Context/Background
economic, social, planning, environmental, geographic

The site truly represents a confluence of traffic and history. St. Francis/Cerrillos crossing is centrally sited within one of Santa Fe’s most active commercial corridors, hosting a diverse business community both private and public including: hospital, cafes, psychic, gas stations, white water rafting tour, law offices;

Is adjacent to one of the state's largest educational institutions, New Mexico School for the Deaf which serves students K-12 from the entire state and houses faculty, staff, and students; and is the largest, busiest intersection in the city of Santa Fe.

Bordered by an historic functioning irrigation ditch the Acequia Madre on the north, the historic New Mexico School for the Deaf (NMSD), the busy intersection of St. Francis / Cerrillos Rd on the south, and the Rail line on the east.

The site is highly visible and considered by many locals as the gateway into the downtown area. It is also a hub for protesting or special announcements. However, narrow medians, awkward crossings, and poorly defined safety zones make this dangerous for large groups.

The site itself contains a railway spur and locally treasured caboose, which belonged to the historic 'Chili Line'. The city's urban 'Acequia Trail' and the Underpass now sit on this railway easement.

Specific Issues

Methods and Findings (if applicable)

Too much vegetation
Community engagement is critical to making cities more livable by encouraging citizenry to engage the design of their environments. Changes interaction with public space. Changes the way people interact with other systems ie: DOT, Parks and Rec, etc. governmental agencies that most people dont typically interact with. Exposes people to the process of building, funding public projects.

State of how the proposal will make cities and towns more livable

The Acequia Trail underpass is an efficient and safe connection to city-wide trail networks. The trail itself is a spacious ten to fifteen foot wide accessible pathway. The main intent was to promote an ambiance that will allow people to perceive and engage with their surroundings as they make the journey through the space. The design also addresses safety and inclusive spaces. Inter-generational relationship, health and well-being is addressed through visual, tactile, and spatial cues.

A wide spacious trail and underpass allow for simultaneous walking, jogging and bicycle use. In addition, restful landings and alternate paths or foot-trails encourage a moment of pause, play and discovery. A flexible recreational environment was strategic to promote high density traffic and therefore increasing visibility to naturally keep an eye out for each other.

Lighting too was analyzed. Tall soft-blue railroad lights announce a gateway into the downtown area. Then, along the trail, light was designed to avoid a glare effect. Incremental lumens allow the eye to adjust as the trajectory is made in and out of the underpass.
The site itself is meant to be an interactive educational space. Two archaeological assets, an historical railway spur with a treasured caboose and a functioning historical irrigation channel (the Acequia Madre), anchor the design. Incorporating the city's history and identity was key to link two distinct characters of a highway-bifurcated community. From this point forward, the goal of the whole site will be about maintaining, and creating memories.

The entire strategy is to create a recreational, not fully defined environment in which people could and perhaps have their attitude towards the open spaces of the city refreshed.

In this, the circuitousness of pathways, the ambiguity of the spaces, the isolation within the trail, combined with smells, touch, visual and physical engagement, and sounds all together are intended to heighten the sensory experience of the visitor.

That effect will increase with each changing season; it will be different colors and light, flowering fields in dry season or small reflection ponds in monsoon season.

Playful knolls in summer or whimsical structures in winter, all bringing safety and security to the transients.”

Planning the trail for INTEGRATION, following:
- Low Impact development guidelines
- Complete Streets concepts: Elements of a pedestrians and supportive environment, street network
- Land use diversity:
  Livable cities concepts
  City integration
  emphasis in connectivity
  Point of interest, destination, Anchor
  Corridor participation
  Multi modal effect,
  Transportation line AS EDUCATIONAL path + destination = discovery

The project is under construction with the founds of federal money it will open to the public on December 1st, 2017