

Topic: Harvesting Wisdom of the Pueblo and Plaza Design for the Development of Sustainable and Resilient Communities

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Abstract:

Densely populated urban planning aims at the reduction of carbon emissions and preservation of undeveloped land. However, high density often comes with a panacea of mental health, resiliency, and quality of life ails for a community.

This presentation explores the ancient wisdom of historical urban planning and participatory ecosystem management in Northern New Mexico: the pueblo and the plaza combine density design approaches that encourage close contact with natural environments and community networking. Built environments that create a day to day contact with nature could be a crucial strategy for both sustaining healthy ecosystems and the development of resilient and sustainable communities.

To explore these areas, mental health research on the effects of nature on the brain, as well as case studies of countries demonstrating the three leading determinants of social, environmental and economic well-being, worldwide, will be reviewed. Regional communities practicing ancient sustainable methods for over a thousand years at the Taos Pueblo and the innovative adaptation of the Greater World Earthship Community, also in Taos, will be examined as models offering practical solution potential for reshaping neighborhoods to incorporate the pueblo and plaza core design concepts.

Yet, integrating dependence upon nature as well as the recognition of dependence upon each other within built urban environments in communities and neighborhoods in today's challenge of existing urban sprawl and culture of Cartesian Dualism and Capitalism provide an obstacle course that is often seemingly insurmountable. The City of Santa Fe in its vernacular structures and complex cultures offers practical applications of this research in current projects and urban planning; creative responses to the universal challenges faced in local resistance to change and governmental policy.