reasons. Cost is an obvious obstacle. Other issues include the loss of the rail right of way for use as a transit corridor, impacts to residential neighborhoods along the bypass alignment, questions about the traffic reduction potential of the bypass, and unresolved questions about the jurisdiction and cost responsibility for the existing Colorado River bridge.

The rail corridor, now owned by RFRHA, was purchased by a consortium of towns, cities, counties and the state DOT in the mid-1990s to preserve its availability as a transportation corridor. Much of the political support for the purchase of the corridor came from rail passenger transit advocates who saw potential for a rail project connecting from Glenwood Springs up into Aspen. Additional support came from trail advocates who saw the potential for a long, scenic trail along the Roaring Fork River. The current bypass proposal includes provision for a trail facility, but would preclude use of the corridor for rail transit—at least at the Glenwood Springs end of the valley.

Additional information:
City of Glenwood Springs Long Range Transportation Plan 2003-2030, July 2003

Another issue is the likelihood that a bypass would not reduce traffic on Grand Avenue as much as hoped. Only about 7 percent of daily traffic in this corridor is pass-through traffic. The bypass might have the compound effects of generating new traffic in the new corridor, moving some traffic off of Grand Avenue and onto the bypass, and allowing local traffic on Grand Avenue to increase. This, combined with questions about future ownership of the bridge (which a massive facility that is expensive to maintain and would eventually cost tens of millions of dollars to replace), presents interesting challenges to advocates for the bypass.

The proposed bypass is not currently funded, but is listed in the city's 2003 Transportation Plan as a project on the state highway system. The project is currently not listed in the State's Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Jackson, Wyoming (2000 pop: 8,647)

Jackson, Wyoming, serves as a base camp and gateway to a vast area of the northern Rockies, including Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks, the National Elk Refuge, national forests, state parks, wilderness areas, and the Gros Ventre and Snake Rivers. Several state highway routes (US 26, 89, and 191) converge in Jackson to become West Broadway (into town from the west) and North Cache (taking off from Broadway and proceeding out of town to the north). The Broadway/Cache corridor serves as Jackson's main street for commerce and tourism-related activities.

West Broadway in Jackson

Traffic in this corridor is much higher during the summer months than at other times of year. On West Broadway, which is the primary commercial artery for the region, daily traffic exceeds 40,000 vehicles per day (VPD) during July. Closer into the downtown, summertime traffic on West Broadway is about 22,000 VPD and on North Cache is about 16,000 VPD. Although Jackson is an international ski destination, winter traffic even at peak times remains far below summer traffic levels.

While traffic on the key downtown arterials has not increased much in the past several years, it is expected to grow slowly over the next couple of decades. The Regional Transportation Plan forecasts that the state highway corridor—West Broadway and North Cache—will be increasingly congested during peak summer months. During the peak travel hours of many summer days, this will create long delays and queues.

Intersection of North Cache and Broadway in Jackson

The intersection of North Cache and Broadway in Jackson is the epicenter of local tourism activity, with the famous town square and infamous "Cowboy Bar." This area is within the "boardwalk" district of Jackson where special design treatments are required, including wooden sidewalks and overhead arcades. Pedestrian activity levels are very high in this area, in spite of the traffic, providing robust summertime business for the numerous tourist shops and restaurants.

An existing "bypass" of sorts has been provided in the form of a truck route that theoretically intercepts trucks west of downtown and routes them north on Millward, connecting into Mercill and thence back to North Cache north of the downtown. Pass-through trucks do utilize the truck route, although as we have seen in other communities, the percentage of total truck traffic that is pass-through is relatively low.

Broadway in downtown Jackson carries about 22,000 vehicles per day (average annual daily traffic) with about 6% trucks.

Two "bypass" projects have been proposed that would have some traffic reduction impact on the state highway corridor. One of these would use a reconstructed county road (Spring Gulch Road) west of town, connecting other local roads and coming back into the state route just north of the Elk Refuge. The other would involve building a new bridge over the Snake River north of town, connecting into Wyoming Route 390 near the Jackson Hole Ski Resort. If both were implemented, together they would reduce traffic on Broadway just west of Cache by about 3,000 daily cars at build-out.

Each of these projects is controversial. Spring Gulch Road passes through a quiet area of the valley floor adjacent to protected open space lands and affecting one of the last viable ranching operations in the valley. The corridor that would be used to connect back into the existing state highway north of town would affect a high-end golf course community with expensive homes. The idea of a new Snake River Bridge presents significant environmental challenges, including impacts to the Snake River, to wildlife habitat and corridors, and to Grand Teton National Park. Such a bridge would open a large area of the valley floor to increased development pressure, including lands west of the river that are currently fairly remote.

