



Strategic Plan Outline 2021

Executive Overview

Our community's values as well as our environmental and cultural assets make La Plata unique and allow us to compare favorably with other communities that have balanced a strong economy with a high quality of life. Our strategic plan for the next three years should not only cover economic dimensions but also include social, environmental, effective governance and cultural aspects. The quality and direction of growth is more important than just an economic perspective.

We have to address and create opportunities attainable housing, ensure an available and skilled workforce with excellence in diverse sectors, and commitment to education and workforce development. We have to be able to keep and grow the businesses here and encourage entrepreneurship. We have to leverage our geography and culture, while protecting our forests and rivers ensuring sustainable, resilient economic development. With this in mind we are committing to the following three major themes:

- **Business Capacity and Growth**
- **Housing Solutions**
- **Expand & Recruit Workforce**

The vision of the Alliance is

*To enable La Plata County to be one of the **most vital and vibrant communities** in the country to **live, work, learn, and play.***

Our mission is

*To create a vibrant and resilient economy from the **recruitment, retention and growth of a variety of businesses**, by fostering **public and private partnerships**, and **preserving our quality of life.***

The La Plata Economic Development Alliance works with the public sector, the business community, and other economic development entities to create highly favorable and sustainable conditions for economic growth and employment creation and retention while leveraging and preserving the recreational, cultural, and social assets of our region. By optimizing local resources and capacities and creating alignment with the driving forces of economic stakeholders in our community, we are a catalyst for economic development.

In 2020, the Alliance focused on the recovery and reopening efforts of the entire business community by working closely with other entities to form the La Plata Economic Recovery Task Force. This group heavily promoted and helped businesses with federal stimulus, local grants,



and re-opening efforts like the 5 Star Certification program. Like all other organizations, The Alliance had to modify our business model to be a supporting organization to any response-oriented efforts regarding public health orders and assistance for the business community.

Role of the Alliance

The Alliance develops and fosters productive relationships and effective partnerships. As a change agent, the Alliance represents the membership's interest and helps drive and advocate for specific initiatives and projects. Our ability to access and collaborate with local stakeholders, our intimate knowledge of the local economic issues as well as our knowledge of the larger national economic environments bring significant value to our membership. In an environment of constrained time and resources, our effectiveness is directly related to our support from the private business community, other economic development organizations, and municipal partners for resources, advice, ideation, and partnerships.

Public Private Partnership

Dynamic economic development improves the landscape of a community not just economically, but as a strong functioning community. Capacity building can create jobs, increase business and personal income, and enhance resources for infrastructure. Focused economic development also builds the capacity of communities to become fundamentally better able to manage change and become more resilient.

Sustainable and resilient economic development such as job creation and sustained employment and infrastructure, is brought about through local leaders collaborating, changing attitudes while respecting cultures, mobilizing existing resources, and thinking differently about problems and using community assets in new ways.

All of our efforts involve multi-stakeholder partnership. The private sector is the driver of employment and economic growth and as such, local government and planning authorities must be conscious of its "enabler" role. Fostering the right environment for the local economy to grow appropriately but always aware of the priorities of the community.

Strategic Planning

The first step in our planning process is to get consensus of our assets and values as a community. These assets, both formal and informal, determine what resources are available to move forward. In doing so we can also determine the community's strengths and weaknesses. This can include human resource capacity, local government support to specific types of business activities planning and development, and the opportunities and threats facing our local economy.



Community Vision

We recognize that common vision amongst stakeholders and organizations is essential creating alignment and defining what values and assets are prioritized. In a process with Region9 and the La Plata Economic Development Task Force, we are documenting vision/mission and value statements from participating organizations and determining common themes as part of Region9's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This regional economic development documentation is used by regional, state and Federal governments for grant funding and initiatives that are critical for our region. An example is Economic Development Administration (EDA) funding decision are based on the CEDS that Region 9 is preparing.

The impacts of COVID 19 confirm the importance of economic resiliency. As we start to consider planning for the next 3 to 5 years, the unpredictable future and the need to accept the journey of a longer-term recovery overshadows a more traditional approach to planning. We need to be optimistic but realistic about how long we may be experiencing a health pandemic and what are the reasonable and necessary objectives to not only survive but continue to build for a brighter future.

Fundamental Question

We began the process by asking ourselves:

What would success look like for our community in regard to economic development & community resilience over the next 2 - 3 years?

Visioning Workshop

The Alliance gathered a small group of stakeholders representing our membership, Board, municipal partners and economic organizations and workshopped to create high level themes to categorize the answer to this question. The results were the following:

The full working group decided to spend time addressing three of the vision themes:

1. **Business Capacity and Growth**
2. **Housing Solutions**
3. **Expand & Recruit Workforce**

A fourth theme, "**Smart Infrastructure**", should be included and addressed in the Alliance's Strategic Plan.

