

Working Group (WG) Mtg. #13 Summary

March 1, 2010
Durango Library
4-6:30pm

NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA

March 15th

4pm to 8 pm @ Durango Recreation Center

Agenda:

1. Review Ideas Forum strategies (attached).
2. Proposed joint meeting with CEAP committee members.
3. Working Group process and composition of group for Phase III Future Land Use plan.

MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Participants:

Staff/Consultants: Charlie Deans, Gabe Preston, Tracie Hughes, Robby Overfield, Jason Meininger, Susan Hakanson

Meeting participants: Travis Craig, Roy Horvath, Sally Bellerue, Brian Kimmel, Dick Norton, Wade Moore, Jeanine Justice, Peter Trugillis, Barbara Jefferies, Jack McGroder

Discussion:

The discussion began with general feedback about the Ideas Forum. Suggestions were made about the venue. There was a need for a larger venue. Discussed strategies that are proposed and those that are being implemented through existing committees or other organizations that are dealing with those issues. Also touched upon how these are broader strategies with the intent in the end to address "land use" comprehensive plan issues. There was concern no one was there to represent CYFMP. We invited those who worked on youth and families master plan. It was recognized that a number of agencies were contacted; however, it was the agencies responsibility to decide whether or not to attend.

Dick Norton suggested the housing facilitator send an email to those on the housing group to keep those people responding and coming back to the table. Fear that if we don't keep them on board they will stop coming. Discussed how we will be sending emails to all those who we have on file from participation to come to workshops in the future. Talked about the upcoming four strategy workshops and how residents will review and prioritize those strategies that are most important to them.

Discussion started with Healthy Communities / Social Services Group and Goals. Strategies were revised. Discussion about school districts – consider adding a school district to regional planning group. We need to get the following individuals involved Michael Brennan 9-R, .Juvie Jones with Ignacio, Dean Hill- Bayfield.

Strategies need to be an action- not using "encourage" at this point. It is time "to do." Suggestion made that going through them one by one will take too long – so Charlie was to cull through the strategies and revise (one author instead of six), then each individual can revise draft on their own, then discuss those that people have an issue. This will also give us a chance to note what is already in place with the county. Process for revising the strategies and the next steps was revisited. Issue rose "where will this document address how the county deals with the strategies- that will be under organizational excellence." Discussion ensued about the county and its responsibility with the proposed strategies. Does the county have to step up where the outside responsible party is not meeting these goals? It was noted that this may be dealt with by placing pressure on the other entities.

Talked about planning districts- need to look at these plans and how they will be advisory or regulatory and how incorporated into the future land use plan process.

Next meeting is March 15th from 4-8 pm; food and childcare will be provided.

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.
- 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. A fundamental role for the county is to maintain fiscal soundness.
- 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.

Strategy

An action designed to achieve a particular goal. A strategy is a short term action, policy, or regulation that is specific enough to be implemented.

Nexus

The relationship or connection of a policy by which a strategy or regulation is justified. A nexus is often required in planning to establish jurisdiction and prove causation, etc.

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) Local governments, La Plata County Economic Development Action Partnership (LEAD), local chambers of commerce, and the Durango Area Tourism Office (DATO) work in partnership to expand buy-local programs.
- c) Shorten the time needed and number of steps required to navigate the permitting processes for all county government functions (planning, building, road and bridge) while maintaining clear, predictable, consistent, fair, and cost effective standards.
- d) Local governments, La Plata County Economic Development Action Partnership (LEAD), Region 9 Economic Development District, Fort Lewis College, and Southwest Colorado Community College work in partnership to develop a business Incubator.
- e) Local governments and economic development entities work in partnership to centralize economic development services under one roof.
- f) Local governments, economic development entities, and private enterprises work in partnership to develop a business recruitment and retention strategy.
- g) Maintain lowest possible taxes for local governments and other local taxing districts while maintaining agreed-upon levels of service for public facilities and services.
- h) 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) work in partnership to augment student internships, vocational and technological programs, teacher tours, entrepreneurship programs and other programs to connect students and educators with local industries.
- i) The county takes a leadership role to find investors to develop an investment fund focused on investment in local businesses.
- j) Local governments employ Colorado House Bill 1350 to encourage development of renewable energy sources.

- k) Minimize county regulatory barriers for the oil and gas industry.
 - l) Establish a score-card that considers sustainable behavior for people, planet, and profit and develop county tax rebates for business that exhibit sustainable behaviors.
 - m) Train and re-train senior citizens for employment skills.
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) As a step towards making county government more flexible and responsive, ask voters to make La Plata County a home rule.
 3. **Support the development and management of infrastructure necessary for a sustainable local economy: water, energy, waste, communications, housing and transportation.**
 - a) Allow opportunities for property owners to create improvement districts in rural centers.
 4. **Preserve and enhance our cultural landscape, scenic resources, recreational opportunities, and county-owned assets for residents, tourists and businesses.**
 - a) The county, La Plata County Economic Development Action Partnership (LEAD), local chambers of commerce, Durango Area Tourism Office (DATO) and City of Durango work in partnership to retain and expand air service at La Plata County/Durango Regional Airport.
 - b) Local governments, the state, the federal government, non-profits and private enterprises work in partnership to build and operate recreational facilities that will stimulate the local economy and will recover their operations costs with the revenues they generate. Facilities could include Lake Nighthorse recreation facilities, multi-event center or a conference center.
 - 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) Establish criteria for establishing rural centers in existing rural communities where future non-residential and residential development will be encouraged. Identify rural centers on officially adopted maps.
 - b) Identify future business park location(s) on officially adopted maps.
 - c) Establish an expedited county permitting process for development in designated rural centers.
 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) The county adopts a La Plata County "right to farm" policy as an official written and recorded action of the Board of County Commissioners.
 - b) The county discounts its fees for activities directly associated with agricultural operations. Discounted fees could include application fees, building fees, plumbing and mechanical fees, planning permit fees, impact fees and other development fees, and road and bridge inspection fees.
 - c) Identify and remove regulatory barriers to value-added production on agricultural land.
 - d) Allow flexibility on agricultural lands for land uses that support or make possible the continuance of an agricultural operation as the primary use.
 - e) Eliminate county sales tax on locally grown food (*Possible legal issues? Colorado Constitution?*).

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 stronger land-link program so new farmers can establish operations without the barrier of rent and lease fees.
 - b) Honor and recognize an agriculturalist in the community annually.
 - c) Provide a centralized commercial kitchen for value added production with locations throughout the county.
 - d) Access State economic development grants for new markets for both local and export markets.
 - e) Advocate for protection of federal land grazing leases tied to agricultural viability.
 - f) Support consumer education that emphasizes benefits of local agriculture.
 - i. Support the Buy Local program and local market branding.
 - ii. Convene community forums to inform community residents about the value of local agriculture and healthy food systems.
 - g) Encourage CSU extension to be more active in educational endeavors that support both traditional and non-traditional agriculture.
 - h) Do not develop any new taxes on agricultural inputs.
 - i) Advocate for elimination or reduction of federal inheritance and capital gains tax that negatively impact agriculture.
 - j) Continue the productive agriculture formula for property taxes on agricultural land.
 - k) Eliminate tax on locally produced foods.
 - l) Develop a circumstantial offset incentive for agricultural properties subjected to inheritance tax.
 - m) Designate a portion of city and county tax to support farm and agricultural support organizations and land acquisitions projects.

