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# Cuba, New Mexico Trails, Park and Walkability Workshop

Step Into Cuba Alliance

UNM Prevention Research Center

U.S. National Park Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program

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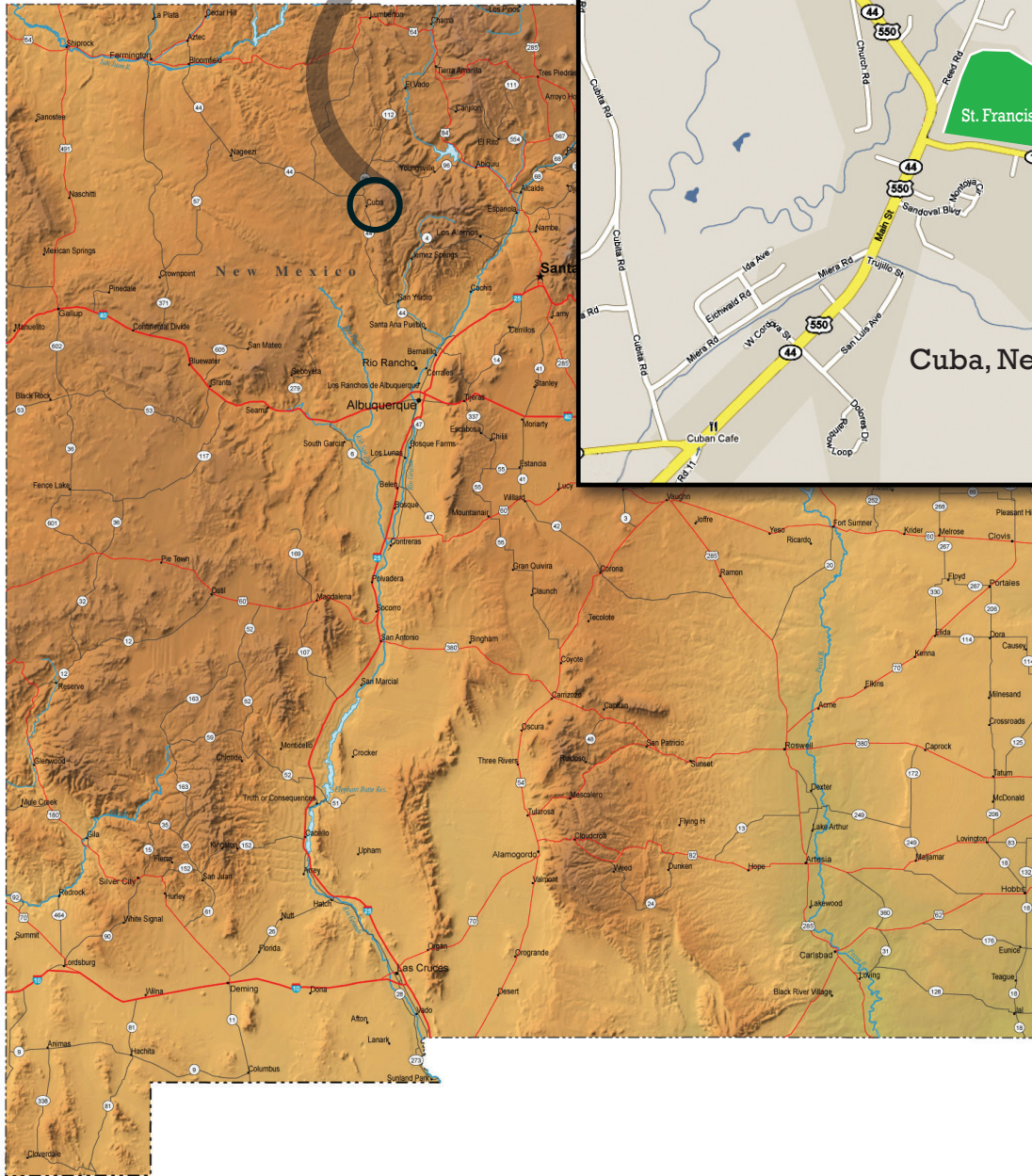
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# Cuba, New Mexico Trails, Park and Walkability Workshop





Map Credit: Google and <http://www.newmexico.org/map/>

## History of Cuba Walkability Initiative and Walkability Workshop

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In 2006, the Nacimiento Medical Foundation (NMF) formed the Step Into Cuba Alliance (the Alliance) comprised of individuals and organizational representatives to guide a community-wide program called Step Into Cuba. This program promotes physical activity through development of sidewalks, paths, trails, social support, and opportunities for lifestyle change. The Alliance is working to create a greener, healthier, and more pedestrian-friendly community with opportunities for extraordinary walking and hiking on surrounding scenic Federal lands. The Alliance has developed strong partnerships with federal, state and local agencies and has received many grants to further its efforts. One outcome of this partnership was the Cuba Trails, Park and Walkability Workshop held May 28, 2009 and summarized in this report.

This report was compiled by Emily Piltch, UNM Prevention Research Center (PRC), Design by Mary Hanrahan (UNM PRC) with contributions and editing assistance from the following Cuba community members, UNM PRC staff and others:

### **Cuba Community:**

JoAnne Hughes, Richard Kozoll, Jeanette Linville, Julie Pederson, Anna Schulte, Elena Snyder

### **UNM Prevention Research Center:**

Theresa Cruz, Sally Davis, Susan DeFrancesco, Pamela Monaghan-Geernaert, Janet Page-Reeves, Wendy Worthington

### **The U.S. National Park Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program**

Attila Bality

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***Note: the observations and recommendations in this report represent the perspectives of participants who attended the May 28, 2009 Cuba Trails, Park and Walkability Workshop.***



## Acknowledgments

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The agencies and coalitions listed below collaborated to organize the Cuba Trails, Park and Walkability Workshop held May 28, 2009 at the Eichwald Center in Cuba, NM. We would like to thank all community members and local and state agency representatives who participated and provided their valuable input into the process of addressing issues of walkability and increased places to walk and recreate in the Village.

We are especially grateful for the support of Mayor Richard Velarde, the members of the Village Council and Ms. Vandora Casados, Village Clerk and Treasurer.

### **Step Into Cuba Alliance**

<http://www.stepintocuba.org/>

Step Into Cuba is a program to promote physical activity through development of sidewalks, paths, trails, social support, and opportunities for lifestyle change. Step Into Cuba is based in Cuba, NM and is guided by a partnership of organizations and individuals – the Step Into Cuba Alliance.

### **University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center**

<http://hsc.unm.edu/chpdp/>

The University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center (PRC) works with communities on evidence-based public health research to improve community and population health and well-being and reduce health disparities. Through a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) the PRC has been working with the Step Into Cuba Alliance for over a year providing technical assistance and documenting the efforts of the partnership.

### **The U.S. National Park Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program**

<http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/>

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) is the community assistance arm of the U.S. National Park Service and supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects.

The NMF Alliance applied through a competitive process and was awarded RTCA assistance for two years. RTCA staff provides technical assistance to communities so they can conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways.

