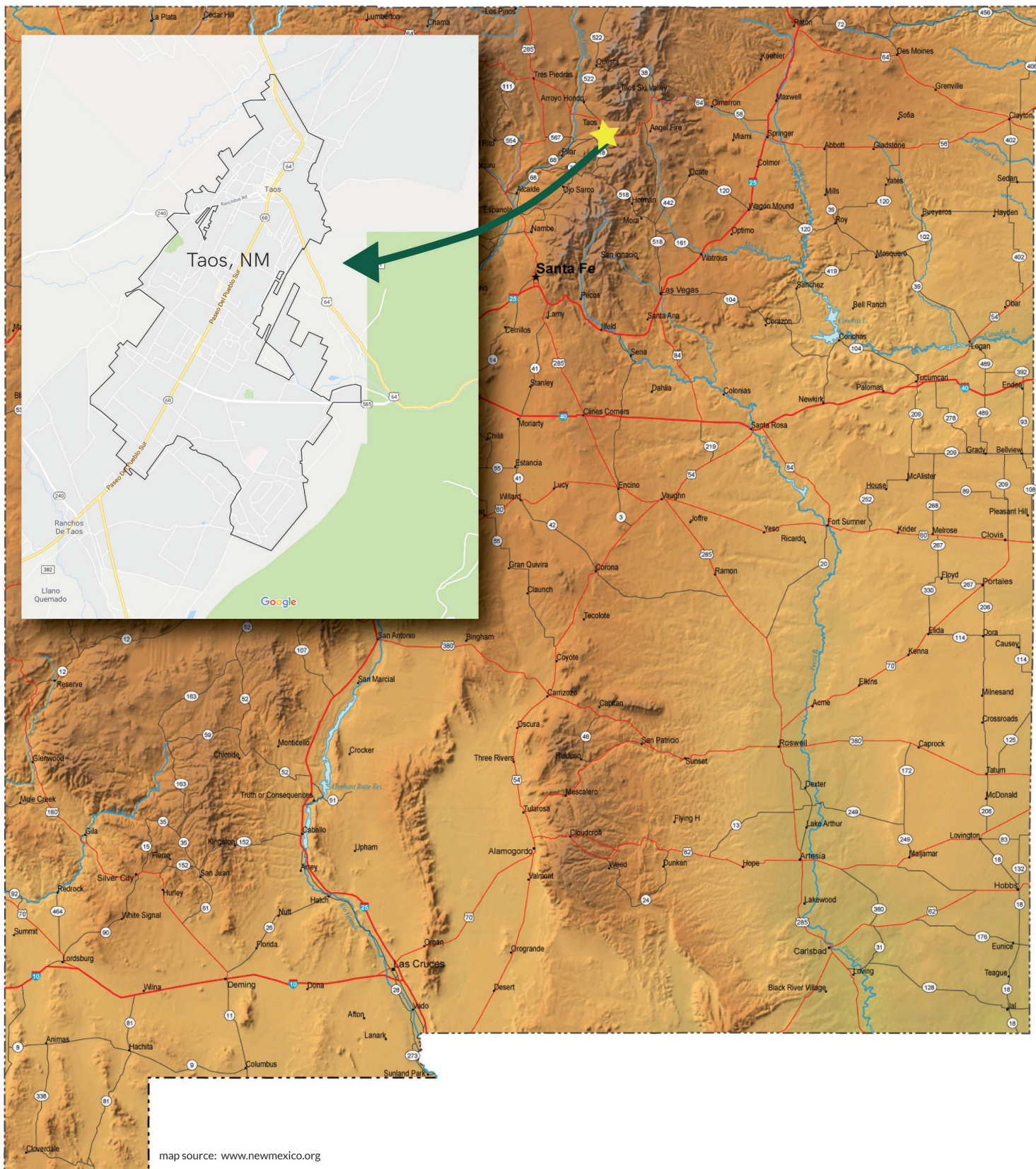




# TAOS WALKABILITY WORKSHOP

*May 14, 2018*





This report was supported by Cooperative Agreement Number 5-U48-DP-005034 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The findings and conclusions of this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the CDC.

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# PARTNERS



*New Mexico Department of Health*  
nmhealth.org

Through its Healthy Kids Healthy Communities program, the Department of Health focuses on increasing opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity where children and low income adults live, learn, play, work, eat, and shop.



*Strong at Heart*  
www.downtowntaos.com

Strong at Heart is a project of the Town of Taos focused on working with Taoseños to create a vision for a thriving downtown for everyone. The goal of the project is to create a Taos Downtown Strategy, which communicates our shared values, guiding principles and vision for the downtown, and includes an action-plan to get things done.



*Taos Land Trust*  
www.taoslandtrust.org

A thirty-year old non-profit that empowers people to protect the land and traditions they love through education, advocacy, and conservation.



SCHOOL OF  
MEDICINE  
PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTER

*University of New Mexico Prevention  
Research Center*  
prc.unm.edu

The Prevention Research Center at The University of New Mexico addresses the health promotion and disease prevention needs of New Mexico communities through participatory, science-based, health promotion and disease prevention research. It fulfills this mission through collaboration, training, dissemination, and evaluation activities.

