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Querencia: Placemaking in the Heart of Northern New Mexico

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QUERENCIA PLACEMAKING IN THE HEART OF NORTHERN NEW MEXICO
By Estacia Huddleston
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This document fulfills the Professional Project requirement for the degree of Master of Community and Regional Planning at the University of New Mexico.
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The purpose of this document is to provide a Placemaking framework for the development of a Living Cultural Corridor in Rio Arriba County. Basing the Placemaking framework in the local concept of *querencia*, or love of place, can reveal local community development and place creation strategies. Contemporary planning processes could learn from traditional placemaking practices developed over the centuries in New Mexico. Equally, the erosion of traditional culture could benefit from contemporary strategies to make public spaces that are place-focused. They could link through regional partnerships, educational experiences and projects that foster cultural distinction in our shared cultural landscapes. Placemaking with a *querencia* place-focus can create better places and community engagement in the process by building community capacity through participation in planning, promoting iterative intervention and long-term implementation strategies. Planning with local culture and people cultivates querencia by building mutual trust and empowerment that leverages the agency of the community to actualize goals and visions in community plans. Placemaking principles, home grown place making strategies and bioregional planning attributes build a foundation for querencia place-focused placemaking. Querencia Placemaking demonstrates three principals of Northern New Mexican place making traditions including autonomous governance, reciprocity and integrated systems thinking. These values in concert with the *Placemaking Principals* developed by the Project for Public Spaces offer a theory and approach to community driven, solution-based responses to change and challenges in the region. The project proposes addressing the challenges in the region through diverse interdisciplinary partnerships, bioregionalism and the implementation of a Placemaking process as a framework for the development of cultural landscape assets. The Resource Center for Raza Planning (hereafter also RCRP) and partners are moving forward on place-focused projects in Española, Chimayó and Abiquiu. Utilizing short-term, *Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper* methods of community engagement, the center's projects build on social learning experiences and provide planning and technical assistance to traditional New Mexican communities. Recommendations for RCRP and other agencies looking to implement Placemaking in their communities are targeted on iterative asset development with diverse community partners in a flexible place-based, community-driven Placemaking process. The RCRP and their institutional partners are in a unique position to spark initiatives and provide technical assistance for planning and small-scale interventions that iterate on cultural landscape assets while building place and community capital with local organizations and municipalities.
Methods Used for Research & Framework Development

In my research I hoped to learn about the homegrown relationships to place that developed as a response to the cultural landscape of Northern New Mexico. Additionally, I wanted to know how participatory placemaking methods could aid in the process of community visioning, and long-term planning for the development of cultural landscape assets. I framed my research in the regional and site-specific concept of querencia, and the methods of contemporary Placemaking in order to create a framework for querencia focused placemaking in Northern New Mexico. The central question framing my research is: can querencia act as a foundation for the development of a site-specific and regional placemaking strategy tied to economic development? The operational questions that will enable me to collect the data I need are:

- **What is place?** How does Northern New Mexico’s context influence traditional place making models? What is Querencia, and what are the forms? Is Placemaking a culturally appropriate method for building community capacity around the development of cultural assets in Northern New Mexico?
- **How is place made?** How do you define Placemaking in theory and practice? What are Placemaking tactics and strategies? How is Placemaking applied in communities? How can Placemaking be applied with respect to the concept and forms of Querencia?

In order to answer these questions I used qualitative research sources such as regional histories, ethnographic scholarship, county and other institutional planning documents, Placemaking research reports, and case studies. In addition, as part of RCRP I employed Participatory Action Research methods such as participatory mapping, participatory design, and a Pop-Up Placemaking event in Chimayo New Mexico. Quantitative data was also used to support my understanding of demographics, spatial relationships and other information related to the current community and built environment. I evaluate the work RCRP and partners have initiated in relationship to developing a querencia place focused model for engaging traditional communities with visioning, technical assistance, prototyping and developing partnerships for future projects.

Throughout the paper I use the terms *place making* to refer to the practice of shaping and creating “place”. This should be distinguished from the term *Placemaking* in which I refer to the contemporary body of theories and practices of community-driven planning. In order to develop further recommendations for a Placemaking framework for the expansion of a Living Cultural Corridor I lay out the argument that a deeply local querencia based place focus would be beneficial to civil participation and long term planning. First I ask the question: **What is Place?** In this query I address location, the historical context of the area, existing conditions and Regional plans to address both challenges and assets in the area. Next I ask the question: **What is making?** I will go into how place is made in a conventional planning process, bioregional process and in a Placemaking process. Then I will define Placemaking strategies and tactics in theory and practice. Additionally, I go into the concept of Cultural Landscape and Querencia, and the traditional place making practices of Northern New Mexico that may inform a Placemaking process. Finally, I will discuss findings and make recommendations on how a Querencia place-focused Placemaking framework might be enacted in the varied communities of Northern New Mexico.
The Concept of Querencia as Place-focus for New Mexican Placemaking

In Northern New Mexico the intricacy of place, and the complexity of planning challenges are too convoluted to actively address as isolated disciplines, individuals, organizations or institutions. Just ask Lew Wallace who famously said “All calculations based on our experiences elsewhere fail in New Mexico.” Contemporary planning paradigms are looking to history to learn from our ancestor's successes to garner clues on how to survive, share and cultivate a distinct place culture. Traditionally New Mexico has unique strategies for place creation and community planning. The wealth of indigenous knowledge of place in New Mexico is remarkable and embodies a distinctive American model of community participation in shaping the landscape we live in, and the shared cultivation of sense of place. The concept of querencia is related to a deep love of place enacted in the local expressions of place, which have endured and evolved with the landscape. The concept of querencia actualizes the love of place. It is the authentic sense of self in place and the actions that secure that sense of belonging to place. Querencia is both an action and feeling sustained by repeated social interaction and land-use practices of reciprocity within the landscape. Querencia is active place making in both the cultivation of sense of place and the active relationship of maintaining it in place—a shared sense of self in place.

Focusing on ‘place’ as the center of the New Mexican planning process creates opportunities for local models of community development and design to inform the incremental steps of realizing visions of place in the community development and planning processes. Place-focused planning sustains cultural landscapes by generating mutual trust that enables empowerment in place by increasing the local capacity to co-create the physical and social environment and valuing multidisciplinary collaboration with local citizens and experts. A localized place-focus, as found in traditional New Mexican place creation or making, can serve as a contemporary foundation for short-term community-driven projects, and social programing that informs the long-term planning process. The focus on place can generate cultural infrastructure beyond the traditional bricks and mortar projects like museums, theaters and other institutionalized cultural centers. For example, work done by the RCRP is exploring the Placemaking approach for the advancement of a “living culture corridor” as both a conceptual framework for place-based and cultural asset centered economic development. Placemaking is a theory and place-focused approach to planning that describes the process of community-driven creation and management of places that leverage partnerships to realize public spaces that reflect community-generated visions in tangible increments that can adapt to goals and change long-term.

“ In Nuevo Mexico, when we are born our mother literally gives us the light—‘Da Luz’, we say in the language of our Iberian forebears. As soon as our eyes are accustomed to the brilliance, we memorize the features of her face. As we rise to walk upon the earth, we transpose her profile to those first intimate horizons: a house, a road, cottonwoods by the river, a distant line of hills beyond. Because we are human we see faces in the rocks and clouds. Thus is human love transposed onto the landscape. Querer means to want, to desire, to be in a place with its people. In folk terminology, querencia is such a place, the center space of desire, the root of belonging and yearning to belong, that vicinity where you first beheld the light. Querencia, in collective terms is homeland” (Lamadrid 2000).
Expert or developer driven processes focus on isolated or site-specific problems and often create isolated, monolithic development that is inflexible and that follows the investment market jumping from place to place. Moreover, these planning practices address the cultural, social and ecological aspects of place as compartmentalized problems, removing critical links that tie culture to landscape, making our distinct places more like cultural cartoon products for “outsiders”. This kind of development favors new development and limits the effect New Mexicans, who have a unique understanding and approach to place, have in really engaging the future through a shared vision and implementation process in the long term.

Placemaking can lead to greater institutional flexibility and community capacity building by localized agency to shape the future to generate a more supportive cultural infrastructure that reflect New Mexico’s distinct places. It is a collaborative participatory process that allows citizens to re-engage the place making and management process. As a scalable tool, Placemaking can be used to address planning problems at multiple levels by approaching both the neighborhood scale as well as the regional connective quality of the corridor to develop “place capital”. Place capital can be defined as the shared wealth of the (built and natural) of the public realm. (Project for Public Spaces 2015a) By addressing community and economic development connected at multiple scales, Placemaking can leverage partnerships and projects that iterate on place-focused initiatives. Placemaking projects and networks would work to provide physical assets that function as diverse flexible and permanent spaces that support tradition, foster authentic experiences of place for locals and visitors, and produce cultural products, relevant activities and regional industry. Developing Placemaking programs and projects that embrace the traditional of love of place like those found in the concept of querencia will inform a better planning process.
The Resource Center for Raza Planning (RCRP)

The Resource Center for Raza Planning (RCRP) is a resource center at the University of New Mexico School of Architecture and Planning. RCRP provides student-driven research and policy analysis related to the growth and development of traditional communities in New Mexico (RCRP 2015a). In 2013, the center initiated the *Indo-Hispano Rural Planning and Design Field School* (I-HFS), a community-based field research experience in Northern New Mexico. Students attended lectures and workshops by local community leaders and scholars, and provided technical assistance for the development of an *Economic Development Plan* for Rio Arriba County. Through field-school research and analysis, graduate students of the I-HFS developed the *Indo-Hispano Homeland: A Living Cultural Corridor Plan for Rio Arriba County*. Since 2013, Rio Arriba County and the City of Española initiated some of the recommendations detailed in the Living Culture Corridor Plan. Community partnerships have been initiated through field-school experiences work in Española, Abiquiu and Chimayó that provided technical assistance for the development of plans and projects. The Resource Center for Raza Planning and partner Center for Regional Studies have been awarded funding to continue this iterative effort to build community capacity for long-term planning in the traditional communities in Northern New Mexico. The intention of this document is to continue the planning effort started in the Living Cultural Corridor Plan, and to provide a framework to guide the Placemaking process in the cultivation of place-based partnerships and regional cultural and economic asset building projects for traditional communities in Northern New Mexico.

Figure 4. Matachines RCRP Graphic, 2015. Resource Center for Raza Planning
Indo-Hispano Homeland: A Living Cultural Corridors Plan

The Rio Arriba Living Cultural Corridor Plan takes an asset-based approach to community and economic development. This approach focuses upon a community’s capacity rather than its deficits (Phillips & Pittman 2009). An asset-based approach starts in the assets; or the existing opportunities, skill base and resources, instead of a needs approach that focuses on problems. Problem centered approaches can overwhelm communities who feel powerless to effect change or do not have the agency to participate in the solution, which can lead to apathetic community engagement in place making (Phillips & Pittman 2009). Assets then, are the valuable qualities, people (including individuals, associations, institutions and organizations), or other advantages or resources that make up the cultural, natural, social and human capital the community capital of a place. Asset-based community development focuses on strengthening existing community capital and on the build up of local existing and potential assets, and works for the improvement of quality of life with the intention of sustainability and equality (Phillips & Pittman 2009). The Living Culture Corridor Plan identifies regional and local assets like rich historical, cultural, artistic and agricultural traditions, educational institutions, unique water and land systems, beautiful natural landscapes, recreation opportunities, and faith and cultural tourism destinations. Additionally, it identifies the local youth as assets (UNM I-HFS 2013).