*We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to the landscape architects (members of the NM Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)) who volunteered their time to participate in the Workshop and provide their expertise to the process. Through a national agreement between the RTCA and ASLA, ASLA members offer support to community based trails, open space and greenways projects.*

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## Overview of Walkability Workshop

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On May 28th, 2009, the Nacimiento Medical Foundation Step Into Cuba Alliance, in partnership with the Village of Cuba, the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center (PRC) and the U.S. National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), held a Cuba Trails, Park and Walkability Workshop at the Eichwald Center in Cuba, NM. The Eichwald Center is a community center with an indoor basketball court, a weight room and a room with cardio machines for community members to use. It is located adjacent to the St. Francis of Assisi Park, a generous open space with a walking path, baseball field, playground, picnic area and other park amenities. The park is the hub of activity in Cuba with beautiful views of the close-by Nacimiento Mountains and Cuba Mesa.

The purpose of this workshop was to provide an opportunity for community members and topic area experts to join together and assess the walking and activity opportunities in the community and to provide recommendations for ways to make the community an easier and safer place to be physically active. Forty-five individuals attended the walkability workshop and learned about creative solutions other communities have used to: solve traffic and pedestrian challenges; design trails for people of all abilities; increase safety of walking routes to school; and make park improvements for increased physical activity.

Led by Cuba walking champions (community members who lead walking and hiking groups in and around Cuba), the forty-five workshop participants divided into small groups and conducted “walking audits” throughout Cuba. The groups recorded, in writing and photographs, observations of positive and negative features of their walks. Participants also noted future opportunities for improvements, and specific challenges to safe and pleasant walking. Many area community members came together to share their ideas and discuss these important health and safety issues. Additionally, representatives from a variety of regional and state agencies participated including: the Mid-Region Council of Governments, the NM Safe Routes to School Program, the NM Department of Transportation Region 6, the NM Department of Health and the NM Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

### **The “walking audit” groups assessed conditions at four primary locations in Cuba:**

- 1) The St. Francis of Assisi Park
- 2) U.S. Highway 550
- 3) Village Paths and Walkways
- 4) Safe Walking Routes to the Cuba Independent School District Campus

This report summarizes the observations and recommendations documented by the four groups. It will serve as a guide as sub-committees of the Step Into Cuba Alliance organize efforts to assist in addressing identified challenges.



## St. Francis of Assisi Park

*This section documents observations and recommendations recorded by participants of the "Park Subgroup" during the May 28, 2009 Trails, Park and Walkability Workshop as well as a summary of park projects and accomplishments since the workshop.*

***Note: the observations and recommendations in this report represent the perspectives of participants who attended the May 28, 2009 Cuba Trails, Park and Walkability Workshop.***



# St. Francis of Assisi Park



## DESCRIPTION OF PARK AND WALKING AREA ASSESSED

The St. Francis of Assisi Park is a 26 acre area public park with beautiful views of the Nacimiento Mountains and Cuba Mesa. The park consists of several components including a walking path around the park, a fenced playground area and a picnic area. The park

is viewed as “beautiful and scenic,” an outdoor space for physical activity and family and community gatherings and as a community asset that is the hub of activity in Cuba.

This group followed the designated walking path around the perimeter of St. Francis of Assisi Park and documented observations on how it is to walk around as well as features of the play ground and playing fields.



## Participants

- Jason Binion, Cuba Community
- Erica Chavez, Cuba Community
- Susan DeFrancesco, UNM PRC
- Arletta Hogan, Cuba Community
- Loretta Jacquez, Cuba Community
- Jeanette Linville, Cuba Community
- Owen Meyers, Cuba Community
- Robert Oberdorfer, NMASLA
- Ray Sisneros, Cuba Community

## PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS

### Walking Path & Surfacing

A dirt walking path exists around the perimeter of the park. Several uneven areas and other trip hazards along the walking path contribute to hazardous and uncomfortable walking. The path is often soggy and muddy after rain.

Documented hazards along the path include: prairie dog and gopher holes, ruts (caused by ATVs, trucks, cattle and horses), a pole sticking out of the grass along the path and several old sprinkler system parts.



At the time of the workshop, it was observed that there are few trees along the walking path to provide shade to walkers and no benches to rest.

In March, 2009, volunteers planted over 250 juniper, sumac, winter fat and other species of seedlings throughout the park. Additionally, in mid-May, poles were installed at the north west corner of the park to fill a gap in the existing fence.

It was observed that trash is often found along the walking path (especially on the south side along NM Highway 126). There are trash cans along the play area, but not along the walking path. Also of concern is that there is no clear distinction between the walkway, the parking lot and Highway 126. Additionally, there is no indication to drivers as they pull into the parking area that they are crossing a walking path.

### Site for Natural Play Area

Currently, the park contains a fenced area with playground equipment. The playground equipment was installed in 2007 and workshop participants documented visual need of a safety inspection. The park does contain areas that could accommodate some natural play elements (dirt hills, boulders for climbing, small trails, etc.).

### Signs

A kiosk promoting the Continental Divide Trail (CDT) and Step Into Cuba project was installed at the southwest corner of the park by CDT Alliance Volunteers in April, 2009.

Three informational signs regarding the proper use of the park and hours of the park, do exist, but are not especially easy to read. The signs are located along the front side of the park facing NM Highway 126. Signs around the play area direct park users to clean up after their dogs however no signs regarding dog clean up exist along the walking path.



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## **Parking**

The parking lot is adequate for the number of people currently using the park. Concerns were documented regarding unsafe conditions for pedestrians who walk from their vehicles to access the walking path. Vehicles are often backing up and driving across the walking path as they enter and exit the parking lot and the area around the island near the Eichwald Center.

## **Other**

The park does not have a drinking fountain for residents walking or playing in the park. There is a drinking fountain and bathroom in the Eichwald Center, but the Center is not always open when residents are using the park.

## **DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **General Recommendations**

Overall, the park presents many opportunities for improvements and enhancements.

Following the workshop, a park committee has convened and is discussing possible next steps for enhancing the park. For more information on projects and activities go to <http://stepintocuba.com/>

A "concept/master plan" for the park will consider additions and improvements to encourage use of the park for physical activity.

The following ideas were presented as possible park additions or enhancements:

- A skate park
- Tennis courts
- Basketball courts
- Volleyball courts
- T-ball field
- Handball/racquetball courts
- Walking trails
- Pump track with undulating mounds for BMX bicycle riding
- Shady deciduous trees
- Updating and leveling of baseball diamond and grassy areas
- Multi-use level playing fields
- Rest areas and picnic tables along walking path
- A drip irrigation system and/or water harvesting

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## **Walking Path & Surfacing Recommendations**

- Although there are a variety of path surfacing options, some workshop participants recommended mulch for the walking path (especially where mud is a problem) because mulch is easier to walk on, softer for knees and hips and an unlimited source
- A bench installed under the pinon trees would provide opportunity for walkers needing to rest
- Using soil to build up parts of the walking path could help avoid water collecting on the path and could make the path the same level along the entire loop. (It was suggested that the County and school have dirt that can be used to raise the path). Leveling the path surface would reduce the number of possible trip hazards
- Extending the walking path on the corners of the park to have the trail make right angles rather than curves would increase walking distance around the park
- Consider opportunities for new walking path links around the perimeter of the park

## **Site for Natural Play Area Recommendations**

- New play areas could be located near the Eichwald Center and current play area so parents who are at the picnic area can watch their children play
- The County and school have dirt that could be used to create an earthen berm for a play area
- Water diversion may be the dry ditch used for runoff on the east end of the park

## **Signs Recommendations**

- It was suggested to potentially have a sign providing the history of the park
- A sign identifying the walking path for potential users could help promote trail use
- Additional signs directing park users to clean up after their dogs around the path area would also be helpful
- More readable signs regarding regulations and rules of park use would help with promoting guidelines of park usage and beautification

## **Other Recommendations**

- Provide additional trash cans along the walking path
- Conduct a playground area safety inspection
- Devise strategy to slow traffic entering park area including near baseball field and around island in front of community center



- Explore opportunities for installing additional places for children to play
- Installing a drinking fountain is likely not feasible in the short-term, but could be a long-term goal

Below is a map with coordinating numbered explanations of the Park drawn by a Landscape Architect with the workshop participants input, and desired additions or changes to make the park more activity-friendly.



