

# La Plata County Comprehensive Plan

## Durango, CO Visioning Open House Meeting Summary

July 29, 2009

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*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?*

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*The comments here are from the Durango open house held on July 29, 2009.*

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

#### ***People***

- The old timers with deep roots in the county

#### ***Natural Resources***

- Yet undisturbed natural and native environment
- Diversity of ecosystems
- Clean air

#### ***Open Space and Scenery***

- Aesthetics – how to keep the scenery
- Open spaces

#### ***Agriculture***

- Large agriculture properties

### ***Community Character***

- The rural character of the region
- Small community feeling

### ***Heritage***

- La Plata Canyon/La Plata City
- Historic towns

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

### ***Growth and Development***

- Development and growth without planning and integration into the overall county
- Water districts without land use plans/regulations/standards
- Self-sustaining economic base in balance with natural resources.
- Urbanization
- Sprawl
- Autocentric strip-type development
- Huge inventory of undeveloped platted lots currently on the books
- Further speculative subdividing of large acreages
- Development that does not accommodate historic, cultural, and natural resources

### ***Economy***

- Lack of affordable space for new business
- Lack of economic diversity

### ***Infrastructure***

- Lack of road maintenance

### ***Energy and Environment***

- Reclamation of wells/well sites after use is complete

### ***Community Coordination***

- Lack of coordination with federal agencies

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

### ***Economic Changes***

- Economic and monetary incentive for choices/decisions that are better for the community.
- Allowances for small business, entrepreneurs-affordability. Need a commercial cul de sac or business incubator

### ***Growth and Development Changes***

- Developed interpretations and understanding of the county's history.
- I would like to see the county impose an excess use tax on large residences (e.g. greater than 5,000 sq ft)
- Development based on carrying capacity
- Development based on watersheds

- Growth directed towards existing towns/villages
- Priorities established based on what is best for a human, not the automobile
- Land use decisions based upon established comprehensive plan and associated policies

***Community Collaboration Changes***

- Integration of all community/government services (schools, social services, economic development, etc.) into comprehensive plan.

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

- Property values are more closely tied to local economy
- Strong sustainable economy
- More small “ru-urban” hamlets/villages
- Villages with big lots (35+ acres) comprising the other areas
- High density residential surrounded by agriculture
- Small towns like Bayfield, Ignacio, something near Purgatory, Hesperus, Marvel are self sufficient with basic services and small labor pool.
- Localized commercial/business areas
- Multigenerational agricultural sites are still here
- Better interaction and unified sense throughout the county
- Appreciation and knowledge of cultural legacy. Prehistoric and historic resources, ethnic histories, local landmarks
- Natural environment and integrated self sustaining community and economy are celebrated

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

- Lack of tourism – helps through the tough economic times, is responsible for growth boom, and is a cleaner industry
- Reduction of gas production – loss of tax base
- Only affordable for wealthy, not the local working class. Become a second home community.
- Economic stratification – rich and poor don’t relate to each other
- All homes on 3 acre lots throughout the county on well and septic
- Sprawl
- Every one of the existing 2009 lots is developed
- Becoming like Pagosa where developers rule
- Loss of cultural and historic identity

**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?**

- Economic development that complements the local community
- Big boxes and leakages, better promote local business
- Local economy vs external companies
- Gas field decline
- Transportation – lack of
- Decline of water for wells

- Educated local leaders
- Interagency cooperation
- Processes affecting how decisions are made. Past decisions making trends vs community benefit

**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?**

- Economy of other states and natural disasters elsewhere that seem to send people here
- Immigration
- Increased population and places to live
- Boomers with less money retiring
- Rising costs of food/transportation/goods
- Health care
- Limited resources – clean water, quantity