The plan establishes the framework for asset-based development at a regional and local scale for skill based learning, cultural corridors and public space destinations. Strategies and recommendations in the plan were developed for Rio Arriba County and at individual community levels for study areas in the Santa Cruz Basin, the Lower Chama Basin and Española Valley. Regional strategies focused on the development of Living Cultural Corridors, heritage tourism and workforce and entrepreneurial development. Regional recommendations outlined in the plan suggested investing in social programming along Living Cultural Corridors to promote year round interest in Rio Arriba destinations and festivals; utilizing integrated heritage trails that celebrate distinctive and varied Northern New Mexican cultural traditions and destinations; revitalizing streetscape and historic forms; and engaging youth in opportunities that anchor them in the traditions, innovation and workforce in the community. Individual community recommendations were developed for the specific contexts and asset development of each place. Recommendations for the Santa Cruz Basin focus on promotion of the areas agricultural, cultural and faith based tourism opportunities and the investment in area youth programs and resources. Lower Chama Basin recommendations concentrate on the development of agritourism destinations and assets, the promotion of educational experiences of cultural arts and traditional crafts, social programming public space, providing alternative accommodation for visitors and creating skill based opportunities for youth. Recommendations for the Española Valley included Main Street revitalization with mixed-use development, small business opportunities, improvements to public space, year-round events and streetscape wayfinding.

“Central Northern New Mexico has a unique place in America history, where the living traditions of the region are reflected in the cultural landscape. It is a region of communities whose livelihoods have been tied to the land and watersheds intimately. People organize around the seasons of the watershed; when the monsoons bring replenishing rain, hard winters bring deep snow, and hot summers bring hot chile. Traditional Northern New Mexican heritage has not been recreated from a memory or a textbook like a living history museum or put on as a show for tourists- it never went away. Many people have strong ties to their communities, the land, and practice traditional lifestyles unique to New Mexico along living cultural corridors.” (RCRP 2013)
What is Place?

Location
The Rio Grande Watershed starts in the Colorado Rockies and extends to the Gulf of Mexico, creating a rich river corridor that has sustained life since time immemorial. The Upper Rio Grande Basin is in north central New Mexico. Contained within the Upper Rio Grande Basin is Rio Arriba County, a census designated area of 5,860 miles, with an estimate 6.9 people per square mile. (U.S. Census 2014) Humans have occupied, traversed and lived in the Rio Grande and Rio Chama confluence region for about 10,000 years.

History
Since the later part of the Ice Age groups of Paleo-Indians traveled and settled along the North/South routes surrounding the Rio Grande river corridor. These hunter-gatherer communities followed seasonal water flows and the migration movements of bison, mammoth and camels and harvesting wild plants like amaranth, yucca hearts, roots, berries and seeds to grind. Over thousands of years the climate oscillated between abundance and drought carving out unique landscapes and settlement patterns like cave dwellings and pueblos. Agricultural and cultural traditions like cooperative irrigation surfaced during the Anasazi period; and significant trade routes opened to connect regional peoples. People began to cluster together in the archaic Rio Grande Valley and agriculture became a more prominent strategy for survival in the arid New Mexican climate (parallel to hunting and gathering) (Riley1995).

Over the next few hundred years the Upper Rio Grande region developed vernacular architecture like pit houses, large and small kivas, defensive cliff settlements, and high density pueblos. Chacoan masonry was applied in the west using local stone and timber for structural support in massive underground kivas and for firewood. Small populations developed adobe puddling as a practical response to material availability in the arid climate in what is now Rio Arriba County (Riley 1995). In the 1300s the Rio Grande Valley area had a resurgence of settlements in a pueblo “Golden Age”. Rich sociopolitical relationships to place were integrated in religious and ceremonial life (Riley 1995). These large settlements acted as hubs for the local economic, religious and social centers. Extensive trade routes exchanged the wares of the indigenous Americas including: obsidian, turquoise, garnets, peridot and other semi precious stones and mineral dyes, tobacco, bison skins, meat and horns from the plains peoples, shells, exotic birds such as macaws for feathers. Corn was traded through the Rio Grande Valley; Copper and lead were mined from the Cerrillos hills. Other goods included: Hopi pottery and cotton woven garments, salt and slaves (Riley 1995).
The Spanish began exploring New Mexico in 1539 after hearing rumors of the famed trade routes and golden cities but expeditions for gold and silver were a failure. However, shifting politics preserved the Spanish investment in the colonies especially in regards to access to established trade routes, Indian slave labor, spiritual conversion, and the development of mining prospects. The Spanish established the first colony 1598 at San Gabriel opposite the river of the Pueblo of Ohkay Owingeh. Acequia irrigation was the first system implemented. Dug with human labor, these gravity fed earthen canals extended the rivers reach and provided surface water for agriculture. The Spanish established colonies in accordance with Las Leyes de Las Indias, the Law of the Indies that dictated the patterns and management strategies for establishing colonies. The laws dictated which natural features were optimal for settlement and provided instruction for communal land management by autonomous local governance. Brutal labor practices and the suppression of ceremony and spiritual practice drove tensions between the Pueblos and the Spanish. During the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, southwestern pueblos organized throughout the region and drove the Spanish out of New Mexico with coordinated regional assaults.

The Spanish resettled Pueblo occupied areas. Many of Rio Arriba’s settlements were founded in the 1700’s including Chimayo, Truchas, Cajilon, Vallecitos and Cañon Plaza (Rio Arriba County 2014). Under the harsh arid conditions of the Upper Rio Grande, people were isolated from Spanish resources and had to be self reliant; developing commercial villages, religious brotherhoods, mutual aid societies, and other community associations dependent on the land (Rivera 2014). The Spanish colonists entered a tense alliance of mutual survival with the neighboring pueblo tribes in the region. The Spanish encouraged and sought to stabilize settlement in the region by granting tracks of land to individuals and communities (Fisher 2008). In order to receive Mercedes de Tierra, grants of land, the potential parties interested had to organize for self-sufficiency, mutual aid, and their own communal welfare (Rivera 2014). The Spanish built adobe churches and indoctrinated regional tribes to Christianity through religious painting, handicrafts, furniture making, performance theater and dance (Rodriguez 2007). The Spanish were forced to have tolerance for Indian religion, which resulted in a unique mix of ceremony and spirituality. Autonomous religious orders served in the capacity of priests after many clergymen were killed in the rebellion, and served as the spiritual authority and stewards of religious traditions in the isolated northern territory. Border settlements were established by Genizarios, North American Indians of mixed Hispanic lineage, to protect the communities of the New Spain frontier from the raiding tribes of the Navajo, Ute, Comanche, Apache and Kiowa in exchange for land ownership (Gonzales 2014). Defensive Plazas, like Plaza del Cerro in Chimayo, were built to consolidate the farms and small villages into central activity centers in the region. Long strips of common land ensured families had access to resources from the hills and grasslands, to the river (Rio Arriba County 2014).
Distinct systems of community and survival developed in the region including defensive vernacular architecture, shared resource management systems, mutual aid societies, acequia irrigation systems, healing arts, and heritage agriculture. People bartered and traveled far to trade goods with regional neighbors. Old World and New World foods, animals and culinary traditions poured into the remote Rio Grande Valley.

In the early 1800s the Old Spanish Trail was established connecting the Northern Communities of New Mexico with California. In 1821, Mexico won its Independence from Spain. By 1846, U.S. forces were invading the Mexican Territory. In 1848, the U.S. adopted The Treaty of Guadalupe, ending the Mexican-American War and ushering in a new American paradigm for New Mexico residents. The Treaty allowed residents to become United States citizens but did not recognize Spanish or Mexican Land Grant holdings. Only an estimated 13% of original Land Grants were validated by the New government. The remaining common lands were privatized or transferred into forest reserves and national forests (Rio Arriba County 2014). This remains a controversial and complex issue today as Land Grant heirs continue to battle in court. The 1800s brought rapid expansion of communities in Rio Arriba County and established the settlements of Tierra Amarilla, Española, Chama, Dulce, Velarde, El Rito, Cebolla, Lumberton and Monero (Rio Arriba County 2014) as seen in the figure to the right. The Homestead Acts of the 1860s brought new building techniques, languages, cultural traditions, educational styles and entrepreneurs to the area. The availability of materials, planning conventions, and Victorian Building Kits introduced a new contrasting architectural style and street condition to the plaza-centric adobe pueblo style previously seen New Mexico. Settlements grew along rail corridors, developing in the style of the East coast cities and towns. New Land management patterns favored grazing and export-oriented production that depleted the landscape. The effects of this can still be seen and contribute to desertification and environmental injustice issues. Timber production, sheep and cattle ranching, and mining boomed well into the 1920s. The railroad was a driver of development in the area creating new wage and trade based economic opportunities. The Chile Line in the newly established Española exported chile, hogs, piñon, and wool North, creating trade lines into remote Colorado (Usner 1995). Seeking everything exotic, the first tourists arrived by rail. In Chimayo, faith based tourists began coming to the area on pilgrimage to the Santuario of Chimayo. In the early 1900s artists, writers and other Anglo-American free spirits like Georgia O’Keeffe and D.H. Lawrence, relocated to New Mexico seeking asylum from the industrialized cities. New Mexico represented the “true American vernacular” (Usner 1995) and its pastiche stimulated a new direction in tourism that backed the production of traditional products by local villages and formed arts societies and institutions for arts and crafts. New Deal programs were designed for emergency relief and to create jobs funding agriculture and arts and craft.
based industries, as well as large infrastructure projects like the Vado Dam. Highway development such as Route 66, shifted the economic development focus away from railways and onto highway corridors. Federal programs sought to modernize the region’s economy, while preserving “traditional” crafts that appealed to a tourist market. New Deal economic efforts largely failed to be sustainable long-term when federal monies were spent. The degraded landscape and land base reduced the capability to be self-sufficient. The Modernist story of place was born from the urban entanglements of the industrial revolution. In cities it meant the separation of land uses through Euclidian design. In the West it meant the separation of rights from the land and a paradigm shift to private property over communal land ideals in favor of exploitive economic practices and the coming of the railroad. The railroad and highways opened up New Mexico to the rest of the country.

WWII played a significant role in the economy in Northern New Mexico. The government employed locals in places like Los Alamos labs. Wool production for military uniforms waned after the war and economic investment moved to the highways as the era of the automobile made its way to rural New Mexico. Economic reforms in the 1970s flushed cash into tourism programs that largely did not take off sustainability. The economic practices employed in Northern New Mexico have been dependent on outside investment that extracts resources to trade outside the region. Moreover, these industries leave when resources are exhausted, moving on to better markets and removing their investment from the community. Wage labor fractured the relationship of the rural New Mexican lifestyle to the landscape by replacing the subsistence barter system and communal management relationships (Arellano 1997; Fisher 2008; Usner 1995). “What we have in the Rio Arriba Bioregion is a colonial economy and colonial economies place no value on caring for the land” (Arellano 1997). These systems need to be balanced to create a sustainable economic development pattern.

In Reclaiming Querencia: The Quest for Culturally Appropriate, Environmentally Sustainable Economic Development in Northern New Mexico, Kristina Gray Fisher presents the concept of querencia as a new model for “decolonized bioregional economic development.” She describes a spoked-type model for regional economic development that puts a multifaceted organization at the center of a connected network of supporting individual entrepreneurs, services and regional organizations (Fisher 2008). For example, The Ganados del Valle economic model is centered on these principles: the investment in human capital and empowerment, the utilization and sustainability of nature and culture, the changing economic and social structures to increase self sufficiency, and to provide the financial support for research development and marketing for unique New Mexico businesses. Fisher’s case studies embody the challenges and successes of Northern New Mexican business incubation and development in a Querencia based economic development model. One of the organizations typifying this model is the Taos County Economic Development Corporation (TCEDC) that has worked since 1987 to address the
challenges facing the historic, semi-isolated, rural community as the area is transitioning from a centuries old, self-sufficient agrarian base to a commercially focused economy. The TCEDC operates using a “family model” in its community development efforts that include business incubation, community agriculture, marketing and manufacturing support and facilities and other services that promote regional food security. The organization has been successful and continues to grow and adapt to community needs. Challenges with the spoked economic model arose not only in the individual efforts, but in the network of support (Fisher 2008). More partnerships and long-term web of support could be developed to increase the survival rate of dynamic economic development models such as these. Community Development projects focused on place already have strong partners forming or initiating creative projects to engage youth and the community at large; the partners are engaged in place making and civic empowerment through arts, culture and agriculture.