# PARTICIPANTS

Fritz Hahn	Rachel Wexler
Cheryl Hedden	Pat Pollard
Bill Wynn	Susann McCarthy
Matthew Foster	Beverly Fisher
Fred Winter	Jim Ludden
Juniper Manley	Jim O'Donnell
Kineo Memmer	Andy Jones
Zaq Garcia	Alison Gillette
Michael Sayre	Jake Caldwell
Bob Silver	Ashley Cummings
Mark Henderson	Jeff DeBellis
Paul Richard	Jim Pollard
David Weaver	Beth Elise Forman
Deborah Larson	Maya Anthony
Naomi Brodkey	Amy Bell



# OVERVIEW OF WALKABILITY WORKSHOP

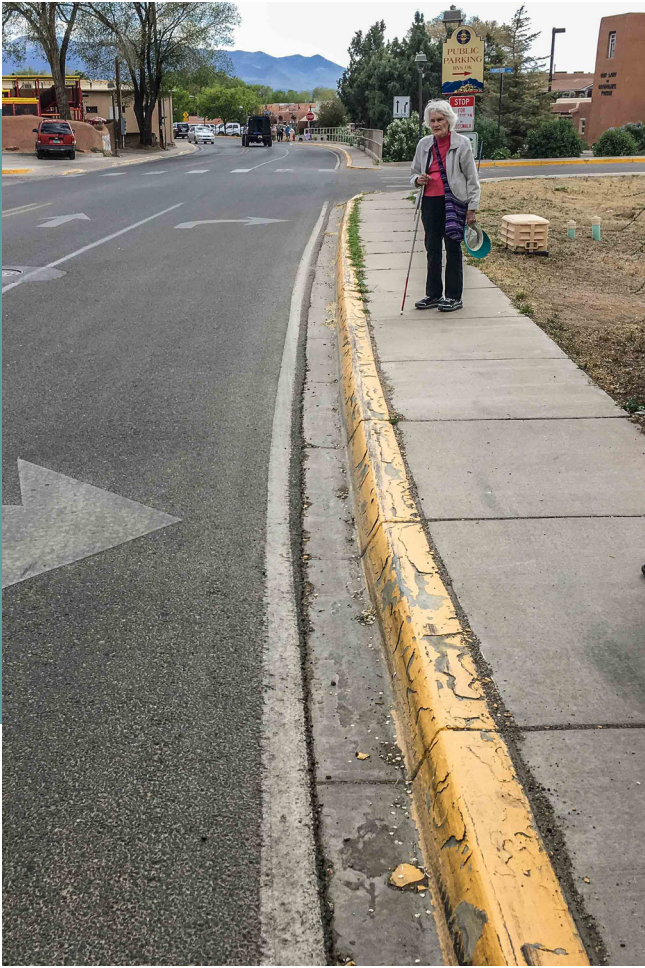


The Taos Land Trust, University of New Mexico's Prevention Research Center, Strong at Heart, and members of the Taos community worked together to assess how safe and easy it is for people to get around Taos on foot. Walkable communities are healthier, safer, cleaner, and more economical. More than thirty people discussed their experiences walking in Taos, built awareness of particular problem areas, and generated ideas to make the downtown area more pedestrian friendly.

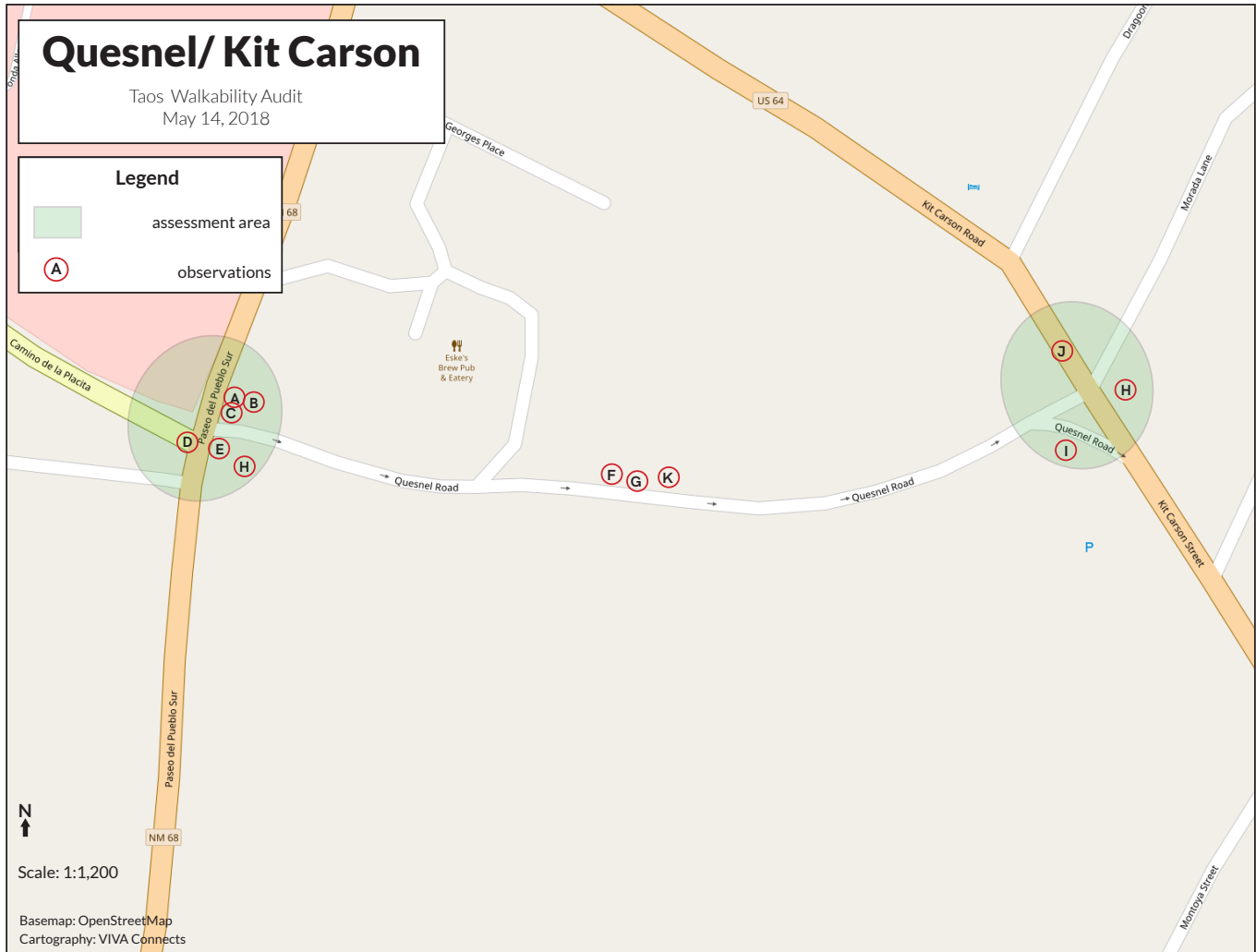
The workshop took place the afternoon of Monday, May 14th, 2018 at The HUB. Maya Anthony, the Trust's public programs and outreach coordinator, began with introductions, an overview, and logistics. New Mexico DOH Health Promotion Specialist Naomi Brodkey led a discussion on the health benefits of walking. Strong at Heart's Clark Anderson gave a brief talk on the status of the participatory and community-driven strategy for revitalizing the downtown historic district of Taos. Much of the feedback received from the community throughout the process has called for better bike and walkability in town.