Recent studies have concluded the town should not take the lead in advocating either of these bypass alternatives. The positive and negative impacts are mixed; each project would have numerous negative impacts and each would require significant funding. However, the town has concluded it would be beneficial to encourage greater use of the truck route (Millward – Mercill) by through traffic (which is a small percentage of peak hour activity).

The bypass idea is alive, however. The new Snake River Bridge, which has been proposed for over 20 years, in particular has attracted advocacy from valley residents and key political leadership. Neither bypass proposal is currently funded or included in any formal transportation program.

Summary

It is common for mountain towns in the West to be bisected by a state highway that carries heavy traffic. For historical reasons, it is also common for that state highway to be the local main street. For that reason, bypass proposals are common. Some observations from the examples described in this section include:

1. When smaller communities are faced with infrastructure issues of the magnitude of a highway bypass, they are well served by any investment they may have made in community visioning and comprehensive planning. Having at least some consensus support for a clear vision of itself and its future helps a community a lot when it is time to evaluate a bypass proposal. Bypasses have profound effects on the landscape, on travel patterns, and on land development patterns. They directly change the areas through which they pass and also affect the character of the towns and region. A community with a clear vision of its identity will be able to evaluate these impacts in terms of its vision.

2. Bypasses generally do not reduce traffic on the bypassed section. If they do reduce traffic, the effect is short term. Congested streets always appear to be full of "pass-through" traffic. However, studies generally show that the pass-through percentages are much lower than conventional wisdom would suggest. Most traffic everywhere is local, and the actual traffic effect of bypasses generally is to increase mobility and travel. Whether this is a positive benefit depends on local community objectives.

3. Bypasses have significant effects on land development patterns. The idea is commonly put forward that a bypass should be a controlled access route, but that is virtually never actually done in actual practice. Thus, bypasses tend to open lands to development pressure, and over time they generate new districts where development is occurring and traffic is growing. Again, this can be positive or negative, depending on local objectives.

4. The strongest argument for a bypass in many cases is the opportunity it presents a local community to take back control of its main street from a state DOT. DOTs have a mission that is important and generally under-funded. They typically are unable to see a highway through a town in the same light as the town, and they find it difficult to justify design and operations decisions that the town believes would benefit local commerce. However, in most (but not all) situations, "taking back main street" requires replacing it with some parallel route. If no such route exists or if building one would be expensive and controversial (which is usually the case), the state may feel it must retain jurisdiction. Further, negotiating jurisdiction transfers is not for the faint of heart, and it can be difficult for political leadership to fall in behind the idea. Even though the state DOT may indicate in the early going that there could be a strong financial benefit to the town in terms of reconstruction of main street, in practice this often diminishes or disappears as the transfer is negotiated. However, where the terms of such an arrangement can be worked out, there can be significant benefits to communities from regaining control of their main streets by agreeing to the designation of a bypass corridor for the state highway route.

APPENDIX F: STREET DESIGN RESOURCES

Here are some resources to help Taos decide what type of street design best suits its goals for the Paseo del Pueblo Sur corridor.

Beyard, Michael D. and Michael Pawlukiewicz, *Ten Principles for Reinventing America's Suburban Strips*, Urban Land Institute, 2001. www.uli.org.
Illustrates how communities can make commercial strips more neighborhood-oriented.

Burden, Dan, et al., *Street Design Guidelines for Healthy Neighborhoods*, Center for Livable Communities, Local Government Commission, January 1999. www.lgc.org.
Helps communities implement designs for streets that are safe, efficient, and aesthetically pleasing for both people and cars. It features helpful guidelines that specify street widths and implementation strategies.

Context Sensitive Solutions, www.contextsensitivesolutions.org.
Includes resources about designing transportation projects in a way that fits the physical setting, maintains safety and mobility, and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources.

Freedman, Michael, Freedman Tung & Bottomley, "Retrofitting the Commercial Strip," presented at the New Partners for Smart Growth Conference, January 2006.
http://www.cmcgc.com/media/handouts/260126/SAT-PDF/460-Freedman.pdf.
Ideas for turning commercial highway strips into neighborhood centers.

Institute of Transportation Engineers, *Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities: An ITE Proposed Recommended Practice*, 2005.
www.ite.org.
Guidance for traffic engineers on designing roadway improvement projects in places where community objectives support walkable communities, compact development, mixed land uses, and support for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Institute of Transportation Engineers, *Guidelines for Neighborhood Street Design*, 2001.
www.ite.org.
Information for traffic engineers on how to build more neighborhood-scaled streets.