In 2013, the New Mexico Community Foundation (NMCF) in partnership with Lily Yeh founder of Barefoot Artists, began an arts and culture based participatory community building and intercultural collaborative initiative. Inspired by a series of workshops led by Yeh in New Mexico, the NMCF grantees and community partners formed a Cultura Cura collaborative, or a “culture cures” collaborative, whose role is to facilitate service learning projects in the heart of Española Valley that are rooted in the cultural richness of place and the historical continuity of the region. The project landed in the vacant Ford Auto Center at the Española Hunter Arts and Agricultural Center on Española’s Mainstreet. The collaborative complex, managed by non-profit partner Siete del Norte will house a community arts and cultural center with workshops, a classroom, artist and performer studio spaces and a venue for events and exhibitions. Plans are in the works for the development of a food hub to support local agricultural production and distribution in a space adjoining the complex. Cultura Cura Collaborators are working on a mural that links local youth with natural materials, histories and traditions. The collaborative project is designed with a place focus at the Hunter Arts and Agriculture Center, but has the flexibility to undertake modest satellite projects in area schools and local places (Montoya 2014).

“Our model builds upon the strengths and wisdom of land-based cultures that have demonstrated the ability to survive and overcome adversity by retaining beliefs and values and recognizing the inevitability of cycles. The tradition of seeking a vision is shared by many cultures and expressed in many diverse ways, but the purpose is to see a better situation than the one presented by a crisis...TCEDC has chosen to work on Community Based Economic Development through value-added and educational opportunities, providing assets and tools for the community that supports and protects the environment of this unique valley.” (Martinson and Bad Hand 2015)
Community Profile and Existing Conditions

Northern New Mexico’s assets are at the center of the cultural landscape. Although the region’s rich history is visible in the landscape, in historic buildings, agricultural lands and social practices it is often overlooked by people passing through to the creative centers of Taos or Santa Fe. Cultural landscape assets in the area include ancient settlements, living Pueblos, churches and other sacred sites, scenic highways, geologic wonders and forest areas, historic railroads, spooky stories and witch trials, artistic traditions, heritage agriculture and even a Monastery where the monks brew traditional beer. The area teems with historical assets, fairs, festivals and recreational opportunities. The people of the region are the area’s strongest assets. The population of Rio Arriba County is 39,777. Hispanic residents make up 71.6% of that population, and are primarily descents of the original land grant communities. Rio Arriba County has a significant Native American population making up 18% of the population. Anglo residents make comprise the remaining 13% (U.S. Census 2014). The residents are valuable assets due to their indigenous knowledge practiced over generations and their distinctive cultural traditions and expressions born in the region. For example, the small village of Cordova still speaks a Castilian Spanish dialect that has evolved with Native American, Nahuatl Indian and Anglo words as cultures mixed along trade routes and new waves of colonialism (Espínosa 1911). This vernacular dialect is one example of language evolving in a landscape and the articulation of local knowledge of the landscape.

Planning in New Mexico has often been looked at as a blank slate (Carr 2015) for development, marginalizing the existing physical and cultural infrastructure, which are one and the same in traditional New Mexican systems. Urbanist Jane Jacobs referred to this kind of planning, as “a quality even meaner than out-right ugliness or disorder and this meaner quality is the dishonest mask of pretended order, achieved by ignoring or suppressing the real order that is struggling to exist and to be served” (Jacobs 1961) and so it has been in New Mexico. Rural areas face some of the Mega Trends in planning seen in other parts of the nation. Mega trends include the boom in aging population, millennial out-migration to urban areas, climate change, globalization, degraded infrastructure and changing lifestyle preferences, especially those tied to pedestrian or proximal accessibility to daily services, job markets and culture. Planning for these challenges should not repeat the same development patterns that suppressed the real order which made survival in the arid climate possible for thousands of years. The out-migration of youth means the Elders who embody the wealth of indigenous knowledge, family histories and practical querencia cannot transfer their knowledge, cultural traditions and place names to the next generation, further separating the practices that uphold Northern New Mexico’s distinct
sense of place and culture (Santa Fe County 2015).

Regional plans and local plans in Northern New Mexico such as the Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area Management Plan, Northern Pueblos Regional Transportation Plan, Rio Arriba Comprehensive Plan, and the Indo-Hispano Homeland: A Living Culture Corridor Plan and Chimayo Community Plan are working to address common challenges like poverty, the slumping economy, decreased tax revenue, out-migration of working and family aged people, watershed management in face of scarcity and pollution, and the erosion of cultural heritage. All these plans identify a need for more government cooperation and collaboration to improve the communications and the outcomes when working with institutions, small communities and tribes. Rio Arriba faces the challenge of an aging population as 18% of residents are over 62. The median age for residents is 39. The Business Bureau for Economic Research projects population growth to be slow in the area, a trend already seen in the out-migration of youth and working age residents seeking employment opportunities. Since 2010, population has decreased 2% in Rio Arriba County, and this trend is expected to continue.

The median income for Rio Arriba County is $40,250, compared to New Mexico’s median income of $44,927. In Rio Arriba County 21.2% of the qualified residents are below the poverty level. Despite that, 79% of the residents own their own homes or land. These owners represent the 22.3% of privately owned land in the region. The other 77.6% of managed land is distributed between state, federal and tribal governments. This puts development pressure on the private land holdings (Rio Arriba County 2014). The Chimayo Community Plan identifies the conversion of irrigated farmland and subsequent loss of water rights as a major concern. (Santa Fe County 2015) Rio Arriba County is known as a bedroom community, where residents travel an average of 28 minutes for work each day to places such as Los Alamos and Santa Fe (Rio Arriba County 2014). This increases the cost of living in the region. The HUD Affordability Index estimates residents spent 67% of their income on housing and transportation combined (HUD User 2015). The occupations with the highest employment rates in Rio Arriba County are in the industries of management, business, science or arts with 16,110 employees (Rio Arriba County 2014). The Business Bureau of Economic Research (BBER) identifies north central New Mexico as an arts and cultural cluster, third to McKinley County and Santa Fe in impact. The communities included in north central New Mexico are the counties of Rio Arriba, Taos, Mora, San Miguel and Guadalupe counties. Location quotients for this area portray the areas creative economy workers at 132% (BBER 2014). Heritage Industries such as traditional acequia-based agriculture, craft food processing, craft wineries and breweries, artisan sheep/wool and textile industries, other craft manufacturing, automobile modification and adobe block manufacturing employ 1,377 cultural workers. The Chimayo Community Plan specifically cites a major challenge in the erosion
and neglect of historic and cultural development patterns, resources and structures including churches, capillas, moradas, cemeteries, trails, acequias, plazas and sacred sites that are important to the surrounding pueblos (Santa Fe County 2015). The plan also points out that public, institutional and private investment in the area is geared towards tourists—not locals.

In spite of its challenges, Rio Arriba has many valuable assets. One example is the burgeoning North Central Regional Transit District which established a free transit service linking the communities of Rio Arriba, Los Alamos, Santa Fe and Taos to other local transit systems including the Rail Runner Express system. Planned economic development in the region centers around established corridors and nodes (See map) (NCRTD 2015). This development is happening around some of the greatest cultural asset landscapes. County governments are investing in transportation assets, water management, health services, and cultural and creative tourism. The investments of planners and citizens in Rio Arriba County have created successful local development models like the award winning preservation and main street revitalization plan at the Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo. The Owe'neh Bupingeh Preservation Plan is a one-of-a-kind plan and a successful model of tribal-led planning and community informed planning that is guided by tribal values and self-determined principals (Hud User 2015). Models like this are great foundational projects to further place-focused planning in Northern New Mexico. In 2006 the Counties of Rio Arriba, Taos and Santa Fe were designated as the Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area. This designation recognizes the special contribution of ecological and cultural services of the region and allows for area governments and organizations to share a common place-based visions and goals. The Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area Management Plan of 2015 has the vision for “community and economic viability rooted in the heritage and environment of Northern New Mexico”. Other regional plans such as the Rio Arriba Comprehensive Plan, Northern Pueblos Regional Transportation Plan and Living Cultural Corridors Plan share this notion and include the encouragement of education, business and housing along with the protection of cultural infrastructure and customs. Many of their goals highlight the role of the area’s distinctive of regional heritage, and strive for diverse economic success.
DISCUSSION

What is making?

How is place made?

The stories and narratives of place shape the local perception of place and its development. What we find by locating ourselves in the complexity and resourcefulness of New Mexican history are rich trade networks, the development of a distinct built environments and survival strategies, autonomous governance and mutual aid societies. Furthermore, there are special expressions of mixed identity and spirituality performed in a continual and reflexive relationship with the land. Cultural production and the creation of place is a way of “doing” culture rather than passive assimilation. The New Mexican cultural landscape represents a living culture in which the mutual creation of place continues to respond to the changes of a contemporary world. This includes globalization, the influx of new populations, the out migration of youth, and climate change. Conventional planning practices compartmentalize the physical and cultural realities of place. In practice, the results produce fragmented and increasingly abstract efforts to organize and regulate the complexities of place with exclusionary and narrow tools designed to be implemented in standardized ways regardless of a community’s idiosyncrasy. Moreover, expert-driven design processes create places from singular realities. For example, streets designed by engineers represent an engineering mentality that creates places with specific goals, such as traffic flow, congestion or corridor safety. Similarly, planning initiatives approached by other disciplines (economists, politicians, architects, cultural administrators, preservationists and planners) face the limitations of their own perspectives that in practice can exasperate unintended consequences when implemented. This conventional system still exults processes that reward competition with neighboring local governments for scarce resources. Regional planning efforts become reactionary responses to market driven development pressure enacted through political lobbying (Thayer 2003). These challenges to the profession of planning are driving the conversation to increase meaningful citizen participation in the planning process and harnessing the agency of daily place users.

The building blocks of a region are centers, districts, open space preserves and corridors (Calthorpe and Fulton 2001). Corridors in New Mexico have historically and culturally facilitated diverse and collaborative relationships that operate across geographic boundaries and provide the first and lasting impressions of place to visitors and locals. Centers and districts are the mixed-use destinations that house the cultural infrastructure that are the physical and social spaces that support social and civil interaction. The programs that fill the space activate it with human activity and spontaneity. Public spaces where people live their daily lives, support the layers of “placeness” that are intangible, like the smell of green chile, or bread fresh from a horno, and other vernaculars that need to be experienced and thus understand the local culture.
architecture” is the ambient, performative, seasonal and otherwise ephemeral qualities that make places memorable and worth preserving (Chase, Crawford & Kaliski 2008).

