

City of Santa Fe, New Mexico

memo

DATE: December 12, 2014
TO: City Council
FROM: Kate Noble, Acting Director, Housing and Community Development Dept
RE: People to the Plaza Report

*All
for KN*

ITEM AND ISSUE:

During the summer of 2014 the People to the Plaza Resolution (2014-49) was passed with the following stated goals: bring more people to the downtown area, increase public safety, and revitalize the downtown economy. The resolution directed staff to bring forward recommendations in the following areas if deemed necessary: increase public safety, enhance the experience of the plaza, provide additional parking opportunities, and improve economic development.

Economic Impact:

In order to assess the economic impact of the resolution, the Economic Development Division (EDD) developed a survey for individuals and businesses.

- 270 surveys were collected in August 2014.
- 217 were completed by individuals and 53 were completed by businesses.
- 21% of businesses reported an increase in transactions and 60% of businesses were satisfied with the initiative.
- Among individuals, 75% said they would be drawn to the Plaza more often as a result of the People to the Plaza Initiative.
- 90% of respondents wanted to see more food trucks on the plaza.

Public Safety Impact:

Listed below are key findings of the increased police presence on the plaza, each point contrasts summer 2013 to summer of 2014. This data represents calls placed to the Santa Fe Police Department regarding issues on the plaza:

- Disorderly conduct complaints fell from 96 to 60 (62 percent)
- Larceny related calls fell from 6 to 2 (67 percent)
- The number of violent disputes called in fell from 12 to 4 (67 percent)
- Number of reported illegally parked vehicles decreased from 9 to 3 (67 percent)

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Public bathrooms and additional parking during plaza events.
- Additional tables for seating
- Additional signage to help visitors and individuals navigate to open/assigned parking
- A program to alleviate the number of homeless people that frequent the plaza

Plans for Summer 2015:

- The Parks Department plans to order 8 additional table sets.
- City staff will work to improve access to and awareness of parking and bathrooms.
- Staff will work to improve the setup logistics (loading, truck parking) with Bandstand and other special events.



Dear Friends and Fellow Santa Feans:

Through more than 400 years of our community's history the Plaza has been the place where people come together. Now, as a city of more than 80,000 people from all over the world and with millions of different ideas, we still need a place to meet and be together. We need to be one Santa Fe, and to embrace all of our diversity and differences. We need community common ground and making that possible is the core of the People to the Plaza initiative.

This summer we began by making a few changes on the Plaza: reducing vehicles, providing seating and supporting music, food and community celebration. We committed to evaluating the changes and understanding how we can make our historic city center the best it can be.

This report summarizes the information collected from hundreds of surveys done throughout the summer. We will be working with this analysis and with community partners to continue the effort and to continue to improve things next summer. I hope that in bringing our community to the Plaza that we can truly find common ground and become one Santa Fe.

Thank you for your commitment.

Sincerely,

Mayor Javier M. Gonzales



People to The Plaza Impact Report

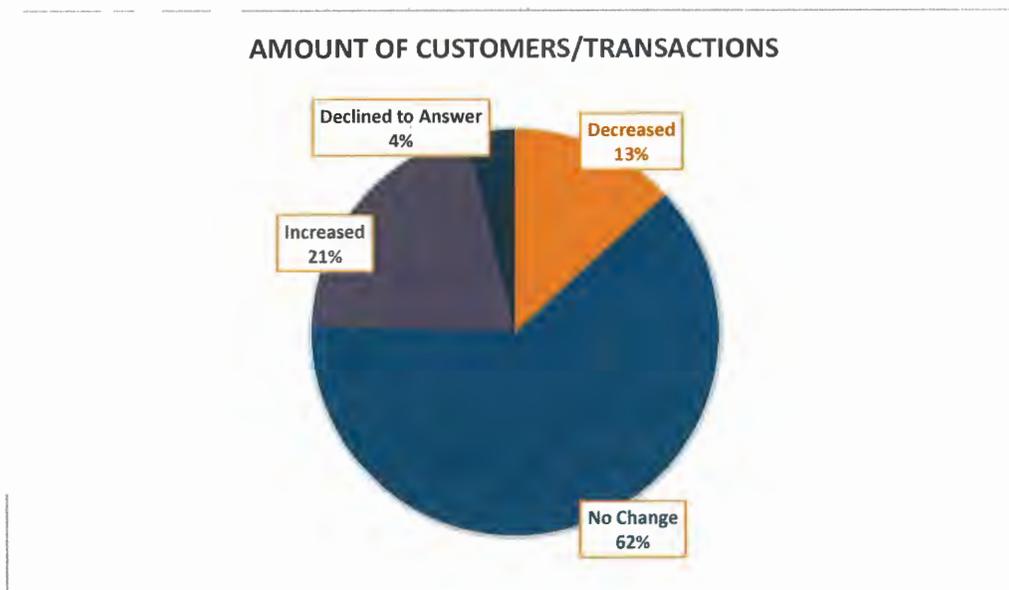
The People to the Plaza Resolution was passed with the goals of bringing more people to the downtown area, increasing public safety and revitalizing the downtown economy.