Oregon Department of Transportation, *Main Street… When a Highway Runs Through It: A Handbook for Oregon Communities*, 1999.
www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/BIKEPED/docs/mainstreethandbook.pdf
Techniques for dealing with state highways in towns, using Oregon examples.

Pulleyblank, Sarah, *Civilizing Downtown Highways*, Congress for the New Urbanism, 2002.
Shows how state highways that function as main streets can be tamed as they run through town.

APPENDIX G: CAMINO REAL CASE STUDY

Palo Alto, California; State Highway Route 82

El Camino Real Vital Statistics

Average Daily Traffic: 45-55,000

Through Lanes: 6

Typical Right of Way: 120 feet

Length of Section: 4.3 miles

Adjoining land uses: Educational, commercial, multifamily residential

Context

El Camino Real is the oldest road in the west, and a dominant local feature in the city of Palo Alto, which is halfway between San Jose and San Francisco. It serves significant local and regional traffic as a principal arterial. It carries substantial bus traffic, and is close to a major commuter rail station. Some locations see major pedestrian movement, with high street crossing volumes at commercial and school crossings. Finally, El Camino Real serves local bicycle trips.

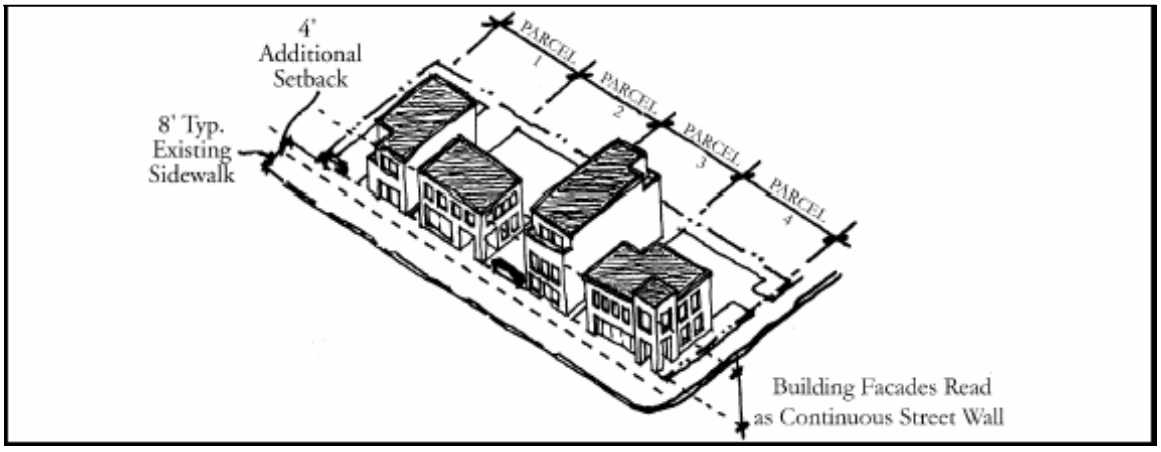
Land uses along El Camino Real in Palo Alto include major commercial development, most of which is auto-oriented, and a bit of which is pedestrian-focused, such as retail shops and restaurants. Multi-family housing appears along the street at numerous locations. Design of these uses varies, with mid-century development featuring front-facing parking lots, large setbacks, and little architectural detail, and both older and newer development featuring side- or rear-located parking, smaller setbacks, and greater architectural detail. Stanford University abuts El Camino Real on the west side of the northern end of the section. Nearby land uses include major activity centers such as business parks, mixed-use downtown areas, and a regional shopping mall.

Little vacant land exists along El Camino Real, but substantial growth is projected for the city and the region, and it is expected that a significant portion of the city's growth will occur along this street, especially as a location for multifamily housing.

The City of Palo Alto and Stanford University recognize the changing role of El Camino Real and want to transform the corridor into a mixed-use urban inner-city arterial complete with street-oriented uses, wide sidewalks, adequate lighting, bike paths and other appeals to the community.

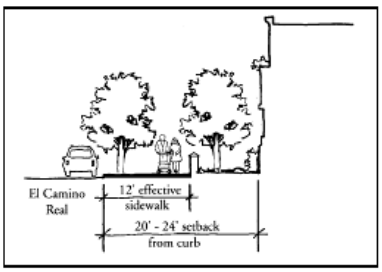
Design Guidelines

The El Camino Real project addresses the character and form of the buildings and private sector land not through specific development *regulations* but through *design guidelines* that serve to frame the discussions between the community (& its adjudicative review boards) and the developers/builders.