**Life-Place Planning**

At every level planning happens, it is important that the planning processes honor the whole and cultivate life-place culture. Simultaneous re-localization movements are sweeping the country; reintroducing communities to place-based solutions like farmers markets, “buy local” initiatives, community supported agricultural models, holistic landscape management systems, creative placemaking initiatives and other grassroots activities. From these movements an emerging body of theory is coalescing around the bioregion (Thayer 2003). A Bioregion, or Life-Place is an area defined by natural rather than political boundaries. Geographic, climatic, hydrological and ecological characteristics define the natural boundaries of a bioregion and support unique living communities. The bioregion is a place where regenerative communities and culture that are made and sustained. Robert Thayer presents bioregional planning as an approach to planning for life-place. Bioregional planning is looks at bioregional patterns and the social interactions that support the indigenous community as well as newcomers. It is based on the axiom that people who **stay** in a place know that place deeply and people that **know** a place care for it more deeply (Thayer 2003). This speaks to the New Mexican concept of querencia. In essence, the idea of a life-place or bioregion connects natural place, awareness, knowledge, wisdom, affection, stewardship, sustainability, and, most important, **action**, as a 'fuzzy set' of nested and covariant concepts. Embedded in the bioregional idea, therefore, is a very general hypothesis: that a mutually sustainable future for humans, other life-forms, and earthly systems can be best achieved by means of a spatial framework in which people lie as rooted, active, participating members of a reasonably scaled, naturally bounded, ecologically defined territory, or life-place (Thayer 2003).

Life-place planning represents a model that is less structured, spatially intuitive, integrated and successive. Bioregional or Life Place patterns work as an interconnected network of relationships instead of the conventional patterns of linear problem solving components strung together. For example, planning for life-place patterns works with the use of districts to aggregate similar place-based qualities within boundaries such as watersheds or foodsheds or culture areas. Bioregional planning development gradually establishes cooperative bioregional partnerships that operate across political or jurisdictional boundaries and focuses on issues that bridge social and environmental concerns. Life-place planning takes a long-term commitment to place, addressing qualities of place that is not adequately described by man made boundaries. It does this by melding disciplines like ecosystem management, regenerative resource use and systems, conservation, regional planning,
and sustainable design. Furthermore, it is multiscalar and can plug into a process where the planning and building of community is improved by engaged learning experiences and civic involvement in the creation of place. The Placemaking approach can be a useful framework for enacting querencia in the planning process: harnessing the inspiration, potential and the incremental agency of communities to create quality of life-places and increase livability at a local and bioregional level.

**Defining Placemaking: Principals and Tools**

Placemaking is a strategy for reviving people's relationship to place. Placemaking intentionally shapes space through planning, design, management and the social programming of public spaces. Moreover, it seeks to transform local spaces into community places. The Placemaking making approach creates a positive framework for social activity and networks by focusing on place assets rather than problems (Kent 2015). Placemaking occurs on multiple scales with a spectrum of community development strategies and applications to achieve common place-based plans and visions. Placemaking converges around “place” as a focal point where disparate disciplines can cooperate to achieve common goals outlined in community visions and plans. The Placemaking model engages people in the shaping of the public realm that citizens occupy in their daily lives. Making connections across a broad spectrum of disciplines leverage the limited resources for the development of healthy, vibrant, and livable communities. Empowering people to co-create the places in their daily lives has the power to address complex problems; be they social, environmental, or civic apathy problems.

Placemaking is no less complex than other models for urban and community development and is not without its challenges. Susan Silerberg identifies common challenges to Placemaking: it is a harder sell than it should be and it should be approached with caution if advanced as a quick fix, marketing or as a pure design project. The benefits of Placemaking are real, but it requires coordinated resources and time to make it successful. Additionally, expertise is scarce, hard to find or incomplete for the iterative projects, creating knowledge gaps in the process and other barriers to involvement. Placemaking takes place in a regulatory environment that is often unfavorable to the process. Organizations like Better Block, an organization that works with community stakeholders to create short-term-high-impact projects for the revitalization of streets, use this constraint to their benefit—asking forgiveness rather than permission for their civic centered block parties (Team Better Block 2015). The Better Block example has led to changes in policies when the Placemaking event highlighted restrictive or outdated zoning practices, especially those that were thwarting an active street.

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**Figure 11. Convergence of Movements/Disciplines around Place**

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Project for Public Spaces
condition or economic development. Funding is always a challenge, but resources are increasingly available through Placemaking grants and Crowdfunding platforms (See right). Another limitation of Placemaking is the misnomer that it is the same as “place marketing” or “place branding”. Placemaking with this constraint leads to design based or developer driven processes. Placemaking is more than beautification or the projection of a brand. Place marketing or branding can be a tool of placemaking, but they are not an appropriate substitute for community identity, values or visioning processes. Placebranding moves away from a deep love a place, and seeks to create a commodified relationship to place, primarily for the benefit of temporary visitors and tourists. Despite Placemaking’s limitations, the benefit to community engaged processes leads to a better understanding of the context of place, adapting flexible solutions when failure happens, and generating a network of placemakers that support long-term partnerships in place. Partnerships enable disciplines like planning, healthcare, design, arts, tourism, historic preservation, research sciences, agriculture, education and others to address complex problems from expansive entry and view points with context sensitive solutions. Placemaking is diverse in practice and as such, the definition evolves with the form and usage. Project for Public (2015 B) spaces outlines what placemaking “is” and “isn’t” to locate the theory and practice. Placemaking is not: top-down, reactionary, design driven, a blanket solution or fix, exclusionary, car-centric, one-size-fits-all, static, discipline driven, one-dimensional, dependent on regulatory controls, a cost/benefit analysis or project focused. Instead, Placemaking is: community-driven, visionary, functional before formational, adaptable, inclusive, focused on creating destinations, context-specific, dynamic, trans-disciplinary, transformative, flexible, collaborative and sociable. Placemaking generally has these qualities at its core:

- **Asset based**: Focuses on existing opportunities, resources, and skills of individuals, organization and institutions to build up and create community assets.
- **Multi-dimensional**: Scales up through partnerships and through time– nested relationships scale up and down through succession iterative layered processes in place.
- **Some Economic Development focus**: Place-led development contributes to quality of place and market distinction, attractive infrastructure, entrepreneurial networks, policies and specialization that have power to attract outside investment and foster strong local economic security in place.
- **Equitable and Inclusive process and outcomes**: Process includes diverse stakeholders, looks at local communities as experts of place and creates community deliverables that are accessible to locals.

### Placemaking Funding Opportunities:

**Placemaking Grants**
- The **Our Town Grant** from the National endowment for the Arts funds Placemaking projects that help transform communities into lively, beautiful, resilient places with arts at its core.
- The Kresage Foundation awards **Strong, Health Places** grants to cross sector, cross-disciplinary initiatives that relate to health, the environment, human services, education, arts & culture and community development.
- Southwest Airlines **Heart of the Community** program fosters Placemaking projects that support and activate spaces in the Heart of cities.
- The **Artplace National Grants Program** invests in Creative Placemaking projects where arts play a central role in community planning and development strategies.

**Crowdfunding Placemaking**
- **Ioby.com** is an internet “crowd-resourcing” platform that connects funders with people proposing or implementing projects.
- **Citizinvestor.com** and **Neighbor.ly** allow citizens to invest in civic projects they care about. Another platform is **Spacehive** that crowdfunds neighborhood projects. **Kickstarter** and **Indigogo** have also been used to fund Placemaking projects.
- Cities and regions nationally are exploring and implementing their own localized versions of crowdfunding platforms.
Tactical initiatives provide opportunities for civil discourse through planning by “giving their communities the tools for positive change in the long term” (Silberberg 2013). Placemaker Fred Kent, emphasizes the making part of Placemaking, in which people become part of the process of shaping community space and thereby seeking to revitalize public space, spark public discourse, embody civic pride, connect community, promote health and well being, advance sustainability, catalyze economic development and nurture authentic sense of place (Silberberg 2013). The concept is that Placemaking is most successful when the focus is on an interactive iterative process and the collaborative production of space. “The iterative actions and collaborations inherent in the making of places nourish communities and empower people” (Silberberg 2013). Making places connects the community to each other and to place, which builds social capital through civic engagement (Silberberg 2013). Placemaking develops economic value through the creation and sustained commitment to place capital. Project for Public Spaces defines place capital as the reconnection of the economy to the community. Today’s economy is generally top down and favors policies that lead to inequality and big outside investments. Place capital builds assets and shared wealth in place that can be leveraged for increased and sustained community engagement in place (Project for Public Spaces 2015c).

Kent (2013) gives the framework for a process model of Placemaking that is flexible, impermanent, shares information, draws on diverse sources of influence, and “empowers everyday users to become makers, to share ideas and to form alliances.” He calls this model The Virtuous Cycle of Placemaking that reflects the cyclical relationship of people to place. “Places grow out of the needs and actions of their formational communities, and in turn shape the way these communities behave and grow…This mutual influence of community and place is what we call the virtuous cycle of placemaking. Mutual stewardship grows from this cycle, which allows multiple entry points into the placemaking process” (Silberberg 2013). This is complexity is required to work in different contexts, communities and for different outcomes. What makes a “good place” is subjective and because place is dynamic, and it can also be emergent. The Virtuous Cycle is a model describing the process of casual sequence, positive reinforcement and feedback. Placemaking is a fluid cycle, which evolves access points for multiple community collaborators involved as makers of place, whereas in conventional process top-down process the making is done by big, bureaucratic, expensive, multi-year debt financed capital plans (Silberberg 2013). Communities take a long time to adapt to change. Because Placemaking is an incremental process, and is focused on place instead of designs, it is responsive to change in leadership, project failures, or other disruptions, and can evolve to establish within the shared vision while implementing more.

Figure 12. The Virtuous Cycle of Placemaking, 2013. Silerberg in Places in the Making

“Places aren’t about the 21st century economy. They are about the people who inhabit and develop them. They are the physical manifestations of the social networks upon which our global economy is built. Likewise, Place-making is not about making existing places palatable to a certain class of people. It is a process by which each community can develop place capital by bringing people together to figure out what competitive edge their community might have, and then working to capitalize on that edge and improve local economic prospects in-place, rather than trying to import opportunity from elsewhere.” (Crain 2013)
appropriate or efficient solutions before huge capital investment is made in something that has short-term benefit to the community or is a bad fit.

In Practice: Successful Strategies and Tactics

The temporary-to-permanent Placemaking model puts community participation at the heart of the process, actively engaging citizens in place-based solutions to inform professionals of important design considerations. Kent identifies major trends in successful Placemaking including:

• **Programming**: “The making is never finished”- programming makes places and is place making, there are infinite possibilities for programmed space.
• **Agile places**: The rise and influence of tactical urbanism-tactical projects can be effective in transforming space quickly and cheaply while drawing attention to long term planning needs.
• **The new collaborators**: public/private partnerships: new collaborations across agencies, organizations and governments facilitate new resource and community networks (Silberberg 2013).

Strategies and tactics should be used in concert with each other and be considered of equal value—“planners being tactical and citizens learning to work more strategically” (Lydon 2012). The Placemaking process works between top-down and bottom-up applied in many ways. PPS developed the Power of Ten as a tool for the reclamation or revitalization of place at multiple scales. The Power of Ten draws attention to the human experience when building a city or region’s place assets. This simply understood tool that can be used by planners and community members to identify what makes a place successful (or unsuccessful) and recognize the reasons people go there. The tool suggests layering activity in such a way that there are ten reasons to be in a place. This can be as simple as a bench, or as dramatic as an interactive art piece, market or cultural destination (see figure to the right). Where places lack elements of a “great place”, projects can develop where community partners utilize strategies like Creative Placemaking, or tactics like Tactical Urbanism.

**Project for Public Spaces suggests 10 ways to improve public spaces:**

- Improve streets as public spaces
- Create squares and parks as multi-use destinations
- Build local economies through markets
- Design buildings to support places
- Link a public health agenda to a public space agenda
- Reinvest Community Planning
- Use the power of ten to create vibrant places at multiple scales
- Create a comprehensive public space agenda
- Employ Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper- Start small and experiment
- Restructure Government to support public spaces (Project for Public Spaces 2015)

![POWER OF 10+ HOW CITIES TRANSFORM THROUGH PLACEMAKING](image)

Figure 13. Power of 10+ How Cities Transform through Placemaking, 2015. Project for Public Spaces
Creative Placemaking

Creative Placemaking focuses on arts and culture as the center of a place driven place making process (Markusen 2010) and suggests that cultural places are the centers of cultural production and consumption, and they are incubators of art and cultural enterprise because place acts as a hub for the innovations between individual ideas and organizations. Participatory or community driven art processes allow an accessible way to engage the making process in place. Creative places foster formal and informal work relationships and facilitate workforce development by training youth to be the next generation of creative workers and entrepreneurs (Markusen 2010).