The large group broke into six teams to assess specific sections of the downtown area. These sections were either short stretches of road or prominent intersections. The workshop's organizers chose these sections because they are either common walking routes, or have high numbers of crashes and close-calls. Leaders of each team carried an assessment form and a map of their section (see appendices). Teams spent about an hour and a half walking their areas, making notes, taking pictures, and discussing possibilities for making them safer for pedestrians.

The teams reconvened at The HUB to present their findings. The organizers had printed a large map of the town where groups identified the specific areas they wanted to highlight. Each group nominated a speaker to spend a few minutes summarizing each team's findings. The workshop's organizers facilitated the discussion and took down notes. James Charlier of Charlier Associates, Inc. closed the workshop with a pointed discussion on some of the issues that Taos faces and suggestions on ways to keep the momentum going once outside groups are no longer as closely involved.



# QUESNEL ROAD



## Description

Quesnel Road is a short, one-way road on the south side of Taos' downtown area. It has a striped bike lane on one side and on-street parking on the other. It forms a busy four-way intersection with Paseo del Pueblo at its west end and another four-way intersection with Kit Carson Road at its eastern terminus. The east end also connects with a large municipal parking area.



## Evaluators

Mark Henderson, Susann McCarthy, Pat Pollard, Alison Gillette, Maya Anthony, Jeff DeBellis, Jake Caldwell, David Weaver, Amy Bell, Deborah Larson



Sidewalks at the intersection of Quesnel Road, Paseo del Pueblo Sur, and Camino de la Placita do not have curb ramps. This makes it difficult if not impossible for individuals with wheelchairs, walkers, or strollers to cross safely.



## Observations

- A. Intersection of Quesnel and Paseo does not have any curb ramps
- B. Sidewalks around intersection of Quesnel and Paseo are in poor condition
- C. Cars pulling in and out of La Cueva Café parking area create hazard for pedestrians
- D. Crosswalks at Quesnel and Paseo del Pueblo are either severely faded or completely unmarked
- E. Stoplight posts block sidewalk at some places, making the distance between the post and the curb as little as 31”
- F. Cars drive fast on Quesnel because they do not necessarily expect to see pedestrians
- G. Bike lane on Quesnel is a short, disconnected segment that terminates at either end of the road
- H. Sidewalks end abruptly at either end of Quesnel Road
- I. Sidewalks are newer, in better condition, and more accessible at intersection of Quesnel and Kit Carson
- J. Crosswalks at intersection of Quesnel and Kit Carson are not marked
- K. There are no sidewalk buffers anywhere in this assessment section

## Recommendations

- 1. Replace bike lane on Quesnel with sidewalk
- 2. Move Quesnel on-street parking to same side as bike lane/sidewalk to create buffer between pedestrians and motorists
- 3. Paint/repaint crosswalks at Quesnel and Paseo
- 4. Widen sidewalks at Quesnel and Paseo
- 5. Increase visibility of crosswalk on Kit Carson with high visibility markings, illumination, better signage, advance stop bars, signals, or other enhancements



There are crossing signals at the intersection of Quesnel Road, Paseo del Pueblo Sur, and Camino de la Placita, but crosswalks are either severely faded or not marked at all.

# ENOS GARCIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Evaluators looking at street crossings.

## *Description*

Enos Garcia Elementary School is part of Taos Municipal Schools. It serves close to 550 students in Pre-K through fifth grade. The building itself is a few blocks west of Taos Plaza. It's bounded by Town Hall Drive to the north, Camino de la Placita to the east, Manzaneros Street to the west, and Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church to the south.



Fading crosswalks make it more difficult for drivers to respond to crossing pedestrians.

