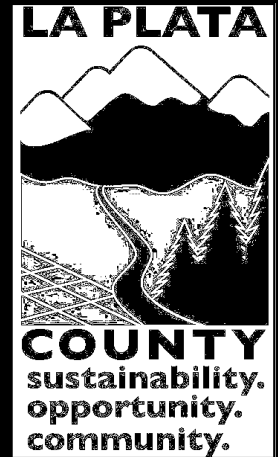


La Plata County Comprehensive Plan Guiding Principles, Vision & Goal Statements February 2010



BACKGROUND

The La Plata County Comprehensive Plan update process began in June 2009. From July to November, the community engaged in the development of a community vision for the year 2030. The visioning process helped to identify what people love about the County that they do not want to see change; issues and concerns; things that people would like to see different; and, their long term aspirations for the future. Beginning in late September, a Citizen's Working Group, as well as some smaller subcommittees, took the community's input and began to develop a set of draft goals for each of the six Plan Elements. In December and January, five community workshops were held around the County to review and edit the draft guiding principles, vision and goals. The next step in the process is an Ideas Forum on February 27th at the Durango Recreation Center to develop strategies and actions the County should take to achieve its vision and goals.

For more information on the Comprehensive Plan process, go to www.laplatacountyplan.com or contact Jason Meininger at 382-6267. We thank you for your participation in helping make La Plata County a great place to live!

La Plata County Comprehensive Plan Vision and Goal Statements

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles serve as a basis of reasoning and action; a set of beliefs that lead, show the way and direct the decisions of the plan. They are the fundamental basis for any decision. They will shape the solution and define the way strategies are developed. Each principle should be defined with a rationale that explains the principle's purpose and implications. Guiding principles define the ground rules for the process and development of the plan. La Plata County will embrace these Guiding principles in the development of the Comprehensive Community Plan:

- A. County officials and residents honor the importance of private property rights, respect the applicable provisions of the Colorado and United States Constitutions, and acknowledge that all county citizens share equal rights with respect to representation and opinion.
- B. Tourism remains an important component of our economic base and vitality.
- C. Growth and change will continue to occur in the future and will likely continue to alter our rural/agricultural landscape.
- D. Growth can create great places to live and work if the community crafts a vision and sets standards and reasonable codes for development that express how and where it wants to grow or change.
- E. An integration of developed land uses such as housing, retail, work places, schools, parks, and civic facilities are important to the daily life of the residents, and when conveniently located are components of achieving better places to live.

La Plata County Comprehensive Plan Vision and Goal Statements

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- F. A variety of commercial land uses accommodates business growth and support economic diversity.
- G. A diversity of housing types and densities are available to a wide range of income levels, age groups and abilities are essential to creating real and healthy communities.
- H. Greenbelt/wildlife corridors help define growth communities.
- I. Communities are desirable places to live when they include a system of connected streets, infrastructure, pedestrian paths, and bike routes to commercial, educational, recreational, and residential destinations.
- J. Communities are desirable places to live when they include a system of connected streets, infrastructure, pedestrian paths, and bike routes to commercial, educational, recreational, and residential destinations.
- K. Land use planning integrated with a larger transportation network encourages a variety of transportation choices and modes.
- L. Agricultural land and agricultural production are important to the local economy and security.
- M. Agricultural lands, open space, and critical natural areas are important to the local character and the community's quality of life.
- N. Energy efficiency and renewable energy production industries at the local and regional levels provide the basis for a sustainable economy.
- O. Conventional energy production is one of the pillars of the local economy.
- P. A prudent community uses water through the most efficient means practical.
- Q. Growth and development standards and decisions are clear, predictable, consistent, fair, timely, and cost effective.
- R. A fundamental role for the county is to maintain fiscal soundness.
- S. Land use planning with an engaged public remains relevant as the community evolves.

2030 COMMUNITY VISION

Our vision is of a community that is a model of collaboration, partnerships and innovation. We have achieved a balance among economic and social development and environmental stewardship. Our communities are neighborhoods that are connected physically and socially to each other. We have a strong sense of community and work together for the county as a whole. We honor and value our diversity and heritage. We respect property rights. Our community is a caring place that supports residents' effort to achieve their full potential. Our efforts make us one of the best places in the nation to live and raise a family.

La Plata County Comprehensive Plan Vision and Goal Statements

ECONOMIC VITALITY ELEMENT

Economic Vitality Vision

Our local businesses are prosperous, our economy is diverse, and our county is fiscally healthy.