- n) Develop clear and simple definitions for agricultural uses and make uses by right.
 - i. Examine residential and commercial use designations to promote agricultural operations (e.g. 4-H hog enterprises should not require commercial designations, etc.)
 - ii. Develop an easier permitting process for temporary or seasonal worker housing.
- o) Organize farm days where locals without gardens can participate in agricultural duties at local small scale farms and ranches.

2. Support the enhancement of renewable natural resource systems (forest and range products, fisheries, wildlife).

- a) Utilize the Dept of Wildlife to purchase development rights on lands valuable for wildlife habitat.
- b) Protect steep slopes and environmentally sensitive lands.
- c) Help to defeat attempts by the federal government to tie up federal lands (national monuments) to outlaw grazing and mining which sustains agriculture.
- d) Harvest (not hunt) deer, elk and geese from agricultural lands.

3. Promote access to healthy, affordable, culturally-influenced, and sustainably produced food, sourced as locally as possible.

- a) Work with Ignacio and Bayfield School Districts to purchase locally produced products through collaboration with Zink farm and formation of an agricultural coop.
- b) County staff provides feedback to developers during covenant review process of implications to local food production and agriculture of subdivision covenants.
- c) Support home school and community gardens.

4. Promote resource-efficient growth and settlement patterns.

- a) City and County designate future growth areas supported by the provision of new and enhancement of existing infrastructure.
- b) Allow agricultural uses and limited retail development in defined nodes throughout county and along Hwy 160/550, but not large scale commercial development outside urban growth areas.
- c) Require urban development to be interconnected with roads, trails, etc. to support multi-modalism.
- d) Emphasize infill by defining infill areas geographically.
- e) Collaborate with towns and the City on promoting infill.
- f) Promote local government collaboration with state and federal agencies to retain local control.
- g) Determine through capacity analysis the maximum build-out for the county and allocate growth accordingly to minimize sprawl.
- h) The County should educate the community on best practices.
- i) The County Comp Plan resolution should include a statement that allows for the plan to be flexible and responsive to new ideas and need for new growth areas if necessary.
- j) Utilize design guidelines for mitigation to sensitive lands that do not restrict a property owners right to develop:
 - i. Do not apply same standards to large and small subdivisions.
 - ii. Do not restrict residential development in scenic viewsheds that cannot be seen from County roads.
 - iii. Review existing visual resource proposal to reduce the prescriptive nature and be more site design oriented.
 - iv. Establish highway corridors that utilize site design to promote visual perception of open space though design guidelines but still allowing development to occur.

- k) Allow staff and developer to have flexibility in creative site design.
- l) Limit sprawl by limiting development into rural areas such as roads, sewer, water.
- m) Require minimum lot sizes (5-15 acres).
- n) Develop a trash ordinance (incentive or enforcement).

5. Meet local energy and materials needs as much as possible through efficiency and with locally or regionally renewable resources.

- a) Allow solar farm coops on undevelopable and/or unproductive lands.
- b) Allow sawmills that would provide more affordable lumber for more affordable housing.
- c) Increase access to gravel in areas that are underserved.
- d) Reduce restrictions in code on development of alternative 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.

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.

- a) Encourage developers and property owners to voluntarily retain historic structures, trails, and ditches by providing incentives.
- b) Provide a property tax incentive for preservation of historic resources.
- c) Educate community about state and federal tax incentives.

9. Continue to protect historic and prehistoric cultural sites.

10. 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) Incentivize the use of non-productive agricultural lands for use instead of productive agricultural or critical natural resource lands through Transfer of Development Rights, Purchase of Development Rights, etc.
- c) Work with landowners to keep land in production through the use of TDRs, PDRs, Conservation Easements, etc.
- d) Educate landowners about the advantages of conservation easements.
- e) Adopt a county policy statement that supports the use of conservation easements on small parcels for farming.
- f) Reform existing code structure to incentivize agriculture production remaining viable by providing clear and simple rules:
 - i. Simplify the building permit process for agricultural buildings (e.g. definitions of ag uses and ag shed vs garage....possibly restructure building permits so that price increases with footage and eliminate types of sheds/uses.)

- ii. Allow multiple uses of agricultural lands that support productive agriculture remaining in business.
- iii. Develop an exemption process for family/heir homesites. Reexamine the current exemption incentive and redevelop to not limit to 35 acres.
- iv. Streamline minor-exemption process to enable farmer/rancher to subdivide non-productive land into smaller parcels than 35 acres.
- v. Provide density bonuses for cluster development.
- vi. Do not create height limits that impair agricultural operations. (exempt ag from height limits for barns, sheds, etc.).
- g) Adopt a policy for agriculture that prevents eminent domain without landowner consent.
- h) Develop a self initiated zoning process for rural land areas.

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 & promotes multiple modes
- b) Dedicate additional county staff support with appropriate expertise to work with developer
- 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.

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 used to interconnect neighborhoods.
- b) Coordinate between County, cities, towns, & tribe.
- c) Prepare a feasibility study for establishing practicable locations for multimodal connectivity/easements and establish priorities. Recognize that it may be infeasible to connect some existing neighborhoods due to layout, topography, and political considerations.

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.
- b) Undertake a statistically valid survey of County voters to assess support of a La Plata/Durango RTA, and possible new funding source(s) for transportation services and improvements.
- c) Formalize and enhance coordination and communication between La Plata Co, Farmington MPO and Northwest New Mexico RPO.

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

- a) Identify key migration routes and implement electric message boards..Hwys 222, 501, Florida Rd.
- b) Provide electronic notification via email when flocks/herds are coming

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

- a) Adopt Best Management Plan for wildlife control and crossing

- b) Coordinate wildlife crossing - opportunities with bike and pedestrian pathway to minimize conflicts and redundancies.
 - c) Include in Comp Plan, addressing effectively in LUC
- 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 or both, trails
 - b) Include 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 for La Plata County, in collaboration with CDOT and municipalities.
 - b) Identify and adopt an array of incentives for facilities and support infrastructure of alternative fuel vehicles.
 - c) Design, fund, and install bus pullouts for Durango trolley and any new or expanded services.
 - d) Install all-weather bike racks and maintain access to current racks (i.e., keep clear of snow).
 - e) Incorporate healthy transportation concepts and designs into Comp Plan.
- 8. Support the use of telecommunications infrastructure as a substitute to daily commuting and travel.**
- a) Conduct GIS analysis to determine areas with poor internet service levels, and foster private provision of internet services in those areas without viable service.
 - b) County will partner with Internet Service Providers in areas where fully-private service is not attainable.
- 9. Encourage land use patterns that reduce per-capita average daily trips (ADT) & vehicle miles traveled (VMT).**
- a) Implement a park-and-ride infrastructure plan as a public-private partnership with developers.
 - 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) La Plata County should provide utility services (sewer, water) to support higher density development.
 - e) Adopt county wide zoning and a 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, and if infeasible, drop the idea.
 - b) Working thorough economic development venues, strive to attract additional air service to the region.
 - c) Partner within other municipalities, MPOs and COG to support additional air service.