## *Evaluators*

Zaq Garcia, Rachel Wexler, Naomi Brodkey, Pascualito Maestas, and Kristina Ortez

## *Observations*

- A. There is no safe place to cross Camino de la Placita between Town Hall Drive and the Fire Department
- B. There is no way for fire trucks to know that bikes and pedestrians are coming from either direction
- C. Sidewalk alongside the school is behind fence with a gate that closes after school hours
- D. No benches, waiting areas, monitors, or designated places for kids waiting to be picked up
- E. Flashing lights on Manzaneros Street pedestrian crossing sign do not work
- F. Manzaneros Street is one-way, but has a double yellow line in the center so that many drivers think it's two-way
- G. Sidewalks in this area are between four and six feet wide
- H. There are no sidewalk buffers in this area
- I. Not all sidewalks are ADA compliant
- J. There is a bike lane in front of the church, but it ends abruptly

## *Recommendations*

1. Paint or re-paint all crosswalks around the school
2. Install or repair flashing crosswalk signs near school to alert drivers of crossings

# CAMINO DE LA PLACITA



## Description

Camino de la Placita is a two-lane road near the northern end of Taos. It begins at the southwest corner of Taos Plaza and continues north for about 3/4 miles to Paseo del Pueblo Norte. It is flanked by single family homes, small business, parking lots, churches, and municipal buildings such as schools, libraries, and firehouses. The road has a total of ten intersections, not including numerous alleys and parking lots that feed directly into it. Community members documented numerous crashes and close-calls along this road at an earlier Downtown Taos: Moving Forward meeting.

## Evaluators

Jim O'Donnell, Jim Ludden, Suzanne McCarthy, Cynthia Homire, Michael Sayre

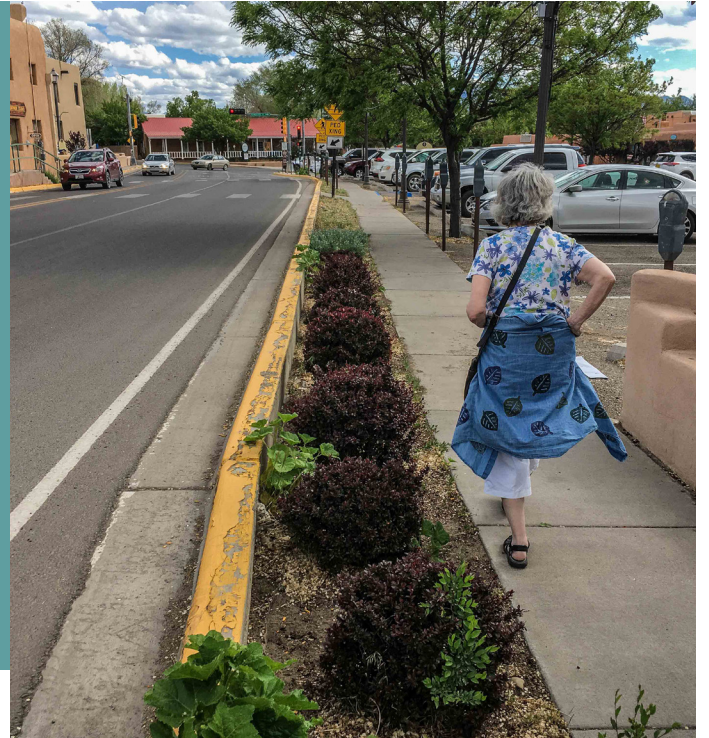
Community members reported numerous crashes and near-crashes at the intersection of Ranchitos Road and Camino de la Placita.



Some sections of Camino de la Placita have a planted sidewalk buffer that gives pedestrians extra separation and protection from passing cars (below). Others do not (above).

## Observations

- A. Taos Retirement Village has no sidewalk and no crosswalk
- B. Difficult crossing in front of fire station
- C. Blind corners and encroaching shrubs encourage cyclists to ride on sidewalks
- D. Crosswalk near handicapped parking space at Guadalupe Church leads users to a flight of stairs
- E. Blue paint to direct those with mobility impairments is faded or missing and misleading
- F. Intersection with Ranchitos Road is very dangerous, especially for bikes



Curb ramps at the intersection of Camino de la Placita and Don Fernando Street lead pedestrians safely into crosswalks rather than directly into the middle of the intersection.

## Recommendations

1. Remove misleading crosswalk near handicap parking space at Guadalupe Church or improve ADA accessibility with ramps instead of stairs and put up better signage.

# RANCHITOS ROAD



View of Ranchitos Road looking East. Shrubbery blocks the shoulder on south side of the road.

## Description

This section of Ranchitos Road extends for approximately ½ mile between La Posta Road and Salazar Road. It is a rural, two-lane state road passing mainly by single family homes and fields. Just past La Posta Road, Ranchitos Road continues west beyond the edge of town.

## Evaluators

Bill Wynn, Matt Foster, Ashley Cummings, Malia Reeves



Shoulder/partial sidewalk on Ranchitos Road is obstructed by power lines and electrical boxes.

## Observations

- A. No sidewalks, bicycle lanes, or shoulders along this section
- B. Bushes and trees impede pedestrians and cyclists at the edge of the lane
- C. Numerous blind turns
- D. Drivers often exceed the 35 mph speed limit

## Recommendations

- 1. Install sidewalk on one side of Ranchitos Road
- 2. Trim bushes and vegetation along both sides of Ranchitos Rd. to improve walkability along shoulders