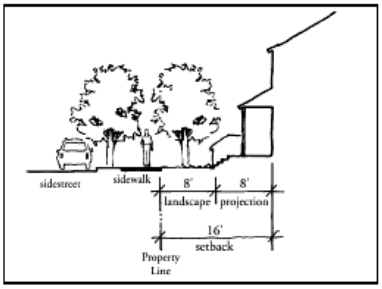
Nationally, this is a conventional approach, leaving the implementation of the vision/master plan in the realm of local politics and procedure. Much then depends on the level of public involvement and other 'political' contingencies – development is left in the realm of negotiation. Quoting from the document:

> … *The purpose of these design guidelines is to:*
> • *Provide a set of guiding design principles for public officials, developers, designers and the community* ***with which to anticipate, evaluate and encourage appropriate*** *development;*
>
> • *Give the jurisdiction* ***tools to evaluate and direc****t project design;*
>
> • *Provide developers with clear direction as to what type and quality of development the city* ***desires****, anticipates and will approve;*
>
> • *Give the community a better understanding as to what type and quality of development the city and community should anticipate and expect along South El Camino Real…*
>
> *… The design guidelines will be* ***extensively used by the review boards****, including the Architectural Review Board (ARB), the Planning Commission and the City Council. The guidelines are* ***intended to direct the project design process toward solutions*** *that, given site conditions and the requirements of the development program, best meet city goals and community values and expectations.*



GUIDELINES 7.1.1 & 7.1.2. Exclusively residential projects are required to be setback 20-24 feet from the El Camino Real curb with a 12-foot effective sidewalk lined by double rows of trees.

GUIDELINE 7.1.2. Low screen walls and shrubbery may be used to create privacy between the sidewalk and adjacent residences. Sidewalks must be at least 8 feet wide, lined with a row of trees on each side.



GUIDELINE 7.1.4. Residential projects are required to be setback 16 feet from the sidestreet property line, with a sidewalk lined by a double row of trees. Stoops and porches may project eight feet into the setback.

The ultimate regulatory force of the *El Camino Real Design Guidelines* aside, these are an excellent presentation of the ***type and quality of development the city desires, anticipates and will approve.*** Clear statements of principle, generally explained graphically, are presented for the complete street-space.

The *El Camino Real Design Guidelines* recognize the corridor as a series of places with distinct character. It does a thorough job of providing guidance on the full range of corridor development and redevelopment issues. Chapters include: *District Vision*, *Site Planning and Landscape Guidelines, Building Design Guidelines, Signage, Renovations and Façade Improvements*, and *Exclusively Residential Projects*. An instructive appendix provides conceptual schematic design examples for a variety of building project scales, ranging from tiny infill projects to full-block developments.

The *El Camino Real Design Guidelines* are not regulatory, but provide guidance to an existing review process. While they do not act as a *rule-book*, they provide a very useful *play-book* for Corridor development.

The ultimate value of the Design Guidelines is their clarity. No citizen, public official, or developer could reasonably fail to understand the ultimate goal of the master plan – and that is a first condition for the implementation of any community vision.

Economic Development

The design guidelines were received enthusiastically by the development community and have been consistently implemented for the past 3 years.

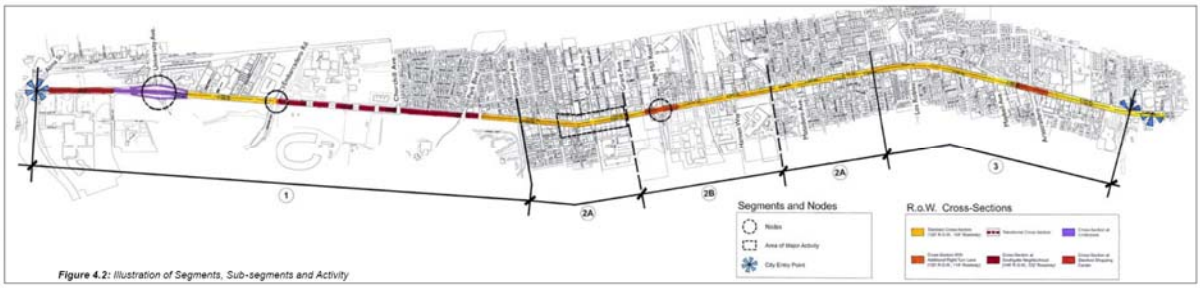
Recognizing that the entire two-mile stretch of El Camino Real could not be a continuous pedestrian-oriented corridor, the City's approach involved a node and corridor concept. This method focuses on three pedestrian nodes (mainly at intersections) and two areas that are more auto-oriented. This creates synergy among auto-oriented uses and pedestrian passages.

