

La Plata County Transit/Land Use Plan Scope of Work

La Plata County, Colorado is seeing increased demands for transportation services as the population grows relative to the three town centers, Bayfield, Ignacio and Durango. Due to low-density, automobile-oriented development current mobility options for the citizens of La Plata County are few. The lack of alternatives and propensity for development that exacerbates dependence on automobiles raises the question of the quality, equity and efficiency of transportation development. Without land use and development that supports the provision of mobility solutions, these services become expensive and underused. Therefore, La Plata County wants to develop a plan that looks at land use and multi-modal transportation options, such as walking, biking, transit, vanpool and carpool, in a coordinated connected process. This approach will ensure the most efficient use of resources to construct infrastructure as well as healthy neighborhoods and communities. Within the framework of a transit/tdm/land use plan, the County wants this plan to include:

- Regional coordination
- Comprehensive process of public consultation
- Comprehensive review and inventory of roadways, land use and travel forecasts
- Review/Refinement of existing forecasts
- Identification of preferred transit plan for the next 10 to 20 years

La Plata County, its regional partners and citizens have done a great deal of work on these issues already. The Southwest Regional Planning Commission in cooperation with the Colorado Department of Transportation completed a regional transportation plan that includes La Plata County in 2008. Also completed recently is the Southwest Transportation Planning Region Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan that includes a transit services inventory and a needs assessment. The City of Ignacio has just conducted a public poll as well as a series of four public meetings that asked among other things questions about mobility and existing transit services. In 2007 the Safe Roads Coalition published the Inventory and Prioritization of Roads in La Plata

County for Improved Bicycling, Pedestrian and Motorist Safety. SUCAP has just issued its Southern Ute Transportation Service Development Plan, 2008-2010. And County staff wrote a memo about Colorado Rural Transportation Authorities.

The following scope of work uses and builds on these and other work already conducted. The scope is divided into three main tasks: conduct existing conditions review; develop strategies to provide multi-modal transportation opportunities in a built environment that supports these activities and; propose plans to implement strategies. Each of these tasks includes both transportation and land use activities because they cannot be separated. For example, the activity of designing a connected street network is both a transportation and a land use task.

Scope of Work

Task 1: Conduct Existing Conditions Review

1. Review existing reports, maps and data including the reports identified above as well as land use plans for the relevant planning districts, comprehensive plans and zoning codes for La Plata County and the communities of Ignacio and Bayfield, the joint planning agreement documents, street classification maps and roadway design standards and current development proposals. We will update transit ridership, funding, budgets, changes and statistics as necessary for La Plata County Senior Services, Durango T, the Southern Ute Community Action Programs (SUCAP) Road Runner service and Community Connections. We will identify other TDM programs such as *Ride Share*, *Durango Mountain Resort*, *Durango Transportation*, taxis or other services and volunteer groups and collect data. We will gather relevant information from CDOT including average traffic volumes on key roadways and any model output they have to support this study. We will review demographic data collected in previous studies and update as needed.
2. Conduct up to 25 telephone interviews with stakeholders including:

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- Representatives from the county and each of communities within the county. This will include staff as well as elected officials. Among other issues, we will ask questions about proposed development, community needs and concerns and opportunities and threats facing each jurisdiction
- Representatives from each of the transit and TDM providers
- Representatives from CDOT
- La Plata Regional Housing Authority
- Region 9 Economic Development District
- Safe Roads Coalition
- Healthy Life Style La Plata
- Chambers of Commerce
- Fort Lewis College
- Major employers
- School District
- Relevant social service agencies and other key stakeholders identified

In these interviews, we will discuss, depending on who we are talking with, mobility issues, existing services, growth and development trends, current strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities and threats.