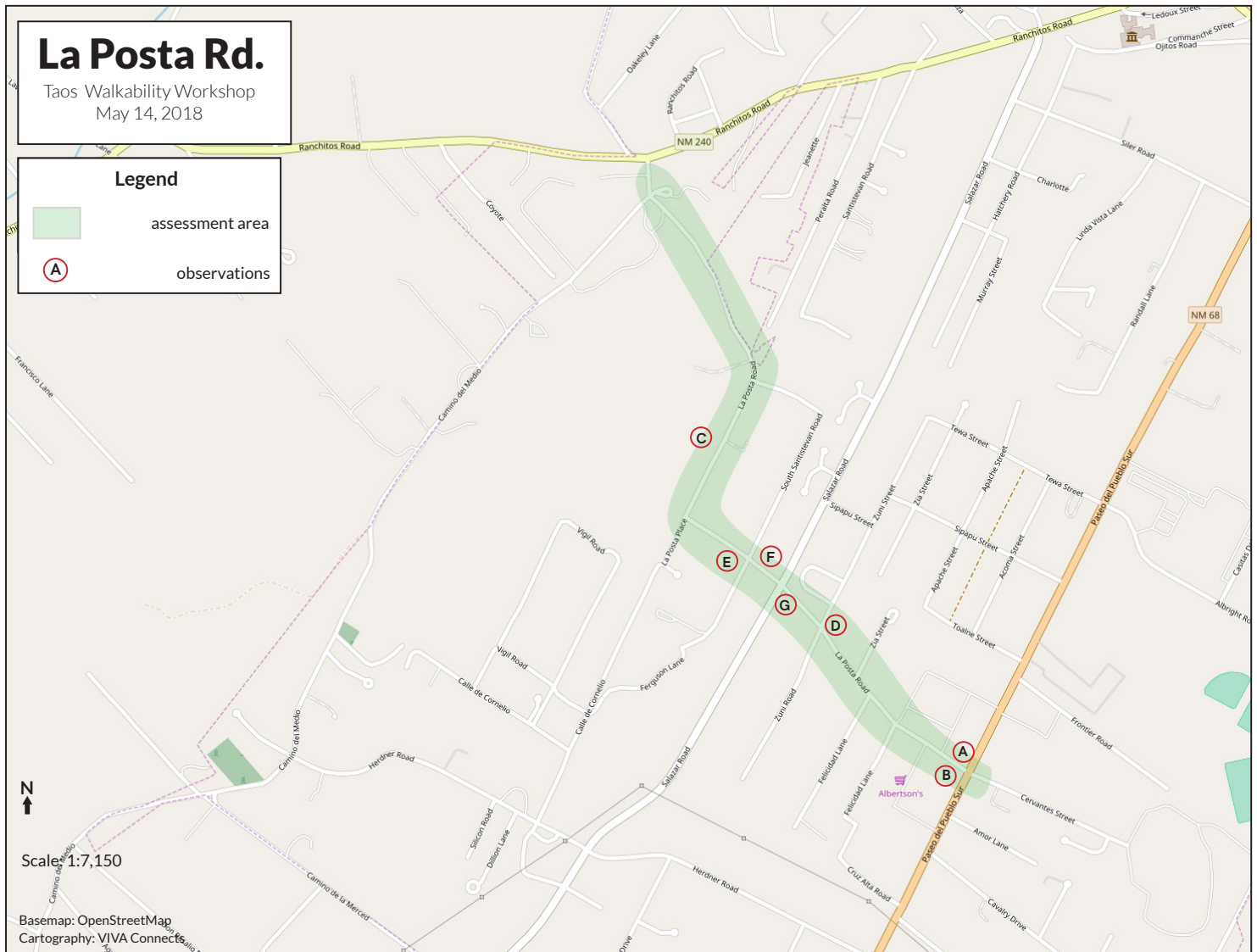


Evaluators Bill Wynn and Matt Foster measure the amount of buffer between the road and the shoulder on Ranchitos Road.



Posted speed limit on Ranchitos Road. No sidewalks are on this stretch of Ranchitos Rd.

# LA POSTA ROAD



## Description

La Posta is a two-lane road that runs for about a mile between Paseo del Pueblo Sur and Ranchitos Road, near the center of town. Its intersection with Paseo del Pueblo Sur is a busy area with multiple shopping centers. Taos High School is also close to this intersection. The rest of the road is lined mainly with single family homes and fields.

## Evaluators

Kineo Memmer, Juniper Manley, Beverly Fisher



Evaluators use whiteboards to document photo locations so that they're able to identify them again later.



## Observations

- A. Left turning vehicles do not always yield to pedestrians in crosswalk at intersection with Paseo del Pueblo Sur
- B. Overgrown bushes by Albertsons force pedestrians off the sidewalk
- C. No sidewalk between Salazar and Ranchitos Roads
- D. Sidewalk on one side between Salazar and Paseo del Pueblo Sur
- E. There are bicycle signs along the road, but not bike lanes
- F. Road has tight corners, blind corners, and high-speed traffic
- G. Road has no shoulder



This intersection has no marked sidewalks or crosswalks.