“In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired” (Markusen 2010). In the white paper Creative Placemaking Ann Markusen uncovered 6 strategies for successful Placemaking initiatives: Creative initiators, designing around distinctiveness, mobilizing public will, garnering public support and securing community arts engagement.
Tactical Urbanism

Tactical Urbanism is an umbrella term that describes a growing body of small-scale improvements to the built environment that are seen as an incitement for long term investment. “Tactical Urbanism doesn’t propose one-size-fits-all solutions but intentional and flexible responses” (Lydon 2012). These actions are commonly referred to as “guerilla urbanism”, “pop-up urbanism”, “city repair” or “DIY urbanism”. Related fields of citizen led reclamation or revitalization of public space include the Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper approach that starts small, experiments, and aims high. It encourages the appropriation of place (Lydon 2012). Temporary, prototype or provisional initiatives are a purposefully experimental strategy for flexible temporary actions that aim to activate place through an action, intervention or experiences that can be done quickly with little budget. This allows the community time to react and to experience “change” in real time. The conventional planning process often seems like an eternity to engaged citizens. Frequently community participation in the design process involves reacting to a seemingly static, one-sided conversation focused on design. Experts present a beautiful artistic rendering of an idyllic architectural design in which access to the process is dependent on literacy of planning language and methodologies to participate. The result can be something the community rails against or does not understand. This is an important step in the conventional planning process, but a Placemaking process that is community engaged can lead to better, long lasting design relationships that are sustained past the projects completion. Feedback from the experience allows for a more informed hard planning, design and implementation process. The professional design response has the potential to create enduring, better-used and more culturally responsive places. Tactical Urbanism has three most common applications, those that are: Instigated by citizens who bypass the conventional project process by protesting prototyping, or demonstrating the possibility of change; as a tool by government, non-profits or developers to engage a broad public in the process of planning, delivery and development; and as an early implementation or spark project tool by cities or developers to test prototype projects before long-term financial and physical implementation is made (Lydon 2015).

Tactical Urbanism has 5 characteristics:

• A deliberate, phased approach to instigating change;
• An offering of local ideas for local planning challenges;
• Short-term commitment and realistic expectations;
• Low-risks, with a possibly a high reward; and
• The development of social capital between citizens, and the building of organizational capacity between public/private institutions, non-profit NGO’s, and their constituents (Lydon 2012).
Querencia and the Cultural Landscapes of Northern New Mexico

Cultural Landscapes

New Mexico’s Cultural Landscapes provide a sense of place and identity developed in the landscape over time. Carl Sauer defines the cultural landscape as a place of mutual creation, “The cultural landscape is fashioned out of the natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the landscape is the result” (Carl Sauer quoted in Mitchell, Rossler & Tricaud 2009). The World Heritage Committee defines a cultural landscape as those where human interaction with natural systems has, over time, formed a distinctive landscape (Mitchell, Rossler & Tricaud 2009). The term ‘landscape’ refers both to a way of perceiving the environment that surrounds us and to the environment itself. Moreover, the perception of landscape is imbued with symbolic values and distinctive landscapes shaped by human activity. Cultural landscapes frequently reflect sustainable land-use patterns and a spiritual connection to the natural surroundings. New Mexico’s cultural landscapes provide a sense of place and identity for its residents and maps their relationship with land over time. They are part of the shared American heritage and personal everyday life. Cultural Landscape Assets include the sites of significant events, activities or groups of people. They range in size from a culturally designated region like the Northern Rio Grande Heritage Area, to a site-specific historic place like the Plaza del Cerro in Chimayó. Additionally, cultural landscapes include the intangibles of heritage such as the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills, objects and artifacts and cultural spaces (Mitchell, Rossler & Tricaud 2009).

Querencia

Querencia comes from the Spanish querer that means to want or to love. In Spain it was the place where an animal found comfort in the bullring. In a bull fight the bull will return to that spot seeking safety and perspective (Arellano 2007). In New Mexico it is used to describe the intimate relationships to the land, which generate and sustain the deep love of place in both spirit and action. It describes both the feeling of an authentic sense-of-self in place as well as the actions that reciprocate the feeling and attachment to place. In Honor, Aridity, and Place, Silvia Rodriguez (2007) says:

Nuevo Mexicanos construct the social meaning and purpose of their lives as members of a community out of both religious and secular practices. Such a community identifies itself as historically continuous, genealogically connected, territorially placed, and socially enacted through traditional subsistence practices of farming, including irrigation and water sharing, and religious celebration. This culture is a dynamic, ever changing process or field, not a static, “For those of us come only recently to a territory, it is difficult to imagine the hundreds of generations that have passed down intimate knowledge on how to live there: fathers and mother teaching daughters and sons the best means of surviving and thriving in this place; whole communities of humans and non-humans so entwined with the land that any slim boundaries between self and other, sky and earth, water and soil, animal and human, must have been inconceivable. How could the land not have been sacred to them?” (Thayer 2003)
bounded, or finite entity. It is a process whereby a land-based population inscribes itself, through time, upon the local
topography or territory the population inhabits.
Practices like Acequias and sacred procession reflect a way to embody locality: “Ritual participation is a consummate
personal and public act. Repeated acts of procession like repeated acts of irrigation, identify persons and tie them
to their place” (Rodriguez 2007).
Rodriguez talks about the relationships of the Acequia not only as an infrastructure system but also as
a social institution, defining community leadership roles and local democratic principals and participation.
Moreover, these practical and spiritual relationships to the landscape relate to placemaking: “Place making is
a process whereby ‘feelings of belonging to an imagined community binds identity to spatial location’ It entails
both oral narrative and bodily practice” (Rodriguez 2007). The songs and ritual related to saints like San Ysidro,
the patron saint of farmers, show key values, themes and symbols that express parishioner’s sense of religious and
community identity, and their attachment to place. Traditional placemaking entails bodily practices such as walking
in procession and maintenance of the acequia systems because they require an individual and collective action
to uphold the querencia- the social and physical landscape inscribed with meaning. Furthermore, placemaking
becomes a way of doing history, where the practices of self-hood and sense of self-in-place are intertwined; the
ritual performance and agricultural practices are the continual expression of claim to place (Rodriguez 2007).
Enrique Salmón (2012) presents Querencia as a love of place and a cognitive model that connects a person’s
awareness, ethnic identity and cultural memory of place: To Hispanics, querencia is a blend of mental spaces not only involving bioregionalism but also including emotional
spiritual, a cultural and ecological health. When people think of the land, the cultural is enmeshed with notions of
cultural memory. These and other mental spaces merge into a multi-dimensional blended space, which is applied to
understanding the Hispano concept of cultural memory is directed tied to the landscape. The environment is not a thing
for Hispanics but is part of their identity because their memories-encoded in their languages, songs, rituals, stories and
cultural history---are linked to their place.
Losing connection to place erases histories and stories- people feel like that to lose their land is to lose themselves,
and erases the transferable memories to secure children’s future investment in the land. In La Querencia: La Raza
Bioregionalism, Juan Estevan Arellano discusses traditional land intimacy, the querencia, that has developed in the
Northern New Mexican landscape, people and culture through generations as “that which gives us a sense of place,
anchors us to the land, and makes us a unique people…Here in New Mexico the knowledge from Africa, Europe,
and the Americas converge in 1598. We are therefore, la raza cosmica, la nueva raza:

Figure 15. Chimayó blessing of runners before Española Fiestas, 2013.
UNM Indo-Hispano Field School
we are a walking diversity of bloods, cultures, and languages, anchored in Nuevo Mexico, nuestra Querencia” (Arellano 1997). Arellano speaks of the importance of the relationship between generations and the transmittal of traditional place names, language and customs. These place names describe not only location but the memory contained within the cultural landscape. Loss of traditional place names in favor of names designed for the convenience of reading maps erodes connections to place. This loss of language speaks to one of the many symptoms of lost connections between the shared life-place cultural spaces and landscape management practices developed over centuries in situ. Indigenous ecological knowledge lost cannot be recovered when accidentally or deliberately snuffed out in the same way an ecosystem can never recover the rich biodiversity found in its environment before radical change. This disconnection from traditional place management promotes a sterilized, one-size-fits-every-American, commercial world-view and economic development pattern that shapes the place environment and de-values the preservation of the New Mexican landscape that is deeply tied to the preservation of the cultural landscape. Arelanno argues that querencia life-place relationships should be stewarded as a bioregional framework for New Mexican economic development supporting the deep ecological, historical and cultural knowledge embodied in the landscape. Kristina Gray Fisher (2008) says that “at the heart of bioregionalism lies a long-term commitment to place: if people intend to remain in a place, then they must live in a way that enables them to do so. This philosophy has a long history in the Hispanic villages of northern New Mexico and is embodied in the Spanish concept of querencia. Querencia describes the inextricable link between the land and its culture; the culture develops through generations of adaptation to the land, and it evolves in a way that sustains the land”.

**Querencia in Action: The Local Placemaking Traditions of the Living Cultures of Northern New Mexico**

Individual and collective action upholds the querencia and is played out in the daily and seasonal lives of New Mexicans (Rodriguez 2007). For example, the congregations of Northern New Mexican churches perform the *enjarre* or re-mudding with local, earthen plaster. The collaborative workday is done by the community to protect the adobe walls of the church from eroding in seasonal monsoons (Kamins 1999). In this way the social part of tending spiritual community is created in place just as the physical infrastructure that holds the community together is renewed year after year. The physical evidence of that tradition is personified in the people contributing to the enjarre, relating spiritual, historical and construction knowledge; but also in the physical elements like a grandfather’s childhood handprint embedded in the very walls- 4 feet thick from the
hundreds of years of participation. In this way the individual is anchored to place in action and reciprocity, and the community operates as a collective, maintaining the structures that embody querencia. When concrete plaster stucco became an affordable option for maintenance, many churches switched to the low maintenance option—losing with it the place making traditions of the local enjarre. When water damage to the adobe walls caused by interior erosion due to the concrete stucco plaster, adobe mud plastering traditions returned to many churches and are practiced today (Kamins 1999). New Mexican traditional place making forms are querencia in “action” and are exemplified in the infrastructure and environmental interactions of the acequia, the social learning spaces of la resolana, and in the streets – the cultural performance spaces of evolving faith and historic memory.

The Acequia

The word Acequia comes from the Arabic word as-aquíya, and refers to both the physical infrastructure systems of earthen canals that divert water from the mountain headwaters to fields, but also to the social systems of autonomous governance and management of the human built environment (Rivera 2014). The Acequia represents convergence infrastructure. It holds the ancient knowledge of the Middle East and Europe and the indigenous ingenuity of the Americas (Rivera 2014). The acequias were the first public works project in the now United States—having a working water diversion system in place; continuously for 400 years in some places. Acequias were built as a commons where irrigators banded together as a labor force- a coalition of mancomunidad, or citizenship (Rivera 2014). This system of autonomous governance, adaptable landscape management and communal irrigation has ensured survival and food security to irrigators for four hundred years. Water connected irrigators to the fields, but also to a confraternity that was the center of rural life (Rivera 2014). Critical to acequia system resiliency is the concept of mutualismo, the reciprocal mutual aid that acts as a communal insurance that everyone has enough. This acequia culture is grounded in the mutual relationship between the practice of irrigation and the reciprocity within the community. A sense of place is created and the querencia, the attachment to land (and its ancestry) is reinforced seasonally. Autonomous governance ensures adaptability and responsiveness to water availability. Mutuality is part of social interaction but is also representative of the human responsibility and obligations to nature. Acequias worked by human hands provide ecoservices like habitat, riparian buffers and aquifer recharge (Raheem 2015). Preserving Acequia infrastructure keeps community watershed systems connected and alive, and preserves the agrarian cultural landscape.