3. Build on existing mapping to create a map that shows transit routes and service areas, stops, bike lanes and pathways, connection points between services and other multi-modal facilities. We will layer this map on land use map and existing street classification map as well as demographic maps created for other plans and studies

4. Identify gaps and overlaps in transit services. This can include geographic areas that need but do not have service, times of the day or week that are without service or groups that need but do not have service. Overlaps may refer to more than one agency providing demand response service to the same geographic area or different services for the same area. Existing studies have identified the following service gaps:

- Need better transit connections within communities and more public transportation
Regionally
- Limited or no weekend services outside of Durango
- There is a lack of regional intercity bus service for the region as a whole.
- Local public transportation (bus/van service) serves seniors and disabled well, but service hours need to be extended.
- Increases in commuting into the Durango/Grandview area due to rapid growth in La Plata County
- Public transportation opportunities should be looked at to support the growing tourism and second-home market
- Need for service from Cortez to Durango along US Highway 160.
- Need for employment related transportation services.

These studies have identified non transit service issues as well. These include:

- Need for better land use planning in coordination with transit services.
- Lack of affordable housing has pushed people into rural areas increasing the need for transit services to those areas
- Creating a Rural Transit Authority (RTA) in Durango

It should be noted that these are taken from regional studies and while they are quite relevant, it may be useful to look more closely at La Plata County intra and inter county needs.

5. Conduct a literature search and review of transit oriented development projects in the western states to identify land use characteristics, strategies and administrative procedures that support transit services, multi-modal communities and compact development. We will search such references as:
 - TCRP: Report 102: Transit-Oriented Development in the United States: Experiences, Challenges and Prospects, Cervero, Robert, Transportation, Research Board, 2004
 - Community Design & Transportation: A Manual of Best Practices for Integrating Transportation and Land Use, Augenstein, C., ed., San Jose: Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, 2003
 - The New Transit Town: Best Practices in Transit-Oriented Development, Dittmar, Hank and Ohland, Gloria, eds., Island Press, 2004

6. Develop one list of best practices characteristics for urban and urbanizing areas including Bayfield, Ignacio, and Tiers 2 and 3 and another list for rural unincorporated areas of La Plata County. We will give special attention in the rural areas to roadways that most likely will be designated to carry transit as well as those nodes throughout the county that have been developed. We will look at both land use characteristics and strategies that will encourage compact mixed use development and discourage sprawl. We will look at, at least, the following issues
 - Compact and mixed land use
 - Densities
 - Street classifications and design standards
 - Pedestrian and bicycle facilities and amenities
 - Setbacks and design standards
 - Street connectivity

We will then prepare a matrix or other easily useable format to describe the best practices, and to the extent possible quantify identified land use characteristics. So, for example, we would define how many units per acre are needed to support fixed route transit. (It's usually considered to be eight to ten units.) We will include graphics or photos as appropriate to illustrate concepts. We will compare existing practices, codes and plans to the best practices matrix developed from literature/project search and identify differences.

7. Draft news article/press releases to explain project to the public. This will include:
 - Draft press release for Durango Herald, Bayfield, SUCAP papers.
 - Draft language to include in existing County newsletter and other stakeholder newsletters or websites
8. Host two public open houses, one in Bayfield and one in Ignacio. It should be noted that Ignacio has recently held a series of meetings and a public survey that gathered information about travel and transit among other issues, so another location could be selected. However, these open houses will be for more than just these communities

These gatherings will focus on mobility concerns; how are people getting where they need to go; what problems do they have getting there. We would like to learn about such things as problems crossing streets, needing bus service to get to the doctor, demand for vanpool program to help commuters or the lack of sidewalks on the way to school.

9. Present draft existing conditions report to stakeholder committee for their comment and input. We will send a copy of the draft report out the week before the meeting to staff for review and distribution.

Task 2: Develop Strategies

1. Identify changes to improve land use for La Plata County to support transit, biking, walking and other TDM measures. Based on the comparison of best practices with existing codes, we will prepare draft model policies and development standards for both urban and rural areas that reflect desired best practices. We will review applicable development approval procedures and practices and identify changes that will better support La Plata goals. These may include guidelines or performance standards to cluster development near transit stops or along transit routes, incentives to reach minimum development densities, site design guidelines to create quality pedestrian facilities linked to transit.