A key piece of that effort was evaluating the impact and the Housing and Community Development Department has put that analysis.

Over the course of 270 total surveys conducted over the month of August, **217 individuals completed surveys and 53 business representatives completed surveys.** We found that 21% of businesses reported an increase in transactions and 60% of businesses were satisfied with the initiative. Among individuals, 75% said they would be drawn to the Plaza more often as a result of the initiative, and an overwhelming 90% of respondents wanted to see more food trucks on the plaza. The survey is attached as an addendum to this report.

Businesses

Out of 53 respondent businesses, 21% saw an increase in transactions. However, 60% saw no change and 13% of businesses reported a decline in customers/transactions.



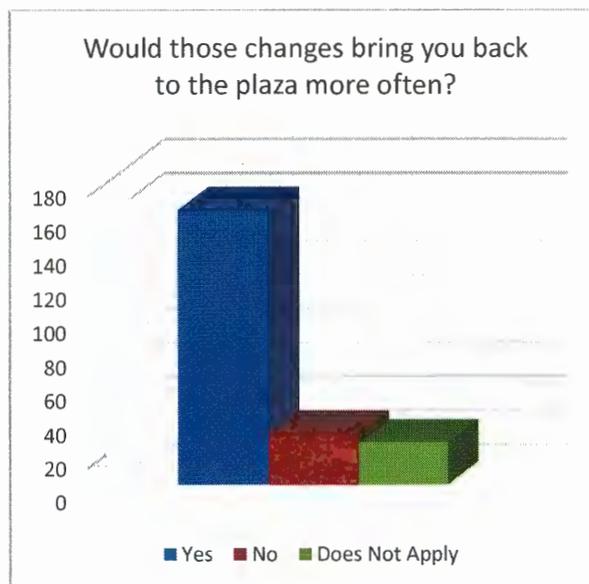


A majority of businesses surveyed say they are very or somewhat satisfied with the People to the Plaza initiative.



Individuals

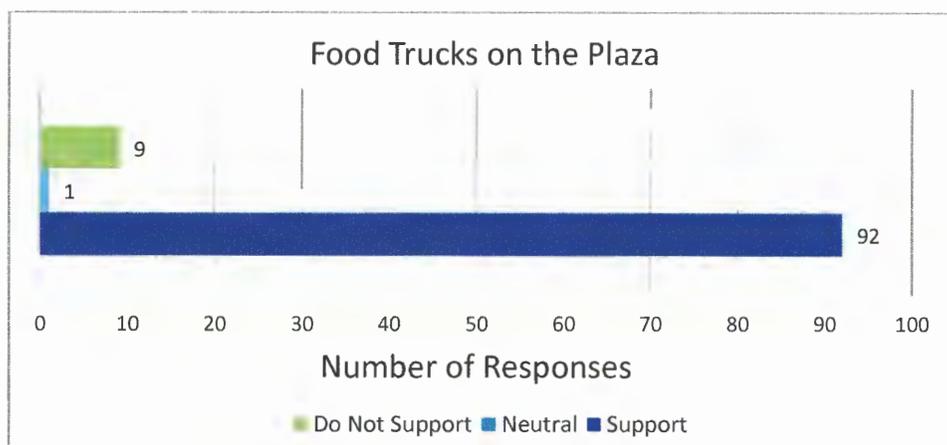
Survey responses were split almost evenly between locals and those who live elsewhere. When asked what the City of Santa Fe could do to encourage more return visits to the Plaza, individuals asked for more music, more food, and more special events. After asking this, we provided a follow up question that asked if they would return more often after those changes were made.





Food Trucks

102 surveys contained questions about food trucks on the Plaza. On eight separate nights during the Bandstand 2014 season, one food truck was allowed to set up on the northwest corner of the Plaza (Palace and Old Santa Fe Trail). With crowds averaging more than 800 people, the food trucks had strong sales and were extremely popular.



One concern raised in a notable number of comments and conversations was the noise caused by the generators used to power the food trucks. To address this, some requested that the City provide access to electricity.

Recommendations

Survey respondents were able to express concerns or make recommendations for issues related to the initiative. The responses were centered around the following issues:

Bathrooms - The top issue raised, by locals and visitors alike, was the lack of bathrooms on the Plaza.

Tables - Business and civilians requested additional tables to fill closed but spacious streets and allow more seating.

Parking - Many respondents asked for more parking in the surrounding area for visitors and additional signage to existing spaces.

Homeless - Several respondents did not feel comfortable on the Plaza because homeless people approached them. Businesses and visitors requested a plan to transition homeless away from the Plaza.



Selected Comments:

Businesses

“There should be a promenade around the Plaza, it should all be a pedestrian zone.”

“The effort to bring more life to the area is appreciated.”

“The increased traffic of people is good, but the bathroom situation is awful.”

“The ENTIRE Plaza should be closed to vehicular traffic; year round – no exceptions.”

Individuals

“The changes seem to work – it’s easy to get around as a pedestrian.”

“There needs to be more picnic tables and more food trucks.”

“I think closing off the streets to traffic is a great idea!”

“Not enough bathrooms.”

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