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) Include a definition of healthy ecosystems in planning documents
- b) Develop indicators to monitor health of various ecosystems in La Plata county
- c) Identify keystone species to monitor for overall health of the natural environment
- d) Develop a land systems management approach
- e) Strengthen education and interpretive programs to connect residents from urban and suburban communities to the natural environment.
- f) Use the Old Fort Lewis campus to research and develop ecosystem and natural resource management for the area.

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

- a) Collaborate with federal, state and tribal agencies to map and designate wildlife corridors, wet lands and riparian habitats.
- b) Explicitly acknowledge ecosystem services, as well as measure and monitor those systems.
- c) Develop preservation and restoration guidelines for preserving and restoring wildlife corridors, wetlands and riparian habitats
- d) Compensate land owners who implement restoration and preservation guidelines on the portions of their property that are designated as wildlife corridors, wetlands and riparian habitats.
- e) Collaborate with DOW and CDOT to implement grade separated wildlife corridor crossings on major roadways.
- f) Put up deer and elk fencing along major highways.

3. Reduce wildfire hazards.

- a) Support grazing and logging permits on public lands
- b) Identify and map areas which are considered to be at particular risk from wildfire due to vegetation, slope and climatic conditions.
- c) Educate the public about the insurance incentives that are available for reducing wildfire hazards around structures.
- d) Educate the public of ways to reduce fire hazard through defensible space and thinning operations
- e) Develop guidelines for property owners to improve understanding of the site assessment process and guidance on house design and location, and on-going management of the site.
- f) Develop wildfire management overlay zone for high risk areas.

- g) New developments in areas covered by a wildfire management overlay should be subject to permit conditions that control the location, building design and ongoing management of 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 on chemicals used in the fracturing process.
- b) Test for chemicals in ground water.
- c) Monitor water quality to ensure safe drinking water.
- d) Investigate and educate on best practices for protecting natural drainage systems and natural aquifer recharge.
- e) Encourage pipeline infrastructure for to move products and by-products of oil and gas development.
- f) Review and remove development code for regulations or policies that may prevent the development of self sustaining solar power and waste filtration systems that allow for small "village" development that is not dependent upon centralized systems.
- g) Make a list/define the risk(s), then develop strategies for each risk that could/should be used.

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

- a) Exempt agricultural lands from noise pollution restrictions.
- b) Define noise standards. Don't just use the state statute on how to measure and mitigate.
- c) Enforce existing light standards on all non-agriculture areas.

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

- a) Encourage pipeline infrastructure to move products and by-products of oil and gas development while reducing number of above ground tanks.
 - a. Review Chapter 90 Natural Resources for alignment with strategy
- b) Reduce restrictions on the oil and gas industry.
- c) Adopt renewable energy dividends (LPEA)
- d) Implement renewable energy tax districts
- e) Incent the use of renewable energy for buildings and energy efficient building designs through the building code.
- f) Reduce standards for security lighting in dense, residential areas.

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

- a) Develop a long term plan for reuse of lands impacted by resource development and review and amend county oil and gas regulations to ensure that restoration and reclamation are in alignment with the plan.
- b) The long-term plan for reuse of lands impacted by resource development will develop strategies to establish renewable energy infrastructure in place of the waning gas and oil extraction infrastructure.
- c) Review Chapter 90 Natural Resources for alignment with current setback requirements and develop exceptions for new wells heads on existing pads that are located too close to residential development.

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

- a) Rely on insurance companies policies to limit development in the flood plains and geologic hazard areas as current standards are adequate.

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 controls for noxious weeds 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 NRCS programs (such as CRP) to allow for native vegetation to grow and to reduce noxious weeds in the 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. Program should be privately run with coordination support from the county.
 - 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.
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- a) 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.
 - b) 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.
 - c) 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.
 - d) Continue to enforce the La Plata County Weed Code and to implement the La Plata County Weed Management Plan.
 - e) Work in partnership with federal land management agencies and sovereign nations to prevent further proliferation of invasive plant species in La Plata County.
 - f) Support efforts of the San Juan Public Lands center and Mesa Verde National Park to enforce the Class 1 air quality areas in and near La Plata County.
 - g) Notify landowners before county rights of way are sprayed with herbicide.

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 of the elderly and special needs populations.
 - b) Create Private Public Partnership (PPP) to undertake land development building projects in response to proposals.
 - c) Support current housing agencies and programs (including homebuyer counseling, foreclosure prevention and financial literacy programs).
 - d) Create and support countywide housing trust/investment fund for land, mortgage, and infrastructure assistance.
 - e) Provide land and financial support for development of affordable/attainable/workforce and senior rental housing.
 - f) Offer planning and infrastructure assistance to encourage for-profit affordable/attainable housing development.
 - g) Create local finance mechanisms for manufactured home communities.
 - h) Offer tax credits to businesses building affordable/attainable/workforce housing
 - i) Develop incentives for compact, higher density development located near jobs and services.
 - j) Require properties that receive subsidy through the County to remain affordable over the long term
 - k) Maintain an inventory of county-owned land for affordable and attainable housing development.
 - l) Provide incentives and assistance to developers of affordable rental housing.
 - m) Provide incentives and assistance for new senior housing.

- 2. Integrate a mix of housing types near employment and services.**
 - a) Institute higher density infrastructure allowances.
 - b) Define clear, predictable development regulations.
 - c) Reduce obstacles to residential and commercial land use possibilities (i.e.: mother-in-law units and commercial/residential mixed use).
 - d) Develop policies for development of higher density housing.

- e) Create workforce centers and employment opportunities in locations where housing and transportation already exist and/or develop housing near workforce centers that use alternative transportation routes.
- 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) Explore creating a local housing factory for modular, manufactured housing components.
 - c) Implement special districts for use of solar energy.
 - d) Support learning for self-sufficient design/build.
 - 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 & institutes who promote community classes, who emphasize education on local food production (including residential gardens) & capacity building.
 - e) Improve and increase life skill resources at local libraries.
 - 5. Support access to affordable healthcare and to a variety of providers.**
 - a) Actively recruit healthcare providers of all modalities through programs such as loan forgiveness and tax incentives.
 - b) Adopt programs that encourage enrollment in healthcare educational programs.
 - c) Incentivize financial institutions to provide citizens with healthcare loans.
 - d) Long-term support of a 2-1-1 Program and Bridge to Success website.
 - e) Support rural designation for Medicare so that more Medicare patients can have a primary care physician.
 - 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.
 - c) Re-evaluate second 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 developments must include pedestrian & bicycle facilities and connections with public transportation.
 - b) Adopt planning code that includes higher density development nodes and promotes multi-modal options.
 - c) Promote healthy communities through neighborhood design, transportation networks & public education
 - d) Adopt policies that encourage local food and fiber production.
 - e) Regulation of mineral extraction regarding noise, ground water pollution and light pollution to private and public property.
 - f) Set a livable minimum wage in the County.
 - g) 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, open space and trails in areas that are expected to experience significant new development.
- c) Rely on government land for open space (without imposing requirements on large property owners).
- d) Develop adopt and implement a county recreation plan.
- e) Assess the feasibility of a County Parks Department and funding strategies.
- f) Ensure public transportation facilities provide full access for residents, their recreational equipment and pets to parks and trailheads.
- g) Acquire more public open space using grants, gifts and dedicated funds.
- h) Develop and maintain access, parking, restrooms & wayfinding to public trails and recreation areas, with consideration for the needs of the elderly and disabled.
- i) Ensure that new development provides and maintains access to public open land areas, where appropriate. Develop adopt and implement a county recreation plan.
- j) Assess the feasibility of a County Parks Department and funding strategies.
- k) Create funding for open space land acquisition.

