



La Plata County Comprehensive Plan

Guiding Principles, Vision, Goals and Strategies

March, 2010

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. On February 27th, 2010 an Ideas Forum for strategies occurred with residents to brainstorm strategies and actions the County should take to achieve its vision and goals. The community workshops in March will provide an opportunity for residents to review the strategies and prioritize those that they feel the County should move forward on implementing.

The La Plata County Comprehensive Plan is organized into four components:

Guiding Principles serve as a basis of reasoning and action; a set of beliefs that lead 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. Guiding principles define the ground rules for the process and development of the plan.

Vision Statements encapsulate the common ground for the future that reflects the aspirations of the residents.

Goals describe broad public purposes to achieve the vision, toward which policies and programs are directed. They express the broad desired results of the Plan.

Strategies are statements that outline the approach or specific action to achieve a particular goal. A strategy is a short term action, policy, or regulation that is specific enough to be implemented.

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!

Guiding Principles

- 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.
- 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. Land use planning integrated with a larger transportation network encourages a variety of transportation choices and modes.
- K. Agricultural land and agricultural production are important to the local economy and security.
- L. Agricultural lands, open space, and critical natural areas are important to the local character and the community's quality of life.
- M. Energy efficiency and renewable energy production industries at the local and regional levels provide the basis for a sustainable economy.
- N. Conventional energy production is one of the pillars of the local economy.
- O. A prudent community uses water through the most efficient means practical.

- P. Growth and development standards and decisions are clear, predictable, consistent, fair, timely, and cost effective.
- Q. Fundamental roles of the county are to maintain fiscal soundness and protect community health and welfare.
- R. Land use planning with an engaged public remains relevant as the community evolves.

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.

Economic Vitality Element

Economic Vitality Vision Statement

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 and Strategies

- 1. Develop incentives for economic activities that promote business sustainability and diversity.**
 - a) Increase the local preference percentage in county procurement policies.

- b) Expand Buy-local programs in partnership with local governments, La Plata County Economic Development Action Partnership (LEAD), local chambers of commerce, and the Durango Area Tourism Office (DATO).
- c) Reduce the time and steps required in the permitting processes (planning, building, road and bridge).
- d) Develop a business incubator in partnership with local governments, La Plata County Economic Development Action Partnership (LEAD), Region 9 Economic Development District, Fort Lewis College, and Southwest Colorado Community College.
- e) Create a one-stop shop for economic development in partnership with local governments and economic development entities that focuses on business recruitment and retention activities.
- f) Work to augment student internships, vocational and technological programs, teacher tours, entrepreneurship programs and other programs to connect students and educators with local industries in partnership with Southwest Colorado Community College; Ft. Lewis College; Durango, Bayfield, and Ignacio high schools, local chambers of commerce; the Colorado Workforce Center; and La Plata County Economic Development Action Partnership (LEAD).
- g) Establish incentives for business that utilize sustainable practices based on a score-card of sustainability indicators.

2. Actively collaborate with the municipalities, Sovereign Nations, State and Federal agencies, private sector and non-profit entities to promote economic diversity and sustainability.

- a) Initiate a referendum to make La Plata County a home rule county.
- b) Create programs with advanced degrees at Ft Lewis College.

3. Support the development and management of infrastructure necessary for a sustainable local economy: water, energy, waste, communications, housing and transportation.

- a) Provide assistance to property owners to create improvement districts in designated rural centers.
- b) Create a water and sewer authority.
- c) Involve all jurisdictions in land use decisions including potential expansion of water and sewer.
- d) Formalize an understanding with the other jurisdictions to absorb their share of growth.

4. Preserve and enhance our cultural landscape, scenic resources, recreational opportunities, and county-owned assets for residents, tourists and businesses.

- a) Build and operate recreational facilities that stimulate the local economy and recover their operations costs with the revenues they generate in partnership with local state and federal governments, non-profits and private enterprises.
- b) Build and operate recreational facilities that stimulate the local economy that are funded through voter-approved financing.
- c) Develop incentives, such as density bonuses, to encourage the dedication of conservation easements and public trails in future subdivisions and other development projects.