1. Field needs proper irrigation system
2. Conflicts could occur between pedestrians and cars backing up to exit parking lot
3. Suggestion of earthen berm
4. Former volleyball area could be revitalized with community interest
5. Children's play area needs safety inspection
6. Opportunity for trail expansion around corner of park
7. Potential area for Pump Track (contained zone)
8. Opportunity for natural play area
9. Strengthen diversion of drainage
10. Include deciduous shade trees to make area more inviting
11. Location of Kiosk
12. Culvert needs to be covered

### **Park projects and accomplishments since May, 2009 Walkability Workshop:**

- Transplant of 31 pinon and two juniper trees from Sandoval County Fairgrounds to the park (May 29)
- Youth group conducts park clean up and creates sand dune for natural play area (June 26)
- Installation of 21 granite boulders along walking trail (July 21)
- Installation of nine sandstone boulders along walking trail (September 4)
- Planting of wildflowers by Volunteers for the Outdoors (September 12)
- Community members interviewed for park design ideas by UNM Landscape Architecture Graduate Students (December 3)
- Park design workshop held (January 30, 2010)



## U.S. Highway 550

*Note: the observations and recommendations in this report represent the perspectives of participants who attended the May 28, 2009 Cuba Trails, Park and Walkability Workshop.*

# U.S. Highway 550



## DESCRIPTION OF WALKING AREA ASSESSED

This group started at the Eichwald Center and walked on NM Highway 126 to U.S. Highway 550. Observations were made first on the East side of 550 for about ¼ mile; the group then crossed and returned on the West side of the Highway. Although time did not

permit walking the entire length of 550 through Cuba, careful observations were made on this specific segment to document examples of barriers that exist to safe walking along the Highway.

## Participants

Stanley Crespín, NM DOT/Cuba Community  
Sara D'Alessandro, Cuba Community  
Daniel Delgado, Cuba Community  
Anna Hargreaves, NM DOH  
JoAnne Hughes, Cuba Community  
Julie Pederson, Cuba Community

Emily Piltch, UNM PRC  
Stephanie Prieto, Cuba Community  
Sam Smelser, Cuba Community  
Elena Snyder, Cuba Community  
Loretta Tollefson, Mid-region  
Council of Governments  
Elise Welch, NMASLA





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## PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS

### ROAD AND SIDEWALKS

#### Current design and general observations:

U.S. Highway 550 has five lanes of traffic, two each direction and one middle turning lane. The road is unpleasant to walk with loud noises and bad air quality from exhaust of high traffic flow including large diesel semi-trucks.

Some sidewalks exist (built in 1967) on both sides of the street. Those existing sidewalks are 3.5 feet wide, with many uneven sections and portions in a state of disrepair. The roadway is well lit by large light posts; however there is no "pedestrian scale" lighting to illuminate the sidewalk and roadway for pedestrians. The highway is part of the Jemez Mountain Trail National Scenic Byway designation.

#### DOCUMENTED CONCERNS ABOUT EXISTING SIDEWALKS:

- Trip hazards (like uneven walkways)
- Many unused sidewalk cuts for driveways
- Surface erosion and obstructions such as light posts in the middle of the sidewalk that make safe travel for electric chairs, wheelchairs or strollers challenging
- Walking audit participants observed some trash and debris along sidewalks

The portions of the sidewalk that are missing include: south of the post office on the east side of U.S. Highway 550 and south of the Dollar Store to the Cuba Health Center on the west side of 550.







There are no buffers separating the sidewalk from the road. Additionally there is no landscaping (streetscaping) nor are there separate bike paths.



There are many signs along sidewalks, blocking sidewalks and cluttering visibility, including commercial signs in public space and old, outdated signs.



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## INTERSECTIONS AND CROSSWALKS

At the time of the workshop, there was only one crosswalk on U.S. Highway 550. This crosswalk is located between the Catholic Church and the hardware store, put in place for the Catholic School. The crosswalk is not striped on the roadway, lacks ramp access or curb cuts for strollers or wheel chair users and has no signs (prior to



the crosswalk) alerting drivers before they approach the crossing area. Additionally, there are no landings on either side of 550 for pedestrians/wheel chair users to wait safely. There are no islands or medians for pedestrians to wait between north and south bound traffic.

## GENERAL SAFETY

- Blind curves on NM Highway 126 (east of U.S. Highway 550) make for unsafe walking between St. Francis of Assisi Park and 550
- Speed limits are posted, but traffic appears to travel above the limit
- There are no speed bumps nor other traffic calming features along the highway
- Large semi-trucks make walking particularly unpleasant and unsafe
- There are no safe routes to the Catholic School on 550 and students do not have access from more than one side of the school
- There are drunk and/or loitering pedestrians along the highway near the grocery store, a concern for both drivers and walkers



## DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### CROSSING:

- Consider the concept of funneling pedestrians to a few crossings rather than designating many crosswalks
- Possible crosswalk locations suggested by workshop participants include: Cuba Post Office, Del Prado Restaurant and crossing of U.S. Highway 550 at NM Highway 126
- Install median islands or “pedestrian refuges” when appropriate to slow traffic and increase safety for pedestrians
- Consider bulb-outs (extensions of the sidewalk) to shorten the distance pedestrians need to cross the street



*Example of possible improvement*

### SIDEWALKS AND SAFETY:

- Sidewalks need to be repaired, widened to meet ADA standards and connected
- Relocate light posts (could be accomplished when sidewalk rehabilitation takes place)
- Consider physical barriers between pedestrians and highway traffic (buffers)
- Look at other small NM towns that are bisected by U.S. highways that have successfully addressed walkability concerns
- Investigate National Scenic Byway guidelines to determine if any guidance exists to address pedestrian issues



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## PRACTICAL AMENITIES AND BEAUTIFICATION STRATEGIES:

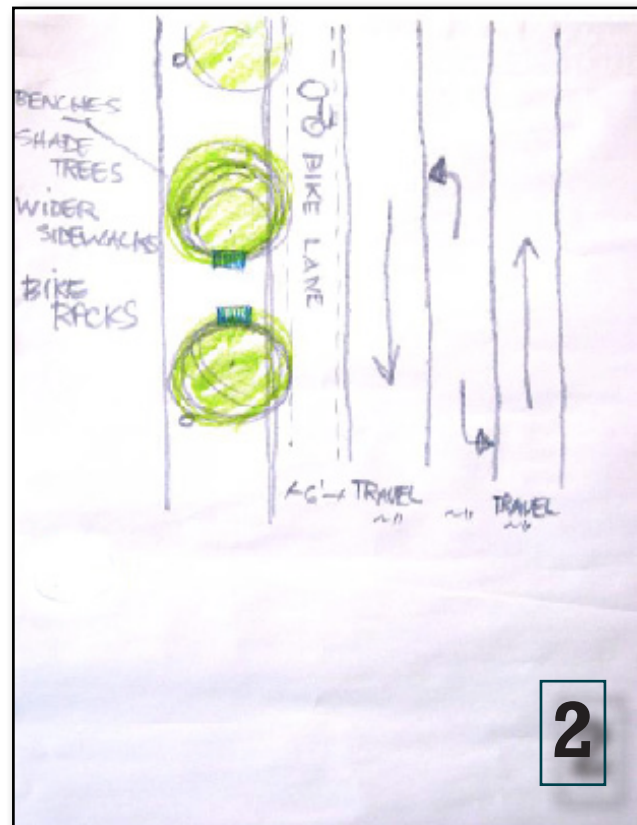
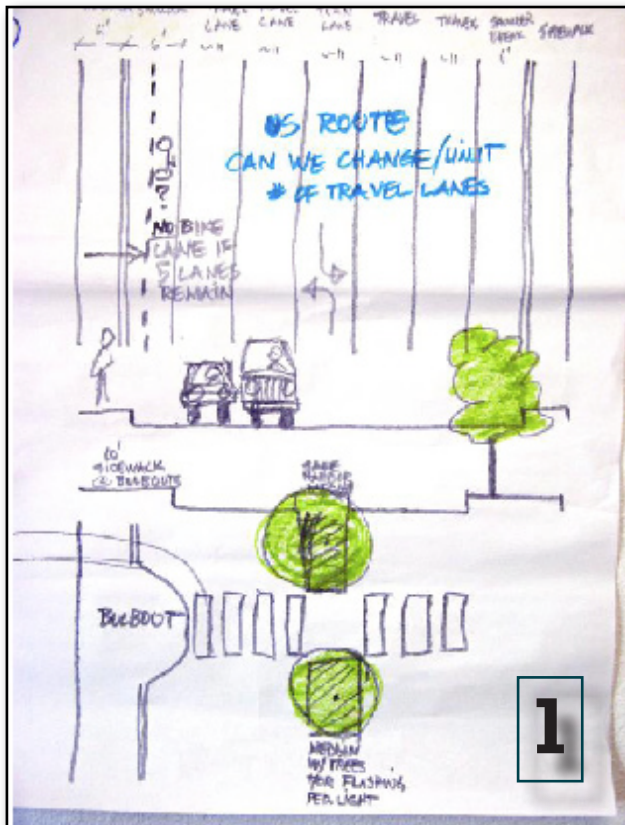
- Consider landscaping or streetscaping
- Consider pedestrian scale lighting
- Incorporate public art and capture logging and mining history



*Examples of possible improvement*



With assistance from a landscape architect, the walking audit group developed two concepts for potentially redeveloping U.S. Highway 550 through the Village.



### CONCEPT ONE:

- Maintain four 11' travel lanes with a center turning lane
- Install six foot sidewalks on both sides of the roadway
- Incorporate bulb-outs into all crosswalks
- A dedicated bike lane was not included in this scenario due to lack of space

### CONCEPT TWO

#### (with a complete streets approach):

- Remove one travel lane in each direction
- Retain center turning lane
- Widen sidewalks - incorporate shade trees, bike racks, benches and other pedestrian scale amenities
- Reduce driveway cuts
- Incorporate a six-foot bike lane





## Village Paths and Walkways

*Note: the observations and recommendations in this report represent the perspectives of participants who attended the May 28, 2009 Cuba Trails, Park and Walkability Workshop.*

# Village Paths and Walkways

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## DESCRIPTION OF WALKING AREA ASSESSED

This group walked from the Nacimiento Medical Foundation (NMF) office across U.S. Highway 550 and back. The group then walked along Cordova Ave. to San Luis Ave., up San Luis to the Community Garden, back to Cordova, past the Village offices to the new library and then turned around and walked back on Cordova to the NMF office.

### Participants

Linda Beltran, UNM PRC                      Dick Kozoll, Cuba Community  
Anna Hargreaves, NM DOH                Will Marion, Cuba Community

## PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS

- The region walked is scenic but provides little infrastructure for pedestrians to feel safe walking
- The areas with greatest pedestrian and vehicular use include:
  - The Senior Center complex
  - Low income housing area
  - Police and Fire stations
  - Library
  - Post Office
  - Magistrate Court
  - Dollar Store and Circle K
  - Cuba Health Center and Public Health Office
  - Cuba Food Pantry
  - Community Garden area



- Sidewalks exist in some locations with a few areas in disrepair
- There are no marked crosswalks within the area assessed
- Some drainage problems were observed on the streets as well as litter present
- No lighting exists on the side streets
- Additionally, the housing area has no sidewalks or areas for recreation (Children were observed riding their bikes on the street)

*Housing area has no sidewalks or places for recreation*



*Drainage problems on street*



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## **DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

A crosswalk at U.S. Highway 550 and Cordova Ave. was recommended by workshop participants.

San Luis Ave. needs sidewalks and potentially speed bumps to slow traffic. Pedestrian scale lighting would also make it safer for walkers.

Cordova Ave. has sidewalks needing repair as well as drainage problems. Litter was also observed on the sidewalk. Similar to San Luis, lighting would help make walking a safer activity.

The Low Income Housing Complex has great potential for a small park or recreation area. Children at the complex are without recreation opportunities with the area having no sidewalks or safe places to bike ride. A safe walking path from the complex to the St. Francis of Assisi Park would help promote safe physical activity and use of the Park.



*Note: the observations and recommendations in this report represent the perspectives of participants who attended the May 28, 2009 Cuba Trails, Park and Walkability Workshop.*



# Safe Walking Routes to Cuba Independent School District Campus



## DESCRIPTION OF WALKING AREA ASSESSED

This group walked from the Eichwald Center to the northeast corner of the St. Francis of Assisi Park. The group then walked up County Road 13 through the school campus, past the administration building and on a small road (named "School Loop") to the

Middle School, the Elementary School, the Portable High School and then to the High School area that is under construction. The group walked back up to County Road 13 and then back to the Park. Additionally, the group walked a small warn foot path behind the Park across property that joins up to County Road 13 right before the school loop (at a Y in the road).