The development community continues to be strongly supportive because the guidelines promote quality design and corridor image, which in turn have increased property values along El Camino

Real. Roughly a dozen new redevelopments have occurred along the 4.3-mile stretch since the design guidelines have been implemented.

Transportation

The section of El Camino Real being redesigned and reconstructed is shown following:



Current conditions

Vehicle Traffic Characteristics. Traffic volume is 45-55,000 vehicles per day. With the effects of congestion and traffic signal delay, peak-period travel speed is approximately 17 mph, although in between signals, 85th percentile speeds exceed 40 mph, more than 5 miles above posted speed. *Transit Characteristics.* Major bus lines run along this section of El Camino Real, at frequencies of 10 minutes during peak periods and 20-60 minutes during off-peak periods. There is a major commuter rail station nearby.

Redesign

Palo Alto applied for and received a grant from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to redesign El Camino Real. $280,000 (including a local match) became available for planning and design work. The consulting team was Community Design + Architecture (urban design), Fehr & Peers Associates (traffic engineering), Urban Advantage (visual simulations), Reid Ewing of University of Maryland (context-sensitive design), and Joe McBride of UC Berkeley (urban forests). About the same time, the then Director of Caltrans, Jeff Morales, began a Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) program whose aim is to make state highways more compatible with their land use contexts. The redesign of El Camino Real, to be more like a main street, is the kind of project envisioned by CSS, and the department has looked favorably on it. The main transportation problems with El Camino Real as it currently exists are poor aesthetics, high vehicle speeds, and difficult pedestrian crossings (see set of pictures on next page). Based on the plan prepared by the consulting team, the City of Palo Alto has proposed the reconstruction of El Camino Real to create:

1. An aesthetically attractive corridor that projects a positive image for Palo Alto.
2. A fully multi-modal urban thoroughfare that maintains mobility and improves safety for transit, trucks, and autos, while improving safety and convenience for pedestrians and bicyclists; and
3. A center of community activity rather than a barrier between activities on each side of the street.

Existing Roadway with Aesthetic, Speeding, and Crossing Problems

The plan for El Camino Real pursues the community's goals by:

1. Planting hundreds of median trees to create a tree-lined street.
2. Reallocating the 120 ft right-of-way by narrowing travel lanes from 12 to 11 ft, allowing parking lanes to substitute for shoulders, widening sidewalks, adding pedestrian refuges in the medians, and adding corner bulb-outs to shorten pedestrian crossing distances; and
3. Dropping from 6 to 4 or 5 travel lanes near intersections with low cross street traffic volumes and high pedestrian crossing volumes.

Median trees: Debate over the role of median trees has been a substantial barrier to full implementation of the El Camino Real plan. Around year 2000 a group called Trees for El Camino Real began to lobby and fund-raise for the installation of median trees. Having raised several hundred thousand dollars, the group only needed Caltrans approval to begin planting trees. About one-third of the median length through Palo Alto is wide enough for trees under current Caltrans clearance policy, which requires a minimum median width of 12 feet. The rest of the median is of substandard width.

Caltrans is conducting a pilot study of median trees on El Camino Real. Several hundred trees are currently being planted on the northern section next to Stanford, and a second planting in the

southern section is now underway. These are sections with the 12 ft medians, but under the pilot, trees are being planted even on the median noses of 8 ft width. Just north of Palo Alto, the city of Menlo Park is using the flexibility of the pilot project to plant trees on medians of only 5 ft width.
Reallocation of ROW: Caltrans has had no objection to narrowing lanes, providing a parking lane in lieu of a shoulder, or adding bulb-outs. Here the main challenge is cost. The entire reconstruction is estimated to cost $32 million. It is unclear when this portion of the project will become feasible.

Narrowing near intersections. The selective narrowing to 4 lanes faces the same financial constraints, and also faces some political obstacles. This section of El Camino Real has 4 major four-way intersections with cross-street traffic of up to 50,000 average daily traffic (ADT). The uniform six-lane section of El Camino Real is scaled to these intersections. El Camino Real also has 17 T-intersections with much lower cross street traffic volumes, on the order of 10k ADT. Two of these have high pedestrian volumes due to school crossings, neighborhood commercial areas, and (in one case) a train station. At these two intersections, pedestrian crossing volumes are so high that vehicle traffic from the side streets clears faster than pedestrian traffic crossing the street, and narrowing El Camino Real to four lanes would actually reduce intersection delay. Traffic simulations showed that as long as the four-lane sections did not extend to the major intersections, overall travel time along the arterial would not be significantly affected. The problem here is that some residents equate any narrowing with increased congestion. To address this, a field test of the 4 or 5 lane segments is included in the plan.