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.**
 - a) Designate rural centers in existing rural communities where future non-residential and residential development will be encouraged.
 - b) Designate future business park location(s) in appropriate locations on adopted land use plans.
 - c) Establish an expedited county permitting process for development in designated rural centers and business parks.
 - d) Set a livable minimum wage in the County.

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.**
 - a) Adopt a "right to farm" ordinance that promotes family-owned traditional agriculture.
 - b) Provide development fee discounts or waivers for activities directly associated with agricultural operations, such as application fees, building fees, plumbing and mechanical fees, planning permit fees, impact fees and road and bridge inspection fees.
 - c) Identify and remove regulatory barriers to value-added production of agricultural products.
 - d) Allow land uses on agricultural lands that support an agricultural operation as the primary use.
 - e) Exempt county sales tax on locally grown food.

Sustainable Development Element

Sustainable Development Vision Statement

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 and Strategies

- 1. Support the enhancement of local food, fiber and forest production systems (growing, processing, marketing, consumption).**
 - a) Develop a land-link program so new farmers can identify agricultural land available for production.
 - b) Support commercial kitchens for value-added production with locations throughout the county.
 - c) Support State economic development grants for new markets for both local and export markets.
 - d) Provide consumer education programs that emphasize benefits of local agriculture.
 - e) Use a voter-approved financing tool to support farm and agricultural organizations and land acquisitions projects.
 - f) Develop definitions and performance standards for permitted agricultural uses.

- 2. Support the enhancement of renewable natural resource systems (forest and range products, fisheries, wildlife).**
 - a) Request the CO Dept of Wildlife to purchase development rights on lands valuable for wildlife habitat.
 - b) Promote Forestry operations on private land that are economically and environmentally sustainable.

- 3. Promote access to healthy, affordable, culturally-influenced, and sustainably produced food, sourced as locally as possible.**
 - a) Work with the Durango, Ignacio and Bayfield School Districts to purchase locally produced products.
 - b) Investigate the use of agricultural cooperatives and value added agricultural products through formation of an agricultural coop.
 - c) Promote local food production and agriculture uses during the development review process.

- 4. Promote resource-efficient growth and settlement patterns.**
 - a) Designate future growth areas supported by the provision of new or enhanced infrastructure.
 - b) Allow agricultural uses and limited retail development in designated rural centers throughout county and along highway corridors, but not large scale commercial development outside urban growth areas.
 - c) Determine through capacity analysis the maximum build-out for the county and allocate growth accordingly to minimize sprawl.
 - d) Create site-based design guidelines and regulations that provide standards to develop on sensitive lands that are appropriate to the scale and context of the proposed development.

- 5. Meet local energy and materials needs as much as possible through efficiency and with locally or regionally renewable resources.**
 - a) Encourage the locations of solar and wind farms.
 - b) Promote sawmills that would provide affordable lumber to support affordable housing.
 - c) Maintain access to gravel that reduces transportation distance.
 - d) Encourage development of renewable fuel infrastructure.

6. **Support investment in adequate and sustainable water resources for social, environmental and economic purposes.**
 - a) Educate the community about the use of efficient water distribution and irrigation techniques without compromising water rights.
 - b) Advocate for legislation to create agricultural water-banking to protect water rights and promote conservation.
 - c) Promote the use of water harvesting and gray water systems and reclaimed water to the degree permitted under State statutes, and increase the use of permeable surfaces.

7. **Protect historic and prehistoric sites and promote cultural preservation to enhance heritage tourism and increase restoration of these sites.**
 - a) Provide incentives to developers and property owners to voluntarily retain historic structures, trails, and ditches.
 - b) Provide a property tax incentive for preservation of cultural resources.
 - c) Educate community about state and federal tax incentives.

8. **Promote and encourage retention of agricultural lands, while allowing for other forms of development.**
 - a) Create an agricultural advisory group to maintain clarity and emphasis on pertinent concerns in land use processes.
 - b) Guide development to non-productive agricultural lands and retain productive agricultural or critical resource lands through mechanisms such as Transfer of Development Rights, Purchase of Development Rights, conservation easements, etc.
 - c) Provide assistance and education to landowners on the use of conservation easements on small parcels for farming and open space purposes.
 - d) Amend the development code for agriculture production by simplifying the building permit process for agricultural buildings, allowing agricultural businesses, exempting family/heir home sites from 35 acre minimum, and increasing height limits for agricultural structures such as barns and sheds.