"**Community Differentiation**" and "**Cultural Shift**" should be addressed in the Strategic Plan as important overarching considerations, and which potentially affect all of the themes and activities.



Major Themes

The following are the three main themes derived from the workshops:

1. Business Capacity and Growth

Other Initiatives/Projects that can be leveraged

- La Posta expansion
- URA
- Creative District
- Character District
- OZ
- Entrepreneurship & Startups
- ED Districts
- Business stimulator ie: SCAPE, FLC Innovation Center, Region 9 EDD,
- DIDF
- Tribal Equity by acquisition

SWOT

Strengths:

- Entrepreneurial spirit
- County/City alignment on development
- Tribe

Weaknesses:

- Short funds
- Not enough staff
- Space for expansions
- Transit/ Transportation
- Lack of Housing

Opportunities:

- Strategic Alliances
- Tax Benefits
- Relocation from Metro Areas to SW Colorado
- Diverse

Threats:

- Costs (Building & Land)
- Unmanaged growth
- Declining Revenue

New Idea Generation

- City /County more balance in \$ for Economic Dev.
- Land swap/acquisition
- Tribe Lease Trust land
- State land divestitures
- Existing buildings



3 Year Intention/Impact

We will impact diversity of business through strategic alliances and equitable investment in economic development to enhance vitality & sustainability.

Priorities for next 12Months

- \$2 Million from County towards ED (measurable)
- Strategic Partners thru tax benefits & incentives
- Priority of housing communicated from Electeds to Staff/Planning

Launch Activity

- - Flush out idea for information gathering
- - Focus Group for City & County

Roles

- - Alliance/ Region 9/ Chambers facilitate core vision for long term follow through of ED

2. Housing Solutions

Other Initiatives/Projects

- Re-invigorating RHA
- Senior Three Springs (53)
- Lumien Apartments (20-30)
- Fair-Share - Homes Fund
- URA - Midtown (DOLA) Density
- 9R Admin

SWOT

Strengths:

- Demand
- Community Support
- URA
- RHA

Weaknesses:

- Awareness
- Developers incentives
- Cost of Living
- Cost of Construction
- Inventory

Opportunities:

- Gov. land
- FLC
- Developers (IF)
- Employers



- State \$
- Fed\$
- Workforce Housing

Threats:

- Parking Code (variance)
- Demand for housing
- Urban flight
- Inventory
- Regulations and Planning

New Idea Generation

- OP. Zone
- Manufactured Housing
- Infrastructure Coordination
- County EDA (Economic Development Area)
- Tax-abatement - Developer (TIF)
- Workforce and repurposing available property (Fairgrounds)

3 Year Intention/Impact

- Move fairgrounds
- Build support GRP funding
- Aggressive for state funding
- City/County/Plan Commission agree to prioritize housing
- Acquire land for projects - one proto-type
- Invest in infrastructure - PPP
- Update joint plan agreement
- Inventory property and opportunities

Priorities for next 12 Months

- URA create project for units
- Plan for Schluter (park & units)
- RHA Re-Mission
- Secure one site (inventory land)
- Get buy in for Workforce Housing from Employer (FLC/City/9R)

Roles

- -Electeds
- -Development Community
- Large Employers, SUIT GF Properties
- State CHFA
- NFP: Housing Solutions, HomesFund
- FLC
- City/County Staff > Planning



Launch Activity

- RHA - Mike S. 2020
- Grant - City/County 2021
- Perm Funding - 2022
- Secure initial site - County
- Developer Conference – 2021

Cultural Shift

- Density
- Easier to build
- Planning Commission > Eco Dev.
- Value units
- While maintaining aesthetics
- Realistic Joint Planning Code- Sidewalks on La Posta?

3. Expand / Recruit Workforce

Other Initiatives/Projects

- FLC / Future of Work event local / State Future of Work Dept.
- BEC - biz/ school/ community connect
- PCC expanding trade programs & grant programs
- SJC / FLC tuition & credit collaboration
- Enterprise Zone State tax credits for employee training
- SCAPE
- SBDC
- Schools of choice K-12
- Alliance Relocation and Trailing Spouse

SWOT

Strengths:

- Have options for training & dev FLC/Pueblo CC/SWCC
- Desired location
- Some diversified sectors (Manufacturing, Fintech/Software dev)

Weaknesses:

- Cost of living vs. livable wage
- Average Wage of the County

Opportunities:

- Introduce skill assessment & job awareness earlier in K-12
- Fire Mitigation Contracts/National Forest

Threats

- Job growth opportunities

New Idea Generation

- Educate Your Own



3 Year Intention/Impact

- We intend to map career paths that match employer needs with local talent pool by bolstering the capacity of both. (cont. learning

Priorities for next 12Months

- Increase quantity & quality of K-12 skill and career awareness
- Re-skill current workforce > certificate program
- Business assessment that leads to improved strategic plan & development to workforce
- Coordination between workforce/exec director players Rethink hired and OTJ training

Roles

- School counselors, Teachers K-12 & college profs.
- Economic dev organizations
- Professional coaches, communication specialists, theater

Launch Activity

- 1) Events that connect educators, students and business on community workforce needs
- 2) Video series that pairs educators, students and business on community workforce.