## Recommendations

1. Install speed radar sign to help control speeding

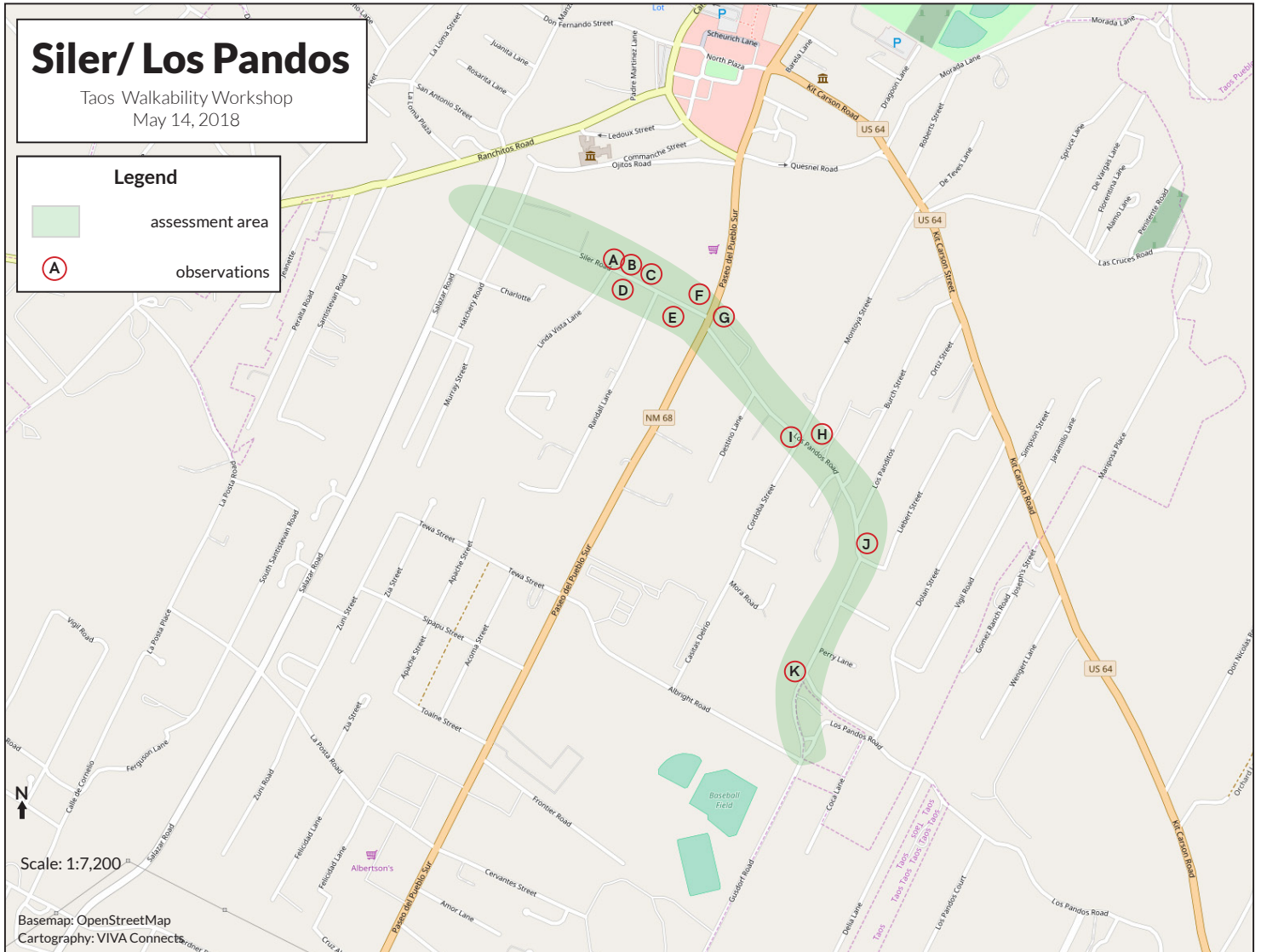


The north side of Cervantes Street does not have a sidewalk. No shoulder and overgrown brush also force cyclists to pedal closer to the center of the car lane.



Buckled sidewalks can be dangerous to pedestrians - especially those with mobility issues.

# SILER & LOS PANDOS ROADS



## Description

Siler is mainly a fence-lined road that runs between Salazar Road and Paseo del Pueblo Sur, where it emerges next to a Smith's grocery store. Just south of this intersection, Los Pandos Road continues to the southeast. The assessment area of this road ends after about ½ miles, where the road wraps around a flatiron building. Both Siler and Los Pandos Roads are two-lane collector roads.



This sidewalk near Los Pandos and GUSDORF Roads is poorly maintained.



This crosswalk at Siler Road and Paseo del Pueblo Sur has a sidewalk on only one side and does not have curb ramps on either.

## Evaluators

Michelle Heinrich, Cheryl Hedden, Bob Silver, Beth Elise Forman

## Observations

- A. Siler Road has sidewalk on one side, but it is in poor shape
- B. Storm drains raise part of the sidewalk creating uneven conditions and bumps
- C. Seven storm drains along Siler Road in total
- D. Siler is narrow with no bicycle lanes
- E. Road has many potholes that drivers and cyclists must avoid
- F. There is no crosswalk button on the Smith's side of the Siler/Paseo intersection
- G. Crosswalk light lasts fifteen seconds – not enough time for people with mobility challenges
- H. Very limited sidewalks on Los Pandos, all of which are narrow
- I. There is only one stop sign on this stretch of Los Pandos
- J. No bicycle lanes, no crosswalks, and blind corners on Los Pandos
- K. Damaged guardrails and trees along Los Pandos are evidence of previous motor vehicle collisions



This section of Siler Road only has a sidewalk on one side.

## Recommendations

1. Put up a speed limit sign on Siler Road
2. Repave Siler Road and if possible, remove some of the storm drains
3. Put in bike lane behind Taos High School on Los Pandos Road
4. Add more time to the crosswalk at Paseo del Pueblo and Los Pandos intersection to accommodate those with mobility challenges
5. Signage on Los Pandos to warn of upcoming blind curve and to share the road with bicyclists



Sidewalks on Los Pandos Road are discontinuous, forcing evaluators to walk in the road.