“But more than geneology, this work is about land and water in one very specific place, for to understand place or querencia, one has to know the ground, the rocks the trees, the flora and fauna. By knowing my roots, I have gotten to know the place como mi manos, 'like my hands', as the old ones would say, based on information stored in my mind and experienced through the senses, that repository of collective memory” (Arellano 2014).
New Spain’s Northern territory is where the European and American indigenous plants mixed in the landscape along river fed acequia systems. The rich agricultural systems of the valleys relied on the river fed acequia irrigation systems that were governed and managed by the Mayordomo, and operated by the parciantes, the irrigating farmers in the system. Acequias connected the river and vegas (or commons) with small agriculture fields. “The ditches bring water, irrigate the land, and create habitat as well as community. They are the refugia and avenues of resilient culture and practice” (Salmón 2012). Agricultural communities cultivated diverse heirloom and local varieties of agricultural products like piñon, melons, chile, peaches and apples and more (Salmón 2012), that were traded along trails and railroads. Modernization and monoculture practices have shaped the contemporary market and changed the relationship of farmer to the land and farming methods. Landscape intimacy, seed diversity and local techniques are being lost as “agricultural knowledge is obsolete and un-relatable to the layperson in a mechanized food system” (Salmón 2012). However, the farmers, curanderos, herbalists, and other stewards of heritage seeds and agricultural traditions that are involved in the acequia carry forward the ecological knowledge tied to the land. The acequia is the backbone of the local ecosystem. The diversity of knowledge that is transferred in the landscape and through the connection of heritage is passed down in the waterways and seeds in what La Academia de la Nueva Raza called el oro pueblo- “the knowledge revealed by the water as it meanders from one bank of the acequia to the other, creating its own journey, in search of that sacred knowledge we all strive to find” (Arellano 2014). The acequia offers models of resilient water and community systems that bridge tradition and modern infrastructure.
The Resolana

Historically, *la resolana* was a term used in Northern New Mexico to describe the sunny south side of the plaza wall where men would gather and share news, gossip, tell stories and talk about life. Moreover, the resolana was a place to talk about survival, share beliefs and cultural histories. Experts were not specialized outsiders, but the most knowledgeable person on the subject at hand (Montiel, Atencio & Mares 2009). Storytelling had, and still has, a powerful role in New Mexican village relationships and learning. “Storytelling was the primary way of passing on life lessons, knowledge, values, and moral guideposts. We believe there is a strong parallel between this traditional education model and the new model arising out of the needs of the post industrial society. So the young learned to understand their everyday life experiences and their culture while incorporating a body of knowledge and traditional values and norms. It occurred to me that if one were to place a canopy over a traditional New Mexican village, one would have a school, a learning community where the skills and knowledge necessary to sustain and give meaning to life in that particular society were taught experientially. Learning and doing were inseparable: one did thereby one learned.” (Montiel, Atencio & Mares, 2009) Salmón asserts that story is at the core of querencia and community resilience. Telling stories about the land will keep that connection vibrant, and will work to create a supporting framework of viable cultural diversity.

La Resolana as a concept is not limited to academic application or design. Local applications represent tangible clues into how informal gathering happens in New Mexico. In *La Nueva Resolna*, Levi Romero (2001) discovers the places that represent the new resolana. He explains that the resolana is not just a great wall we can recreate by design. La resolana as a successful place is evolving and have physical attributes like solar orientation, local relevance and existence as a local refuge from tourists. Places like plazas and public parks have been repurposed away from community use and constricted to commercial or cultural commodification for outsiders. The new resolana has moved from the traditional south-facing plaza walls and moved to modern locations like Walmart or the Post Office. These places allow mixed use, socialization and chance encounters with other locals, family members or friends. Romero tells the story of the Post Office in Embudo that has become the resolana for the community. When the Architects did the Post Office redesign they inadvertently destroyed the resolana. The new entrance did not face south losing the afternoon warmth that made people linger and chat with other locals—a key role in the resolana sense of place. This simple change destroyed the resolana and removed the community relevance of the Post Office as a gathering space. These lessons are important reminders on why we should seek to dig deeper in our analysis and research on local place making traditions in New Mexico, like the informal gathering spaces of the resolana.
Sensitivity and awareness to design is needed to protect these homegrown strategies and indigenous methods for community development as growth and progress marches on. "The Resolana as a traditional and contemporary community gathering place provides a look into the details that can help us recompose and embrace, rather than displace the vital and nurturing nueva resolana" (Romero 2001).

In Resolana: Emerging Chicano Dialogues on Community and Globalization the authors discuss the roots and concept of the resolana, a place for gathering and discussion, and the knowledge that comes from the process called "el oro del barrio" or the "pure gold" that emerges from the deep contextualized knowledge of place (Montiel, Atencio & Mares 2009). The authors describe querencia as the meaning of place, as generated by the cultural landscape and sustained by multigenerational learning relationships. A change in how New Mexican societies were educated happened at the turn of the century. The top down authority of a teacher or expert took place of a learning society, where learning was embedded in everyday experience. Education was compartmentalized and divided into subjects and managed like a commodity. "In the educational institutions of industrial society, learning has become separated from practice. And once knowledge has been severed from practice, learning becomes the mere transference of information from those who have it and those who do not. Learning and knowledge have thus become isolated from one another and from action, yet they mesh with each other, like cogs in the industrial wheel" (Montiel, Atencio & Mares 2009).

The authors propose the concept of la resolana as a contemporary pathway toward a learning society and practice to recover buried indigenous knowledge and learning frameworks to "offer our traditional, preindustrial institutions, values, and ways of knowing and learning as guides and models for the industrial age" (Montiel, Atencio & Mares 2009). La resolana as a learning society happens in the physical places where people gather to exchange knowledge and stories, but also as the informal networks of indigenous knowledge shared, and the emergent praxis. In the contemporary age of the Internet, open source platforms and accessible digital tools provide new mechanisms for el oro del barrio to flourish and guide the development of the public realm.

New Mexican Streets As Places

The importance of New Mexico’s corridors can be seen throughout history, from the original trade routes between the indigenous peoples of the Americas, to economic development around rail roads and later highways. Today New Mexico’s scenic highways and cultural corridors define not only the perception of the place regionally to travelers, but also how and where economic development happens, and how a community
comes to see itself. Streets and roads play a role at every scale of public space and operate as transportation conduits, moving cars safely from one destination to another, and as the connective tissue of the cultural landscape that relates a sense of belonging and place to everyday day users. In New Mexico the street traditionally was a place of convergence; its role was an intimate multi-use space, accommodating trade, conquest, spiritual practice and social interaction. This relationship can be heard in the *corridos*, *tesoros* and other folk song traditions that share the regional histories of the bioregion (Lamadrid 1994). Unique forms of social interaction developed that activate streets as places including the distinct cultural practices of procession and the appropriation of street space as a reflection of resistance and Hispano identity as personified in the *Matachines* dances and Lowriding.

**Procession**

The *Matachines* dances, processions and foot races are some of the performance-embodied memory practices that arise in public spaces like streets and trails, and around sacred space like holy lands and sites, including the acequias and rivers. The *Matachines* dances are the Indo-Hispano expression of identity through ritual dance and place relationships in the landscape that play out the iconography of colonialism, survival and querencia of the Northern New Mexican cultural landscape (La Madrid 2000). The Matachine tradition came from Spanish missionary performance theater meant to dazzle and terrify converts. The practice evolved with local Native American spiritual influence and illustrates the unique mestizo experience. Today Matachines danzantes retell local histories of conquest and conversion. Each danzante, or spiritual dancing group, tells their story differently and keeps diverse place narratives alive through procession and the reciprocal relationship to saints and irrigation (Rodriguez 2007).

Procession manifests in other forms such as in the New Mexican traditions for running and pilgrimage. For example, the Española Fiestas start in Chimayó with a blessing at the church. Runners run relay for eleven miles to honor veterans and deliver a torch to the Española Plaza setting off the Fiestas. Trails and foot-paths on Pueblos accommodate seasonal foot races that retell stories of the Pueblo Revolt, where Pueblo runners ran relay as far the Hopi pueblos in Arizona to deliver messages between tribes. Religious pilgrimage along major highways and roads happen several times of the year, but the largest pilgrimage happens during the Easter holiday when the Village of Chimayó receives 300,000 faith-based tourists annually to the Santuario de Chimayó, many of them pedestrians (Archdiocese of Santa Fe 2010). Walking and pilgrimage play a continual role in local corridor place making.
Lowriding

Lowriding in New Mexico is a social practice and a form of local Hispano culture that is at once a revelation of place identity and a performative reclamation of place. It is a traditional place making form that includes familial culture networks of handmade cars, with cruising as the symbolic demonstration of identity and resistance. Lowriding is characterized by customized remodeled or low-to-the-ground cars, slow cruising and informal gathering. Lowriders are an expression of individual and cultural identity in a working class medium—the car. “If modernity promised products and techniques to free us from the constraints of locally based culture, it did so with the thread of uprooting us from social relationships. In response, lowriders engage in traditionalizing commodities by customizing them with meanings that enable a continuity of relationships. As reconversions, lowriding practices reinterpret and reinscribe local meanings that enable a continuity of relationships” (Bright 1998). Lowriders appropriate space as a symbolic process of resistance and identity that reinforces community ties through spectacle, improvisational action and performance in the streets. Lowriders create spontaneous and mobile public space as a collective and as individual cars. “Low and slow” is a physical description of the customized cars, but more importantly it represents the way the individual car creates a slow-moving intervention on the road, attracting attention, and subverting the primary use of streets for efficient traffic passage. Lowriders converge on the streets as improvisational parades and make public space by gathering in parking lots or at a car wash where people share music, flirt and socialize. In Española (and Chimayó) the “lowrider capital of the world”, lowriders are the artistic medium for the expression of faith. The customized cars depict local identities, religious imagery or memorials for loved ones or ancestors (Bright 1998). Long time lowrider Levi Romero says that lowriding is more than a car, “I believe, that the last thing in poetry is the poem, as I also believe that the last thing in lowriding is a lowered ride” (Romero 2008). It is an attitude, language and internal identity that resists conformity and commodification. A true lowrider may not have a car, but they embody the values and community of the Lowrider. It is the active claiming of the experience of place by slowing down and redirecting the experience of self-in-place as an expression of rootedness in the landscape, spirit and ancestry of a place.