10. Support and encourage partnerships with local agencies and jurisdictions in the provision of recreational and community facilities.

- 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.
- c) Create a water and sewer authority.
- d) Involve all towns in land use decisions including potential expansion of water and sewer.
- e) Prompt other jurisdictions (including Durango, Bayfield, Ignacio, Dry Side, Allison, and Hermosa) to absorb their share of growth.

11. Encourage intergenerational involvement within the community.

- a) Develop a relationship between schools & seniors including mentorship & volunteer activities.
- b) Encourage Durango Arts Center to hold an annual arts collaboration of youth and seniors.
- c) Support the Discovery Museum.
- d) Support, assist and encourage community non-profits, cultural organizations, facilities and services. Provide assistance in marketing their programs and in the recruitment of volunteers.
- e) Support efforts to utilize schools as neighborhood centers for community social and recreational activities and services. When appropriate, locate local, County-sponsored services and activities at school facilities.

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.**
- 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) Provide long term support of a 2-1-1 program & "Bridges to Success".
 - c) Support training co-op & asset mapping to eliminate duplication of services and to fill gaps in service
 - d) Dedicate staff to find & leverage grants.
 - e) 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 to follow Federal and State activities and plans.
 - i. Monthly reports and/or updates to County Commissioner on Regional Public Land Planning
 - ii. Notify County residents of Public land planning and possible impacts to individual property owners.
 - f) Collaborate with Public Land Agencies to identify key stone species, collect and analyze data and monitor health and movements of wildlife to measure health of the natural environment and location of continuous wildlife corridors.
 - g) Implement a public education program on alternative transportation options.
 - h) Develop & implement a county recreation plan that coordinates access to/through various landowners.
- 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.**
 - 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.**

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.
- 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. A fundamental role for the county is to maintain fiscal soundness.
- 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.

Strategy

An action designed to achieve a particular goal. A strategy is a short term action, policy, or regulation that is specific enough to be implemented.

Nexus

The relationship or connection of a policy by which a strategy or regulation is justified. A nexus is often required in planning to establish jurisdiction and prove causation, etc.

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).~~ [work in partnership to expand buy-local programs.](#)
- c) [Reduce](#) ~~Shorten~~ the time ~~needed and number of~~ [and](#) steps required ~~in to navigate~~ the permitting processes ~~for all county government functions~~ (planning, building, road and bridge) ~~while maintaining clear, predictable, consistent, fair, and cost effective standards.~~
- 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.~~ [work in partnership to develop a business incubator.](#)
- e) ~~Create a one-stop shop for economic development in partnership with~~ [Local governments and economic development entities](#) ~~that~~ [work in partnership to centralize economic development services under one roof.](#)
- f) ~~Local governments, economic development entities, and private enterprises work in partnership to~~ [focuses on develop a business recruitment and retention activities](#) ~~strategy.~~
- g) ~~Maintain lowest possible taxes for local governments and other local taxing districts while maintaining agreed-upon levels of service for public facilities and services.~~
- h) ~~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) work in partnership to~~ [a](#) [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 \(LEAD\).](#)

- ~~i)h) The county takes a leadership role to find~~ Identify investors to develop an investment fund focused on investing ~~ment and providing loans to in~~ local businesses.
- ~~j)i) Local governments e~~ Employ Colorado House Bill 1350 to encourage development of renewable energy sources.
- ~~k)j) Minimize county regulatory barriers for the~~ energy ~~oil and gas~~ industry.
- ~~l)k) Establish a score card that considers sustainable behavior for people, planet, and profit and develop county~~ tax rebates for business that utilize ~~exhibit~~ sustainable practices ~~behaviors~~ based on a score-card of sustainability indicators.
- ~~m)l) Provide T~~ training -and re-train programs for -senior citizens on ~~for~~ employment skills.

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 ~~As a step towards making county government more flexible and responsive, ask voters to~~ make La Plata County a home rule county.

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 ~~Allow opportunities for~~ property owners to create improvement districts in designated rural centers.

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

- ~~a) The county, La Plata County Economic Development Action Partnership (LEAD), local chambers of commerce, Durango Area Tourism Office (DATO) and City of Durango work in partnership to retain and expand air service at La Plata County/Durango Regional Airport.~~
- ~~b)a) Local governments, the state, the federal government, non-profits and private enterprises work in partnership to~~ b) Build and operate recreational facilities that will stimulate the local economy and will recover their operations costs with the revenues they generate in partnership with local state and federal governments, non-profits and private enterprises, such as ~~Facilities could include~~ Lake Nighthorse recreation facilities, multi-event center or a conference center.
- ~~c)b) 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 ~~Establish criteria for establishing~~ rural centers in existing rural communities where future non-residential and residential development will be encouraged. ~~Identify rural centers on officially adopted maps.~~
- b) Designate ~~Identify~~ future business park location(s) in appropriate locations on ~~officially~~-adopted land use plan ~~maps~~.
- c) Establish an expedited county permitting process for development in designated rural centers and business parks.

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) ~~The county a~~Adopts a La Plata County a "right to farm" ordinance~~policy as an official written and recorded action of the Board of County Commissioners.~~
- b) Provide development fee discounts or waivers~~The county discounts its fees~~ for activities directly associated with agricultural operations, such as. ~~Discounted fees could include~~ application fees, building fees, plumbing and mechanical fees, planning permit fees, impact fees ~~and other development fees,~~ and road and bridge inspection fees.
- c) Identify and remove regulatory barriers to value-added production of ~~on~~ agricultural products~~land~~.
- d) Allow land uses flexibility on agricultural lands ~~for land uses~~ that support ~~or make possible the continuance of~~ an agricultural operation as the primary use.
- e) Eliminate county sales tax on locally grown food. ~~(Possible legal issues? Colorado Constitution?)~~.

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 ~~stronger~~ land-link program so new farmers can identify agricultural land available for production.
~~establish operations without the barrier of rent and lease fees.~~
- b) Honor and recognize an agriculturalist in the community annually.
- c) Provide ~~a-centralized~~ commercial kitchens for value-added production with locations throughout the county.
- d) Access State economic development grants for new markets for both local and export markets.
- e) Advocate for protection of federal land grazing leases tied to agricultural viability.
- f) Provide Support consumer education programs that emphasizes benefits of local agriculture such as -
 - i. ~~Support the~~ Buy Local program and local market branding. and
 - ii. ~~Convene~~ community forums to inform community residents about the value of local agriculture and healthy food systems in partnership with -
- g) Encourage CSU extension ~~to be more active in educational endeavors that~~ that support both traditional and non-traditional agriculture.
- ~~h) Do not develop any new taxes on agricultural inputs.~~
- ~~g) Advocate for elimination or reduction of federal inheritance and capital gains tax that negatively impact agriculture.~~
- ~~j) Continue the productive agriculture formula for property taxes on agricultural land.~~
- ~~h) Eliminate~~ county sales tax on locally produced foods.
- ~~h) Develop a circumstantial offset incentive for agricultural properties subjected to inheritance tax.~~
- ~~m) Designate a portion of city and county taxes~~ to support farm and agricultural support organizations and land acquisitions projects.

