



# TAOS DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

*Community Town Hall*

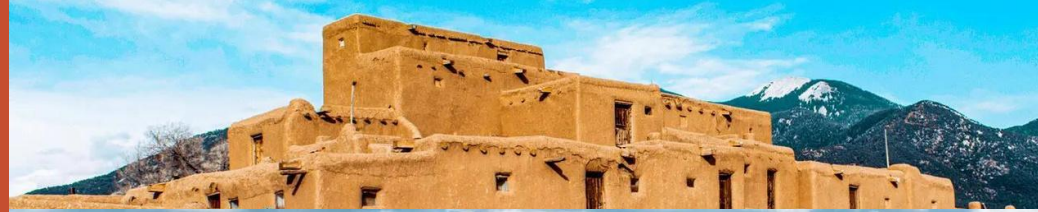
## March 27th, 2024



International Institute  
of Tourism Studies  
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

# Opening Remarks

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*Photos from Visit Taos*

# Updated Destination Stewardship Planning Timeline



- ~~– Situation Analysis Desktop Research~~
- ~~– Listening & Informing Strategy~~
- ~~– Stakeholder Engagement Plan~~
- ~~– Resident Tourism Sentiment Survey + Deployment Plan~~
- ~~– Analysis of Online Travel Reviews~~

- ~~– Draft Situation Analysis Report Submitted~~
- ~~– Meetings to Validate Situation Analysis Findings (In-Person)~~
- ~~– Deploy Resident Sentiment Survey~~

- ~~– Visioning and Planning Workshops (In-Person)~~
- ~~– Additional 1:1 interviews~~
- ~~– Workshop Outcomes Report~~
- ~~– Refining priority issue area solutions~~

- ~~– Crafting the Destination Stewardship Plan~~
- Validate and Finalize the Destination Stewardship Plan
- Package the Research Toolkit
- Present final Destination Stewardship Plan

# Overview of the Destination Stewardship Plan



# How the Community Shaped the DSP

## *Co-creation, engagement, and outreach*


3,348 community members completed the **Resident Tourism Sentiment Survey**

95 businesses completed the **Business Tourism Sentiment Survey**

**33+ 1:1 interviews** with a wide range of community leaders

**4 Focus Groups, 8 Workshops, and 3 Sessions with Elected Officials.**

**2 Community Town Halls** (Public Meetings) with 290 attendees



*“I would like to see the Town of Taos let go of the fear that too much tourism will hurt us. It can only hurt us if we are irresponsible about how we build it...We don't have to “sell out” to become more prosperous as a town.”*

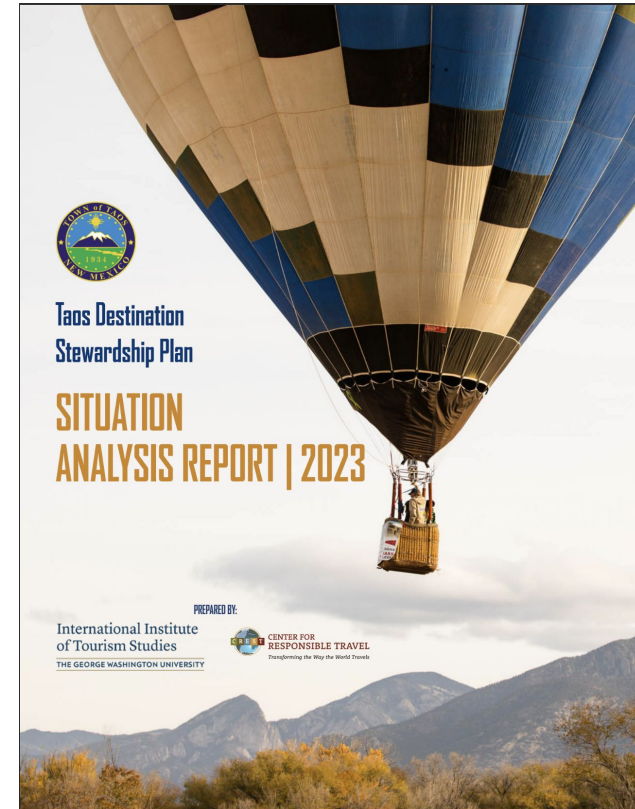
*“I want to love Taos.”*

*“We can make something beautiful for us that others can enjoy.”*

—Resident Survey Respondents

# Key Deliverables

The SAR serves as a comprehensive, up-to-date, baseline assessment of tourism in Taos, presenting a review of the current, holistic impacts of tourism on Taos' economy, communities, and cultural and natural assets. It served as the first step of the DSP development process, providing key insights into the following:





Taos Destination Stewardship Plan

# ANALYSIS OF ONLINE TRAVEL REVIEWS

Key Findings | October 2023



PREPARED BY:

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Taos Destination Stewardship Plan

# RESIDENT TOURISM SENTIMENT SURVEY

Town of Taos, New Mexico

Key Findings | October 2023



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CENTER FOR  
RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

# Plan Framework

VISION STATEMENT



VALUES

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



FOCUS AREAS AND STEWARDSHIP GOALS



PRIORITY INITIATIVES

EXPECTED OUTCOMES



ACTION PLAN AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION



# Draft Community VISION

**We share Taos, a home where diverse communities flourish, preserving and celebrating our rich heritage while fostering inclusion and the fair distribution of tourism's benefits. We educate one another and visitors to become better stewards of our place, natural resources and ecosystems, ensuring prosperity for future generations. Through collaborative tourism management, we revitalize historic Taos, honor our multicultural legacy and enrich our quality of life.**

# Community Values

**Respect and Protection:** The holistic and authentic preservation of cultures requires respecting the diverse perspectives and communities within Taos, giving equal consideration to each, and emphasizing an inclusive and equitable approach to conserving cultural heritage.

**Balance and Collaboration:** We have a commitment to working together synergistically, fostering collective efforts, and promoting a spirit of cooperation to achieve shared goals and objectives.

**Inclusion and Equity:** Our governance is guided by principles of responsible planning and equitable distribution of tourism benefits, resulting in long-term prosperity for all local communities.

# Community Values

**Mutuality and Stewardship:** Our people are bound to the land and have served its stewards. Our responsible and ethical management of natural resources and ecosystems ensures their sustainable use and conservation for present and future generations.

**Diversity and Transparency:** Our leadership prioritizes inclusivity, diversity, and equity in decision-making processes.

**Education and Placeknowing:** Communication of our histories, challenges, values, and goals is critical to shaping resident and visitor attitudes and behaviors.

## Destination Stewardship Plan Main Goals

 <p>Stewardship Communications</p>	 <p>Inclusion and Equity</p>	 <p>Workforce Stability</p>	 <p>Protect Authenticity</p>
<p>GOAL 1: Foster destination stewardship among residents, businesses, and visitors.</p>	<p>GOAL 2: Facilitate fair distribution of economic benefits.</p>	<p>GOAL 3: Increase tourism workforce stability.</p>	<p>GOAL 4: Protect and elevate Taos' authentic character.</p>

 <p>Workforce Housing</p>	 <p>Sustainable Mobility</p>	 <p>Sustainable Practices</p>	 <p>Monitoring and Reporting</p>	 <p>Collaborative Management</p>
<p>GOAL 5: Advocate for workforce housing solutions.</p>	<p>GOAL 6: Promote sustainable mobility for residents and visitors.</p>	<p>GOAL 7: Promote sustainable tourism practices and resilience to environmental risks.</p>	<p>GOAL 8: Monitor tourism and its impacts on people and place.</p>	<p>GOAL 9: Maintain collaborative tourism management and plan implementation.</p>

A landscape photograph of a sunset over mountains. The sky is filled with large, horizontal clouds illuminated from below by the setting sun, creating a vibrant orange and yellow glow. The mountains in the background are silhouetted against the bright sky. The foreground is a field of dense, green and blue vegetation. The text "Goals & Strategic Initiatives" is overlaid in the center of the image in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

# Goals & Strategic Initiatives



# Goal 1: Foster destination stewardship communications and education among residents, businesses, and visitors.

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- 1.1 Sustain community engagement in tourism management and decision-making.
- 1.2 Implement an education strategy that informs visitors and community members about their shared responsibilities in stewarding Taos' history, diverse cultures, and fragile environment.
- 1.3 Develop a visitor marketing and communication strategy that promotes responsible stewardship behaviors in the destination and engages local tourism stakeholders in spreading a cohesive message to visitors.