Our local businesses are prosperous, our economy is diverse, and our county is fiscally healthy. We approach our economic development with a long term view and seek cooperative, integrated, and creative solutions to foster regional economic growth. Our county is renowned for entrepreneurial spirit, green industries, local food production, education, and cultural, recreational and heritage tourism. We recognize there is a balance between economic and social development and environmental protection and we achieve this balance by promoting our assets while encouraging sustainable business development. Our reliable and fast internet and well educated community attract knowledge based industries. We are a national leader in conventional and renewable energy industries. Our agricultural industry is thriving as a result of both increased markets and innovative programs in the county that support agricultural viability. Our county is a vibrant and exciting destination that shows off our natural assets, rich heritage, and diverse cultures. The county's economy provides opportunities for all people, to stay as they grow their families, advance their careers and continue to be productive members of the community. Economic vitality is supported by infrastructure investments, learning opportunities, access to health and child care, and a balance between cost of living and wages.

Economic Vitality Goals

1. Develop incentives for economic activities that promote business sustainability and diversity.
2. Actively collaborate with the municipalities, Sovereign Nations, State and Federal agencies, private sector and non-profit entities to promote economic diversity and sustainability.
3. Support the development and management of infrastructure necessary for a sustainable local economy: water, energy, waste, communications, housing and transportation.
4. Preserve and enhance our cultural landscape, scenic resources, recreational opportunities, and county-owned assets for residents, tourists and businesses.
5. Stimulate economic vitality by maintaining an adequate supply of land for businesses and industries and attracting and expanding businesses and industries that strengthen our community and provide livable wages.
6. Support agricultural innovations and sustainable technologies; promote and stimulate local markets as well as export markets for locally-produced agricultural products; encourage development of facilities for value-added products

La Plata County Comprehensive Plan Vision and Goal Statements

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

Sustainable Development Vision

Our community develops based upon principles that respect and protect our natural, cultural, and heritage assets that contribute to our high quality of life.

Our community develops on principles that respect and protect our natural, cultural, and heritage assets that contribute to our high quality of life. We employ effective principles to achieve our desired development pattern that creates and enhances the development of real communities. La Plata County guides development in a way that is symbiotic with local municipalities, sovereign nations, neighborhood communities and property owners. To protect our rural lifestyle and character, our County has grown around designated centers integrating new and old neighborhoods while maintaining agricultural lands. These centers are served by a well planned infrastructure and multimodal transportation system. Our agricultural system is an important provider of food to our community and beyond and agriculture is supported through innovative local programs that ensure its viability. Our community is appreciative and is knowledgeable about our treasured cultural legacy, historic resources, and scenic assets which we strive to maintain. We recognize water is a finite resource and plan based upon that understanding. We are proactive in addressing impacts of drought and potential water shortages. Our planning takes into account the unique characteristics and needs of each watershed and ensures a reliable water supply for all users. The County promotes water conservation and reuse to reduce our water consumption. As a community, we planned for higher conventional energy prices by investing in new technologies. Thus, our County is renowned for its energy independence and as an exporter of conventional and renewable energy. Locally we have reduced energy demand through efficiency, conservation, and design.

Sustainable Development Goals

1. Support the enhancement of local food, fiber and forest production systems (growing, processing, marketing, consumption).
2. Support the enhancement of renewable natural resource systems (forest and range products, fisheries, wildlife).
3. Promote access to healthy, affordable, culturally-influenced, and sustainably produced food, sourced as locally as possible.
4. Promote resource-efficient growth and settlement patterns.
5. Meet local energy and materials needs as much as possible through efficiency and with locally or regionally renewable resources.
6. Support investment in adequate and sustainable water resources for social, environmental and economic purposes.
7. Promote energy production and mineral development while minimizing negative impacts on public health, the environment and infrastructure.
8. Promote historic and pre-historic preservation to enhance heritage tourism and increase restoration of these sites.
9. Continue to protect historic and prehistoric cultural sites.
10. Promote and encourage retention of agricultural lands, while allowing for other forms of development.

La Plata County Comprehensive Plan Vision and Goal Statements

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

Transportation Vision

La Plata County has an efficient multi-modal transportation system that complements our land use strategies.

La Plata County has an efficient multi-modal transportation system that complements our land use strategies. Walking, cycling and equestrian routes connect our neighborhoods, towns, and employment. We have an efficient countywide public transportation system. Street, road and public transportation networks are well planned to enable people of all ages and abilities to get around safely, efficiently, and conveniently through the county. Our airport connects us to the rest of the world contributing to our economic vitality.

Transportation Goals

1. Promote development that is accessed with multiple modes of transportation.
2. Prioritize a road and transportation network that connects existing developments.
3. Promote a regional public transportation system that includes communities beyond the state and county boundaries.
4. Recognize historic rights of livestock passage on county roads.
5. Minimize conflict between traffic and animals, both wildlife and livestock.
6. Encourage an interconnected network of streets and paths that promote multi-modal transportation options, Encourage the use of the most efficient, safe and environmentally healthy transportation designs and technologies.
7. Support the use of telecommunications infrastructure as a substitute to daily commuting and travel.
8. Encourage land use patterns that reduce per-capita average daily trips (ADT) & vehicle miles traveled (VMT).
9. Promote the expansion of aviation services (number of flights, frequency, destinations) and support viable rail connectivity.