Behind the street based performance of lowriding, is a cultural network of customization, shared experience and technical knowledge that is passed down between generations, families, social networks and friends. The culture is sustained through reciprocal networks of customization, creation and recycling based in local place. Lowriding is a subculture within a broader reading of Latino and Chicano culture, it is a complex,
multi-generational, working-class practice that depends upon mutual aid found within car clubs, working relationships and communal relationships; it strengthens familial bonds across generations; and it emboldens individualistic bragagio (Chappell 2012). Regulations, like those in Denver that ban cruising, damage these cultural networks by controlling who the streets are made for and how public space is used. Cultural collateral damage is sometimes intentionally and at other times haphazardly propagated through the creation of built environments as a reaction to racism or as a force of gentrification (Zavestoski & Agyeman 2015). Accommodating lowrider culture as a stakeholder in the creation of place makes better streets and preserves cultural distinction. Lowriding is an asset as a place making form, and because of seasonal events like the Española Mainstreet Showdown car show, that draws cultural tourists to Rio Arriba County, and into Northern New Mexico’s scenic highways.
POP-UP Chimayó: Short-term Action for Long-term Vision

Historic Chimayó (in Santa Fe County), New Mexico is experiencing a period of redevelopment. The Santuario de Chimayó has undergone renovations to facilitate more faith tourism spurring concern over changes in the community. Planning organizations and residents are concerned about economic development and growth that threatened communal infrastructure and traditional cultural landscapes. Santa Fe County and the Chimayó Citizens for Community Planning are in the process of developing strategies for growth. The Chimayó Community Plan’s purpose is to guide new development and provide tools to meet community needs for the next twenty years. Written to reflect community needs and desires, the plan identifies community issues, goals and objectives to meet the growth opportunities and community concerns in Chimayó (Santa Fe County, 2015). RCRP and Santa Fe County facilitated Youth Vision Workshops and a Pop-up Placemaking event in Chimayó as part of the youth community engagement process in the development of the Chimayó Community Plan. The ideas garnered from the youth visioning workshops led to the idea of a pop-up event to activate public space and experience some of the ideas the youth envisioned using Creative Placemaking tactics. Workshop participants spoke of the importance of having local places to gather for activities, such as libraries and community centers, and feeling like these places have disappeared to neighboring Española. They also spoke about the negative perception of the youth and how it effects them growing up (and leaving). Participants with families said they would come back if they had opportunities for work, but also simple things like having a local school. From the workshops, the RCRP, Chimayó Youth Participants and UNM students developed social programming, and designed and fabricated interventions based on the Chimayó Youth Visioning Workshop ideas. The pop-up design was an opportunity to prototype small “achievable actions” in a limited amount of time to address some of the key issues identified by youth leaders and in the Chimayó Community PlanDraft such as lack of gathering spaces and social programming for youth, honoring local tradition and memories, reviving cultural assets and connecting to youth organizations and the planning process.

The pop-up strategy was a good way to test out the goals in the Chimayó Community Plan for low risk, at low cost while gaining additional community engagement in the planning process. The intention was to create a great local experience of the youth’s vision for Chimayó that re-invigorated a contemporary sense of querencia in underutilized public spaces and demonstrated the power a vision for the future can have on fostering positive relationships to place. Creating opportunities for youth to participate in the long term planning process is important to Chimayó’s future. The Chimayo Pop-Up created prototypes as the first iteration in a

Chimayó Youth Visioning Workshop Ideas implemented in Pop-Up:

- A bus/stop little library created from recycled materials that reflected Chimayó car culture and iconography,
- A sit-in movie showcasing a New Mexico themed movie,
- Local guest speakers on querencia and herencia (heritage),
- A memorial trail walk along the undeveloped historic Chile Mill trail and procession to the capilla (chapel) in Plaza de Cerro,
- A community art fence weave to beautify the Bennie J. Community Center chain link fence,
- Games and activities,
- Tailgate picnic and car show, and
- Chimayo Community Plan Open House.
a longer goal of having public amenities like for example, libraries in Chimayó. Little libraries are free peer-to-peer book lending kiosks that are popping up all over the country to provide books to areas out of institutional reach. RCRP’s design for the prototype little library did double duty of acting as an RTD bus stop at the Bennie J. Chavez Senior and Community Center. In this way it facilitated transportation infrastructure and acted as an informal outdoor reading room. An incremental development of this idea might be to open little libraries at bus stops across the region to share regional educational materials, community events, books and local zines. The Little Library, or better yet a network of little libraries can open a conversation for the long term planning of a bricks and mortar Chimayo Library. 

The Pop-up was designed to be flexible and adaptable. The social programming for the pop-up was unfortunately untested as the event was canceled early due to wild and un-predictable weather and was unable to reschedule in the same format. The RCRP has begun new process of center partnerships and community engagement centered around building place capital in the Plaza del Cerro and finding a permanent home for the Little Library. The workshop and interventions stand-alone as a tangible community deliverables generated from the process. The Pop-Up event hoped to celebrate the youth vision for Chimayó and enhance assets on site. It also sought to generate a conversation about how communities can participate in how their public spaces are developed and whom they serve. We chose a community engagement strategy found in Placemaking because it focuses and builds on assets and solutions inherent to the place. Furthermore, RCRP hopes to develop a place focus on Plaza del Cerro, and provide technical assistance for the advancement of a revitalization plan to build on the momentum generated through the local Placemaking process.

Lessons learned through the Chimayó Pop-Up Placemaking process:

- Establish “placekeeping”, or long-term management relationships early in the process. If momentum slows down or ends because the project base moves on, partnerships change, or when the crisis is over, then a succession plan should be in place to sustain the momentum in other ways. Leaving dots unconnected after a community process is over stalls iterative momentum. Developing connections with people that are willing to manage the momentum is an important key to making a distinction between iteration and piece-meal. Partnerships need to be flexible and able to work to collaborators best roles in process.
• Organize to deliver “low hanging fruit” identified in City and County plans. Try out small solutions by prototyping and creating interdisciplinary networks citywide to make a big impact for a small budget. It can also re-build the capacity to reflect a distinct rural regional identity. Focusing on small place based solutions allow people access to the place making process at the place where they live.

• Work with-in and with-out institutions. Guerilla actions and sanctioned methods can lead to interesting collaborations on events, support and marketing for events. Working at all levels and helping each other connect through social media, educational experiences that build skills, and actions that reinforce querencia and innovate markets.

• Be flexible and patient- Create back-up plans for projects partnerships and community deliverables.

• Develop community participatory metrics for measuring success, gathering feedback and designing meaningful community deliverables

Figure 21. Chimayo Pop-Up Little Library, 2014. Photo source: Resource Center for Raza Planning
A Querencia Focused Placemaking Model

Querencia, as the place focus for Placemaking can be used as a contemporary planning tool to leverage partnerships in order to realize places that reflect “user-generated” visions in tangible increments. Traditional New Mexican cultural landscape practices can inform a contemporary foundation for creating short-term, community driven, iterative projects and social programing that enlivens the long-term planning process. The long-term development of a Living Cultural Corridor through querencia focused placemaking has the potential to engage citizen, institutional and governmental agencies in regional economic development that supports sustainable growth and cultural landscape asset preservation. Placemaking should be community-driven and build on iterative project wins locally and regionally. In order to implement Placemaking strategies in Northern New Mexico, an understanding of traditional New Mexican community engagement strategies should be utilized to create functional outcomes and culturally sensitive planning frameworks; especially those that support querencia. Placemaking with this intention has the potential to create interfaces for deeper community engagement, build partnership networks and prototype long- term planning efforts around the creation of vibrant and resilient places. Querencia as a creative relationship to place demonstrates three qualities that can be used to begin to build unique New Mexican placemaking strategies and tactics for beneficial mutual influence on communities and place. The qualities of a querencia focused Placemaking model express enduring themes in the New Mexican cultural landscape: The autonomous creation and management of cultural land traditions; the reciprocal relationship to place through cultural memory and practice; and the integration of social performance within natural and physically associative landscape systems.

A querencia-based model focuses more on place than a vehicle for commerce or entropy and costly repair of past planning mistakes. At its root it speaks to a deep love of place and reflects a commitment to the multidimensional cultural and bioregional landscape. Without the deep knowledge local communities can offer about sustained living in place, true solutions to the challenges we face may not be able to make a difference alone, even as isolated successes. Worse, local knowledge is forever lost within the untenable landscape. Application of Placemaking for the development of Living Cultural Corridors addresses three contexts: Streets as Places, La Resolana and Regional Relationships. By focusing on streets as places, Placemakers can address the backbone of public spaces, and the space that is most frequented daily by visitors and locals alike. La Resolana is a model for places that exist as networks of social and human capital, but also as physical third places of gathering that offer locals refuge, social learning spaces and privacy from commodification. By developing diverse regional partnerships and networks through context-sensitive place making strategies and tactics, the public spaces in which we live can be more resilient to trend development, produce a more authentic engagement in place, foster the fruition of local and regional cultural landscape assets, and advance quality of

Autonomy

People qualities
- Decentralized, democratic and a little anarchical (cultural resistance tied to identity)
- Organized for common good through mutual aid
- Deep pride of place- strong resistance to outside paradigms that erode Life-place culture.

Place qualities
- Sacred and intrinsic natural value, tied to distinct cultural landscape
- Individual and collective roles in governance and management of place

Reciprocity

People qualities
- Learning relationships are multi-generational and communal. Skills (like traditions) are passed through networks and by “doing”

Place qualities
- Historical man-made landscapes like Acequias provide important eco-services and connect to watersheds and deep history
- Symbiotic relationship to cultural survival in place- giving and getting in a regenerative system

Integrated Systems

People qualities
- Equitable and mutually beneficial social support
- Learning by doing, experiential education
- Indigenous Knowledge tied to landscape

Place qualities
- Sustainable land management and infrastructure practices
- Responsive and regenerative systems
- Organized around the watershed
life for residents. Each iteration in the process can allow partners an appropriate role to make a contribution to place. Moreover, Placemaking with a deep place focus can lead to more local resource control, including the community capacity to control their own destiny and participate in place-governance.

RCRP and partners have been working in Rio Arriba County to develop an increased focus on asset-based community development, heritage tourism and the revitalization of cultural landscape assets. Projects started in the field-schools such as the Living Culture Corridor Plan have garnered more support for the institute and led to additional planning processes in the region. An increased focus on Placemaking can offer a framework to move forward and generate iterative momentum in communities around short-term projects that build capacity to develop local strategies to address complex planning problems around economic development, cultural erosion and “placelessness” long term. An asset based framework, like Placemaking, is useful in New Mexico where the scars of past cycles of extractive economic development have left communities overwhelmed with change. Placemaking offers engagement in place that goes beyond a reactive relationship to the creation of the built environment and fosters active participation in the creation of small scale tangible community wins, and the cultivation of a long-term commitment to place. Developing projects that are in concert with the “low hanging fruit” goals in local and regional Plans works well with the Placemaking framework where place-based projects engage community on multiple levels. The field-schools are effective mechanisms for social and academic learning, and “doing” experiences that connect institutional technical assistance to traditional communities in New Mexico.

The RCRP has been working to broaden the role an institution can play in the planning process, for example providing plans or models, but also the technical assistance to prototype interventions in a high tech lab, shops and other collaborative work centers. For example, During the Chimayo Pop-Up UNM students and RCRP staff were able to generate tangible community deliverables such as the Little Library and reading room furniture beyond conventional reports, boards or presentations. The pop-up was rained out, however the partnerships developed in the process have expressed interest in participating in the next iteration of place-based projects. These deliverables will be used in Chimayó for the Plaza del Cerro Redevelopment Plan and process, which includes an Adobe Remodeling Workshop that connects students and residents to local traditional materials and community experts. The clustered focus in Rio Arriba County has built relationships garnered around the focus on place. Specifically, RCRP has been working on projects based in Española, Abiquiu, and Chimayó to revitalize regional cultural assets such as plazas. The Power of Ten is a tool developed by Project for Public Spaces that allows a community to evaluate assets and activities in public space, and is an accessible framework from which

“We need a new landscape where rural and urban meet, based on traditional knowledge yet ready to test and accept new technologies that don't contribute to it's destruction. We are entering a new frontier if we are open to learning from the past and preparing for the future and its approaching changes” (Arellano 2014).
to view what makes a place distinctive or successful. The Power of Ten is a tool that offers a lens of abundance, or an opportunity rich vantage point in which to analyze places, identifying the resources, opportunities and potential collaborators in the region as well as service gaps in an area. Identifying additional place-based and community resources such as individuals, organizations or institutions that might be potential partners would be particularly important for the RCRP and any local institution pursuing Placemaking.