Economic Data For La Plata County

Region 9 - Percentage of Jobs in Base Industries 2019						
	Archuleta	Dolores	La Plata	Montezuma	San Juan	Region 9
Agribusiness	9%	30%	7%	12%	0%	9%
Mining	1%	2%	3%	2%	0%	2%
Manufacturing	1%	3%	1%	3%	1%	2%
Government	3%	5%	11%	5%	3%	8%
Regional Services	16%	11%	20%	21%	11%	19%
Tourism	31%	7%	30%	16%	59%	26%
Households	39%	42%	28%	40%	23%	33%
Total # jobs	4,930	905	21,767	9,343	356	37,301

Region 9 - 2019	¹ Avg Annual Wage	² Livable Wages		
		Adult	Adult + Preschooler	2 Adults (1 working)+ Preschooler + School-age
Archuleta County	\$ 36,660	\$ 25,875	\$ 54,184	\$ 54,496
Dolores County	\$ 35,308	\$ 23,733	\$ 50,710	\$ 51,022
La Plata County	\$ 47,944	\$ 26,957	\$ 55,266	\$ 55,598
Montezuma County	\$ 37,223	\$ 24,045	\$ 51,854	\$ 52,187
San Juan County	\$ 27,508	\$ 27,331	\$ 56,368	\$ 56,701
Colorado	\$ 61,828	\$ 58,989	\$ 59,301	\$ 59,300

¹LMI - 2019 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) - all industries

² MIT Liveable Wage Calculator <https://livingwage.mit.edu>

Regional Median Housing Prices 2020

Jurisdiction	¹ Purchase Price 30 year fixed loan 10% Down 3% Interest Rate	Qualifying Annual Income 30% DTI	³ % of Families with less than Qualifying Income	Number Sold Listings
Archuleta County - Pagosa Springs all	\$ 410,000	\$ 75,994	69%	431
Dolores County - all	\$ 179,500	\$ 37,206	32%	20
Dove Creek	\$ 116,750	\$ 26,646	19%	6
Rico	NA			
La Plata County - all	\$ 492,253	\$ 89,835	47%	939
Bayfield	\$ 330,000	\$ 62,532	29%	73
Durango	\$ 569,500	\$ 102,834	62%	194
Ignacio	\$ 247,000	\$ 48,565	38%	10
Montezuma County - all	\$ 259,000	\$ 50,584	43%	397
Cortez	\$ 220,000	\$ 44,021	42%	234
Dolores	\$ 319,000	\$ 60,681	54%	89
Mancos	\$ 352,700	\$ 66,351	59%	63
San Juan County - Silverton all	\$ 300,000	\$ 57,483	49%	31

¹ Purchase Price based on median home prices (Single Family) through November 2020 - MLS.

² Qualifying Annual Income courtesy of The Homes Fund Serving SW Colorado (30% Debt to Income Ratio)

³ Based on estimates of Family Household Income from the 2019 American Community Survey (Census Table DP03)



Region 9 – Industry Growth Forecast 2019 – 2023

Industry	2019	2023	# Change	% Change	Earnings per Worker
Health Care and Social Assistance	5,763	6,093	330	6%	\$54,949
Other Services (except Public Administration)	2,414	2,673	259	11%	\$27,395
Accommodation and Food Services	5,494	5,630	136	2%	\$24,362
Manufacturing	1,396	1,515	119	9%	\$49,666
Retail Trade	5,798	5,914	116	2%	\$36,430
Educational Services	703	806	103	15%	\$37,444
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,163	2,264	101	5%	\$72,162
Government	10,146	10,243	97	1%	\$59,497
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	471	558	87	18%	\$37,833
Transportation and Warehousing	1,101	1,177	76	7%	\$75,264
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,277	1,333	56	4%	\$27,773
Wholesale Trade	860	903	43	5%	\$63,764
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,076	1,116	40	4%	\$55,517
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1,508	1,544	36	2%	\$35,818
Management of Companies and Enterprises	203	233	30	15%	\$112,729
Information	517	529	12	2%	\$111,809
Utilities	246	236	(10)	(4%)	\$113,090
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	577	562	(16)	(3%)	\$147,275
Finance and Insurance	1,172	1,134	(38)	(3%)	\$99,170
Construction	4,172	4,122	(49)	(1%)	\$54,098
Total Estimated Jobs	47,055	48,583	1,528		

Data Source: EMSI Q.4 2020 Dataset