## MEASURING SUCCESS

1. Completion and **execution of a marketing strategy** that strategically repositions a portion of resources toward visitor education and community engagement rather than an exclusive focus on destination promotion.
2. The **community demonstrates true partnership behavior** through ongoing engagement in tourism management conversations. This is measured by the volume of participation in key touch points such as community tourism meetings, the number of resident sentiment and tourism stakeholder surveys completed bi-annually, results on the surveys which indicate an increase in tourism stakeholder and resident sentiment toward tourism has improved, and total impressions on the website, taos.org/ increased.
3. A **comprehensive tourism dashboard for Taos** collects data on visitor use, visitor and resident sentiment, and visitation impacts, ultimately developing an industry-leading tourism dashboard that's regularly updated
4. **Visitors behave more responsibly and respectfully**, as shown by reduced negative environmental and cultural impacts expressed by the community in resident sentiment and tourism stakeholder surveys.
5. Increasing **local participation of volunteer or paid ambassadors** in the cultural and recreation spaces creates a welcoming and positive educational exchange between visitors and residents.



## Goal 2: Facilitate fair distribution of economic benefits from tourism among all communities.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

2.1 Develop and promote new tourism experiences and products that celebrate culture, preserve land, and benefit marginalized communities.

2.2 Support and finance community events that preserve and celebrate Taos' diverse cultures.

2.3 Enhance market readiness of emerging tourism enterprises.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

1. **Tourism product development:** number of new tourism experiences that are led and benefit the Hispano and Latino communities, new tourism experiences that create deeper linkages between the Taos Pueblo and the Hispano and Latino communities.
2. **Tourism entrepreneurship:** number of micro- and small tourism entrepreneurs completing incubation programs and classified as “visitor ready”; attendance rates and satisfaction scores for workshops and events; the percentage of emerging businesses connected with financing options.
3. **Celebrating and preserving culture and traditions:** increase in cultural events, utilization rate of the Community Events Fund, and the number of grant applications received signify a vibrant and collaborative community landscape; number of sites preserved through the Local Treasures program; and stories collected through the StoryCorps project, reflecting efforts to celebrate and preserve local heritage.
4. **Integration of new tourism products into destination marketing:** effectiveness of marketing strategies promoting new tourism products and experiences; increases in sales attributed to promotional efforts.



## Goal 3: Increase tourism workforce stability.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- 3.1 Increase leadership and collaboration within the business community to enhance tourism workforce recruitment.
- 3.2 Improve employee retention.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

1. Decrease in employee turnover / increase in employee longevity at local businesses.
2. Increase in mental health resources available to the workforce.
3. Percentage of youth participants in tourism-related skill-building activities, percentage of youth participants who choose to remain in Taos for further education or career opportunities, and number of youth employed or pursuing careers within the tourism sector or related industries.
4. Number of businesses participating in training programs, the adoption rate of best practices among participating businesses, and the percentage of businesses that report increased stability or expansion as a result of the training initiatives.





## Goal 4: Protect and elevate Taos' authentic character.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

4.1 Build coalitions and put into action placekeeping initiatives that counteract gentrification.

4.2 Identify and advocate for regulatory changes to protect historical assets.

4.3 Secure financing for the preservation of lands and infrastructure threatened by gentrification.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

1. Increased numbers of disenfranchised community members participating in educational/mentoring initiatives that empower individuals and communities with the knowledge and skills needed to leverage land stewardship and historic building restoration for economic benefit and environmental preservation.

2. Increased access to funding for the restoration of aging historic buildings and homes will preserve Taos' architectural heritage and enhance residential spaces, contributing to the mitigation of gentrification pressures.

3. Development and implementation of quick-win place-keeping initiatives and events that celebrate local cultures and businesses. In particular, reinvigoration of the Town Plaza for community use is a high priority across communities.

4. Taos residents, particularly the youth, realize a deeper-seeded sense of place and stewardship of the land and culture by participating in the regional outdoors, land, experiences, the arts, and other opportunities visitors enjoy.



## Goal 5: Advocate for workforce housing solutions.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- 5.1 Advocate for policies that improve tourism workforce housing access, diversity, and affordability, aligning with ongoing efforts.
- 5.2 Increase affordable housing options for middle- and low-income residents to support the community and a thriving tourism workforce.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

1. Increase in the tourism workforce's **access to affordable housing units**, reflecting successful advocacy and policy change. The tourism workforce will demonstrate an increase in occupancy of innovative and alternative housing solutions, such as ADUs.
2. Quantifiable growth in the **use of housing resources and funding by the tourism workforce**, indicating improved understanding and access fostered by the initiative.
3. Enhanced policy frameworks reflected in the number of **full-time residents able to supplement their income through permitted short-term rentals** without impacting long-term housing availability.
4. The successful establishment of **Employer-Assisted Housing Programs** across businesses, as evidenced by the number of tourism workers assisted, and an increase in employer participation in housing solutions, measured by the adoption of educational materials and the number of employer-led housing options created.
5. The **conversion of underutilized properties into affordable housing units**, tracked through the number of projects initiated and completed.