## Participants

Jessica Frost, NM Safe Routes to School Coordinator

Anna Schulte, Cuba Community  
Jose Silva, NMDOT

Donna Lovato, Cuba Community  
William Perkins, NMASLA

## PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS

- The Cuba Independent School District campus is located in a beautiful scenic area
- However, there are currently no safe walkways to the Cuba school campus
- Many vehicles enter and exit campus on a variety of different roads
- The School campus is not far walking distance from St. Francis of Assisi Park
- The road leading up to the school (County Road 13) is quite wide



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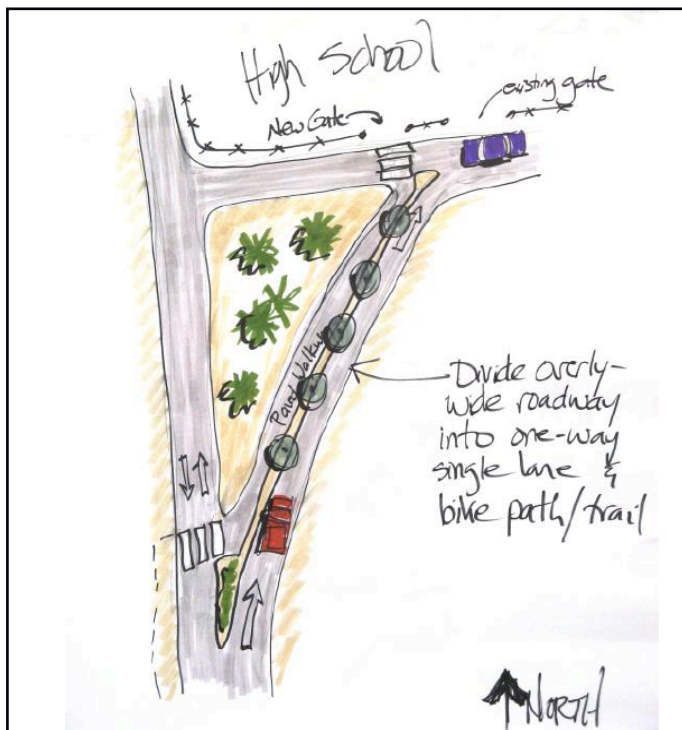
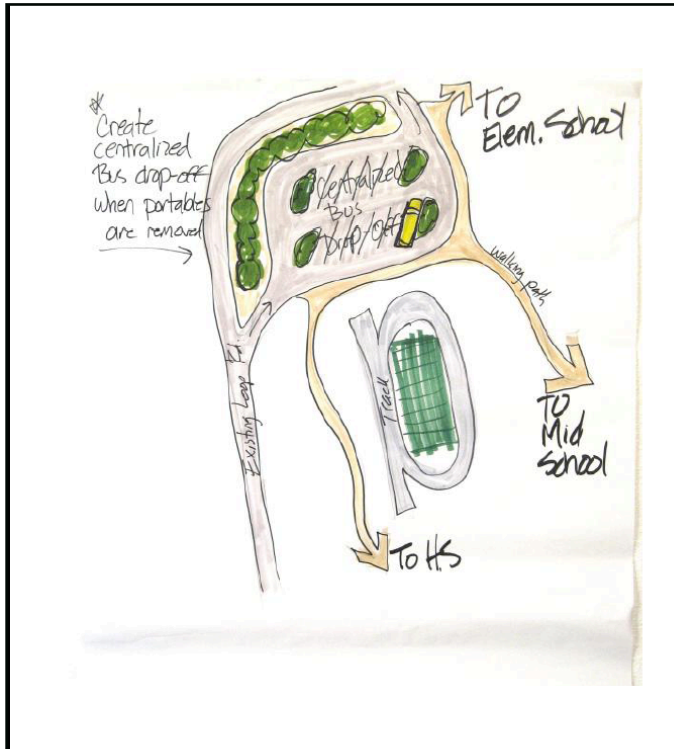
## DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

There are potential improvements to paths and sidewalks to increase the number of Cuba Independent School District students walking or bicycling to school.

- Create a centralized bus drop-off when portable buildings are removed and construction is complete
- Establish separate and safe walking paths to each school building from roads and from bus drop off
- Divide overly wide street into one-way single lane and bike path/trail
- Use existing Elementary School bus bay/stop as a skate park
- An approach to increasing walkability and reducing traffic and school bus congestion is to develop a drop-off site at St. Francis of Assisi Park adjacent to the baseball diamond. Students could then walk to school via a "walking school bus" (WSB). A WSB is a strategy many communities use to encourage students to walk to school even if they are typically bussed to the campus or driven in a vehicle. Adult volunteers walk with groups of students from the "alternate" drop off site to the school. These students will then have had 20-30 minutes of physical activity before the school day begins.



With assistance from a landscape architect the group generated ideas of possible improvements for making the school campus safer for pedestrians.





## Overall Recommendations and Next Steps

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At the end of the workshop, all participants came together to discuss next steps in the process to make the community an easier and safer place to be physically active. Below is a summary of the discussion:

- Distribute the summary report to the Village Council and post on the Step into Cuba website
- Document the community process and activities of promoting walkability
- Work with the Step Into Cuba Alliance and general community members to create a Master Concept Plan for moving ideas forward
- Organize committees to work on recommendations from each venue assessed during the workshop
- Involve youth in "next steps" to ensure their ideas are incorporated
- Some additional ideas for promoting safe walking and activity
  - Consider potential surfacing options for trails: asphalt, base course from county, mulch, other possibilities
  - Pursue potential walking trail around Sandoval County Fairgrounds
  - Discuss plan for maintenance of existing and newly formed walking routes
  - Coordinate with Prescription Trails project
  - It was reported that the Village has funding for a basketball court to be developed in the St. Francis of Assisi Park
  - Ideas to promote hiking near-by, explore possibilities for promoting Cuba Mesa as venue
    - Perhaps use U.S. Forest Service Administrative Site as location for trail head
    - Challenge to overcome: Cuba Mesa crosses private lands
    - Eventually, promote Cuba Mesa route on Step Into Cuba website





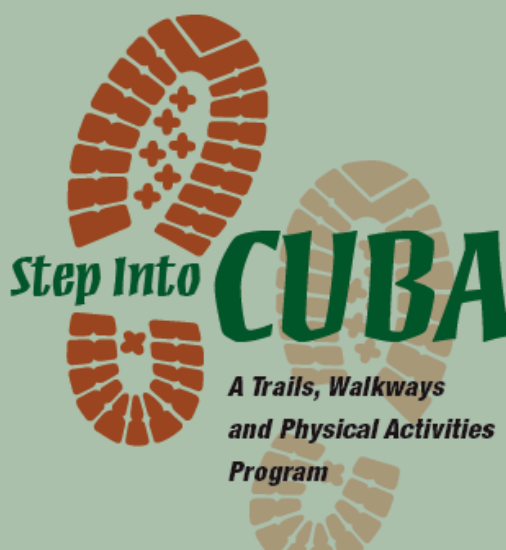


*Note: the observations and recommendations in this report represent the perspectives of participants who attended the May 28, 2009 Cuba Trails, Park and Walkability Workshop.*




# Appendices

## POSTER



**Step Into CUBA**  
A Trails, Walkways  
and Physical Activities  
Program

Coordinated by Nacimiento Medical Foundation



# CUBA TRAILS & WALKABILITY WORKSHOP

**Thursday, May 28th 4-7:30pm**  
**St. Francis of Assisi Park – Eichwald Recreation Center**

Join the Step Into Cuba Alliance to:

- ▶ Improve US 550 for Pedestrians
- ▶ Improve Village Sidewalks
- ▶ Improve St. Francis of Assisi Park
- ▶ Identify needed trails & walkways

**Come share ideas about making Cuba walker-friendly. We need your input!**


### Project Goal

To promote a healthy lifestyle by increasing walking and hiking in Cuba and on the surrounding scenic Federal lands.