Plan for 6-4 Lane Hybrid Design

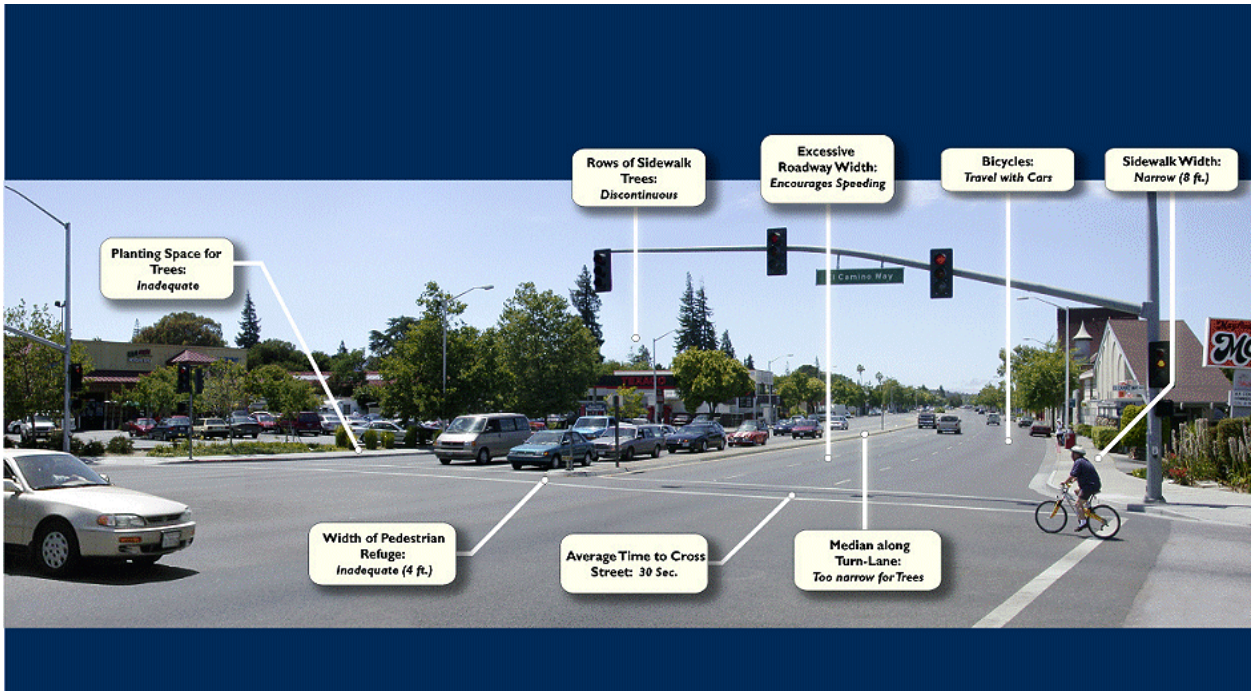
Figure 5.17: Corridor Concept Plan: 6/4-lane Hybrid Option - Configuration B

Finally, Stanford University is interested in creating a new bicycle connection through the eastern portion of the campus (the Arboretum) to El Camino Real. This would be connect to the existing bike path along El Camino and be consistent with the City's Draft Bicycle Plan.

The University has also explored transforming the frontage of El Camino Real from on-street parking to a wider sidewalk with street trees.