Transportation Element

Transportation Vision Statement

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 and Strategies

1. **Promote development that is accessed with multiple modes of transportation.**
 - a) Adopt and implement zoning that promotes higher density development nodes.

- b) Dedicate additional county staff support with appropriate expertise to work with developers.
- c) Prepare a comprehensive “multimodal development planning checklist” for use by developers to encourage inclusion of multimodal elements and by staff during the review process.
- d) Implement a range of process-based and financial incentives for developers to meet multimodal goals, such as additional staff support, faster review turn around, lower review fees, and possible tax incentives.
- e) Prepare a community-based transportation plan concurrently with the future land use plan.
- f) Require developments adjacent to county and state roads/highways to be designed “transit ready”.

2. Prioritize a road and transportation network that connects existing developments.

- a) Update street standards to provide flexibility so that County can accept currently sub-standard private roads that will interconnect neighborhoods.
- b) Prepare a feasibility study for establishing practicable locations for multimodal connectivity/easements and establish priorities.

3. Promote a regional public transportation system that includes communities beyond the state and county boundaries.

- a) Evaluate and document governance and funding options for a regional multimodal Regional Transportation Authority (RTA).
- b) Undertake a survey of County voters to assess support of a La Plata/Durango RTA, and possible funding source(s) for transportation services and improvements.
- c) Formalize and enhance coordination and communication between La Plata Co, Southwest Council of Governments, Farmington MPO and Northwest New Mexico RPO.

4. Recognize historic rights of livestock passage on and across county roads.

- a) Identify key passage routes and implement electric message boards on county and state roadways.
- b) Provide electronic notification via email when flocks/herds will be moving on roadways.

5. Minimize conflict between traffic and animals, both wildlife and livestock.

- a) Adopt a Best Management Practices plan for wildlife control and crossings.
- b) Coordinate wildlife crossing opportunities with bike and pedestrian pathways where there are the lowest negative impacts to wildlife.

6. Encourage an interconnected network of streets and paths that promote multi-modal transportation options.

- a) Design and plan an interconnected multimodal network of streets, paths and trails.
- b) Define interconnectivity requirements in development standards.

7. Encourage the use of the most efficient, safe and environmentally healthy transportation designs and technologies.

- a) Adopt and implement a “complete streets” policy and plan that understands the cumulative effects of traffic generated by new development.

- b) Formalized collaboration and partnerships with CDOT and municipalities.
- c) Design, fund, and install bus pullouts for any new or expanded services.
- d) Require installation of all-weather bike racks and access to existing racks.

8. Support the use of telecommunications infrastructure as a substitute to daily commuting and travel.

- a) Conduct an analysis to determine areas with poor internet service levels, and foster private provision of internet services in those areas.
- b) Partner with Internet Service Providers in areas where fully-private service is not attainable.
- c) Provide internet service where no alternatives are available

9. Encourage land use patterns that reduce per-capita average daily trips and vehicle miles traveled.

- a) Implement a park-and-ride infrastructure plan.
- b) Collaborate with oil and gas industry to minimize service traffic.
- c) Encourage flexible work hours, and onsite amenities (showers, lockers) to facilitate bicycling.
- d) Adopt county wide zoning and a future land use plan that identifies nodes that support transit & multimodal, including defining locations for activity nodes.

10. Promote the expansion of aviation services (number of flights, frequency, destinations) and support viable rail connectivity.

- a) Undertake a preliminary feasibility study for railroad connectivity.
- b) Retain and expand air service at La Plata County/Durango Regional Airport with all willing partners.
- c) Support improvements at the Animas Airpark facilities and associated Business Park.

Natural Environment Element

Natural Environment Vision Statement

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.

Natural Environment Goals and Strategies

1. Protect and enhance healthy ecosystems.

- a) Develop a resource management plan for keystone species and programs to monitor health of various ecosystems throughout the county.
- b) Support educational and interpretive programs to connect residents from urban and suburban communities to the natural environment.
- c) Research and/or develop ecosystem management protocols for our area.