- n) Develop ~~clear and simple~~ definitions and performance standards for permitted agricultural uses such as ~~and~~ make uses by right.
 - i. ~~Examine residential and commercial use designations to promote 4-H~~ agricultural operations ~~(e.g. 4-H hog enterprises should not require commercial designations, etc.)~~
 - ii. and Develop an easier permitting process for temporary or seasonal worker housing.
- o) ~~Organize farm days where locals without gardens can participate in agricultural duties at local small-scale farms and ranches.~~

2. Support the enhancement of renewable natural resource systems (forest and range products, fisheries, wildlife).

- a) Request Utilize the Dept of Wildlife to purchase development rights on lands valuable for wildlife habitat.
- b) Protect steep slopes and environmentally sensitive lands.
- c) Advocate to allow grazing and mining to occur within proposed ~~Help to defeat attempts by the~~ federal designations of government to tie up federal lands (Conservation Areas or National monuments to) ~~to outlaw grazing and mining which~~ sustains agriculture.
- d) Create rules that allow Harvest (not hunt) of deer, elk and geese from agricultural lands.

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 through collaboration with Zink farm and formation of an agricultural coop.
- b) County staff will promote ~~provides feedback to developers during covenant review process of implications to~~ local food production and agriculture uses in ~~of~~ subdivision covenants during review process.
- e) ~~Support home school and community gardens.~~

4. Promote resource-efficient growth and settlement patterns.

- a) ~~City and County d~~ Designate future growth areas supported by the provision of new or ~~and~~ enhanced ment of ~~existing~~ infrastructure.
- b) Allow agricultural uses and limited retail development in defined nodes throughout county and along Hwy 160/550, but not large scale commercial development outside urban growth areas.
- c) ~~Require urban development to be interconnected with roads, trails, etc. to support multi-modalism.~~
- d) ~~Emphasize infill by defining infill areas geographically.~~
- e) ~~Collaborate with towns and the City on promoting infill.~~
- f) ~~Promote local government collaboration with state and federal agencies to retain local control.~~
- g) c) Determine through capacity analysis the maximum build-out for the county and allocate growth accordingly to minimize sprawl.
- h) d) The County should educate the community on best practices.
- i) e) The County Comp Plan resolution should include a statement that allows for t The Comprehensive plan will to be flexible and responsive to new ideas and ~~need for~~ new growth areas if necessary.
- j) Create Utilize site-based design guidelines and regulations that provide standards to develop ~~for mitigation to~~ on sensitive lands that are appropriate to the scale and context of the proposed development. ~~do not restrict a property owners right to develop:~~
 - i. ~~Do not apply same standards to large and small subdivisions.~~
 - ii. ~~Do not restrict residential development in scenic viewsheds that cannot be seen from County roads.~~

- ~~iii. Review existing visual resource proposal to reduce the prescriptive nature and be more site design oriented.~~
- ~~iv. Establish highway corridors that utilize site design to promote visual perception of open space through design guidelines but still allowing development to occur.~~
- ~~k) Allow staff and developer to have flexibility in creative site design.~~
- ~~l) Limit sprawl by limiting development into rural areas such as roads, sewer, water.~~
- ~~m) Require minimum lot sizes (5-15 acres).~~
- ~~n) f) Develop a trash ordinance (incentive or enforcement).~~

5. Meet local energy and materials needs as much as possible through efficiency and with locally or regionally renewable resources.

- a) Allow solar and wind farm coops on undevelopable and/or unproductive lands.
- b) Allow sawmills that would provide ~~more~~ affordable lumber to support ~~for more~~ affordable housing.
- c) Increase access to gravel in areas that are underserved.
- d) Reduce restrictions ~~in code~~ on development of renewable~~alternative~~ 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 that to allow for agricultural water-banking to protect water rights and promote conservation.
- a)c) Promote the use of water harvesting and gray water systems to the degree permitted under State statutes and increasing the use of permeable surfaces.

~~**7. Promote energy production and mineral development while minimizing negative impacts on public health, the environment and infrastructure.**~~

~~**8.7. Protect historic and prehistoric sites and p**~~**Promote cultural ~~historic and pre-historic~~ preservation to enhance heritage tourism and increase restoration of these sites.**

- a) Provide incentives to ~~Encourage~~ developers and property owners to voluntarily retain historic structures, trails, and ditches ~~by providing incentives.~~
- b) Provide a property tax incentive for preservation of cultural ~~historic~~ resources.
- c) Educate community about state and federal tax incentives.

~~**9. Continue to protect historic and prehistoric cultural sites.**~~

~~**10.8.**~~ **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) Direct Incentivize the development to use of non-productive agricultural lands retain ~~for use instead of~~ productive agricultural or critical ~~natural~~ resource lands through mechanisms such as Transfer of Development Rights, Purchase of Development Rights, ~~etc.~~~~

- e) ~~b) Work with landowners to keep land in production through the use of TDRs, PDRs, Conservation Easements, etc.~~
- d) ~~Educate landowners about the advantages of conservation easements.~~
- e) ~~c) Provide assistance and education to landowners on Adopt a county policy statement that supports the use of conservation easements on small parcels for farming and open space purposes.~~
- f) ~~Amend the Reform existing development code structure to incentivize agriculture production remaining viable by providing clear and simple rules:~~
 - i. ~~Simplify the building permit process for agricultural buildings (e.g. definitions of ag uses and ag shed vs garage....possibly restructure building permits so that price increases with footage and eliminate types of sheds/uses.)~~
 - ii. ~~Allowing multiple uses of agricultural lands that support productive agricultural e remaining in businesses.~~
 - iii. ~~Develop an exempting on process for family/heir homesites from . Reexamine the current exemption incentive and redevelop to not limit to 35 acre minimum, and s.~~
 - iv. ~~Streamline minor exemption process to enable farmer/rancher to subdivide non-productive land into smaller parcels than 35 acres.~~
 - v. ~~Provide density bonuses for cluster development.~~
 - vi. ~~i. Do not create increase height limits that impair agricultural operations. (exempt ag from height limits for for agricultural structure such as barns and , sheds, etc.)~~
- g) ~~Adopt a policy for agriculture that prevents eminent domain without landowner consent.~~
- h) ~~Develop a self-initiated zoning process for rural land areas.~~

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 & promotes multiple modes.
- 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.

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 ~~used to~~ interconnect neighborhoods.
- ~~b) Coordinate between County, cities, towns, & tribe.~~
- ~~c) Prepare a feasibility study for establishing practicable locations for multimodal connectivity/easements and establish priorities. Recognize that it may be infeasible to connect some existing neighborhoods due to layout, topography, and political considerations.~~

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.
- b) Undertake a statistically valid survey of County voters to assess support of a La Plata/Durango RTA, and possible new funding source(s) for transportation services and improvements.
- c) Formalize and enhance coordination and communication between La Plata Co, Farmington MPO and Northwest New Mexico RPO.