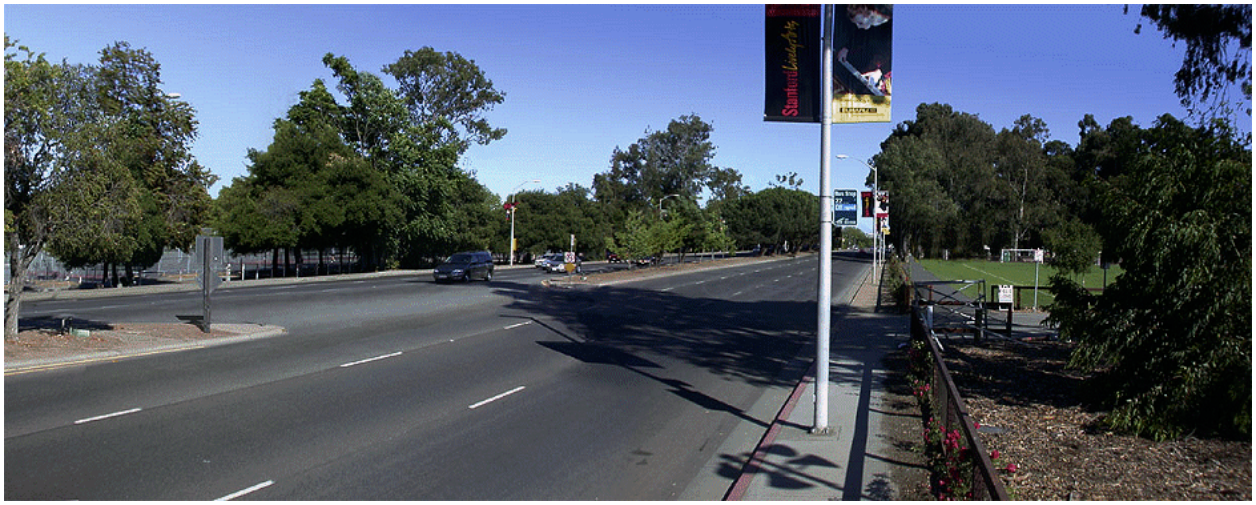
Existing conditions and redesign

Existing



Redesign

Existing



Redesign

Key tools

- Development guidelines to assure quality development, including the appendix of design solution examples. A great playbook to get developers headed in the right direction.
- Road network and streetscape improvements
- The computer imaging.
- The clear and specific numbers: quantitative information about the street sections and other design details. These give everyone *specifics*.
- Tax increment financing of amenities

Resources

El Camino real home page: http://www.city.palo-alto.ca.us/planning-community/el-index.html

APPENDIX H: SAMPLE ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

Here are examples of northern New Mexico architecture shown at the community discussion on Wednesday, Dec. 7. The attendees liked the images and suggested that these styles may be appropriate for Taos.

Historic

Contemporary

Contemporary

Contemporary southwest style

Traditional northern New Mexico style

Pueblo style

Pueblo style

A stone building in Las Vegas

Main Street in Las Vegas

A supermarket in Santa Fe

A mixed-use building in Santa Fe

Housing at San Juan Pueblo

APPENDIX I: TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS PROGRAMS

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs allow a community to designate specific areas for growth and others for preservation, then use the free market to transfer the right to develop land from the preservation area to the growth area. These programs respect the right of a property owner to develop his or her land while also respecting the community's desire to preserve some areas that are environmentally, recreationally, or aesthetically important. Communities around the nation have been using TDR programs for the past 25 years, protecting tens of thousands of acres of working and natural lands.

For example, if a landowner had a parcel of undeveloped land near the Highway 68 corridor that the community decided was important to preserve, the landowner would be allocated a certain number of development credits. The property owner could then sell these development credits to the town, developers, or other investors. The credits would be applied to property within an area that Taos has decided should be more developed, like the stretch of the Paseo del Pueblo Sur between Camino de la Placita and La Posta. The credits would give the developer the right to develop at a higher density on the "receiving" property than would usually be allowed on that land. The property owner on the "sending" property would then place a permanent conservation easement on his or her land, meaning that it could never be developed. Easements can be used to protect land for farming, parks, wildlife habitat, or other uses that require the land to remain undeveloped.

TDR programs have the advantage of using free market mechanisms to create the funding needed to protect valuable farmland, natural areas, and other open space. However, many people find TDR programs complex and administratively challenging, requiring the local unit of government to make a strong commitment to administering a potentially complicated program and educating its citizens and potential developers. TDR programs must be combined with strong comprehensive planning and local controls in order to be successful.

TDR programs are allowed under New Mexico statute §5-8-43, signed into law in 2003.

Online Resources

General information about TDR programs:

"TDRs and Other Market-Based Land Mechanisms: How They Work and Their Role in Shaping Metropolitan Growth," by William Fulton, Janice V. Mazurek, Rick Pruetz, and Chris Williamson, Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Studies, June 2004.
http://www.brookings.edu/metro/publications/20040629_fulton.htm

American Farmland Trust fact sheet on Transfer of Development Rights, January 2001.
http://www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/27746/FS_TDR_1-01.pdf

Individual TDR programs and ordinances

Los Ranchos de Albuquerque adopted a TDR program in 2003:
http://www.beyondtakingsandgivings.com/losranch.htm

Chattahoochee Hill Country, Fulton County, Georgia:
http://www.chatthillcountry.org/hot-topics/tdr.htm

"How Well Can Markets for Development Rights Work? Evaluating a Farmland Preservation Program," by Virginia McConnell, Elizabeth Kopits, and Margaret Walls, Resources for the Future, March 2003 (study of Calvert County, Maryland, TDR program):
http://www.rff.org/Documents/RFF-DP-03-08.pdf

Cape Cod Commission Model Bylaws and Regulations: Transfer of Development Rights Bylaw/Ordinance for Towns in Barnstable County, Massachusetts:
http://www.capecodcommission.org/bylaws/tdr.html

Pinelands Development Credit Bank, New Jersey:
http://www.njdobi.org/pinelandsbank.htm

TDR Program, King County, Washington:
http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/tdr/
In addition, two communities in King County have online information on their TDR programs: Issaquah (http://www.ci.issaquah.wa.us/Page.asp?NavID=836) and Redmond (http://www.ci.redmond.wa.us/insidecityhall/planning/compplanning/transfer.asp).

