

La Plata County Comprehensive Plan

Bayfield, CO Visioning Open House Meeting Summary

July 27, 2009

The La Plata County Comprehensive Plan visioning outreach included 1 full day vision summit, 6 open houses in locations throughout the county, a youth survey, and a community survey. All participants in the vision process answered the same four questions.

- *What do you treasure about La Plata County that you do not want to see change?*
- *What concerns do you have about La Plata County for the future?*
- *What would you like to see different or change in La Plata County in the future?*
- *What do you want La Plata County to be like in 20 years?*

Vision open house participants responded to an additional four questions that survey and vision workshop participants were not asked. Those questions were:

- *What would be the worst possible scenario for La Plata County in the future?*
- *What are the internal factors (possibly in our control) that are going to be affecting La Plata County's future that we need to consider in our vision?*
- *What are the external factors (outside our control) that are going to be affecting La Plata County's future that we need to consider in our vision?*

The comments here are from the Bayfield open house held on July 27, 2009.

1. What do you TREASURE about La Plata County that you do not want to see change?

Recreation Access/Opportunities

- Recreation
- Outdoor recreation

People

- Attitude of the people
- Family friendly, kid activities
- Friendly working class people

Natural Resources

- Wildlife
- Wildlands
- Rivers
- Natural landscape – mostly still clean, open

- Land without gas wells
- A reasonable place for different interest: outdoors, environmental, agricultural, etc.

Qualities of Nature

- Beauty
- Tranquility
- Sunshine – we need to use it!

Community

- Reasonable traffic flow
- Bike friendly intention
- Small town feeling
- A thriving cohousing community. Example of alternative high density neighborhood

Agriculture

- Farm and ranch land

2. What CONCERNS do you have about La Plata County for the future?

Transportation and traffic

- Needs to be more access to alternatives into Durango to increase safety, provision of emergency services. It increases traffic, but maybe distributes it. Cannot just be 1-3 entry points.
- Traffic issues

Cost of Living/Affordability

- Affordability of housing for working class folks and families
- Lack of affordable housing
- Proliferation of trophy homes
- Cost of living
- Affordability/housing.

Health Care

- Health care options

Regulations

- More restrictions on land owners
- Pressures for ever more regulation

Economic development

- Declining revenues vs services

Environmental Protection

- Air pollution, coal, diesel, sprawl, incoherent growth
- Open space and wildlands, loss of ranching and farmland
- Wildlife safety/accommodation
- Light pollution
- Balance interest of residents and gas development

- Too many gas wells on open lands

Education

- Education options – elementary and high school vocational education

3. What would you like to see DIFFERENT/CHANGE in La Plata County?

Economic development

- More economic opportunities on the east side of the county. Land use regulations that are easier to decipher. Is the county trying to eliminate firewood sellers?
- Find a way to encourage and foster new businesses that will create a solid base of employment and the associated revenues and benefits.

Alternative transportation modes

- True bike lands on all main roads, not bike paths shared by walkers.
- Sidewalks/walkers

Recreation Assets

- Bayfield recreation area with pool

Environmental Protection

- Limit future wells. Use directional drilling. Monitor water quality especially as it related to fracking.
- Better weed control.

4. What do you want La Plata County to be like in 20 years?

Maintain quality of life/Treasures

- Maintain Treasures
- Towns maintain separate identity with rural land between
- Continued sense of community, cohesion.

Affordable

- Working people can afford to live here
- Housing to support multiple income levels – affordable housing.

Use Alternative Energy/More sustainable

- More involved and sustained by alternative sources helping the reduce reliance on fossil fuels while creating jobs and opportunity locally
- Example for solar energy
- We are a leader in use of solar energy
- A small community involved in the newest technology concerned with the environment and social issues
- Area a leader in solar and sustainable applications.

Ft. Lewis College Grows

- Integration of Fort Lewis College with sustainable communities at all levels and areas.

- Fort Lewis College is a four year university with graduate degrees.

Agriculture still present

- Community supported agriculture (systemic options for marketing). Sustainable transportation options.
- We still have agricultural producers

Multimodal Transportation

- Multimodal transportation options.

Community services provided

- Childcare and services for aged.

5. What would be the worst possible scenario for La Plata County in the future?

- We end up looking like Aztec/Farmington or we end up being like Telluride/Mtn Village.
- Incoherent sprawl bankrupting county budget (2 checkmarks next to comment)
- We lose the “flavor” that has traditionally made this county very desirable for a diverse population and the associated interest.
- Overgrowth – people, buildings, etc.
- Become too structured with land use and overpopulated
- Loss of ranch and farm lands to housing tracks
- Polluted water sources (gas wells)

6. What are the internal factors (possibly in our control) that are going to be affecting La Plata County’s future that we need to consider in our vision?

- Declining gas revenues.
- CDOT control of land use and development.
- Interest in support for alternative energy.
- Business and local government need employees. Can they afford to live here?
- Gas wells and water quality/availability (huge)
- Planning for transportation and alternative sources of energy
- Utility infrastructure, water, roads, electric, gas, land use. (2 agrees)
- Growth must be smart and coherent, not dumb and incoherent.
- Be aware how regulations and planning staff actions affect real people.
- Must control our appetite for goods/services that are provided by government (tax supported) funds.

7. What are the external factors (outside our control) that are going to be affecting La Plata County’s future that we need to consider in our vision?

- Depletion of natural gas resources
- Climate change-water cycle change
- Competition for our water
- Conservation of wildlife

- Wildfires/residential encroachment
- People want to move here
- CDOT?
- National economy
- National economy and credit options
- National politics- who is in charge in DC/Denver
- Resource competition – China, India, etc.
- War debt-national debt
- Who wins the health care battle in D.C.