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

- a) Identify key migration routes and implement electric message boards ~~on~~ Hwys 222, 501, Florida Rd.
- b) Provide electronic notification via email when flocks/herds will be moving on roadways ~~are coming~~.

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

- a) Adopt Best Management Practices Plan for wildlife control and crossing

- b) Coordinate wildlife crossing - opportunities with bike and pedestrian pathway to minimize conflicts and redundancies.
 - ~~c) Include in Comp Plan, addressing effectively in LUC~~
- 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 ~~or both~~~~, trails
 - b) Define ~~Include~~ 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 ~~for La Plata County~~, in collaboration with CDOT and municipalities.
 - b) ~~Identify and adopt an array of incentives for facilities and support infrastructure of alternative fuel vehicles.~~
 - c) Design, fund, and install bus pullouts for Durango trolley and any new or expanded services.
 - d) Require installation of ~~Install~~ all-weather bike racks and ~~maintain~~ access to existing ~~current~~ racks. ~~(i.e., keep clear of snow).~~
 - ~~e) Incorporate healthy transportation concepts and designs into Comp Plan.~~
- 8. Support the use of telecommunications infrastructure as a substitute to daily commuting and travel.**
- a) Conduct an ~~GIS~~ analysis to determine areas with poor internet service levels, and foster private provision of internet services in those areas ~~without viable service.~~
 - b) ~~County will p~~Partner with Internet Service Providers in areas where fully-private service is not attainable.
- 9. Encourage land use patterns that reduce per-capita average daily trips (ADT) & vehicle miles traveled (VMT).**
- a) Implement a park-and-ride infrastructure plan as a public-private partnership with developers.
 - 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) ~~La Plata County should provide utility services (sewer, water) to support higher density development.~~
 - e) 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, ~~and if infeasible, drop the idea.~~
 - ~~b) Working thorough economic development venues, strive to attract additional air service to the region.~~
 - b) Retain and expand air service at La Plata County/Durango Regional Airport in partnership with La Plata County Economic Development Action Partnership (LEAD), local chambers of commerce, Durango Area Tourism Office (DATO) and City of Durango.
 - c) Support improvements of the Animas Airpark facilities and associated business park.
 - ~~c) Partner within other municipalities, MPOs and COG to support additional air service.~~

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) Include a definition of healthy ecosystems in planning documents~~
- ~~b) a) Develop indicators, keystone species and programs to monitor health of various ecosystems in ~~La Plata~~ county and develop a resource management plan.~~
- ~~c) Identify keystone species to monitor for overall health of the natural environment~~
- ~~d) Develop a land systems management approach~~
- ~~e) b) Provide Strengthen educational and interpretive programs to connect residents from urban and suburban communities to the natural environment.~~
- ~~f) c) Utilize se the Old Fort Lewis campus to research and develop ecosystem ~~and natural resource~~ management for the area.~~

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

- ~~a) Collaborate with federal, state and tribal agencies to mMap and designate wildlife corridors, wet lands and riparian habitats in collaboratation with federal, state and tribal agencies.~~
- ~~b) Explicitly acknowledge ecosystem services, as well as measure and monitor those systems.~~
- ~~e) b) Develop preservation and restoration guidelines for preserving and restoring wildlife corridors, wetlands and riparian habitats.~~
- ~~d) c) Provide incentives to Compensate land owners who implement restoration and preservation guidelines on the portions of their property that are designated as wildlife corridors, wetlands and riparian habitats.~~
- ~~e) d) Collaborate with DOW and CDOT to iImplement grade separated wildlife corridor crossings on major roadways in collaborate with DOW and CDOT.~~
- ~~f) e) Install Put up deer and elk fencing along county roads ~~major~~ and major highways.~~

3. Reduce wildfire hazards.

- ~~a) Support grazing and logging permits on public lands~~
- ~~b) Identify and map areas which are considered to be at particular risk from wildfire due to vegetation, slope and climatic conditions.~~
- ~~c) Educate the public about the insurance incentives that are available for reducing wildfire hazards around structures and on.~~
- ~~d) a) Educate the public of ways to reduce fire hazard through defensible space and thinning operations~~
- ~~e) b) Develop guidelines for property owners to improve understanding of the site assessment process and guidance on on fire-wise house design, and location, and on-going fuelwood management of the site.~~

~~f) Develop wildfire management overlay zones for high risk areas that control -~~

~~g) c) New developments in areas covered by a wildfire management overlay should be subject to permit conditions that control the location, on building location, design and fuelwood ongoing management of 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 on chemicals used in the fracturing process and to -~~

~~b) a) Test for chemicals in ground water.~~

~~c) b) Monitor water quality to ensure safe drinking water.~~

~~d) c) Incorporate in the development standards Investigate and educate on best management practices for protecting natural drainage systems and ~~natural~~ aquifer recharge.~~

~~e) d) Provide incentives for Encourage pipeline infrastructure ~~for~~ to transport move products and by-products of oil and gas development.~~

~~f) e) Create Review and remove development ~~code for~~ regulations or policies that encourage may prevent the development of self community-scale renewable energy systems and sustaining solar power and waste water filtration systems that allow for small "village" developments ~~that is not dependent upon centralized systems.~~~~

~~g) Make a list/define the risk(s), then develop strategies for each risk that could/should be used.~~

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

a) Exempt agricultural lands from noise pollution restrictions.

b) Define noise standards that exceed the requirements in ~~Don't just use the s~~State statutes on how to measure and mitigate.

c) Enforce existing light standards on all non-agricultural al usee areas.

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

~~a) Encourage pipeline infrastructure to move products and by-products of oil and gas development while reducing number of above-ground tanks.~~

~~a. Review Chapter 90 Natural Resources for alignment with strategy~~

~~b) a) Reduce restrictions on the oil and gas industry.~~

~~c) b) Adopt renewable energy dividends (LPEA).~~

~~d) c) Implement renewable energy tax districts.~~

~~e) d) Incentivize the use of renewable energy for buildings and energy efficient building designs through the building code.~~

~~f) e) Reduce standards for security lighting in urban dense, residential areas.~~

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

a) Develop a long term plan for reuse of lands impacted by resource development and ~~review and~~ amend county ~~oil and gas~~ regulations to achieve ensure that restoration and reclamation strategies are in alignment with the plan.

b) Provide incentives and remove obstacles for ~~The long-term plan for reuse of lands impacted by resource development will develop strategies to~~ establishing renewable energy infrastructure on impacted lands in place of the waning gas and oil extraction infrastructure.

c) Review Chapter 90 Natural Resources for alignment with current setback requirements and develop regulations exceptions for new wells heads on existing pads that are located ~~too~~ close to residential development.