### Light Refreshments

**For more information contact:**  
**Jeanette or Aletta at 575-289-3718**

This fact sheet is being provided by The University of New Mexico's Prevention Research Center, a member of the Prevention Research Centers Program, supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cooperative agreement number U49-CE-00061-05. For more information, please contact the UNM Prevention Research Center at (505) 272-4462. 04-09-12






**The Step Into Cuba Alliance invites Cuba residents to a Trails, Park & Walkability Workshop**


**Come share ideas about making Cuba walker-friendly.**

*Date: Thursday, May 28th from 4 – 7:30pm. Light refreshments*  
*Location: St. Francis of Assisi Park – Eichwald Recreation Center*

## TRAILS, PARKS & WALKABILITY WORKSHOP

Learn about creative solutions to solving traffic and pedestrian conflicts, trail design for all people, safe routes to school and park improvements for increased physical activity. Participants should plan to spend time outside looking at some of our trails and sidewalk issues. The ideas generated at this workshop will become the foundation of a Cuba Trails & Walkability Plan to be developed over the next 12 months.

For more information on the Trails & Walkability Workshop or the Step Into Cuba Alliance please contact the Nacimiento Medical Foundation Office at **575.289.3718**



This postcard is being provided by The University of New Mexico's Prevention Research Center, a member of the Prevention Research Centers Program, supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cooperative agreement number U49-OP-000061-05. For more information, please contact the UNM Prevention Research Center at (505) 272-4462, 05-09



## INVITATION

May \_\_\_\_, 2009

Dear \_\_\_\_\_;

On behalf of the Step into Cuba Alliance, the Nacimiento Medical Foundation (NMF) requests your presence at:

*the Cuba Trails and Walkability Workshop*  
Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup>  
4:00-7:30 PM  
St. Francis of Assisi Park - Eichwald Recreation Center  
*refreshments provided*

As a leader in our community we hope you will consider joining us for this important event where residents will come together to learn and provide feedback on improving availability for walking in and around the Village. Workshop participants will learn about creative solutions to solving traffic and pedestrian conflicts, trail design for all people, safe routes to school and potential park improvements for increased physical activity. Participants will spend time outside looking at and discussing some of our trails and sidewalk issues.

*The ideas generated at this workshop will become the foundation of a  
Cuba Trails & Walkability Plan to be developed over the next 12 months.*

The Step into Cuba Alliance represents many agencies and organizations that share a goal of making Cuba a healthier community. Many partners have come together to organize this workshop including: the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center, the National Parks Service, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program that are all committed to supporting pedestrian safety improvements in the greater Cuba area.

For more information on the Trails & Walkability Workshop or the Step into Cuba Alliance please contact Nacimiento Medical Foundation at (575) 289-3718 and ask for Jeanette or Arletta.

We look forward to seeing you there,

Sincerely,

Richard Kozoll, MD, MPH  
NMF Board Member  
Coordinator, *Step Into Cuba*

Jeanette Linville, BS  
NMF Program Director



## **Trails & Walkability Workshop Eichwald Community Center**

**May 28, 2009**

### **AGENDA**

4 – 4:45PM

A. Welcome & Introductions by Mayor Velarde & Attila Bality (National Park Service)

Overview of the Step Into Cuba Program – Dr. Kozoll

Slide Show of what is and what could be for Cuba's park, trails, and sidewalks.

4:45 – 6PM

B. Field Work

Break up into 3-4 groups with clipboards & worksheets to go out and see the issues at 3/4 sites quick audit:

- 550 through town,
- St. Francis of Assisi Park,
- Park to School Complex,
- Village Complex sidewalks

6 – 7PM

C. Mapping & Brainstorming

Groups record findings on large scale maps. Develop graphic representations of ideas. Group reports on findings.

7-7:30PM

D. Identify Next Steps, volunteer groups, action plans.



WORKSHOP AUDIT TOOL

**Trails, Park & Walkability Workshop**  
How walkable is the Village of Cuba?

May 28, 2009

Group Name / Area \_\_\_\_\_

Sidewalks	Yes	No	Comments/suggestions/concerns
Are there sidewalks on both sides of the street?			
<b>If no, where are sidewalks needed?</b>			
Are portions of the sidewalk missing?			
<b>If yes, provide location.</b>			
Do poles, signs, shrubs or other items block the sidewalk?			
<b>If yes, provide location.</b>			
Is the surface of the sidewalk smooth and even?			
Is there litter, debris or snow (in winter) on the sidewalk?			
Is the sidewalk wide enough, especially for individuals with strollers, or wheelchairs and other disabilities to feel safe?			
<b>Provide width: _____ ft _____ in</b>			
Are there many busy driveways through the sidewalks?			
Is the sidewalk separated from traffic with a buffer (separation) between sidewalk and street?			
<b>If yes, provide width: _____ ft _____ in</b>			
Are there separate bike paths to keep bicyclists off sidewalks?			
<b>If yes, do signs indicate bike paths?</b>			
Is there landscaping along sidewalk?			
<b>If yes, is it well maintained?</b>			
Other concerns to document?			



**Trails, Park & Walkability Workshop**  
**How walkable is the Village of Cuba?**

May 28, 2009

Group Name / Area \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Trails, Park & Walkability Workshop**  
**How walkable is the Village of Cuba?**

May 28, 2009

Group Name / Area \_\_\_\_\_

Safety	Yes	No	Comments/suggestions/concerns
Is drunk driving a concern along roadways? <b>If so, provide location.</b>			
Do drivers drive too fast? <b>List posted speed limit.</b>			
Are there features such as speed humps or speed tables to slow traffic?			
Do drivers drive too close to walkways or bike paths?			
Do drivers yield to pedestrians?			
Do drivers obey stop signs?			
Do drivers use turn signals?			
Are there many trucks on roadways?			
Are there blind curves?			
Are there segments of walkways that are isolated from houses or commercial areas and are of particular concern? <b>If yes, provide location.</b>			
Is there adequate lighting along walkways and bike paths? <b>If not, provide location.</b>			
Do crime and / or drug activity occur? <b>If yes, provide location.</b>			
Are aggressive or rude people...or loitering problems in specific locations? <b>If yes, provide location.</b>			
Do dogs frighten pedestrians in specific locations? <b>If yes, provide location.</b>			
Other?			

**Trails, Park & Walkability Workshop**  
**How walkable is the Village of Cuba?**

**May 28, 2009**

**Group Name / Area** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>For Trails &amp; Schools</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments/suggestions/concerns</b>
Are there trails to and from schools, places of work or shopping, separate from roadways? <b>If no, provide location where needed.</b> <b>If yes, is the surface all weather?</b>			
Are there trails to walk for fitness or leisure near peoples' homes and places of work? <b>If no, provide location where needed.</b> <b>If yes, is the surface all weather?</b>			
Are there trails for people to walk their dogs? <b>If yes, provide location.</b>			
Are there bike paths, separate from traffic? <b>If yes, are they well marked?</b>			
Are there cattle guards, fences, waterways or other obstacles impeding trails or bike paths? <b>If yes, provide location.</b>			
Are there gaps in the trails or bike paths?			
Do drivers have clear visibility of trails and bike paths? <b>If no, list obstacles.</b>			
Do pedestrians / bicyclists have clear visibility of traffic? <b>If not, list obstacles.</b>			
<b>Just for Schools</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments/suggestions/concerns</b>
Are there safe routes for students to walk to school from a 1 mile radius of the school? <b>If no, what are obstacles?</b>			
Do the students have access to the school grounds from 3 - 4 sides of the property?			
Is there safe and secure bike parking on the school grounds?			
Do crossing guards or school monitors help keep students safe as they enter school grounds? <b>If no, provide location where crossing guards and monitors would be needed.</b>			

## Trails, Park & Walkability Workshop

How walkable is the Village of Cuba?