## Goal 6: Promote sustainable mobility for residents and visitors.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

6.1 Enhance non-motorized trail and mobility infrastructure

6.2 Advance cultural placeknowing and community-first spaces.

6.3 Promoting resident focused transit and connectivity.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

1. **Increase in the use of non-motorized trails** by residents reflects the effective enhancement and community-driven promotion of an **interconnected network**. This is complemented by improved walkability and bikeability across Taos.
2. Active community and stakeholder engagement in trail planning, feedback sessions, and related events alongside a measurable **rise in resident participation in placeknowing projects**. These efforts underline a deepening connection to Taos' cultural core and an enhanced public understanding of the town's redevelopment and placeknowing initiatives.
3. The advancement of preservation efforts that celebrate Taos' cultural diversity, witnessed through the growth of spaces that integrate modern needs with traditional values. This includes the establishment of **community-first spaces, highlighting a shift towards more inclusive and culturally rich public areas** supported by both residents and visitors.
4. **Increased use of public transportation** by both residents and visitors, indicating a move away from vehicle dependency towards more sustainable transit options. Increased number of public transportation and shuttle service routes.
5. Improved **accessibility & affordability for residents** to engage in dining, outdoor rec, & tourism experiences, reflecting a sense of community ownership and pride in local assets, demonstrating the success of initiatives aimed at integrating community needs with tourism development.



## Goal 7: Promote sustainable tourism practices and resilience to environmental risks.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

7.1 Develop and implement a “Stewardship Certified” good practices program for tourism businesses.

7.2 Identify and respond to destination risks from environment-related threats.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

1. Increased collaboration achieved among various environmental conservation organizations and community stakeholders will be a critical measure of progress towards a unified approach to addressing environmental threats in Taos.
2. Developing a baseline for environmental indicators and implementing a monitoring strategy will provide crucial insights into the effectiveness of environmental stewardship initiatives. The establishment of baseline data enables the measurement of progress over time and informs future decision-making processes.
3. Properly managed tourism demand contributes economically without systemic impact on the socio-economy-environment. Monitoring changes in specific environmental metrics, such as the number of forest fires, water quality, air quality, and waste diversion due to composting, will gauge the impact of environmental stewardship actions on the ground. Positive changes in these metrics signify progress towards mitigating environmental risks and enhancing destination resilience.



## Goal 8: Monitor and manage tourism and its impacts on people and place.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

8.1 Establish an accessible and routinely updated tourism impact monitoring database.

8.2 Produce an annual report on indicators.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

1. A destination monitoring action team is formed. The action team will convene regularly and oversee all aspects of the destination monitoring framework, from definition of indicators to data collection and public reporting.
2. Relevant impact indicators are identified and tracked annually.
3. An annual or bi-annual (every two years) report is published.
4. Long-term trends are improving and backed by validated monitoring.



# Goal 9: Maintain collaborative tourism management and plan implementation.

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

9.1 Create a destination stewardship council to guide DSP implementation in the short-term.

9.2 Increase awareness and understanding of the DSP among tourism stakeholders and the broader community.

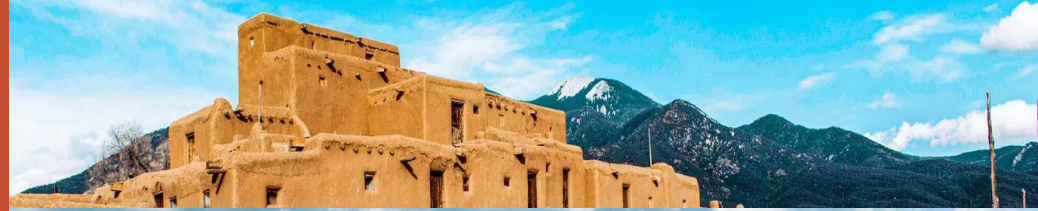
9.3 Establish a permanent collaborative management structure for destination management and marketing.

## MEASURING SUCCESS

1. The establishment and successful operation of effective short-term structure for collaborative management and DSP implementation.
1. Enhanced coordination across all jurisdictions and communities, regular communication with stakeholders to manage expectations, and widespread buy-in for our vision among all sectors of our community.
1. The establishment of a permanent collaborative management and marketing structure that builds off the short-term structure established.

THANK YOU!

**Questions?** Email Contessa  
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*Photos from Visit Taos*