La Plata County Comprehensive Plan Vision and Goal Statements

HEALTHY NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ELEMENT

Healthy Natural Environment Vision

La Plata County supports the protection and enhancements of a healthy natural environment on a local, regional and global scale.

Healthy Natural Environment Goals

La Plata County supports the protection and enhancements of a healthy natural environment on a local, regional and global scale. We are a leader in environmental stewardship and a model community for our proactive and balanced approach to conserving natural resources. We enjoy a healthy environment with clean air and water, and dark night skies. Wildlife corridors connect natural areas throughout the county creating ecosystem linkages and improving wildlife vitality. Our community members continue our legacy of land stewardship engaging in activities on their land that enhances land health. Damage from invasive weeds has been reduced and our native species are thriving. As extractive industries develop and decline, disturbed lands are successfully reclaimed.

1. Protect and enhance healthy ecosystems.
2. Encourage preservation and restoration of wildlife corridors, wetlands and riparian habitats.
3. Reduce wildfire hazards.
4. Address risks to our natural environment and long-term water resources by appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures.
5. Minimize noise and light pollution, light trespass, and glare from future development and encourage retrofit of existing nuisances
6. Develop energy infrastructure to generate sufficient energy locally to meet future needs.
7. Encourage the restoration or reuse of lands impacted by resource development.
8. Restrict development in the floodplain and significant geologic hazard areas
9. Protect and improve air and water quality and manage noxious weeds through collaboration with federal, state, sovereign nation, and local agencies.
10. Reduce, reuse, and recycle material resources.

La Plata County Comprehensive Plan Vision and Goal Statements

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND HOUSING ELEMENT

Healthy Communities & Housing Vision

La Plata County is a great place for multigenerational families. The County strives to maximize the quality of life, well being and potential of all citizens.

La Plata County is a great place for multigenerational families. The County strives to maximize the quality of life, well-being and potential of all citizens. The County has taken an active leadership role in affordable housing so that citizens are able to live and work in the county. There are ample housing choices for all income levels. Citizens have access to the opportunities they need to reach their personal potential. Childcare is widely available and affordable. Our community promotes an active and healthy lifestyle. The County supports quality recreational and park facilities that enhance public health. Our community members have access to quality and affordable health care. Community members, including young people, are viewed as assets and are encouraged to be involved in community issues. They have the opportunity to continue to live here. Our community provides opportunities for lifelong learning and development for every individual.

Healthy Communities & Housing Goals

1. Encourage and take an active role to increase the supply of affordable/attainable/workforce and senior housing.
2. Integrate a mix of housing types near employment and services.
3. Safe, healthy and energy efficient homes.
4. Encourage construction and renovation of homes to be safe, healthy and energy efficient.
5. Encourage life skills and lifelong learning opportunities.
6. Support access to affordable healthcare and to a variety of providers.
7. Support a continuum of choices that helps seniors and disabled persons to thrive.
8. Promote healthy communities through neighborhood design, transportation networks, and public education.
9. Support quality childcare and elder care that is widely available and affordable.
10. Encourage dedicated access to public open space, recreation and trails.
11. Support and encourage partnerships with local agencies in the provision of recreational and community facilities.
12. Encourage intergenerational involvement within the community.

La Plata County Comprehensive Plan Vision and Goal Statements

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE ELEMENT

Organizational Excellence Vision

We have a strong sense of community; individuals, neighborhoods, and communities all work together to achieve common goals for the county as a whole.

We have a strong sense of community; individuals, neighborhoods, and communities all work together to achieve common goals for the county as a whole. Communication and collaboration across the community is effective and citizens are confident in their county government. Respectful and informed dialogue to resolve community challenges results in effective solutions based upon multiple benefits. Groups work together to maximize scarce resources and people are aware of the various services available. Diversity in our community is valued and celebrated. People from different age groups, cultures, backgrounds, and interest frequently come together to participate in local activities, events, and projects. Within local government, La Plata County supports a work environment that values productive employees, innovative personnel practices, and continuous workforce development to ensure county services are delivered in an efficient, ethical and responsible manner.

Organizational Excellence Goals

1. Provide citizens with user-friendly, consistent and efficient services.
2. Collaborate with local governments, state and federal agencies, the Sovereign Nations, businesses and other organizations, to ensure efficient and effective service delivery.
3. Engage and inform citizens in local decision making and develop transparent public processes that encourage respect among all individuals and groups.
4. Work towards excellence in all county practices.
5. Ensure two-way interaction between citizens and their county government that includes easy access to information, transparency, and opportunities for citizen input.
6. Align municipal and county goals, visions, and actions.