### **Park Assessment**

May 28, 2009

Walking Path	Yes	No	Comments/suggestions/concerns
<p>Is there any shade for walkers on the walking path? (e.g., nearby trees etc.).</p> <p><b>Note where the shade is on your map.</b></p>			<p>If yes, please explain what is creating the shade and if it is adequate. If no, provide suggestions for creating shade.</p>
<p>Should benches be put along the path to offer opportunities for rest?</p> <p><b>If yes, indicate on your map where they should be located.</b></p>			
<p>Should all or some of the benches be covered to provide shade?</p> <p><b>If yes, please indicate on your map where they should be located.</b></p>			
<p>Are drinking fountains for trail users or park users necessary?</p>			
<p>Along the walking path?</p> <p>At the community center?</p> <p><b>If yes, please indicate on your map where they should be located.</b></p>			
<p>Are there any rocks, protruding tree roots, sudden drop offs or other trip hazards along the path?</p> <p><b>If yes, please describe the trip hazards and note on your map where they are located.</b></p>			

**Surfacing:** Please note your preferred surfacing for the walking path. Why?



A **natural play space** could include some of the following components:

- dirt hill to run and climb on
- logs for climbing
- boulders for climbing
- a place to create berms (i.e. dirt piles) of varying heights
- a place to build a small amphitheater or platform for dramatic play
- trail among patches of tall grasses or bushes (that exist or could be planted)
- a labyrinth
- brush piles to crawl in
- a pile of saplings or small branches to build with
- sand pit with water supply near by
- a place to build a small playhouse

Site for Natural Play Area	Yes	No	Comments/suggestions/concerns
<p>Is there a site at the park that could accommodate some of these play elements?</p> <p>If yes, describe where and why you selected the site (e.g. consider space and terrain issues, opportunity for shade; safe distance from street and other activities at park etc.)</p> <p><b>Please indicate the area on your map.</b></p>			

Signs	Yes	No	Comments/suggestions/concerns
<p>Are there signs directing park users to clean up after their dogs?</p> <p>If yes, what do the signs say? Are they easy to understand? Do people follow them? Could it be said better? Located in a better place?</p> <p>If no, would you suggest that signage be used and what should it say?</p>			
<p>Are there signs regarding proper use of the park, hours of the park etc.?</p> <p>If yes, what do the signs say? Are they easy to understand? Do people follow them? Could it be said better? Could they be located in a better place?</p> <p>If no, would you suggest that signage be used and what should it say?</p>			
<p>Are there other needed signs that you would recommend?</p> <p>If yes, please explain what they should say.</p>			

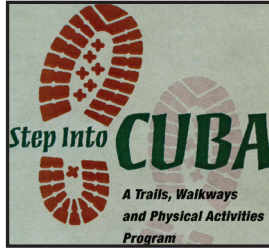
<b>Parking</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments/suggestions/concerns</b>
Is parking adequate for the number of people using the park presently or for the potential increase in use?  If no, please explain your concerns:			
Are the conditions safe for pedestrians who walk from their vehicles to the recreation building, to the walking path or to other parts of the park?			If no, please explain your concerns:
<b>Other</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments/suggestions/concerns</b>
Are there other accommodations/changes at the park that you would like to see that would improve its safety for users?			If yes, please explain.
Are there other accommodations/changes at the park that you would like to see that would improve its usability by people with disabilities (i.e., people in wheelchairs, people with limited mobility)?			If yes, please explain.
Are there any parts of the park that you think need a closer or more specific inspection for safety or to address engineering or design concerns?			If yes, please explain.
Are there adequate trash cans – in size, number?			If no, explain what you think is needed:
Are there other accommodations/improvements at the park that you would like to see that would encourage its use for physical activity?  If yes, please explain.			Please provide your ideas by age groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ preschool</li> <li>▪ grade school</li> <li>▪ mid school</li> <li>▪ high school</li> <li>▪ young adults</li> <li>▪ adult</li> <li>▪ active older-adults</li> </ul>

**Cuba Trails, Park and Walkability Workshop  
May 28, 2009 Group Leader Instructions**

<i>Location</i>	<i>Leaders</i>	<i>Route</i>
Park	Jeanette, Arletta, Susan	(.9 mile) Eichwald Center Bld to CDT Sign to corner leading to School back to Eichwald Center
550 Corridor	Julie, JoAnne, Loretta T., Emily	(1 mile) Eichwald Center Bld to 126 to 550 to post office, cross highway at crosswalk, back to Eichwald Center
Cuba Trails/walkways	Dick and Attila	NMF Office to Village Complex area
Park to school	Anna and Jessica Frost	(1.3 miles) Eichwald Center Building, cross park diagonally, up to center of school complex and back

**Supplies to remember:** Bright vests for participants, copies of audit tool specific to your route, map of your route, clip board/pen, camera, photo log, tape measure

1. At 4:45 PM workshop participants will self-select into 3 or 4 groups depending on number in attendance.
2. Briefly introduce the concept of your specific audit to your group and give an overview of what will happen. The group will be out for about 1 hour walking in an assigned area of the Village and critically assessing the route while keeping in mind the introductory presentations on complete streets, safe routes to school, park assessment etc.  
  
Request a volunteer note taker to record all ideas/concerns shared (or the group leader can do it). Also ask if someone wants to be designated photographer to photograph issues that are written on the audit form and record them on the photo log.
3. ***Encourage group members to share/record concerns they have had in the past regarding walkability in your location even if the issues are not noticed during the short walking audit.***
4. Follow the assessment tool and ensure observations for your specific group are well documented.
5. Ensure that photo log is filled out to briefly describe the photos taken.
6. Allow the group to stop along the route when appropriate in order to record issues, discuss etc but be aware of the limited time and getting your group back by 6 PM.
7. When you return at 6pm the groups have 20 minutes to discuss the audit and identify the top 3-4 issues they observed (these could be a mix of most important to address and most feasible to address, might not be both). Discuss possible solutions and next steps. Use the large map to indicate problem areas and potential solutions.
8. Prepare group to report back to the larger group and ask for a spokesperson to report



## Step Into Cuba Website Coming

In a few weeks or less, <http://stepintocuba.org> will be everybody's source for latest information about the Step into Cuba project, Cuba area physical activity events, and local walkway and trail information. Many thanks to the University of New Mexico Prevention research Center for

help on development of the site. Complete information will soon be available in next month's Cuba News and Step Into Cuba displays at St. Francis Park, the US Post Office, Nacimiento Medical Foundation/Public Health Office, and the US Forest Service Office.

### Participate in Upcoming Projects to Make Cuba More Walkable Next Step Into Cuba "Steps" Identified at Trail and Walkability Workshop

The Nacimiento Medical Foundation *Step into Cuba* Alliance would like to extend a big thank you to the 45 individuals who participated in the very successful May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009 Cuba Trails, Park and Walkability Workshop held at the Eichwald Center.

Workshop participants first learned about the Step Into Cuba project and saw examples of how other communities have made changes to their roadways, trails and parks to improve physical activity opportunities for local people. Led by the Cuba walking champions, small groups then performed "walking audits" throughout Cuba and recorded - in writing and photographs - observations of positive and negative features of the walk. They also noted future opportunities for improvements, and specific challenges to safe and pleasant walking. The observations, feedback and recommendations will be compiled and provided to decision-makers to help make the Cuba area more activity friendly.

