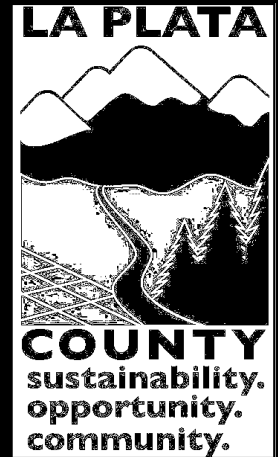


La Plata County Comprehensive Plan DRAFT Vision & Goal Statements December 2009



Background

The La Plata County Comprehensive Plan update began the end of 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 long term aspirations for the future. Beginning in late September, the Citizen's Working Group, as well as some smaller subcommittees, took the community's input and began to develop a set of draft goals. These goals are now ready for your review and comment.

Goals are intended to be broad statements that describes the final result one hopes to achieve. After refining these goal statements, the next step will be to develop specific strategies and actions that will allow La Plata County 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 sincerely thank you for your participation in helping make La Plata County a great place to live!

2030 Community Vision

Our vision is of a community that is a model of collaboration, partnerships and innovation. We have achieved a balance between economic and social development and environmental stewardship. Our communities are designed to create real 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 celebrate our diversity and heritage. Our community is a caring place that supports people's effort to achieve their full potential. Our efforts make us one of the best places in the nation to live and raise a family.

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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:

- Growth and change will continue to occur in the future and will likely continue to alter our rural/agricultural landscape; it can either serve or not serve our community interests and values
- Growth can create great places to live and work if it is based on the community's own sense of how and where it wants to grow, by crafting a vision and setting standards and codes for development which respond to community values.
- An integration of 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.
- A variety of commercial land uses can accommodate business growth and support economic diversity.
- A diversity of housing types available to a wide range of income levels, age groups and abilities are essential to creating real and healthy communities.
- Providing a continuous system of greenbelt/wildlife corridors help to define identified growth communities.
- 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.
- Land use planning will be integrated with a larger transportation network that encourages a variety of transportation choices and modes.
- Agricultural land, open space, and critical environmental areas are important to the local character and improve the communities' quality of life.
- Energy efficiency and renewable energy production at the local and regional levels provide the basis for a sustainable economy.
- Communities will use water through the most efficient means possible.
- Growth and development standards and decisions should be predictable, consistent, fair and cost effective.

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ECONOMIC VITALITY ELEMENT

Economic Vitality Vision

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 economic growth. Our county is renowned for green industries, local food production, education, and cultural and heritage tourism. We recognize there is a balance between economic and social development and environmental protection. We achieve this balance by promoting our assets and a sustainable ethos in business development. Our reliable and fast internet and well educated community attract knowledge based industries. We are a national leader in renewable energy industries. Our agricultural industry is thriving as a result of both increased local markets as well as 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 young people to stay as they grow their families and advance their careers. Economic vitality is supported by infrastructure investments, learning opportunities, access to childcare, and a balance between cost of living and wages.

Economic Vitality Goals

1. A fundamental role for the county is to maintain fiscal soundness.
2. Regulations and policies for business and economic activities shall be fair, clear, predictable, and consistent.
3. Develop incentives for economic activities that promote business sustainability and diversity.
4. Actively collaborate with municipal, Southern Ute, Ute Mountain, private sector entities and non-profits to promote economic diversity and sustainability.
5. La Plata County supplies and promotes development and management of infrastructure necessary for a sustainable local economy: water, energy, waste, communications, housing and transportation.
6. Preserve and enhance the county's assets to be attractive for tourists and residents.
7. Preserve and enhance our cultural landscape, scenic resources and recreational opportunities for residents, tourists and businesses.
8. Stimulate economic vitality by attracting businesses and industries that are congruent with our local culture and provide livable wages.