## NEXT STEPS

James Charlier, a nationally recognized transportation planning professional, from Charlier Associates, Inc. closed the workshop with a clear-eyed discussion on the problems that pedestrians face in Taos and what it would involve to solve them. He cited three major issues that have led to a poor pedestrian environment in Taos:

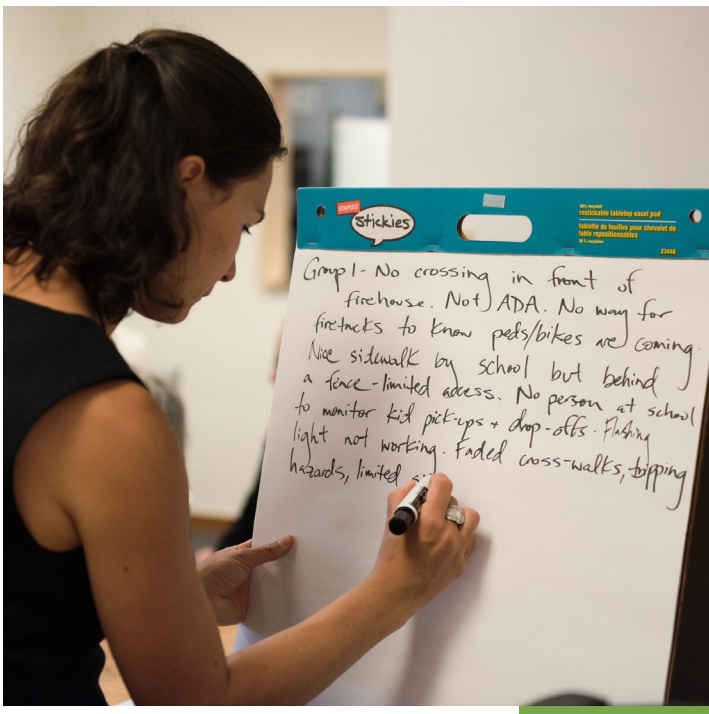
- Haphazard and rapid growth
- Town infrastructure was retro-fitted for cars
- Lack of money

He emphasized that outside partners are only there for a short time. At the end of the day, it would be up to residents to keep the momentum going. He also warned that none of the issues would be easy to solve.

Jim asked the group to come up with three goals that they would like to focus their energy into. The group chose:

- Re-painting all crosswalks (a city councilor present said that the town typically does this each fall)
- Trimming any brush that encroaches on roads and sidewalks
- Installing flashing crosswalk signs near schools to alert drivers of crossings

Someone in the group also mentioned a program in Santa Fe, “Sidewalk Angels.” Sidewalk Angels was a group of volunteers that helped to fill the gap between the City of Santa Fe’s limited budget and the need for safe and accessible places to walk. The program had been successful until its initiator moved away and the movement dwindled. The group discussed the possibility of organizing a similar program in Taos.



# SUMMARY



Taos is a small but busy town with an eclectic mix of long-time residents, newcomers, and visitors. It is an old town with a great deal of history. Many of the streets are narrow and winding, making them challenging for pedestrians and bicyclists. Sidewalks and crosswalks are often in disrepair and many are too narrow to accommodate people in wheelchairs.

On the positive side, Taos has many active and engaged residents with a strong desire to make their community a more walkable place. As plans are being drawn up to redevelop or resurface roads, it will be important for community members to advocate for interconnected sidewalks that are safe and easy for everyone to use. Residents will need to be creative in finding ways to accomplish this, given not only lack of funds, but also the narrow roadways that they have to work with.



# APPENDICES





# Taos Walkability Workshop

## Roads



**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Group Members:** \_\_\_\_\_

Sidewalks	Yes	No	Comments/Suggestions/Concerns
Are there sidewalks on both sides of the street?  <b>If no, where are sidewalks needed?</b>			
Are the sidewalks continuous and free of missing sections?  <b>If no, provide location</b>			
Are sidewalks free of poles, signs, shrubs or other items that block the sidewalk?  <b>If no, provide location</b>			
Is the surface of the sidewalk smooth & even?			
Are sidewalks free of litter, debris or snow (in winter)?			
Is the sidewalk wide enough, especially for individuals with strollers, or wheelchairs and other disabilities to feel safe?  <b>Provide width: _____ ft _____ in</b>			
Are there curb cuts for driveways that make the sidewalk uneven?			
Is there signage to mark hidden driveways?  <b>If no, provide locations of concern</b>			
Is there a buffer separating the sidewalk from the curb?  <b>If yes, provide width: _____ ft _____ in</b>			
Is there landscaping, benches, bicycle racks, or other features within the buffer?  <b>If yes, are they well maintained?</b>			
Are there designated bike lanes or shoulders in the road to keep bicyclists off sidewalks?  <b>If yes, do signs indicate bike paths?</b>			
Have you documented all your sidewalk concerns?			

If no, what are they?			
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Intersections & Crosswalks	Yes	No	Comments/suggestions/concerns
Are there marked crosswalks at intersections? <b>If yes, provide location and type of control (none, signs, traffic signal, etc.)</b>			
Are there sufficient marked crosswalks between intersections? <b>If yes, provide location and type of control (none, traffic signal, etc.)</b>			
Are high visibility crosswalk markings used? <b>Are they in good condition?</b>			
Are there signs alerting drivers of pedestrian crossings?			
Are there curb ramps for individuals with strollers, or wheelchairs on all corners of intersections?			
Do curb ramps direct users into the middle of intersections?			
Is the landing at the crossing large enough, especially for individuals with strollers or wheelchairs to wait away from the curb and feel safe at the intersections?			
Are there medians or islands where pedestrians can wait between traffic lanes? <b>If yes, are they raised medians or islands?</b>			
Do drivers have a clear line of sight at all crosswalks? <b>If not, list barriers.</b>			
Do pedestrians have a clear line of sight at all crosswalks? <b>If not, list barriers.</b>			
Have you documented all your sidewalk concerns? <b>If no, what are they?</b>			