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

- a) Rely on insurance companies policies to limit development in the flood plains and geologic hazard areas ~~as-~~ ~~C~~current standards are adequate.
- b) Complete and update county mapping of geologic hazards and the 100 year floodplain.
- c) 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.
- d) 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 ~~controls for~~ noxious weeds ~~s~~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 NRCS programs (such as CRP) to allow for native vegetation to grow and to reduce noxious weeds in the county.
- e) 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.
- f) 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.
- g) 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.
- h) Enforce the La Plata County Weed Code and implement the La Plata County Weed Management Plan.
- i) Work in partnership with federal land management agencies and sovereign nations to prevent further proliferation of invasive plant species in La Plata County.
- j) Support efforts of the San Juan Public Lands center and Mesa Verde National Park to enforce the Class 1 air quality areas 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 ~~that is -~~ ~~P~~rogram should be privately run with ~~coordination~~ support from the county.
- b) Create a composting program that would allow for the city/county to compost waste ~~-A~~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 of the elderly and special needs populations.
 - b) Create Private Public Partnership (PPP) to undertake land development building projects in response to proposals.
 - ~~c) Support current housing agencies and programs (including homebuyer counseling, foreclosure prevention and financial literacy programs).~~
 - ~~d)~~c) Create and support a countywide housing trust/investment fund for land, mortgage, and infrastructure assistance.
 - ~~e)~~d) Maintain an inventory of county-owned land and provide land and financial support for development of affordable/attainable/workforce and senior rental housing.
 - ~~f)~~e) Offer planning and infrastructure assistance to encourage for-profit affordable/attainable housing development.
 - ~~g)~~f) Create local finance mechanisms for manufactured home communities.
 - ~~h)~~g) Offer tax credits to businesses building affordable/attainable/workforce housing
 - ~~i)~~h) Develop incentives for compact, higher density development located near jobs and services.
 - ~~j)~~i) Require properties that receive subsidy through the County to remain affordable over the long term
 - ~~k) Maintain an inventory of county-owned land for affordable and attainable housing development.~~
 - ~~l)~~ Provide incentives and assistance to developers of affordable rental housing.
 - ~~j)~~ Provide incentives and assistance and for new senior housing.
 - ~~m)~~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 higher density infrastructure allowances/incentives for higher density development in appropriate locations.
 - ~~b) Define clear, predictable development regulations.~~

- e) ~~b) Provide incentives for~~ ~~Reduce obstacles to~~ residential and commercial land use ~~possibilities, such as~~ ~~(i.e.:~~ mother-in-law units and commercial/residential mixed use ~~projects in appropriate locations}~~.
- ~~d) c) Create~~ ~~Develop~~ policies for development of higher density housing ~~in proximity to employment centers~~.
- e) ~~d) Create~~ ~~policies for~~ workforce centers and employment opportunities in locations ~~where housing and transportation already exist and/or develop housing near workforce centers~~ ~~where that use multi-modal alternative~~ 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 a ~~Explore creating~~ a local housing factory for modular, manufactured housing components.
- c) Implement in partnership with LPEA special districts for financing use of renewable solar energy.
- d) Adopt a high performance building code that provides incentives for ~~Support learning for~~ resource-efficient self-sufficient 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 ~~who~~ emphasize education on local food production (including residential gardens) ~~and~~ ~~&~~ capacity building.
- e) Improve and increase life skill resources at local libraries.

5. Support access to affordable healthcare and to a variety of providers.

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

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 second 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~~ ~~must~~ include pedestrian ~~and~~ ~~&~~ bicycle facilities and connections with public transportation.
- b) Adopt a future land use ~~planning code~~ that includes higher density development nodes and promotes multi-modal options.

- ~~e) Promote healthy communities through neighborhood design, transportation networks & public education~~
- ~~d)c) Adopt policies that encourage local food and fiber production.~~
- ~~e)d) Regulate ion of mineral extraction regarding noise, ground water pollution and light pollution levels on adjacent private and public property.~~
- ~~f)e) Set a livable minimum wage in the County.~~
- ~~g)f) 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, ~~open space and trails~~ in areas that are expected to experience significant new development.
- c) Rely on public government land for open space ~~(without imposing requirements on large property owners).~~
- ~~d) Develop, adopt and implement a county recreation plan.~~
- ~~e)d) Assess the feasibility of a County Parks Department and identify funding strategies.~~
- ~~f) Ensure public transportation facilities provide full access for residents, their recreational equipment and pets to parks and trailheads.~~
- ~~g)e) Acquire more public open space using grants, gifts, incentives and dedicated funds.~~
- ~~h)f) Develop and maintain access, parking, restrooms and wayfinding to public trails and recreation areas, with consideration for the needs of the elderly and disabled.~~
- ~~i) Ensure that new development provides and maintains access to public open land areas, where appropriate. Develop adopt and implement a county recreation plan.~~
- ~~j) Assess the feasibility of a County Parks Department and funding strategies.~~
- ~~k) Create funding for open space land acquisition.~~

10. Support and encourage partnerships with local agencies and jurisdictions in the provision of recreational and community services facilities.

- 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.
- c) Create a water and sewer authority.
- d) Involve all jurisdictions ~~towns~~ in land use decisions including potential expansion of water and sewer.
- e) Formalize an agreement with Prompt the other jurisdictions ~~(including Durango, Bayfield, Ignacio, Dry Side, Allison, and Hermosa) to~~ absorb their share of growth.

11. Encourage intergenerational involvement within the community.

- a) Develop a relationship between schools & seniors including mentorship & volunteer activities.
- b) Partner with the Encourage Durango Arts Center to hold an annual arts collaboration of youth and seniors.

- c) Promote and provide ~~S~~support to the Discovery Museum.
- d) Support, assist and encourage community non-profits, cultural organizations, facilities and services. ~~.-~~ Provide assistance in marketing their programs and in volunteer ~~the~~ recruitment ~~of volunteers~~.
- e) Formalize an agreement with ~~Support efforts to utilize the~~ schools districts to use the schools as neighborhood centers for community social and recreational activities and services. ~~.-When appropriate, locate local, County-sponsored services and activities at school facilities.~~

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.**
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) Provide long term support of a 2-1-1 program & "Bridges to Success".~~
 - ~~e)b) Support training, cooperation and ~~co-op~~ & asset mapping to eliminate duplication of services and to fill gaps in service.~~
 - ~~d)c) Dedicate staff to research and pursue ~~find & leverage~~ grants.~~
 - ~~e) 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 ~~to follow Federal and State activities and plans.~~
 - ~~i. Monthly reports and/or updates to County Commissioner on rRegional Public Land activites and Planning~~
 - ~~ii.i. Notify County residents of Public land planning and possible impacts to private individual property owners.~~~~
 - ~~f) Collaborate with Public Land Agencies to identify key stone species, collect and analyze data and monitor health and movements of wildlife to measure health of the natural environment and location of continuous wildlife corridors.~~
 - ~~g) Implement a public education program on alternative transportation options.~~
 - ~~h) Develop & implement a county recreation plan that coordinates access to/through various landowners.~~
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.

- 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.

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.
- 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. A fundamental role for the county is to maintain fiscal soundness.
- 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.

Strategy

An action designed to achieve a particular goal. A strategy is a short term action, policy, or regulation that is specific enough to be implemented.

Nexus

The relationship or connection of a policy by which a strategy or regulation is justified. A nexus is often required in planning to establish jurisdiction and prove causation, etc.

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) Identify investors to develop an investment fund focused on investing and providing loans to local businesses.
 - h) Employ Colorado House Bill 1350 to encourage development of renewable energy sources.
 - i) Minimize county regulatory barriers for the energy industry.
 - j) Establish tax rebates for business that utilize sustainable practices based on a score-card of sustainability indicators.
 - k) Provide training programs for senior citizens on employment skills.
- 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.

- 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.