2. Encourage preservation and restoration of wildlife corridors, wetlands and riparian habitats.

- a) Map and designate wildlife corridors, wet lands and riparian habitats in collaboration with federal, state and tribal agencies.
- b) Develop preservation and restoration guidelines for preserving and restoring wildlife corridors, wetlands and riparian habitats.
- c) Provide incentives to land owners who implement restoration and preservation guidelines on the portions of their property that are identified as wildlife corridors, wetlands and riparian habitats.
- d) Implement grade separated wildlife corridor crossings on major roadways in collaboration with CO Department of Wildlife and CO Department of Transportation.
- e) Install deer and elk fencing and/or crossing facilities and structures along county roads and major highways.

3. Reduce wildfire hazards.

- a) Educate the public about insurance incentives available for reducing wildfire hazards around structures, and ways to reduce fire hazard through defensible space and thinning operations.
- b) Develop guidelines for property owners on fire-wise house design, location and fuelwood management of the site.
- c) Develop wildfire management overlay zones for high risk areas that control new development regarding building location, design and fuel management on the site.

4. Address risks to our natural environment and long-term water resources by appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures.

- a) Require oil and gas industry to inform county of any chemicals used in the extraction or production processes, and test for chemicals in ground and surface waters.
- b) Incorporate in the development standards best management practices for protecting natural drainage systems and aquifer recharge.
- c) Create development regulations or policies that encourage community-scale renewable energy systems and waste water systems that allow for small "village" developments.

5. Minimize noise and light pollution, light trespass, and glare from future development and encourage retrofit of existing nuisances.

- a) Create noise and light regulations for agricultural operations appropriate to support production.
- b) Define noise standards and adopt measurement and mitigation strategies.
- c) Adopt best management practices for revisions to light and noise control regulations, such as a dark sky ordinance.
- d) Establish appropriate security lighting requirements in urban/suburban residential areas.

6. Develop energy infrastructure to generate sufficient energy locally to meet future needs.

- a) Adopt renewable energy dividends (LPEA).
- b) Implement renewable energy tax districts.
- c) Incentivize the use of renewable energy for buildings and energy efficient building designs through the building code.

7. Encourage the restoration or reuse of lands impacted by resource development.

- a) Require reclamation plans to be in conformance with long term land use plans for the area to be reclaimed.
- b) Provide incentives and/or remove obstacles for establishing renewable energy infrastructure on impacted lands.

8. Restrict development in the floodplain and significant geologic hazard areas

- a) Complete and update county mapping of geologic hazards and the 100 year floodplain.
- b) Develop a ranking system that identifies geologic hazards that pose a tangible risk to public health and safety and focus county regulation on those significant hazards.
- c) Require development to be located outside of the floodplain and significant geologic hazards except on properties where there are no feasible development sites outside of the floodplain or outside of significant geologic hazards; where floodplain or significant geologic hazards cannot be avoided, mitigation standards will be implemented to minimize risk to public health and safety.

9. Protect and improve air and water quality and manage noxious weeds through collaboration with federal, state, Sovereign Nations, and local agencies.

- a) The County should implement noxious weed controls in county right-of-ways.
- b) Require notifications be sent to landowners when public right of way or well pad is sprayed with herbicide.
- c) Engage with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs (such as Conservation Reserve Program) to allow for native vegetation and to reduce noxious weeds in the county.
- d) Expand the 50 ft. stream bank setback on enclosed structures to require a 50 ft or greater setback for on-site wastewater systems as defined by the San Juan Basin Health Department.
- e) Revise the land use code so that erosion and sedimentation control standards specifically mitigate the following: disturbance of natural soil cover and vegetation; exposed soil and unstable soil conditions; protection of receiving water bodies; wetlands; construction and work in and adjacent to water bodies and wetlands; slope stability; cuts and fills; and disturbance to the surrounding soils, root systems and trunks of trees adjacent to site activity.
- f) Work in partnership with the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission to continue monitoring water quality as part of the oil and gas permitting process.
- g) Enforce the La Plata County Weed Code and implement the La Plata County Weed Management Plan.
- h) Work in partnership with federal land management agencies and Sovereign Nations to prevent further proliferation of invasive plant species in La Plata County.
- i) Support efforts of the San Juan Public Lands center and Mesa Verde National Park to enforce Class 1 Area air quality standards in and near La Plata County.