Thank you to the many individuals who signed up to help with the sub-groups that were organized to plan and carry out next steps identified at the workshop. Anyone interested is welcome to participate in the following groups:

- Park enhancements
- Sidewalk evaluations and improvements
- Highway 550 pedestrian improvements
- Identifying new trail loops in Cuba and
- Working to develop safe routes for young people to walk to school.

The primary success on May 28<sup>th</sup> was that so many Cuba area community members came together to share their ideas and discuss these important health and safety issues. Mayor Velarde actively participated and provided his insight into project next-steps. Coordinators for planning the workshop were Attila Bality of the US National Park Service, Emily Pilch and Susan DeFrancesco of the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center, and local members of the Step Into Cuba Alliance. Additionally, we were fortunate to have individuals representing a variety of state agencies participate and they are dedicated to providing their expertise as the sub-groups move forward: Loretta Tollefson, Planner with the Mid-Region Council of Governments; Jessica Frost, NM State Safe Routes to School Coordinator; Stanley Crespin and Jose Silva, NM Department of Transportation District 6 and Anna Hargreaves with the NM Department of Health. Thank you to three members of the New Mexico Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects who sketched diagrams of possible improvements to roadways, trails and the park during the workshop.

We welcome your participation as we work on these projects. Contact the Nacimiento Medical Foundation at (575) 289-3718 and ask for Jeanette Linville, Arletta Hogan or Anna Schulte.

## St. Francis of Assisi Park Improvements New Trees, Fence Repair, and Sand Dune

Several dozen trees – pinon pine and two junipers – received a new home along the St. Francis of Assisi Park Nature Trail. They were relocated from the Sandoval County Fairgrounds where new roads and activity areas are under construction. The relocation was complicated and special thanks are due to many individuals who "made it happen." Faustino Gallegos provided critical expertise to put in new water sources that will be required by the trees during their first several seasons. Mark Hatzenbuehler provided many hours of skilled equipment operation and assistance with maneuvering the trees into their new locations. Ray Sisneros provided expert guidance, education, and a lot of hard work to ensure the trees were planted properly. Village staff provided skilled equipment operation and labor. Special thanks go to Larry Chavez, Antonio Crespin, Curtis Lopez, and Ralph Montoya. Mayor Rick Velarde generously donated a Saturday to help with the project. Thanks also go to several others who provided critical assistance: David Allen, Owen Meyers, Frank Murphy, Joel Morken, and Anna Schulte. Thanks to Dick Kozoll for coordinating the project.

The north fence at the northwest corner of the park was recently repaired. A pole barrier to provide pedestrian access was constructed as part of the project. Many thanks to Howard Gurule who generously cut and donated the poles after hearing of need for this improvement at a Village Council meeting. Thanks to Richard Velarde Jr. for help with concrete and paint and Sally and Dick Kozoll who installed the barrier over Memorial Day weekend.

The east end of the park has a new "sand dune" under development. This is the first of many "natural" child play areas we will create along the



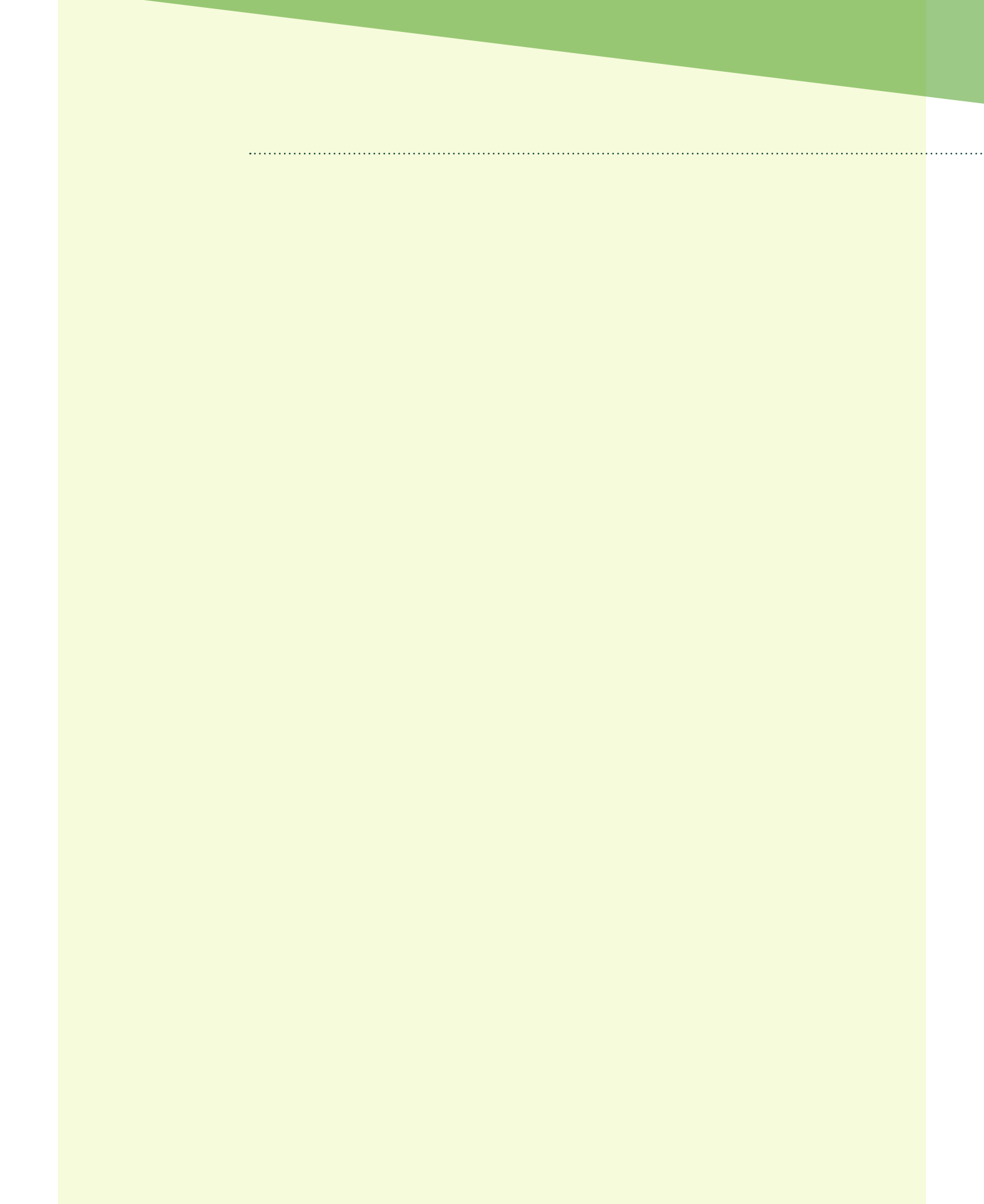
nature trail. There is a lot of evidence that providing young children a natural environment in this way can have lasting benefits including healthier lifestyles. We are grateful to Sandoval County for

donating the crusher fine "sand," as well as mulch for the all the new trees. Take a walk around St. Francis Park and see the new improvements – it's just a little less than one mile.

Check <http://stepintocuba.org> for more information on the Step into Cuba Project









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