

Working Group (WG) Meeting #3 Summary
Monday August 17, 2009
Durango Recreation Center
4-6 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

August 31, 2009

4-6 p.m.

Durango Recreation Center AGENDA:

- 1. Review draft EV Goals (15 min)**
- 2. Review draft Guiding Principles (15 min)**
- 3. Visioning overview and draft statements (90 min)**

MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Participants

Staff/Consultants: Erick , Jason, Charlie, Gabe, Tracie, Julia, Robbie

Working Group (WG): Julie Levy, Barbara Jefferies, Travis Craig, Roy Horvath, Sally Bellerue, Jack Llewellyn, Wade Moore, Brian Kimmel, Jeanine Justice, Peter Tregillus, Sue Herbst, Jack McGroder, Dick White

Observers: Dick Norton

Draft_Goals for Economic Vitality

Gabe kicked off the conversation on economic vitality by asking the question:

Given the array of entities actively working on economic development and the focus of the profession on helping existing businesses and entrepreneurs succeed, what is the role for county government in economic development?

Several ideas surfaced in the first ten minutes of the discussion that set the stage for the group-effort of drafting the economic vitality goals upon which the group agreed and another proposed goal that needs more discussion.

Revenues/tax base

Goal EV-1: A fundamental goal for the county is to maintain fiscal soundness.

Context/discussion: This was the first goal proposed in the meeting and was recorded on the wall under revenues/tax base. .

Economic development/small business development & workforce development

Goal EV-2: County regulations and policies for business and economic activities shall be fair, clear, predictable, and consistent.

Context/discussion: The discussion leading to this draft goal was initiated by one member who stated that the county has regulatory authority over land use, and is therefore a player in the economy and economic development.

Goal EV-3: The county will develop incentives for businesses and economic activities that are sustainable and diverse.

Context/discussion: In its first rendition, this goal did not mention diversity. A few members of the group subsequently began brainstorming a goal about economic/market diversity as a component of sustainability. After working on a goal specifically about economic diversity, one group member pointed out that the value of economic diversity could be integrated into Goal EV-3 by adding the word 'diverse' and others agreed.

There was also some discussion about the definition of economic diversity. One group member expressed concern that the incentives for diversity could favor businesses based solely on their 'uniqueness'. This may not be fair to businesses that might be contributing to economic vitality, but are not eligible for incentives based on the fact that they are not unique or that other like businesses are in the area. Gabe proposed that this concern could be addressed in the strategies by stating that a business would not be denied incentive only because other like businesses already exist. With the agreement that the group would be able to address this issue of further defining criteria for diversity in the strategies, the group indicated that they had no disagreements with goal EV-3. One member mentioned that the county needs to avoid producing unintentional incentives attracting or discouraging certain economic activities accidentally without making a deliberate choice.

Goal EV-4 La Plata County actively collaborates with municipal, tribal, private sector entities and non-profits to promote economic diversity and sustainability.

Context/discussion: One member said that economic development activities should be sensitive to the preferences and characteristics of the municipalities. Another added that the county should support municipal efforts at economic development.

Tourism

Goal EV-5 La Plata County preserves and enhances the assets it owns to be attractive for tourists and residents.

Context/discussion: This goal was drafted to reflect a discussion in the group about how assets owned by the county government can be an important part of the features that make La Plata County attractive to tourists and residents. One example is the recreational value that bike lanes can add to the county road system. Another example of an asset partly owned by the county that can enhance attractiveness is the Durango-La Plata County airport and nearby infrastructure.

Economic vitality topics to be discussed at future meetings

- One goal was proposed under the tourism sub-topic that was not discussed thoroughly because of time constraints: *"The county preserves and enhance cultural and scenic resources and recreational opportunities."* This discussion needs to be continued at the next meeting.
- Erick made an observation that the community development department "speaks water, sewer, and access" and lacks an ED liaison to translate the language of economic development and fiscal realities from the ED organizations (LEAD, etc) to the discussion for other county departments and county commissioners.

- The group needs to develop a plan-strategy to avoid incentives that result in unintended or perverse outcomes.
- In determining the application of incentives for businesses and economic activities that contribute to economic diversity, businesses that are not unique in the county should be eligible for incentives so long as they are contributing to a sustainable economy.
- Proposed definition of incentive: "Cue to make an economic or business decision in the best interest of the county."
- Housing, economic vitality and transportation are all linked because commuting results when housing supply and prices are out of balance with the number of jobs and income they produce.
- Dick White emailed a proposed goal for Economic Vitality Tuesday 8-18 that he didn't get a chance to voice at the 8-17 meeting: *"La Plata County supplies and promotes development and management of infrastructure necessary for a sustainable local economy: water, energy, waste, communications, and transportation."*

Housekeeping/logistics

- There were two working group members who did not receive the economic vitality materials sent in Charlie's 8-13 emails. One member mentioned that multiple emails coming from multiple consultants was inefficient and also suggested that consultants offer a prioritized reading assignment for those who are short on time.
- Barbara Jeffries stated she can't attend the 8-31 meeting because the monthly meeting schedule was modified due to Labor Day.
- Charlie brought up the issue that we may not accomplish a plan element in each 2 hour meeting and that we may run out of time occasionally. There were a couple of working group members that suggested that longer meetings would be OK if they were informed before the meeting, but the preference seemed to be for scheduling an additional meeting time with adequate notice.