2. Propose strategies to encourage compact growth as well as mixed use. This may include such approaches as using a capital plan that outlines when public infrastructure will be built or exploring the possibility and effectiveness of an urban growth boundary.
3. To encourage streets that support walking, biking and transit, our team will develop street connectivity guidelines and lay out a collector-and-above street network. These may be mapped and/or given as connectivity standards that will identify the distance between streets of different classifications like local, collector or commercial streets.
4. Recommend design standards for streets by classification. This will include lane width, parking, sidewalks, greenbelts and bike lanes. We will design cross sections for each street type.
5. Based on existing growth projects, discussion with planning staffs and proposed land use strategies, we will allocate future growth within the county for the next 10 to 20 years
6. Identify transit corridors and develop guidelines for land use and street design for these corridors that will be at some point served by transit. Transit corridors will be main streets and roadways that transit is likely to serve within the 10 to 20 years. The identification as a transit corridor or street should be adopted into the comprehensive plan and map.
7. Propose transit/tdm improvements that will help coordinate existing services as well as provide service to fill in gaps. These improvements may include: additional routes, schedule changes, transit amenities, changes to existing routes, rideshare or vanpool programs or other coordination activities such as seat share among different social service agencies.
8. Explore organizational and management structures to oversee county-wide transit services. One option is a Rural Transportation Authority; another option might include Intergovernmental Agreements or contracts with existing providers. We will also examine opportunities for organizational coordination such shared dispatch

9. Based on demographic data and discussions with County, Cities, CDOT and transit staff our team will draft recommendations for park and ride facility locations. These facilities will serve both transit and carpool/vanpool services. We will create a maps to show these as well as additional routes, transit streets and other recommended multi-modal improvements recommended.

10. Review/refine existing forecasts Travel forecasts have recently been completed for the Regional Transportation Study 2030 TRIP (conducted by LSA Associates, Inc.) We will review those forecasts and suggest alternative methodology that will produce more refined travel forecasts to reflect alternative development scenarios and demand management methodologies within the study area. We will use the land use allocations developed in sub task 5. We will take into account proposed new land uses and increase in multi-modalism. We will look to communities such as Portland Oregon that have come up with travel modal coefficients that quantify the effects of land uses that increase compact design and densities and encourage walking, biking and transit.

11. Present draft land use/transit/tdm strategies recommendations report to stakeholder committee for their comment and input. We will send a copy of the draft report out the week before the meeting to staff for review and distribution. We will edit document in response to those comments.

Task 3: Develop Implementation Plans

1. Identify a preferred transit plan that responds to forecast needs and land use changes over a 10 to 20 year period. This plan will include proposed routes, services and programs that may include express bus, intra and inter-county connections, rideshare and vanpool programs, community shuttles, deviated route and services for elderly and disabled. This transit plan will recommend an organizational structure and will describe a phasing plan for services and routes as well as other tasks and activities necessary to successfully

implement this program. These may include organization strategies as well as infrastructure changes to the road and street system.

2. Develop funding plan to support proposed transit services and programs. We will identify available funding sources and lay out strategies to pay for services and programs. We will develop a capital plan that will cost improvements on a planning level for improvements to roads and transit systems. It will also identify proposed funding by year for system. It should be noted that over a 10 to 20 year period funding options may change significantly.
3. Present plan to stakeholder committee for review and comment. Integrate comments into report. At the same visit present report to County Commission, if requested. We will send a copy of the draft report out the week before the meeting to staff for review and distribution.
4. Prepare final report including existing conditions report, strategies and plan. The final report will present maps of recommendations, as needed.
5. Share findings with public including a press release and draft language to include in county and stakeholder newsletters. We will also produce display boards showing recommendations and plan to be displayed in key locations such as senior center or library.