10. Reduce, reuse, and recycle material resources.

- a) Develop a County wide comprehensive recycling program that results with an increase in the types of materials (including appliances) that can be recycled and identifies convenient locations for drop-off and collection.

- b) Create a composting program that would allow for the city/county to compost waste and promote composting by individuals.
- c) Provide tax incentives to businesses and individuals who recycle and re-use material resources.

Healthy Communities and Housing Element

Healthy Communities and Housing Vision Statement

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 and Housing Goals and Strategies

1. Encourage and take an active role to increase the supply of affordable/attainable/workforce and senior housing.

- a) Create a countywide housing plan aimed at increasing the efficient use of resources and addressing the residential and supportive needs.
- b) Create Private Public Partnerships (PPP) models to undertake land development building projects.
- c) Create and support a countywide housing trust/investment fund for land, mortgage, and infrastructure assistance.
- d) Maintain an inventory of county-owned land and provide financial support for development of affordable/attainable/workforce and senior rental housing.
- e) Offer planning and infrastructure assistance to encourage for-profit affordable/attainable housing development.
- f) Explore the potential of manufactured home communities including local finance mechanisms .
- g) Offer incentives, such as tax credits and financing, to businesses building affordable/attainable/workforce housing.
- h) Develop incentives for compact, higher density development located near jobs and services.
- i) Require properties that receive subsidy through the County to remain affordable over the long term.
- j) Provide incentives and assistance to developers of new affordable rental housing and new senior housing.
- k) Adopt a development impact fee on new development that is graduated based on distance to infrastructure and level of housing affordability.

- 2. Integrate a mix of housing types near employment and services.**
 - a) Institute infrastructure allowances/incentives for higher density development in appropriate locations.
 - b) Provide incentives for residential and commercial land uses, such as mother-in-law units and commercial/residential mixed use projects in appropriate locations.
 - c) Create policies for development of higher density housing in proximity to employment centers
 - d) Create policies for workforce centers and employment opportunities in locations where multi-modal transportation routes exist or are planned.

- 3. Encourage the design, construction and renovation of homes to be safe, healthy and energy efficient.**
 - a) Facilitate/develop guidelines to lower the life-cycle costs of housing.
 - b) Provide incentives to attract local housing production for modular, manufactured and/or housing components.
 - c) Implement in partnership with LPEA special districts for financing renewable energy.
 - d) Adopt a high performance building code that provides incentives for resource-efficient design and buildings.

- 4. Encourage life skills and lifelong learning opportunities.**
 - a) Identify joint or multiple use facilities for educational, cultural, community and recreational services.
 - b) Work with County school districts and higher education institutions to provide a variety of activities for residents of all ages, including tuition free classes and childcare, at their respective facilities.
 - c) Connect educational institutions and the private sector to achieve an integrated system of basic and career education, training and retraining for the community work force.
 - d) Work with local agencies and institutes who promote community classes with an emphasis on local food production (including community gardens) and capacity building.
 - e) Improve and increase life skill resources and financial literacy at local libraries.

- 5. Support access to affordable healthcare and to a variety of providers.**
 - a) Adopt programs that encourage enrollment in healthcare educational programs.
 - b) Incentivize financial institutions to provide citizens with healthcare loans.
 - c) Provide resources and support for a 2-1-1 Program and Bridge to Success website.
 - d) Maintain/support rural designation for Medicare so that more Medicare patients can have a primary care physician and actively recruit healthcare providers of all modalities through programs such as loan forgiveness and tax incentives.

- 6. Support a continuum of choices that helps seniors and disabled persons to thrive.**
 - a) Create and regularly update a public list of resources to connect people in need with each other.
 - b) Provide incentives to builders to include universal design in buildings and residences.
 - c) Re-evaluate accessory home regulations in regard to smaller lots.
 - d) Support transit options for all, including seniors and disabled, connecting residents to critical destinations throughout the County.