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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 takes a big picture view in planning for the sustainable development of our county. 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 states, neighborhood communities and property owners. As a result, we are recognized as the most livable county in America. To protect our rural character, our County has grown around designated centers integrating new and old neighborhoods while preserving agricultural lands. These centers are connected by a well planned multimodal transportation system. Our agricultural system is a principle provider of food to our community 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. La Plata 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 being an exporter of 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 production systems (forest products, fisheries, wildlife).
3. Promote access to healthy, affordable, culturally-appropriate, and sustainably produced food, sourced as locally as possible.
4. Promote a resource-efficient growth and settlement pattern.
5. Meet local energy and materials needs as much as possible through efficiency and with local or regional renewable resources.
6. Support investment in adequate/sustainable water resources for social, environmental and economic purposes.
7. Encourage energy production and mineral development that minimize impacts on public health and the environment.
8. Promote historic and pre-historic preservation to enhance heritage tourism and increase restoration of these sites.
9. Protect historic and prehistoric cultures and resources.

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Transportation Element

Transportation Vision

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

Walking and cycling routes connect our neighborhoods, towns, and employment. We have a countywide public transportation system fueled by renewables. 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 use 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. Develop an integrated interconnected network of public streets that promote multi-modal transportation options.
3. Encourage the use of the most efficient known/proven transportation technologies.
4. Promote the use of telecommunications as a substitute to daily commuting and travel.
5. Encourage land use patterns that reduce per-capita average daily trips (ADT) & vehicle miles traveled (VMT).
6. Promote the expansion of aviation services (number of flights, frequency, destinations) for the County and support viable rail connectivity.

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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.

We are a leader in environmental management and a model community for our proactive 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 oil and gas development in the San Juan Basin declined, we have successfully reclaimed disturbed lands.

Healthy Natural Environment Goals

1. Protect & enhance the native bio-diversity in the county.
2. Preserve and restore wildlife corridors, wetlands and riparian habitats.
3. Reduce wildfire hazards.
4. Address the risk of climate change to our natural environment and long-term water supply by appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures.
5. Reduce the upwind emissions of carbon dioxide and conventional air pollutants that enter the local airshed.
6. Minimize light pollution, light trespass, and glare from future development and encourage retrofit of existing lights.
7. Work with residents, businesses, and other agencies to develop energy infrastructure to generate sufficient energy locally to meet future needs without net energy imports.
8. Encourage the restoration or reuse of lands impacted by resource development.
9. Preserve and improve local air quality.
10. Minimize development in the floodplain and geologic hazard areas, and when it occurs, mitigate site and watershed impacts.
11. Collaborate with other public agencies to protect air and water quality.

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Healthy Communities and Housing Element

Healthy Communities & Housing Vision

La Plata County strives to maximize the quality of life, well being and potential of all citizens.

The County has achieved a balance of being able to both live and work in the county by taking an active leadership role in affordable housing. There are ample housing choices for all income levels achieved through partnerships and county supported programs. Through programs and organizations, families in poverty, children, the elderly, and youth are provided the support they need to reach their personal potential. Childcare is widely available and affordable. Our community promotes an active and healthy lifestyle. The county provides quality recreational and park facilities throughout the county enhancing public health. Our community members have access to quality and affordable health care for all income levels. Young people receive the support, care and love they need, are viewed as assets, are involved community members and responsible citizens, and take advantage of constructive, well-organized and accessible activities. They want to continue to live here. Our community provides opportunities for lifelong learning and development of every individual, including educational excellence for our youth.

Healthy Communities & Housing Goals

1. Encourage and take an active role to increase the supply of affordable/attainable/workforce housing.
2. Integrate a mix of housing types near employment and services.
3. Encourage the improvement of substandard housing to be safe, healthy and energy efficient.
4. Promote new and renovation of existing homes with increased energy efficiency.
5. Support life skills and financial education to transition from poverty to self-sufficiency.
6. Encourage a competitive and active real estate development market.
7. Support access to affordable healthcare.
8. Support a continuum of care that keeps seniors and disabled persons independent.
9. Promote healthy communities through neighborhood design, transportation networks, and public education.
10. Support quality childcare that is widely available and affordable.
11. Encourage dedicated access to public open space, recreation and trails.
12. Support and encourage partnerships with local agencies in the provision of recreational and community facilities.

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Organizational Excellence Element

Organizational Excellence Vision

We have a strong sense of community where 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. Respectful and informed dialogue results in effective solutions based upon multiple benefits to resolve community challenges. 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, progressive 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 and efficient service.
2. Collaborate with local governments, state and federal agencies, the Southern Ute tribe, and area non-profits to ensure efficient and effective service delivery.
3. Engage and inform citizens in local decision making.