APPENDIX J: TRANSPORTATION-RELATED FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

For the transportation infrastructure-related improvements associated with any of the options presented in this report, several sources of federal funding are available through the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT). Taos may be more successful at getting funded if it approaches NMDOT with plans already developed for projects that would use federal funding.

Transportation Enhancements (TE): This program is an excellent source of funding for pedestrian and bicycle paths. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) notes:

> Transportation Enhancements activities offer communities funding opportunities to help expand transportation choices such as safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities, scenic routes, beautification, and other investments that increase recreation opportunity and access. Communities may also use TE funds to contribute toward the revitalization of local and regional economies by restoring historic buildings, renovating streetscapes, or providing transportation museums and visitors centers.

TE funding can also be used to acquire scenic land easements, vistas, and landscapes; however, the project must "relate to surface transportation." According to FHWA, factors that can help establish this relationship include:

- The project's proximity to a highway or a pedestrian/bicycle corridor;
- Whether the project enhances the aesthetic, cultural, or historic aspects of the travel experience, and;
- Whether it serves a current or past transportation purpose.

For more details, see the FHWA Transportation Enhancements Web site, www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te, or the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse, www.enhancements.org.

Transportation, Community and Systems Preservation Program (TCSP): TCSP funding can be used for projects that integrate transportation, community, and system preservation plans and practices that:

- Improve the efficiency of the transportation system.
- Reduce the impacts of transportation on the environment.
- Reduce the need for costly future investments in public infrastructure.
- Provide efficient access to jobs, services, and centers of trade.
- Examine community development patterns and identify strategies to encourage private sector development.

Priority goes to applications that:

- Have instituted coordinated preservation or development plans that promote cost-effective investment and private sector strategies;
- Have instituted other TCSP polices such as those addressing high-growth areas;
- Address environmental mitigation, and

- Encourage private sector involvement.

The town may want to coordinate with NMDOT about approaching elected officials to use TCSP funds in Taos. While the legislation describes TCSP as a discretionary grants program, it is routinely earmarked.

For more information, see the FHWA's TCSP Web site, http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tcsp/index.html.

Bus and bus-related projects: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) administers a program that grants funds for buses and bus-related facilities such as shelters and other passenger amenities. For more information on available funding, see http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_Bus_and_Bus_Facility_Fact_Sheet_Oct_05.pdf

APPENDIX K: PUBLIC ART PROGRAMS

Public art can contribute vitally to a healthy, attractive community. It can express a town's pride in its history and culture, draw new investment, and stimulate its residents' creativity and sense of community.

Several attendees at the team's public meetings suggested that the town, in keeping with its proud tradition as an artists' community, should increase its commitment to public art. Some tactics require little or no financial support from the local government—for example, a competition to decorate trash cans, bus stop benches and shelters, and other street furniture. Other strategies can require more of a financial commitment, but several resources can help with funding. Some of these are listed below. One popular approach is to set aside 1 percent of a developer's construction costs or a municipal bond to fund public art in a new project. Many cities around the country have these "One Percent for Art" programs, as do several states, including New Mexico.

Online Resources

"The Arts and Smart Growth: The Role of Arts in Placemaking":
http://www.smartgrowth.org/pdf/Arts_and_Smart_Growth.pdf
This discussion paper from the Funders Network for Smart Growth and Grantmakers in the Arts explains how the arts can help reinvigorate a community and enrich it socially, culturally, and economically. It includes case studies from cities, suburbs, and small towns, including Creede, Colorado, near Taos.

City of Albuquerque Public Art Program: http://www.cabq.gov/publicart
The program sets aside 1% of city construction funds derived from the general obligation bond program and certain revenue bonds for the purchase or commission of works of art.

New Mexico Arts: http://www.nmarts.org
The state arts commission that administers the 1% public art program for the state of New Mexico.

Arts Resource Network: http://www.artsresourcenetwork.org/public_art/default.asp
A service of the city of Seattle but applicable to other places, this Web site includes detailed suggestions for starting and funding a public arts program, case studies, funding sources, and other resources.