Safety	Yes	No	Comments/suggestions/concerns
Do drivers drive at a speed that makes you feel unsafe? <b>List posted speed limit: _____ mph</b>			
Are there features such as speed humps or speed tables to slow traffic? <b>If no, are they needed?</b>			
Is the roadway free of blind curves?			
Are all segments of walkways visible from houses or commercial areas? <b>If no, provide location</b>			
Is there adequate lighting along walkways and bike paths? <b>If no, provide location</b>			
Are there any needles, liquor bottles, or other evidence of crime or drug activity? <b>If no, provide locations of concern</b>			
Is the roadway free of dogs that may frighten pedestrians? <b>If no, provide locations of concern</b>			
Have you documented all your safety concerns? <b>If no, what are they?</b>			



# Taos Walkability Workshop Schools



**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Group Members:** \_\_\_\_\_

Schools	Yes	No	Comments/Suggestions/Concerns
<p>Are there sidewalks along the routes that children walk near the school?</p> <p><b>If yes, are they on both sides of the street? How wide are they? Record widths &amp; mark on the map. Mark where sidewalks needed.</b></p> <p><b>Provide width: _____ ft _____ in</b></p>			
<p>If sidewalks exist, are there trees, grass, or other buffers between the sidewalk and street?</p> <p><b>Provide width: _____ ft _____ in</b></p>			
<p>Do sidewalks have ADA ramps at all corners?</p> <p><b>Describe any other obstacles that may make walking difficult for anyone that is mobility, visual, or hearing impaired.</b></p>			
<p>Are there enough designated crosswalks near the school?</p> <p><b>If no, where are they needed?</b></p> <p><b>If yes, are they accompanied by a stop light, flashing yellow lights in the pavement, or other signal?</b></p>			
<p>Do crossing guards or school monitors help students enter school grounds?</p> <p><b>If no, provide location where crossing guards and monitors are needed.</b></p>			
<p>Can students walk to the school grounds from 3 - 4 sides of the property?</p>			
<p>Are there any high speed (30 mph or more) streets near the school?</p> <p><b>If yes, is there a lower School Zone speed limit posted for when school is in session?</b></p>			

Are there school speed limit signs, overhead school flasher speed limit signs, and/or speed feedback signs?  <b>Where should they, or more of them, be added?</b>			
Is there a safe place for guardians to pick up students without interfering with pedestrians?			
Have you documented all your school concerns?  <b>If no, what are they?</b>			

*Join us for a*

# WALKABILITY WORKSHOP

**Monday, May 14th 3-6:30 pm**  
**Civic Plaza Drive with an optional group dinner afterwards**

In collaboration with Strong at Heart and the UNM Prevention Research Center, Taos Land Trust is coordinating a Walkability Workshop to evaluate six sites around town for bike and walkability.

Come join a group to see how hot spots in town add up in terms of safe separation for pedestrians and bicyclists from traffic and connectivity around town.

The six sites will be:

- Group 1- Enos Garcia Elementary School
- Group 2- Valverde St./Camino de la Placita to Ranchitos Rd. intersection
- Group 3- Ranchitos Rd. to Salazar intersection and to Camino del Medio intersection
- Group 4- La Posta Rd. to Taos High School
- Group 5- Siler Rd. to Los Pandos Intersection
- Group 6- Paseo del Pueblo Norte at Quesnel to Kit Carson Rd. intersection

Contact the Taos Land Trust for more information or  
RSVP at 575-751-3138





# Groups seek ideas for making downtown Taos pedestrian, bicycle friendly



Rick Romancito

**Traffic is always a concern for anyone within the downtown area. Three groups hosting a "walkability workshop" Monday (May 14) to look at improving downtown for pedestrians and bicyclists.**

Posted Friday, May 11, 2018 12:46 pm

**By Taos Land Trust staff**

Taos is not known for being friendly to pedestrians and bicyclists, say three groups hosting a kind of walking workshop Monday (May 14).

"With too few sidewalks, poorly designed intersections and almost no bike trails, Taos can be a downright dangerous place to walk or bike. A growing number of Taos residents, however, are ready for that to change," says a statement from Taos Land Trust, Strong at Heart and the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center.

"Our town was built around walkability," said Taos Town Councilor Darien Fernandez, referring to the early years of the town's 400-year history where walking or animal transportation were the only options for getting around Taos. "It's exciting to be part of a project that brings us back to where we began. We've seen over the last 60 years the result

News article from Taos News:

<https://taosnews.com/stories/groups-seek-ideas-for-making-downtown-taos-pedestrian-bicycle-friendly,48069>

# TAOS LAND TRUST LEADS WALKABILITY WORKSHOP IN DOWNTOWN TAOS

May 18, 2018 by [Maya Anthony](#)  
in [Community](#), [Taos Land Trust](#)



This past Monday the 14th of May, Taos Land Trust coordinated a Walkability Workshop with the [UNM Prevention Research Center](#) and [Strong at Heart](#) at the [PASEO](#) Hub on Civic Plaza Drive. The purpose of the workshop was to examine six sites around the downtown core for bike and walkability for all users. The six sites were chosen based on Strong at Heart's community-driven data regarding areas of close-calls or collisions between pedestrians and bicyclists with cars. The six sites were:

- The area around Enos Garcia Elementary School to Civic Plaza Drive and Manzanares St.
- Camino de la Placita from Valverde St. intersection to Ranchitos Rd. intersection. This covered the areas in front of Taos Retirement Village and the town Fire Station.
- Ranchitos Rd. from Camino de la Placita Rd. to Camino del Medio intersection
- Taos High School to La Posta Rd. until Camino del Medio intersection



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MEDICINE**

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**PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTER**

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