- 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, such as Lake Nighthorse recreation facilities, multi-event center or a conference center.
 - b) 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 plan.
 - c) Establish an expedited county permitting process for development in designated rural centers and business parks.

- 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
 - 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) Eliminate 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) Honor and recognize an agriculturalist in the community annually.
 - c) Provide commercial kitchens for value-added production with locations throughout the county.
 - d) Access State economic development grants for new markets for both local and export markets.
 - e) Advocate for protection of federal land grazing leases tied to agricultural viability.
 - f) Provide consumer education programs that emphasize benefits of local agriculture, such as Buy Local program and local market branding, and convene community forums to inform community residents about the value of local agriculture and healthy food systems in partnership with CSU extension.
 - g) Advocate for elimination or reduction of federal inheritance and capital gains tax that negatively impact agriculture.
 - h) Eliminate county sales tax on locally produced foods.
 - i) Develop a circumstantial offset incentive for agricultural properties subjected to inheritance tax.
 - j) Designate portion county taxes to support farm and agricultural organizations and land acquisitions projects.
 - k) Develop definitions and performance standards for permitted agricultural uses such as 4-H agricultural operations and temporary or seasonal worker housing.

- 2. Support the enhancement of renewable natural resource systems (forest and range products, fisheries, wildlife).**
 - a) Request the Dept of Wildlife to purchase development rights on lands valuable for wildlife habitat.
 - b) Protect steep slopes and environmentally sensitive lands.

- c) Advocate to allow grazing and mining to occur within proposed federal designations of Conservation areas or National monuments to sustain agriculture.
- d) Create rules that allow harvesting (not hunting) of deer, elk and geese from agricultural lands.

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 through collaboration with Zink farm and formation of an agricultural coop.
- b) County staff will promote local food production and agriculture uses in subdivision covenants during 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 defined nodes throughout county and along Hwy 160/550, 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) The Comprehensive plan will be flexible and responsive to new ideas and new growth areas if necessary.
- e) 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) Allow solar and wind farm coops on undevelopable and/or unproductive lands.
- b) Allow sawmills that would provide affordable lumber to support affordable housing.
- c) Increase access to gravel in areas that are underserved.
- d) Reduce restrictions on 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 that to allow for agricultural water-banking to protect water rights and promote conservation.
- c) Promote the use of water harvesting and gray water systems to the degree permitted under State statutes and increasing 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) Direct 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 & promotes multiple modes.
- 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.

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.
- b) Undertake a statistically valid survey of County voters to assess support of a La Plata/Durango RTA, and possible new funding source(s) for transportation services and improvements.
- c) Formalize and enhance coordination and communication between La Plata Co, Farmington MPO and Northwest New Mexico RPO.

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

- a) Identify key migration routes and implement electric message boards on Hwys 222, 501, Florida Rd.
- 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 Best Management Practices plan for wildlife control and crossings.
- b) Coordinate wildlife crossing opportunities with bike and pedestrian pathway to minimize conflicts and redundancies.

- 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 in collaboration with CDOT and municipalities.
 - b) Design, fund, and install bus pullouts for Durango trolley and any new or expanded services.
 - c) 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.

- 9. Encourage land use patterns that reduce per-capita average daily trips (ADT) & vehicle miles traveled (VMT).**
 - a) Implement a park-and-ride infrastructure plan as a public-private partnership with developers.
 - 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 in partnership with La Plata County Economic Development Action Partnership (LEAD), local chambers of commerce, Durango Area Tourism Office (DATO) and City of Durango.
 - 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 indicators, keystone species and programs to monitor health of various ecosystems in county and develop a resource management plan.
- b) Provide educational and interpretive programs to connect residents from urban and suburban communities to the natural environment.
- c) Utilize the Old Fort Lewis campus to research and develop ecosystem management for the 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 designated as wildlife corridors, wetlands and riparian habitats.
- d) Implement grade separated wildlife corridor crossings on major roadways in collaborate with DOW and CDOT.
- e) Install deer and elk fencing along county roads and major highways.

3. Reduce wildfire hazards.

- a) Educate the public about the insurance incentives that are available for reducing wildfire hazards around structures and on 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 on building location, design and fuelwood management of 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 on chemicals used in the fracturing process and to test for chemicals in ground water.
- b) Incorporate in the development standards best management practices for protecting natural drainage systems and aquifer recharge.

- c) Provide incentives for pipeline infrastructure to transport products and by-products of oil and gas development.
- d) 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) Exempt agricultural lands from noise pollution restrictions.
- b) Define noise standards that exceed the requirements in State statutes on how to measure and mitigate.
- c) Enforce existing light standards on all non-agricultural uses.

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

- a) Reduce restrictions on the oil and gas industry.
- b) Adopt renewable energy dividends (LPEA).
- c) Implement renewable energy tax districts.
- d) Incentivize the use of renewable energy for buildings and energy efficient building designs through the building code.
- e) Reduce standards for security lighting in urban residential areas.

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

- a) Develop a long term plan for reuse of lands impacted by resource development and amend county regulations to achieve restoration and reclamation strategies.
- b) Provide incentives and remove obstacles for establishing renewable energy infrastructure on impacted lands.
- c) Review Chapter 90 Natural Resources for alignment with current setback requirements and develop regulations for new wells heads on existing pads that are located close to residential development.

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

- a) Rely on insurance companies policies to limit development in the flood plains and geologic hazard areas as current standards are adequate.
- b) Complete and update county mapping of geologic hazards and the 100 year floodplain.
- c) 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.
- d) 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 NRCS programs (such as CRP) to allow for native vegetation to grow and to reduce noxious weeds in the county.
- e) 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.
- f) 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.

- g) 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.
- h) Enforce the La Plata County Weed Code and implement the La Plata County Weed Management Plan.
- i) Work in partnership with federal land management agencies and sovereign nations to prevent further proliferation of invasive plant species in La Plata County.
- j) Support efforts of the San Juan Public Lands center and Mesa Verde National Park to enforce the Class 1 air quality areas 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 that is privately run with support from the county.
- 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 of the elderly and special needs populations.
 - b) Create Private Public Partnerships (PPP) to undertake land development building projects in response to proposals.
 - 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) Create local finance mechanisms for manufactured home communities.
 - g) Offer tax credits 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 affordable rental housing and for 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 a local housing factory for modular, manufactured 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 residential gardens) and capacity building.
 - e) Improve and increase life skill resources at local libraries.

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

- 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 second 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) Adopt policies that encourage local food and fiber production.
 - d) Regulate mineral extraction regarding noise, ground water pollution and light pollution levels on adjacent private and public property.
 - e) Set a livable minimum wage in the County.
 - f) 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) Rely on public land for open space without imposing requirements on large property owners.
- d) Develop, adopt and implement a county recreation plan, assess the feasibility of a County Parks Department and identify funding strategies.
- e) Acquire public open space using grants, gifts, incentives and dedicated funds.
- f) 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.
- c) Create a water and sewer authority.
- d) Involve all jurisdictions in land use decisions including potential expansion of water and sewer.
- e) Formalize an agreement with the other jurisdictions to absorb their share of growth.

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) Promote and provide support to the Discovery Museum.
- d) Support, assist and encourage community non-profits, cultural organizations, facilities and services in marketing their programs and in volunteer recruitment.
- e) 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.**
- 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.**
- 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.**