- 7. Promote healthy communities through neighborhood design, transportation networks, and public education.**
 - a) All new subdivisions and commercial developments will include pedestrian and bicycle facilities and connections with public transportation.
 - b) Adopt a future land use plan that includes higher density development nodes and promotes multi-modal options.
 - c) Regulate mineral extraction regarding noise, ground water pollution and light pollution levels on adjacent private and public property.
 - d) Participate in efforts to provide residents of the County such basic human needs as food, clothing and shelter.

- 8. Support quality childcare and elder care that is widely available and affordable.**
 - a) Provide training and support, including tax credits, for individuals to provide child and elder care in their homes.
 - b) Evaluate, revise or create regulations, such as zoning, parking and land use regulations, relating to child and elder care facilities to encourage county-wide service.

- 9. Encourage dedicated access to public open space, recreation and trails.**
 - a) Provide developers a menu of options for dedicating access to public open space, recreation and trails.
 - b) Develop a plan for dedicated access to public lands in areas that are expected to experience significant new development.
 - c) Develop, adopt and implement a county recreation plan, assess the feasibility of a County Parks Department and identify funding strategies.
 - d) Acquire public open space using grants, gifts, incentives and dedicated funds.
 - e) Develop and maintain access, parking, restrooms and wayfinding to public trails and recreation areas, with consideration for the needs of the elderly and disabled.

- 10. Support and encourage partnerships with local agencies and jurisdictions in the provision of recreational and community services.**
 - a) Team with schools, religious institutions and grange halls to share facilities for recreational, educational, and community activities.
 - b) Create "kid trails" within the county and encourage local schools to offer incentives to children for their use.

- 11. Encourage intergenerational involvement within the community.**
 - a) Develop a relationship between schools & seniors including mentorship & volunteer activities.
 - b) Partner with the Durango Arts Center to hold an annual arts collaboration of youth and seniors.
 - c) Support, assist and encourage community non-profits, cultural organizations, facilities and services in marketing their programs and in volunteer recruitment.
 - d) Formalize an agreement with the school districts to use schools as neighborhood centers for community social and recreational activities and services.

Organizational Excellence Element

Organizational Excellence Vision Statement

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 and Strategies

1. Provide citizens with user-friendly, consistent and efficient services.

- a) Utilize best management practices that include checklists, interactive user friendly website, and extended hours.

2. Collaborate with local governments, state and federal agencies, the Sovereign Nations, businesses and other organizations, to ensure efficient and effective service delivery.

- a) Establish a recurring forum for networking among social service agencies, parks & recreation department, private recreation facilities & other non-profits to eliminate duplication of efforts and to fill agency gaps in service.
- b) Support training, cooperation and asset mapping to eliminate duplication of services and to fill gaps in service.
- c) Dedicate staff to research and pursue grants.
- d) Formalize relations between the County government and Federal and State Public Land Agencies (NFS, NPS, BLM,) by designating a County planner as a Public Lands Liaison, who will provide monthly reports and/or updates to County Commissioner on regional public land activities and notify residents of possible impacts to private property.

3. Engage and inform citizens in local decision making and develop transparent public processes that encourage respect among all individuals and groups.

- a) Develop an interactive website that allows citizens to participate and provide input.
- b) Conduct County Commissioner regularly-scheduled meetings at different locations around the county on a rotation basis.

4. Work towards excellence in all county practices.

- a) Annually review the outcomes of development decisions and submit report of findings to BOCC.
- b) At least biannually (every two years) review the outcome of development decisions and submit report of findings to BOCC.

5. Ensure two-way interaction between citizens and their county government that includes easy access to information, transparency, and opportunities for citizen input.

- a) Create county website for two-way communication between individuals & service providers.
- b) Implement a policy of "kids day" at the county to expose La Plata County students to daily operations
- c) Provide an online forum for the public and public officials & County staff to communicate with each other.

6. Align municipal and county goals, visions, and actions.

- a) Conduct joint meetings between the municipalities and county on a scheduled basis and inform the public of the results of the meetings.
- b) Hire a Public Information Officer to provide periodic reports on collaborative efforts.