One limitation in the RCRP Placemaking process has been to have community anchor organizations or institutions take over the momentum generated from the student projects. If a goal is to manifest community deliverables that are meaningful and reflect a community’s long term commitment to place, then “placekeepers” or people invested in the long-term commitment to place should be identified to become stewards of iterative momentum in place while the longer planning process takes place. For example, a number of Facebook pages have been initiated in RCRP Placemaking projects that have over a hundred followers and more join sporadically as pages stay open. A strategy for social media should be developed with a local placekeeper to keep the pages alive and serving the community when student investment wanes. Meaningful community deliverables ignite the virtuous cycle and represent small wins to build upon. As the interest around place grows, and new partnerships are generated from the processes, the projects will be more significant and so must the community deliverables to keep the virtuous cycle in action.

Flexible conceptual frameworks, such as the Living Culture Corridor Plan focus on place capital building action in Rio Arriba County. Plans lead to new projects with a deeper insight into how visions, goals and objectives may be implemented within a Placemaking process with multiple access points for engagement. The Placemaking process then develops community participatory driven objectives for implementing site-specific projects such as a little library, sidewalk mural or crosswalk, pop-up etc. Prototyping these ideas with technical assistance and support by institutions allows the ideas to be tested in real time, generating feedback, and providing an accessible and interactive experience of change in place. The RCRP and partner’s flexible and responsive design process allow the projects to evolve in distinct communities and can respond as needed by collaborating with diverse partner assets. Participation in new visioning and prototyping projects at multiple levels not only benefits the conversation about how place is made but also the active community role in the development of place, and the cultivation of love of place in tangible ways. Principles and Recommendations for the development of a Querencia Placemaking model follow the guidelines developed by Project for Public Spaces to improve community places, and the Life-Planning Attributes developed by Robert Thayer in Life Place: Bioregional Thought & Practice.

Querencia Placemaking Model Principles:

- Emphasize local resources and the ‘deep wisdom’ of long-term residents committed to place. Treat community as experts
- Integrate indigenous ecological knowledge and tradition with new planning technologies and tools. Look to local place making examples for better understanding of how New Mexican spaces function and how to plan a more context-sensitive built environment
- Develop nested and iterative community visions and place making solutions that represent diverse stakeholders
- Employ Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper mechanisms to achieve long-term community vision through prototyping low-hanging fruit: Start small and experiment. Build on successes and exponential momentum for long-term applications that create places not just designs
- Foster lasting interdisciplinary partnerships by creating planning opportunities that engage healthy communities across disciplines and use placemaking as a level playing field to work out collaborative solutions based in place
- Design an enduring built environment to frame public space and successive, flexible social programming that benefits locals and seasonal visitors
- Create places that respond to and fit the characteristics of the bioregion and cultural landscape
- Build local economies through bioregional economic development, alternative educational experiences in place, creative incubators and markets that emphasize regional economic self-reliance
- Link a public health agenda to a public space agenda. Integrate querencia based HIA in public health planning (RCRP 2014)
- Create a comprehensive public space and health agenda, and influence policy to reflect place-based governance, interdisciplinary collaborations and regional cooperation
- Garner political will to support public spaces, inclusive civic mutualismo and place-based planning focused planning processes
- Take an Asset based approach to facilitate a positive platform to view and take part in the virtuous cycle, a favorable chain of events that reinforce themselves through feedback loops, and to engage in deeply local solutions
- Reaffirm Community Planning as more asset-based, community-driven and engaged in the equitable shaping of place
- Reaffirm role of autonomous self-reliant citizen planning societies to facilitate placekeeping over the long-term.
Recommendations for the Development of Cultural Landscape Assets in a Living Culture Corridor

Querencia Placemaking intends to make community development goals transparent and tangible by managing community expectations and building on the success of existing assets and the iterative momentum of community engaged planning within a supportive bioregional network.

Develop Vibrant Regional Relationships: Living Cultural Corridors

- Organize around the watershed-to foster life-place relationships to the bioregion.
- Continue to develop access to transportation centers supporting multimodalities like trains, local and regional buses, automobiles, equestrian, bicycle and pedestrian pathways.
- Use Creative Placemaking and arts engagement- to grow the Northern New Mexican creative economy. Create markets around creative and cultural tourism, geo-tourism and educational/experience based tourism.
- Foster regional learning relationships and alternative educational opportunities by creating partnerships between statewide educational institutions like UNM, and local educational institutions such as Northern New Mexico Community College.
- Conduct participatory asset mapping to uncover and connect a more comprehensive understanding of place-based assets, resources and potential partners. (Asset mapping processes helps facilitators of a community development process to engage citizens in a positive approach that resists community burn out or an apathetic response to overwhelming problems).

Plan for Streets and Corridors as Places

- Improve streets as public spaces to reflect formal and informal social interactivity in place.
- Promote New Mexico Main Streets and the development of Complete Streets, Shared Streets, Safe Routes to Schools, Livable Streets or other shared mobility models when redeveloping streets within the living cultural corridor.
- Promote traditional infrastructure management systems like acequias and alamedas to support thriving ecoservice corridors. Develop partnerships for native plantings, phytoremediation and heirloom seed banks.
- Preserve distinctive character and place names. Facilitate heritage landscapes, clear skies, open roads and dense cultural nodes along Living Culture Corridors. Establish a corridor culture through local and regional networks, cultural enterprise and accessibility.
- Create development incentives for Corridor and node areas in a state of blight or vacancy, especially those commercial areas impacted by highway development.

Figure 22. Streets as Places: iterations on place, 2015. Resource Center for Raza Planning
RECOMMENDATIONS

Facilitate Places for Social Learning: La Resolana

- Invest in partnerships by following best practices of building teams and delegating roles, link in accountability to tangible results and management plans. Cultivate interactive collaborations across disciplines to uncover relationships of place to healthy communities.
- Invest in places that revitalize civic life and stewardship. Foster multigenerational places like public gathering spaces, centers, historic dance halls, plazas and community living rooms or salas, to interact and share place knowledge, do community service, and have fun.
- Create organizational hubs that support business development and management skills, and provide access to other professionals and resources. Examples could be: co-working spaces, craft labs, skill-share spaces, workshops, tool libraries, cooperative manufacturing facilities or action tanks. Organizations like these could serve as cultural infrastructure and host collaborations with local education and planning institutions, field schools, researchers, artists and other multi-disciplinarians.
- Promote experience-based social programming and targeted tourism. Invest in attracting “geotourists” who spend more time and money locally, and seek out authentic local experience based travel.
- Develop phone and map apps for comprehensive cultural network tours for New Mexico through the Placemaking and marketing strategy of Living Cultural Corridors. Include asset based storytelling in promotional material for tourism and in education programs that appeals to visitors and locals.

Plaza Revitalization

- Revitalize plazas and parks as multi-use destinations that provide community private and public common spaces that host activity beyond commercial social interaction including community incubators, youth engagement organizations, co-working spaces or other alternative spaces.
- Start small and experiment utilizing community capacity to build skills and places
- Revitalize local use of plazas providing locals a reason to be there and use the Power of Ten to measure assets in place
- Protect community character and distinction of plazas by creating flexible community private and common public spaces
- Connect pedestrian accessibility to corridors, new developments and roads and into plazas
- Start small with restoration or other traditional skill building workshops to build skills among youth and other locals

Layering local uses with visitor uses makes place more accessible and better used. Services and social programing like co-working, social learning or incubator spaces and markets could activate the plaza in ways locals and the economy respond to.

Figure 23. Social Learning Spaces: iterations on Place, 2015. Resource Center for Raza Planning
Local Application: Plaza Revitalization Example

**Española Plaza**  
**Start Small:** Develop street based placemaking to highlight mainstreet and plaza interface. An iteration would be to create flexible prototypes for social programming and daily reasons to visit the plaza.

**Aim Big:** Address corridor safety for pedestrians with traffic calming, intersection repair or other creative interventions that indicates the areas as a shared mobility space (RCRP 2013).

**Abiquiu Plaza**  
**Start Small:** Develop wayfinding through Creative Placemaking process with local artists. A small scale solution could be temporary wayfinding that offers seasonal flexibility for the influx of tourists, privacy of locals and Living Culture Corridor visibility. Another iteration could be a permanent wayfinding project, information kiosks or murals.

**Aim Big:** Revitalize place based assets like the Ferran Gym and and West side of the plaza through social learning projects and integrate local educational experiences with traditional skill building and the *mutualismo* traditions of the community (RCRP 2015).

**Plaza del Cerro**  
**Start Small:** Develop project with local youth and senior organizations to do a community service limpieza of the site, the next iteration could be a community garden and tool sharing shed reflecting traditional use. An adobe restoration workshop is being developed to restore a room in the Westside of the Plaza.

**Aim Big:** Restore other sides of plaza through iterative projects. Develop community appropriate uses for the plaza for the long term goal of making a place that is highly residential and used by all generations in the community (RCRP 2013).

In smaller communities wayfinding could be utilized in creative ways to indicate public (or private) space, areas of interest, landmarks, services or local business corridors. Painted wayfinding in a more insular community might range from temporary festival street painting to permanent interpretive signage designed by local artists. Partnerships might include local historical organizations, artists, seniors, youth, churches, lowriders, family organizations, and plaza residents. Starting small with a community picnic or community garden and aiming big for a revitalized life-place culture.

Small scale solutions can be prototyped in place. This process starts small and aims big by testing out ideas with community participation in phases. Plaza restoration starts with a adobe workshop and collaboration to restore a room in Plaza de Cerro. Iterations on the place could involve social learning or healing spaces to activate restored rooms, gardens, acequia landscapes, traditional use and function, and provide flexible social programming that responds to community goals for place.

Figure 24. Plaza revitalization: iterations on place, 2015. Resource Center for Raza Planning
RECOMMENDATIONS

Regional Application: The Power of Ten example

The Power of ten is a tool developed by the Project for Public Spaces that uses an asset-based approach to looking at place. As a general framework the Power of ten looks at assets at multiple scales. Looking for place-based assets and partners gives a starting point to build stakeholders, develop tools of engagement and pinpoint areas for tactical intervention. Partnerships through field-schools, participatory planning, workshops & training, pop-ups, social programming, and other local initiatives centered on place offer exponential opportunities for collaboration.

Figure 25. Española Plaza Power of Ten, 2015. Resource Center for Raza Planning
A Querencia Placemaking model leverages regional assets and opportunities in order to create an autonomous, reciprocal and integrated systems approach to long term planning, utilizing home grown concepts for community development. Iterative placemaking allows partnerships to participate in a web of mutual benefit. The Virtuous Placemaking Cycle allows for success and failure within a network focused on place, vs. project-centered approaches to problems whose success or failure fails to address the enormity of contemporary problems. Asset-based planning starts in opportunity and available resources. This lens of abundance generates local accessibility to solutions. Wangari Matahi, founder of the Green Belt Movement, advanced community empowerment and design with the approach that solutions are connected the same way problems are. Mathai created resources in situ by mobilizing woman to do the simple radical action of planting trees in response to the observation that resource degradation and the immovable top-down governance caused recurring struggle in her community. Planting trees was an entry point for better environmental management, community empowerment and improved livelihood (The Greenbelt Movement 2015). This simple, but elegant solution spurred a massive restoration effort by networks of women building community capacity for grassroots actions, where each woman represented an important agent of change. Planting resources in this way connects the concept of querencia as love of place, and the action of querencia as love of place. Likewise, connecting New Mexican solutions to a placed-focused approach like Placemaking has the potential to galvanize community drive and position limited resources for planning and development that are localized within community asset-networks and cultural landscapes. A Querencia Placemaking model plans for the heart of Northern New Mexico.

“No matter how much things change, that which gave us life, sustained us, will always be with us, here, aquí --en el pecho, en el corazón”

(Levi Romero 2008)
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